



Eastside Regional Park Public Art Plan El Paso

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URBAN PARKS

Urban parks are not a luxury, but rather an essential component of a healthy, meaningfully balanced life when we live within the built environment of a city. Parks provide a place for people to shift from their daily responsibilities to a more relaxed, open experience of time and place. Parks provide a spectrum of experiences that contribute to personal and family wellbeing, while at the same time strengthening community through shared, interactive use.

Parks are very much about a range of experiences framed by what is happening. There are active and passive activities, differences based on time of day, weather and natural cycles, whether alone or with others, and more. Parks are places that provide the full experiential spectrum - from quiet solace to energetic activities. As such, they offer a fantastic, ever-shifting array of various conditions and unexpected circumstances. These conditions in turn offer park visitors on-going experiences are unique from visit to visit, even if for example, the same trail is walked again and again.



EASTSIDE REGIONAL PARK

This generous 92-acre park site is situated in a mixed site context. Along the majority of the east, west, and south edges are housing developments. To the north is mixed commercial and a major road.

There are two significant, specific uses that impact the park. One is in the SE corner. An elementary school, whose outdoor play area is bounded by a long stone wall. The other is along the northern portion of the eastern edge. A very large car salvage yard has major visual impacts particularly in that area of the park, but also from any locations with some elevation.

This park will have a number of active uses, such as ball fields, play courts, skate/BMX park, outdoor water, amphitheater, pavilions, playgrounds, dog park, community garden area, and more. There is also a significant building - a community center/natatorium. But the park will also have significant open space and natural areas enhanced by specific environmental landscaping. Running throughout the park is an extensive trail system that weaves through the entire park and interconnecting the many uses – inviting people to walk or jog as part of their visit. This system is an open invitation even if people have come to the park for other purposes and uses.



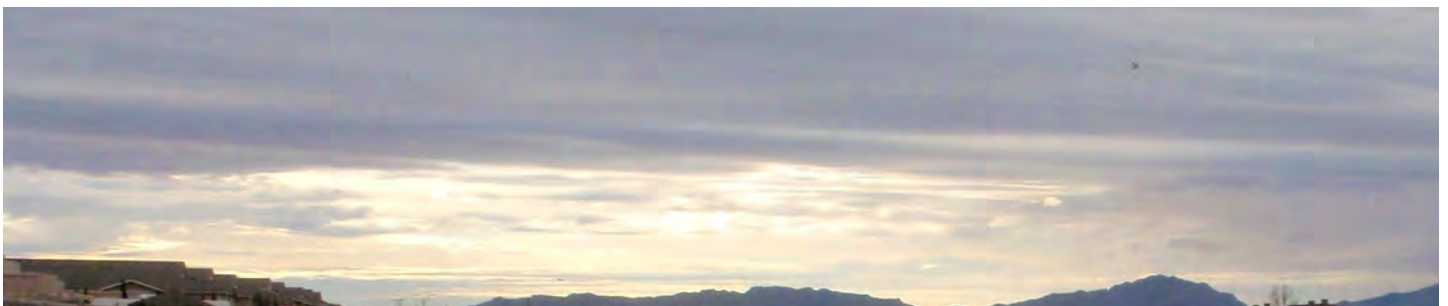
POETRY OF PLACE REVEALED

The impression of the topography of the site is that it is flat. But in actuality, there are constant slight variations of the land that are very apparent when on foot, as many people will be when using aspects of the park. For example, when you find the several small knolls currently within the park land, and climb up on top of them, you immediately are given wonderful, distant views outside the park. Looking towards the horizon lines there are mountains in most directions. Also wonderful are the expansive views of the sky which are dramatic and ever-changing. These views give you a sense of open space within and beyond the surrounding dense neighborhood housing.

These kinds of experiences, currently available on the undeveloped parkland, will remain even as the park amenities are developed and demonstrate one of the valuable benefits of parks - respite from density.

Looking forward, all of the public art outlined in this plan will accentuate these experiences even further in delightful and unexpected ways - enhancing even further everyone's experiences of the park time over time. The intention is for the artwork to invite exploration that will reveal the park's many physical dimensions. Thereby opening many doors that will lead to a wealth of responses and experiences.

The numerous active and passive uses planned for the new park will be overlaid on this land and its context in phases over a number of years. As a result, the park will have changing pattern of uses that will shift in type and focus as it unfolds. This scenario will create an evolving history of use and memory for the community as they come and explore the place during the park's several design and construction phases.



CULTURE & PARKS

Each park is wonderfully unique – the setting, the activities, the land, the vistas, the design. Yet the addition of art in a park can energize, enliven and enrichen a particular park beyond these attributes. Using art to further expand on a park's particular uniqueness elevates a park's potential to provide even more memorable connections to place and people. Artwork partners with the park to lend more expansive views of people's experience in that park. There is a ripple effect that gives people a stronger connection to the place they live and the people they live with.

Adding a variety of cultural, artful voices encourages a spirit of creativity among visitors as they engage with imaginative, unexpected additions to a park's environment. This engagement enhances the potential for remembering each visit by changing how people are engaged physically, mentally, and emotionally from

moment to moment while in the park. The journey through each experience created by artworks at that park not only becomes one for every individual, but becomes as well as a journey for the collective community over time.

The best contribution that any artwork interventions in the park makes is to generate unexpected experiences that pair with the more typical park experiences such as the weather, natural light shifts, time of day, planned and unplanned activities, time spent alone or with friends and family, unpredicted conditions, or even friendly meetings that change someone's planned uses of the park.

Artwork within the park contributes to the aesthetics, the comfort, the interest, and the knowing of place.



ART PROGRAM GOALS ~ Overview

- This Art Plan's primary goal is to outline a set of public artwork projects that are genuinely integrated into the natural environment and physical conditions of the land of Eastside Regional Park, as well as in relationship to the specific uses of the park.
- A range of artwork types will be planned to take place during the phasing of the park, so that the community is able to take advantage of the entire park even as it unfolds.
- Artworks will infuse the entire park, thus enhancing the whole of the place by being thoughtfully located throughout the park. Through this careful location of artworks, people will be drawn to areas of the park they might not have thought to go.
- Artworks will become iconic and integral to the community's understanding and sense of this park, as well as how they experience it - whether regular or one-time park visitors.
- Artworks will interact with and reveal the notable qualities of the land, daily shifting natural elements, planned park uses and design, and especially the particular meaning and purpose that parks play in people's lives.
- Artworks would explore the basic natural elements such as rainwater, sunlight and shadows, seasons, time of day, wind, etc. -- revealing these fundamental elements to people in imaginative ways as integrated aspects of every artwork. This approach would then become a signature of the artworks at this park.



- Artworks will have diverse concepts and cultural references, and be of a variety of scales, materials, and how they engage the natural elements.
- Artworks will be exciting and meaningful for all ages by paying deliberate attention to diversity of ages.
- If possible, involving community youth and/or families in one or more projects (whether through generating ideas through brainstorming with artists or some more specific types of involvement) would be very beneficial to excitement and long-term stewardship.
- Artwork projects will be timed closely with the phases of construction, taking advantage of earthmoving, construction, etc. whenever possible.



ART PROGRAM GOALS ~ Details

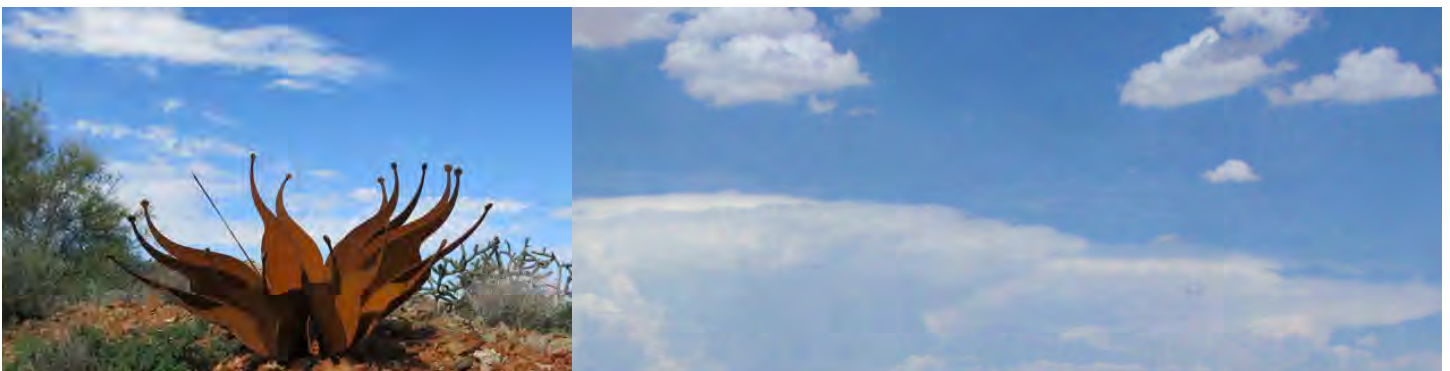
From the point of acceptance of the park master plan and moving into the first design phase of the park's development, the community will begin to truly understand the reality of the site becoming a park. The process of artists developing artworks during this phase will generate excitement about the new park, particularly through any community engagement.

Permanent artworks will engage the character of different areas within the park as they evolve to their completed form through the design/construction phasing. Artists should consider how their artwork is viewed from many vantage points, and how people can be drawn to their site within the park through their artwork.

At the same time, it is important that every artwork be developed with the fundamental idea that it is becoming part of the whole "*family*" of artworks in the park.

The primary areas for locating art are:

- The multi-tiered trail system running throughout the park
- The two-part plaza connecting the Community Center/Natatorium to activities and amphitheater across the park access road
- The open natural areas and the north/south landscape environment between the park road and the sport field parking lots
- The larger environments surrounding each roundabout



ART PROGRAM GOALS ~

Specific Recommendations

Explore Natural Elements

Since parks are such specific outdoor experiences, it is stimulating to have artworks explore a range of natural elements that can be creatively focused on and made visible for park users including:

- Seasons
- Wind
- Sunlight and shadow
- Time of day
- Rainwater

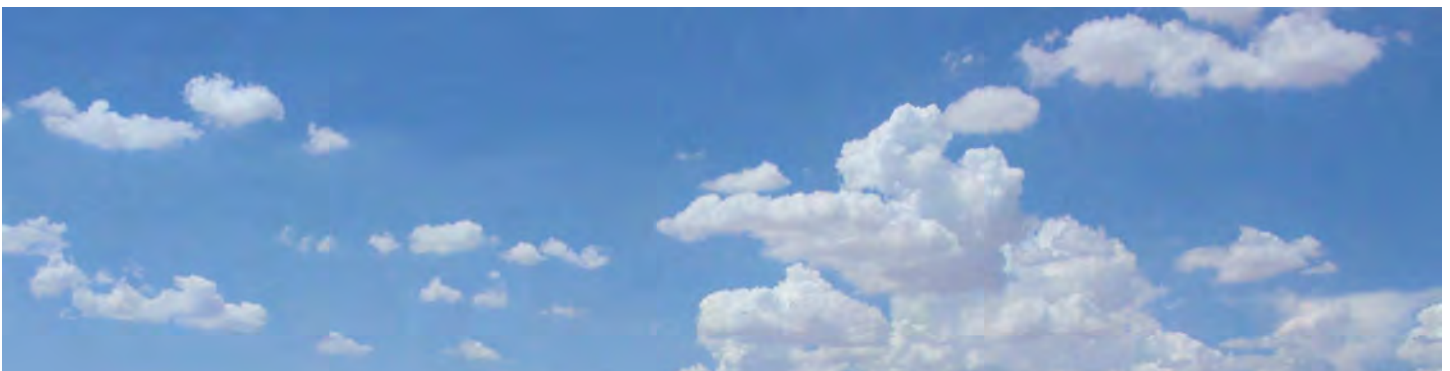
Revealing these fundamental elements to people in imaginative ways should be integrated aspects of every artwork concept.

This approach to the artworks then becomes a signature of this park - giving the neighborhood a sense of identity and pride of place.

Incorporate Subtle Lighting

Exploring the judicious use of lighting in one or two artworks through the use of LED lighting fixtures powered by solar systems would create a subtle, night time presence in the park.

This creative use of lighting could be very memorable if done well, and would add to the overall special character of the park.





Creatively Engage Community

Finding ways to include direct engagement of community members in a couple of the art projects will build a direct relationship between community and the park that endures over times and generations. This sense of relationship has a direct impact on important qualities of stewardship and ownership.

In turn, engagement also strengthens understanding the character, culture, and history of the community while at the same time introducing the character and culture of the park to the same community. The exchange is a flow back and forth.

This engagement is not limited to hands-on creation of artwork parts, but can be accomplished through activities such as, but not limited to:

- Creative park walks led by artists
- Art scavenger hunts that reveal aspects of the park site
- Collecting descriptive stories/poems or photographs generated by use of the park
- Postings on social media platforms
- Creative community brainstorming events that generate ideas that become incorporated into an artwork concept

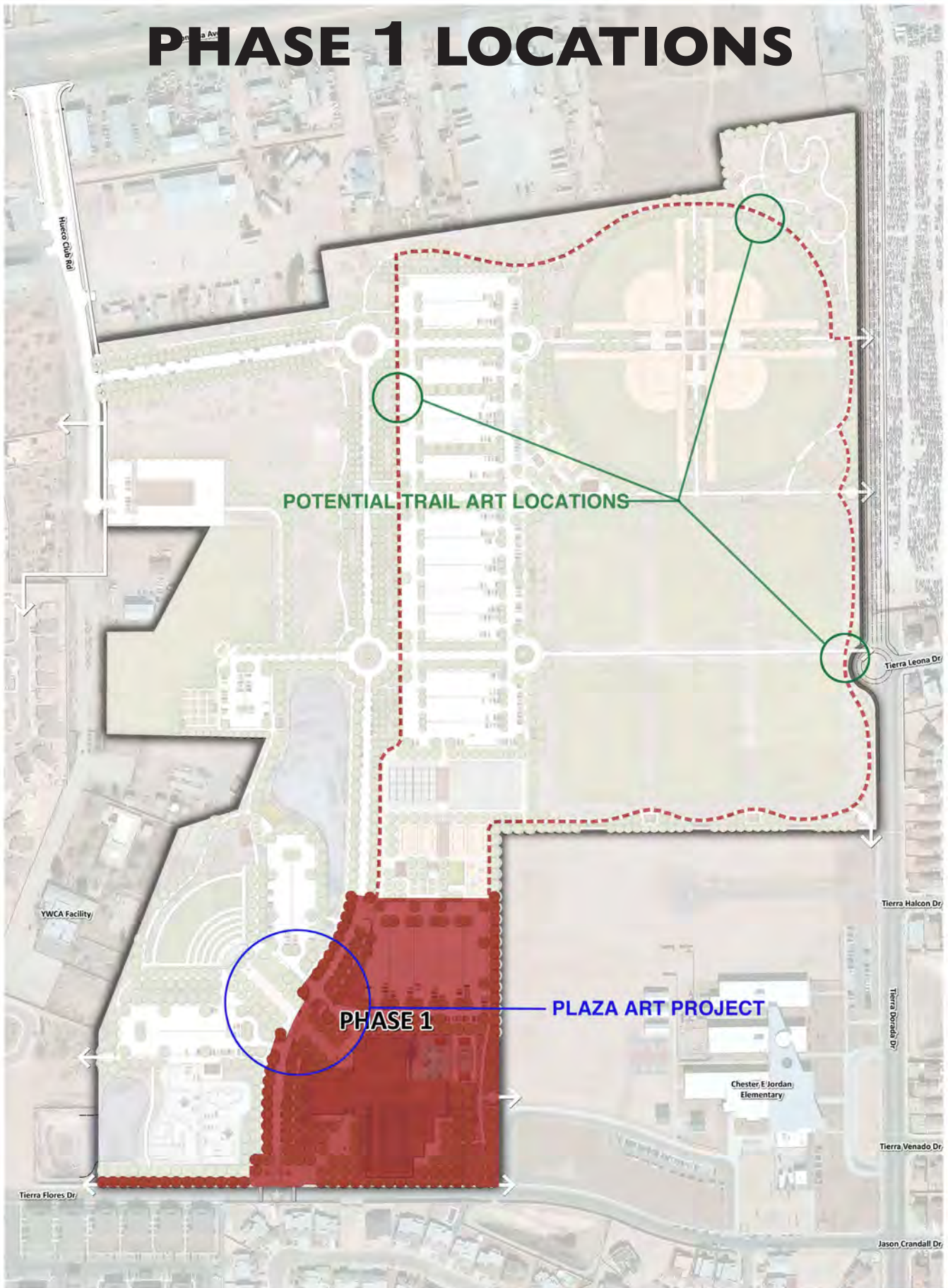
ARTWORK LOCATIONS

The artwork locations are intended to create an integrated nested system. It is important to consider how to spread the limited artwork projects throughout the park so that they directly impact the experiences of the park users who are on foot or bike, as well as those moving through the park in cars, and while using the active zones.

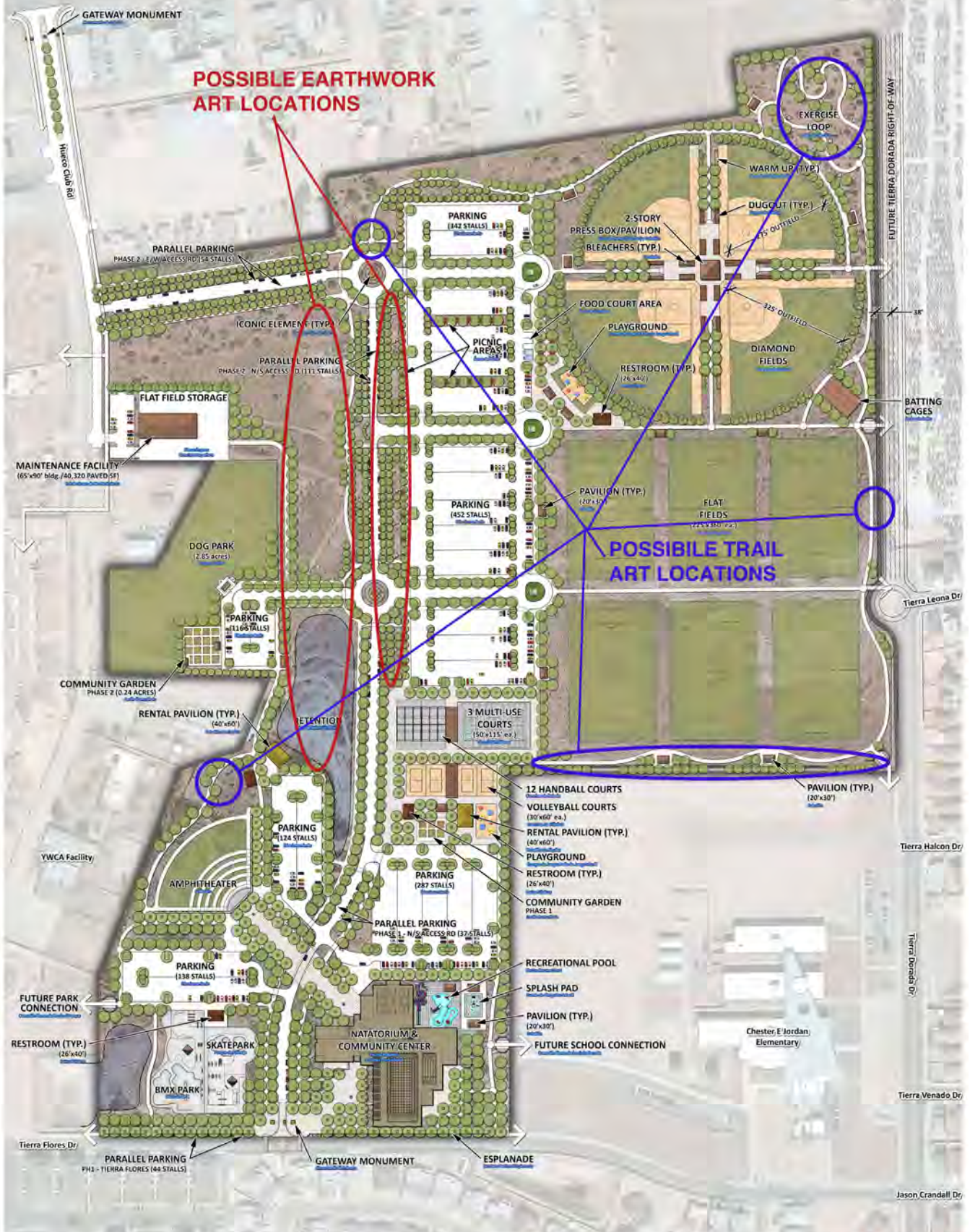
The goal is to have the artwork be visually available from both a distance, as well as directly from close proximity.

The Art Master Plan is a system built through purposefully networking all the artwork components. By doing so, the art plan generates an overall sense of the artwork infusing the park's sense character and experience. And ultimately, the park's specialness for the community.

PHASE 1 LOCATIONS



LATER PHASE LOCATIONS



Two-Part Plaza: Between the Community Center and Amphitheater

This is the only art location site that is in direct relation to the primary architectural component of the park. The full plaza influences many uses at the south end of the park. It will ultimately span the park road and thus have the opportunity to influence those driving in the park, as well as those walking from the parking lots into the community center, across the road to the amphitheater and skate/BMX park area, or parking and walking into the amphitheater.

It is desirable to think of the plaza as an overall “place” where the artist can create an immersive environment so to speak. Not simply placing a “sculpture in the plaza”. The plaza is a place that sets the tone for the park user coming and going to the various activities in that area of the park.

The plaza as a place should be energetic, fun, and always interesting and engaging. A place that park users look forward to being in and seeing what is happening as they move across it to their activities. At the same time it should function as a place that is totally enjoyable when used to sit in either alone or as a gathering place to be with others.

Because the plaza is in two distinct parts on either side of the road, there is the potential to create an interesting conceptual shift across the plaza area. For example, perhaps there is a totally different creative concept and environment from one side to the other, or a flowing, gradual shift, or components that are shared but appear to be different when in a diverse surrounding environment.

This location offers the opportunity to work with the designers to collaborate during design to potentially affect the plaza design and landscaping, and then creatively integrate further artistic concepts through components that expand and extend the sense of place.

By collaborating there is the potential for the artist to specifically influence in part or as a whole, some aspects of the plaza, such as the ground plane hardscape, seating arrangements, landscaping, lighting, etc.

Project budget:

\$205,000 + construction credits

Construction credits would be negotiated depending on what aspects of the plaza an artist contributes to through their creative consideration. Ideally the artist would collaborate with the design team and concepts reached jointly would be incorporated directly into the construction documents. The art budget would pay for additional components that are the direct responsibility of the artist to fabricate and install. This approach would more likely allow the entire plaza environment to be treated holistically.

Trail System ~ Location, Scale & Interaction with Natural Elements

The trail system is complex and threads through the entire park in many interesting ways. There is a main "loop" which can be used by those who are coming to the park expressly to use the trails for walking, jogging, etc. This way of using the trails connects people to the largest sense of the 92-acre park. But there are also many alternative trail spurs connecting to all the other activities within the park. These spurs intersect the loop and encourage unexpected, "in the moment", use of the trail system for a walk or break from these other activities. The spurs also provide variety to those just using the trails system.

The trail system is the primary location for artwork within the park because it encompasses the entire park. Artworks located along the trail system will function at close and distant range. Trail artwork would enhance the direct experience of those using the trails as they encounter different artworks along the way. At the same time the trail system provides the opportunity to place particular artworks throughout the park that are scaled to be seen from a distance, populating the park with artworks that give a very distinct character to the park.

These provide a secondary experience to trail users, but work to give all those using the park for any activity an experience of art in the park. These trail projects can be located episodically along the trail in key locations. One project could consider the larger area around one roundabout environment as it is connected to the trail system at that particular location. The consideration for this artwork is that some aspect of it is viewable by cars navigating the roundabout, while at the same time fulfilling the primary conceptual task for the art project to be part of the trail experience.

The artworks along the trail would provide changing experiences based on interaction with natural elements. For example an aspect of an artwork could work with shadow play and how it would be very different if encountered on at various times of day in different seasons, or shifting weather conditions of wind and rain. Exploring the natural phenomena allows the artworks to resonate in a way that mirrors the actual physical experience of the park users.



Criteria for all projects commissioned during Phase I:

- It is important for any trail projects realized during Phase I that they are conceived so they can be incorporated into the final design and construction of the trails.
This means that they must be able to be re-installed and/or allow construction to be completed, leaving the artwork in place when the final trail surface and landscaping is built in subsequent phasing.
- Scale of projects would range so both emerging and established artists were commissioned.

Criteria for all phases of projects

- Projects can be described so they could potentially involve both 2-D and 3-D artists.

Project budget ranges:

- 2 @ \$ 25,000 (for emerging artists)
- 2 @ \$ 60,000
- 2 @ \$150,000



Environmental Earthwork Project

There will be earthmoving during the construction of the park project. This is an opportunity for there to be an earthwork created that uses the construction process to realize part of the artwork. There are several goals for this artwork.

First would be to provide a unique physical experience that gives people a vantage point intentionally framed by an artistic environment of the overall site, the horizon mountain vistas, and sky viewing.

Second would be to have a unique destination in the park that is an artwork about the land and exclusive to this particular park and its setting and context. This would become a touchstone destination place to visit as a regular or single time user.

Third is would be to produce a distinctly, closer relationship to the land and plants and natural materials that are indigenous to El Paso. This park is especially conducive to this idea as a significant part of the park-land is purposely being left as open, passive use, natural space accessible by the trail system.

This project could also be related to the retention pond if desirable. But it should be tied into the trail system so it is easily accessed. Conceptually it could be complete in one location or broken up into linked components that remains strongly legible as a whole.

Project budget:

\$225,000 + construction credits

To accomplish this signature artwork it is important to take advantage of work undertaken during construction for the raw material of earth, and movement of earth. There is also a strong potential to work in tandem with the landscape architect designing the project. The artist could easily work within the greater landscape design and plant material selection, finding creative opportunities for the earthwork that could partially be put directly into the construction documents.

Materials that should be considered are earth held by stonework or gabion structure and rammed earth.