Thelma Boltin Trailhead & Sweetwater Greenway Loop Trail Alignment Project

September 9, 2026 | Stakeholder Meeting: Tree Advisory Board

City of Gainesville

NV5

Agenda

1. Project Overview
2. Public Engagement
3. Preliminary Plans + Feedback
4. Next Steps

Overview

Project Introduction

The City Commission directed staff "***to reimagine the site as a trailhead*** *along the Sweetwater Trail Loop system, connecting Depot Park, the Matheson History Museum, Tom Petty Park, and the 6th Street Trail.*"

https://dos.fl.gov/cultural/programs/florida-folklife-program/folk-heritage-awards/list-of-past-recipients/thelma-boltin/

This project includes **conceptual design** for three main components:

1. **Reimagine the Thelma Boltin Site**
   $2M Construction Budget

2. **Initial Alignment for Sweetwater Trail Loop System**
   Study will develop a Construction Budget

3. **Stormwater Improvements**
   Study will develop a Construction Budget

Project Introduction

Commission directive has
5 key project objectives:

1. **Honor Thelma Boltin + Folk Art Tradition**
2. **Recognize site's WWII History**
3. **Create usable outdoor community space**
4. **Provide stormwater improvements**
5. **Retain community garden element**

Public Engagement

Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

ACCESS TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INFORMATION

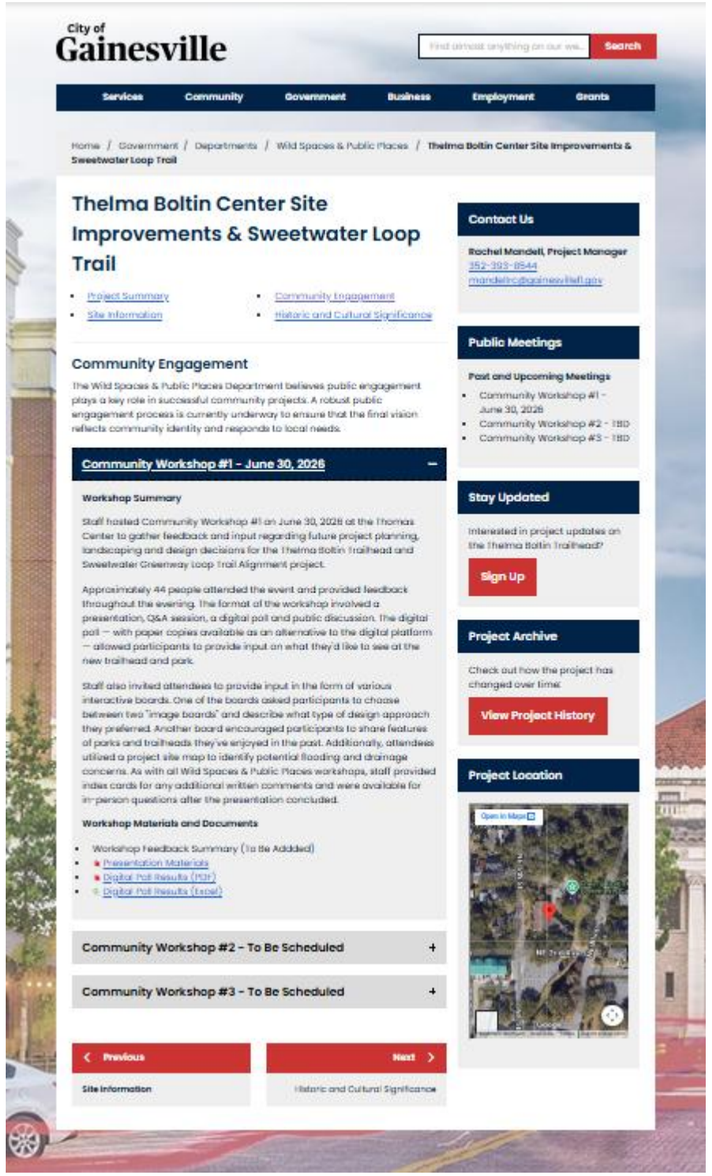
Project Website:
GainesvilleFL.gov/thelmaboltin

Public Engagement information available:

- Past Public Meeting Materials
- Past Public Meeting Feedback Summaries
- Upcoming Public Meeting Dates & Times

Also available:

- Project Site Information & Archives
- “Sign Up” Link to Join Email List



Presentation at Community Workshop #1 on June 30, 2026

Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

1

Identify Community Priorities + Explore Opportunities

- Conducted 4 Stakeholder Meetings
- Held Community Workshop #1

2

Share Draft Designs + Verify Understanding

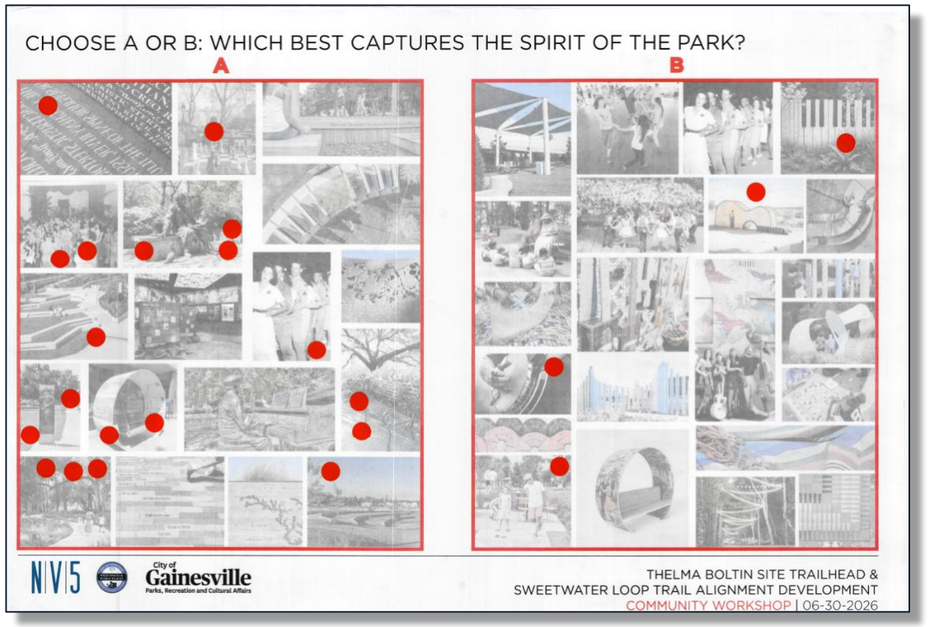
WE ARE HERE!

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Community Workshop #2
- Preliminary City Commission Presentation

3

Refine Plans + Finalize Recommendations

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Community Workshop #3
- Final City Commission Presentation



Menti-Poll Word Cloud & “Spirit of the Park” Feedback Board from Workshop #1

Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

PHASE 1 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

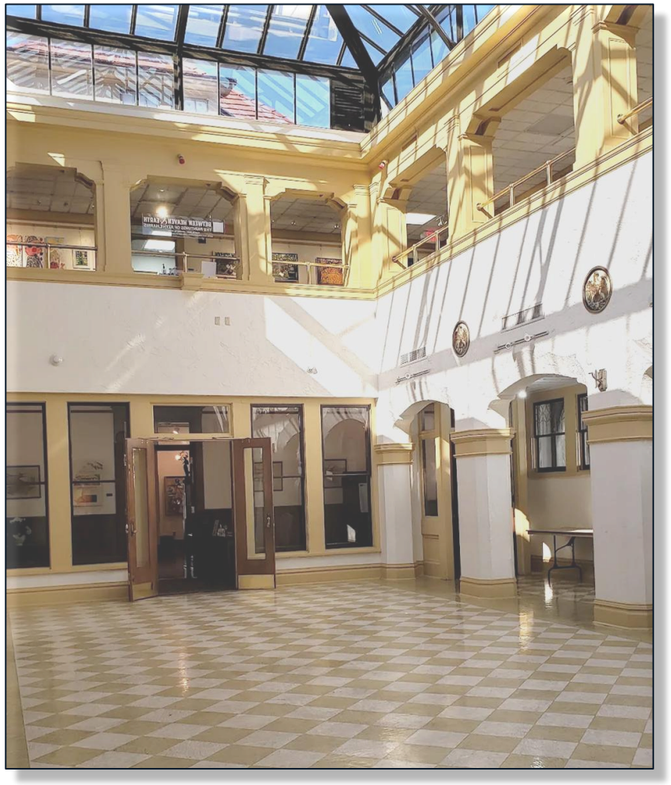
1

Identify Community Priorities + Explore Opportunities

May 2024

<u>Phase 1 Stakeholder Meetings:</u>

1. Gainesville Art in Public Places Trust (APPT)
2. Duckpond Neighborhood Association (DNA)
3. Public Recreation & Parks Board
4. Cultural Affairs Board (CAB)



Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

PHASE 1 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

1

Identify Community Priorities + Explore Opportunities

Stakeholder Themes + Priorities:

Historical + Cultural Context

- Honors History and Cultural Identity
- Integrates Art, Interpretation, and Education

Community Focused

- Creates Community Gathering Space
- Improves Connectivity & Trail Experience
- Balances Parking & Access Needs

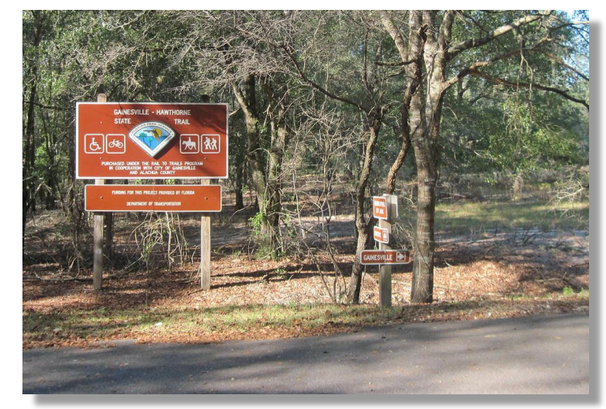
Environmentally Responsible

- Preserves the Natural Character of the Site

Example of Outdoor Sculpture

Example of Outdoor Pavilion

Example of Community Gardens



Example of Trailhead Signage

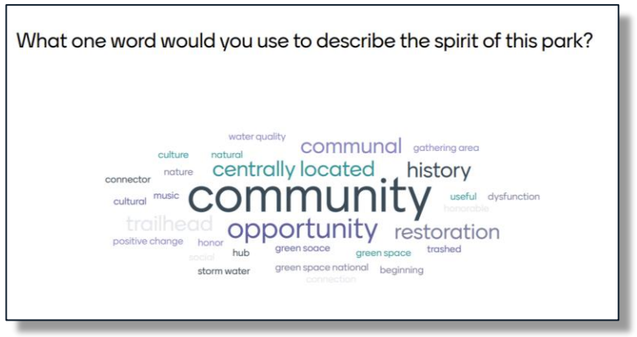
Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

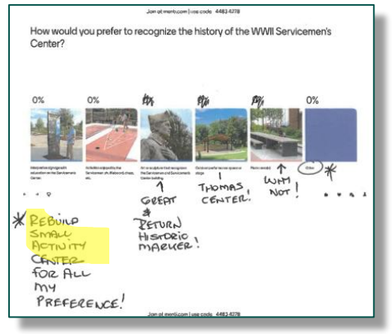
1

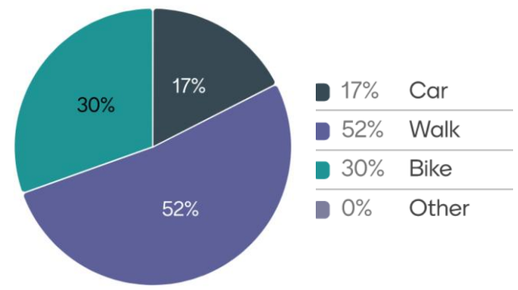
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 FEEDBACK

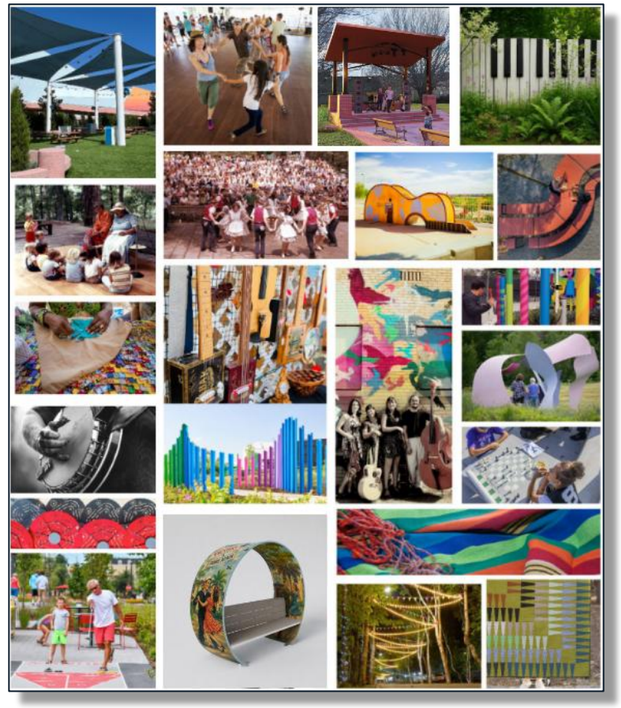
Thomas Center, June 30, 2026

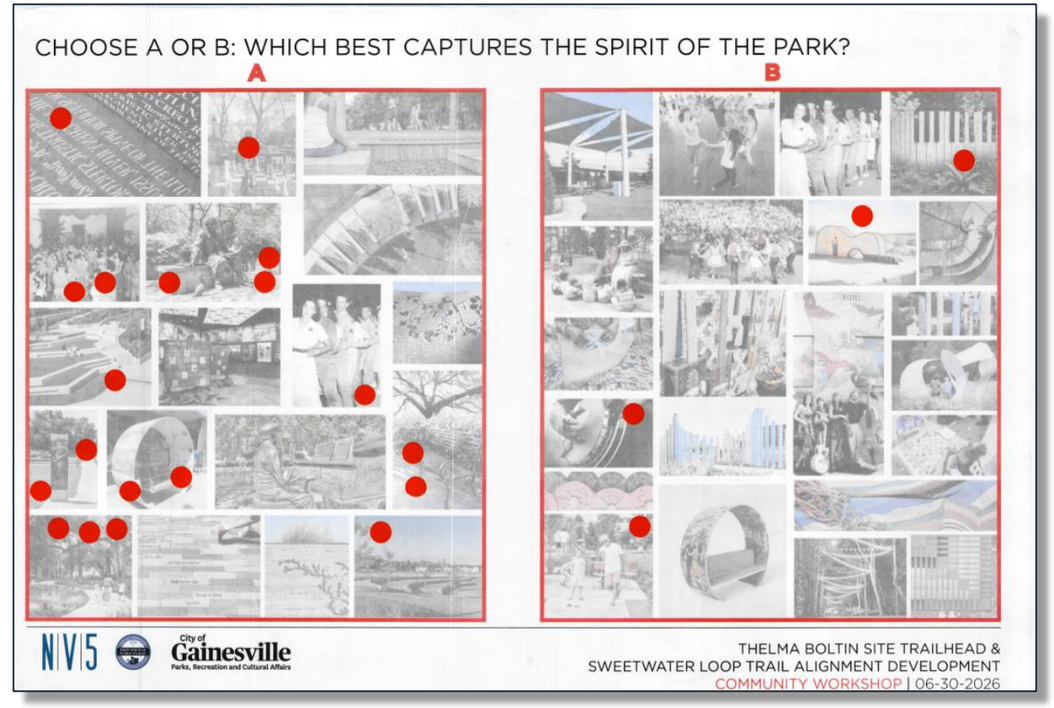
Identify Community Priorities + Explore Opportunities











Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 FEEDBACK

1

Identify Community Priorities + Explore Opportunities

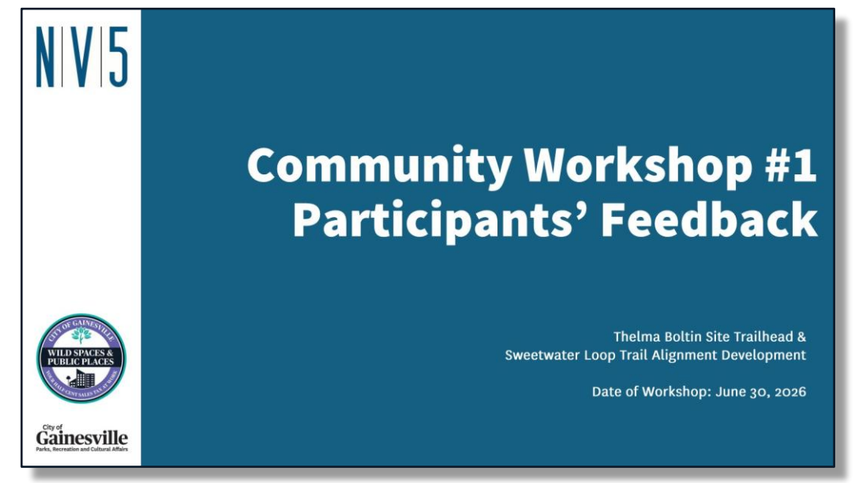
Workshop #1 Format:

- Presentation w/ Q&A
- Menti Poll
- Interactive Feedback Boards
- Index Cards/Written Feedback

Topics/Questions Asked included:

- How do visitors travel to the site?
- What is the “spirit of the park”?
- How best to honor the history of the Thelma Boltin Center and WWII Servicemen’s Center?

Workshop feedback included perspectives from attendees who had previously advocated for the preservation of the Thelma Boltin Center. They expressed disappointment and frustration about the demolition of the building. Replacing the historic marker and replicating previous elements of the site were identified by attendees as potential ways to honor the legacy of the site. These discussions will continue throughout the community engagement process.



Workshop #1 Feedback Summary Document (PDF) is available on the Project Website:
GainesvilleFL.gov/thelmaboltin

Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 FEEDBACK

1

Identify Community Priorities + Explore Opportunities

Workshop Themes + Priorities:

Historical + Cultural Context

- Honors & Interprets History & Cultural Legacy
- Favors Reflective, Context-Sensitive Design

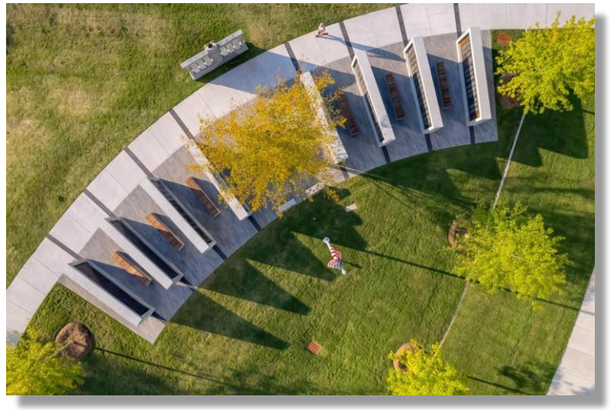
Community Focused

- Creates Community Gathering Space + Supports Occasional Programming
- Provides a Connected & Functional Trailhead Experience
- Balances Access, Safety, and User Amenities (including Community Gardens)

Environmentally Responsible

- Protects & Enhances Natural Features of the Site (Sweetwater Creek, Heritage Trees)

Example of Interpretive Signage Bench



Example of Memorial Park Sculpture

Public Engagement: Community Driven Design

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 FEEDBACK

1

Program Priorities:

- Art/Sculpture and Interpretative Signage/Education to Honor History (Thelma Boltin & WWII Servicemen's Center)
- Usable Outdoor Community Space (Ex. Pavilion/Stage for Occasional Community Activation)
- Stormwater Improvements & Restoration to Sweetwater Creek
- Park Amenities (picnic tables, benches)
- Preserve Heritage Trees/Shade
- Trailhead Amenities + Safe Pedestrian & Bike Access
- Maintain and Enhance Existing Community Gardens

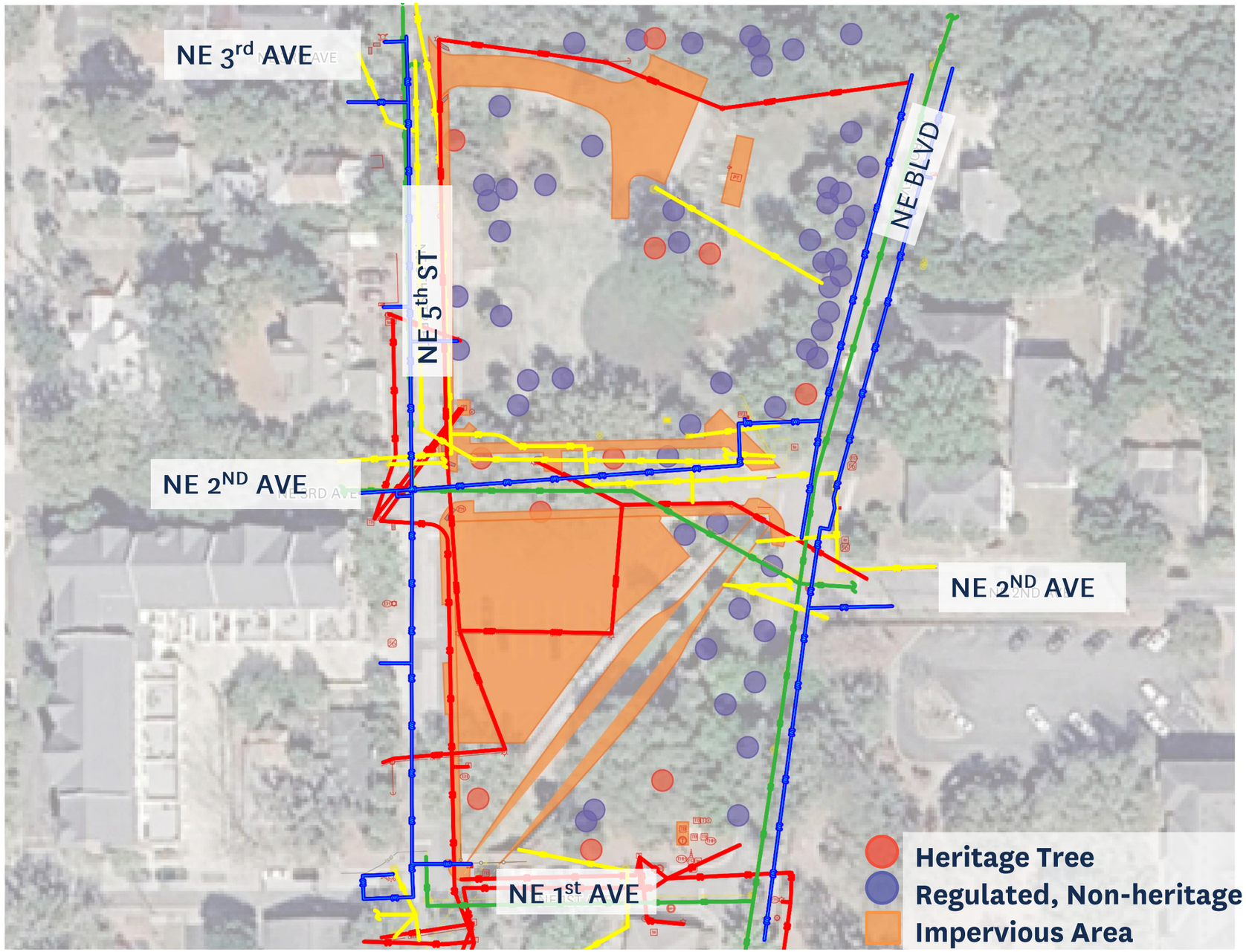
Identify Community Priorities + Explore Opportunities

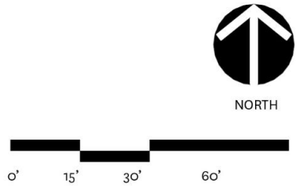
"Spirit of the Park" Image Board A (Preferred) from Workshop #1

Preliminary Plans + Feedback

Site Analysis

Site Analysis: Utilities + Trees





Site Analysis: Regulated + Heritage Trees

Heritage Tree List

1. 38" Live Oak
2. 22" Cedar
3. 49" Live Oak
4. 23" Live Oak
5. 41" Live Oak
6. 48" Live Oak
7. 32" Live Oak
8. 33" Pine
9. 26" Pecan
10. 23" Live Oak
11. 31" Live Oak

Site Analysis: Regulated + Heritage Trees

Design Considerations:

- Preservation of trees, especially high-quality heritage trees is a priority of the project.
- Many trees have volunteered and/or are growing within and around existing infrastructure, including the retaining walls along the creek corridor.
- Many of the existing walls and stormwater infrastructure, especially on the Thelma Boltin Site and along NE Boulevard between NE 4th Avenue and NE 5th Avenue are in poor condition and require replacement. This will require tree impacts with the construction/repair of these structures.
- Thoughtful replanting to restore impacted canopy will also be considered with the future construction/repair of these structures.

Program List

Reimagine site as a trailhead for Sweetwater Greenway Loop Trail

Honor historic and cultural legacy of Thelma Boltin and folk art

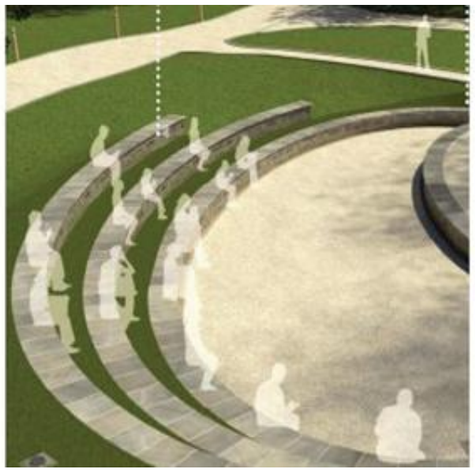
Create usable community outdoor space

Recognize WWII servicemen through art and/ or sculpture

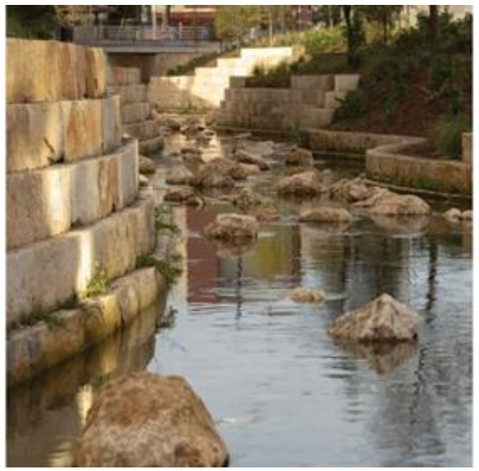
Provide park amenities (bike racks, tables, benches)

Maintain community garden element

Replace historic marker



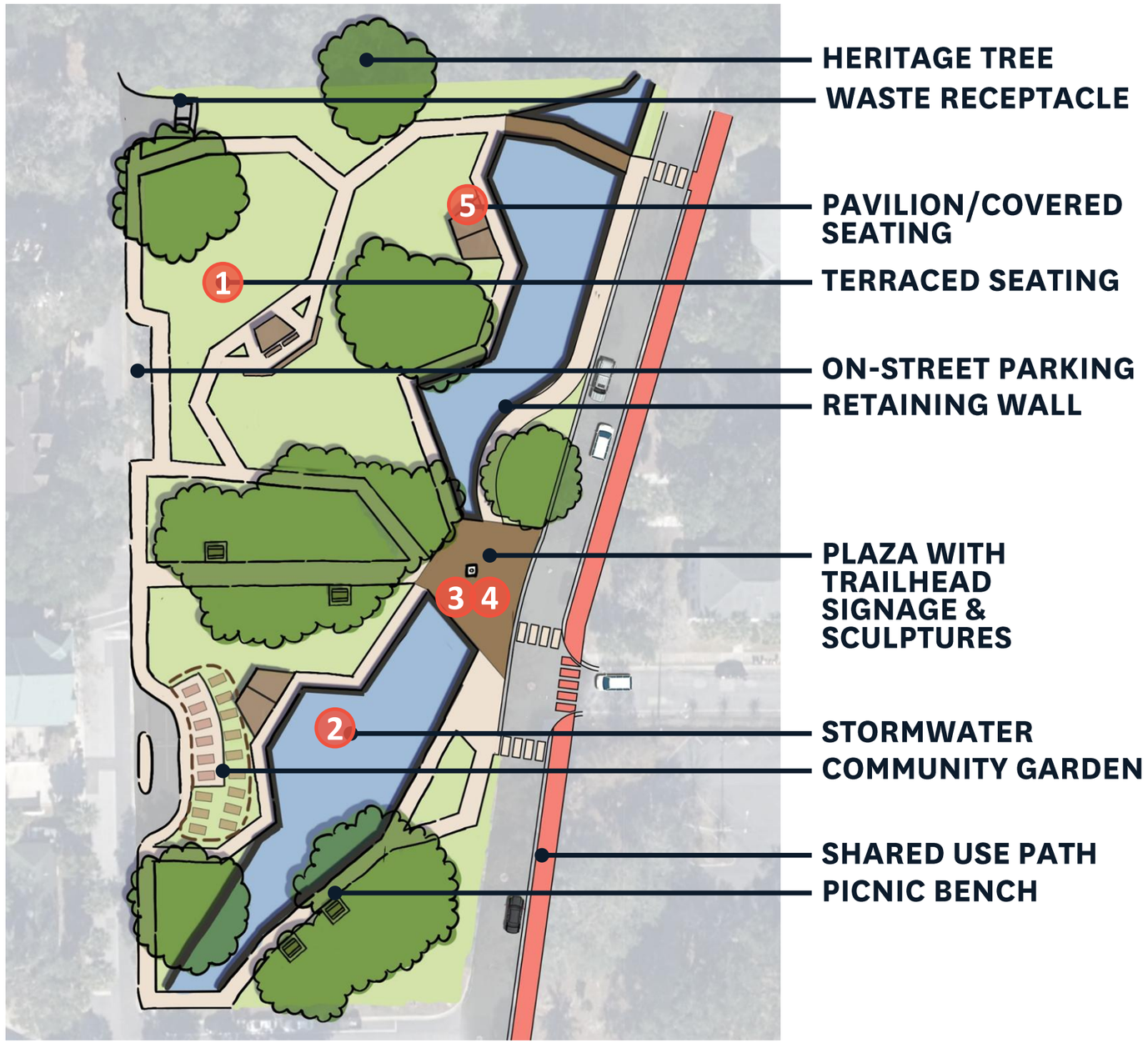
Include pavilion and/ or stage



Propose stormwater improvements

Interpretive signage

Concept Plan 'A'



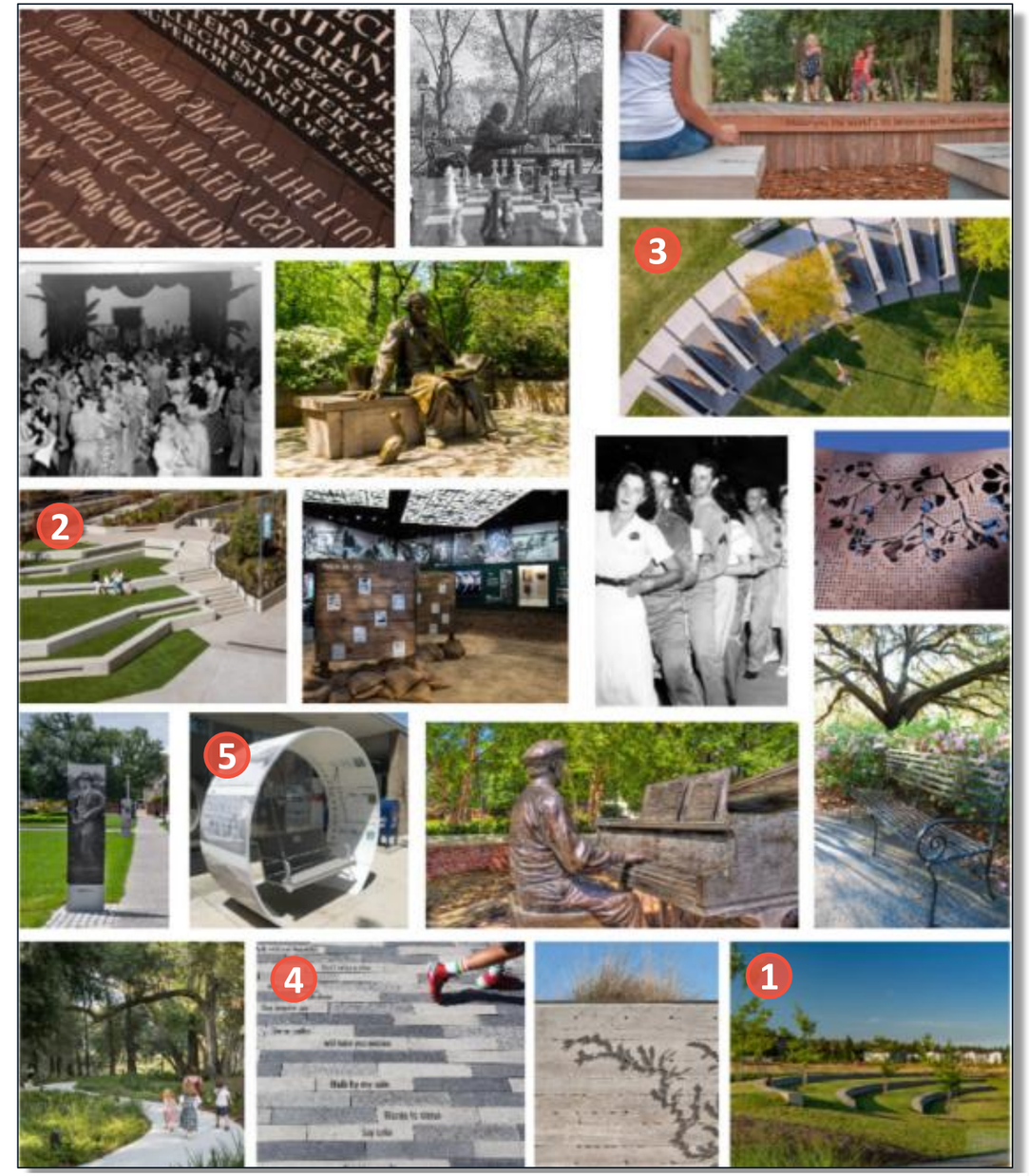
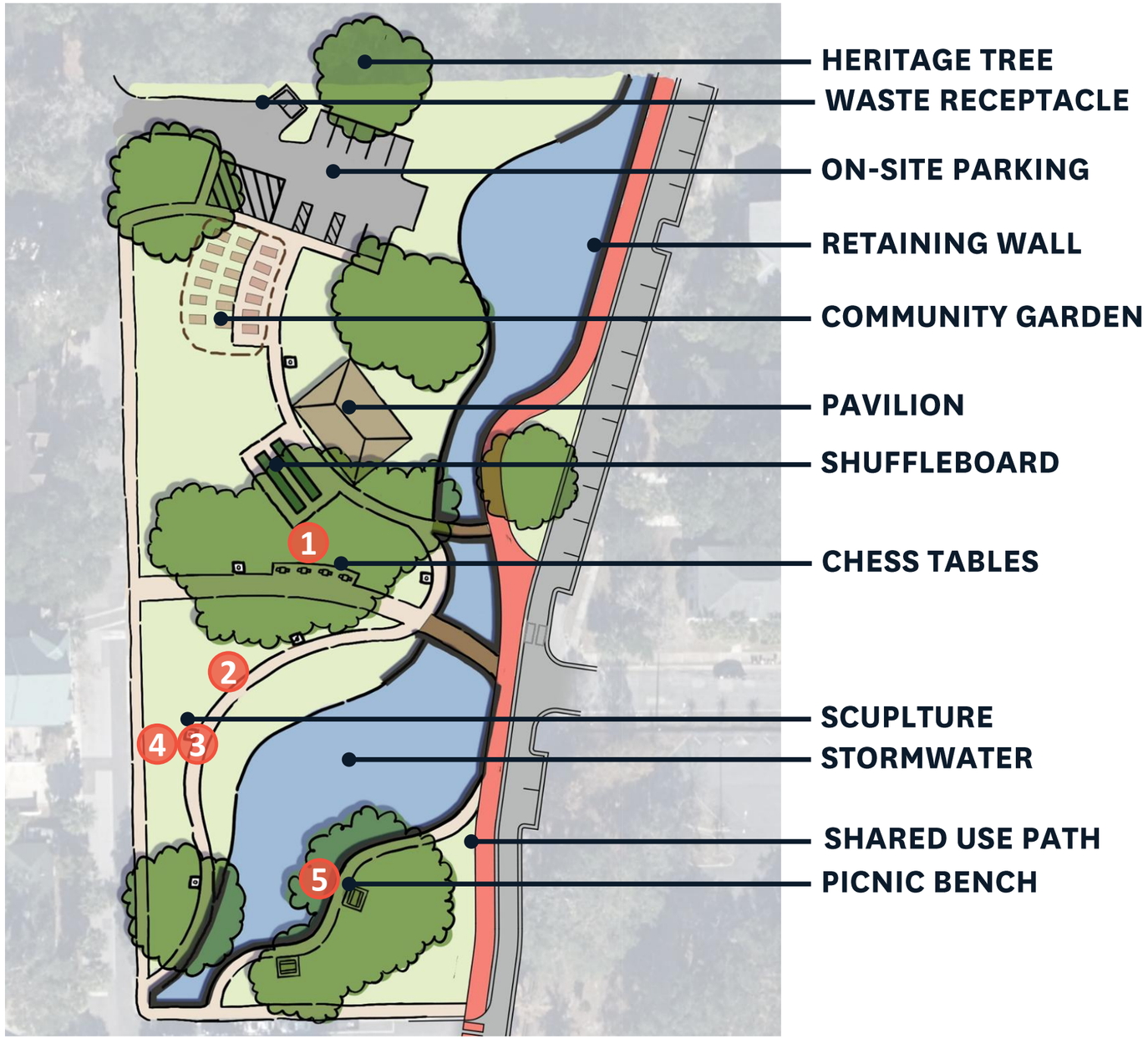


Image Board selected during Public Workshop #1

Concept Plan 'B'



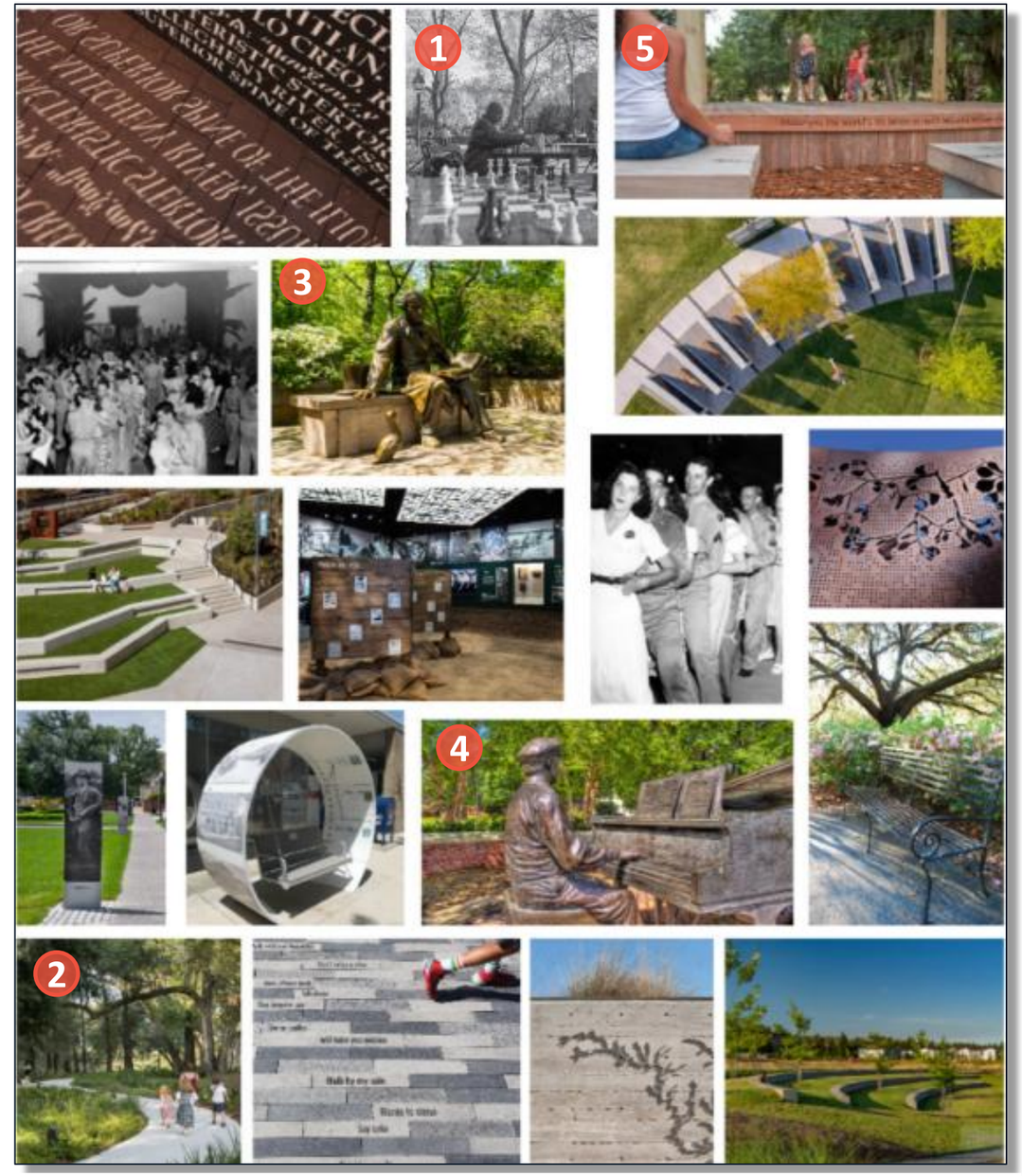
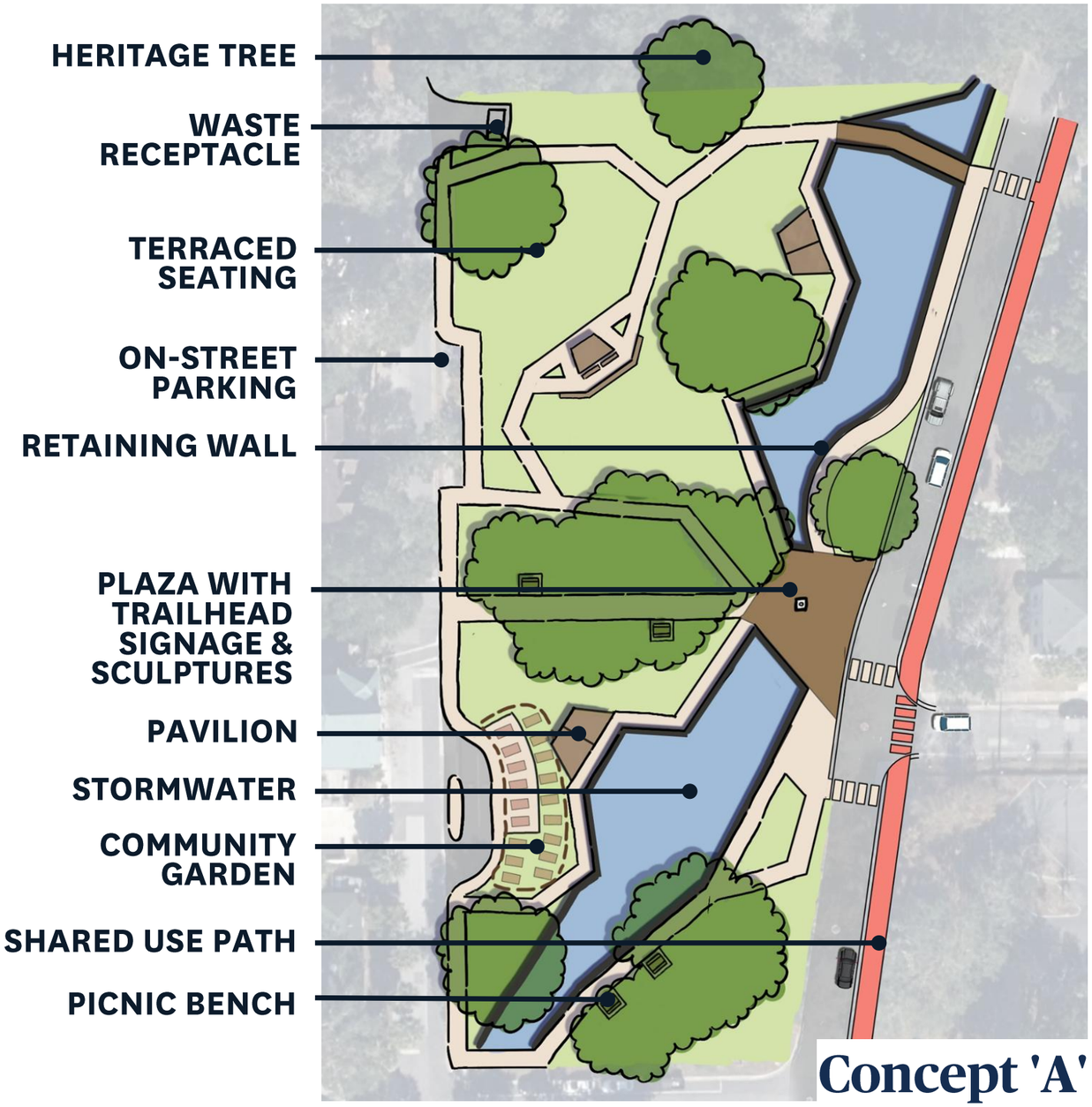
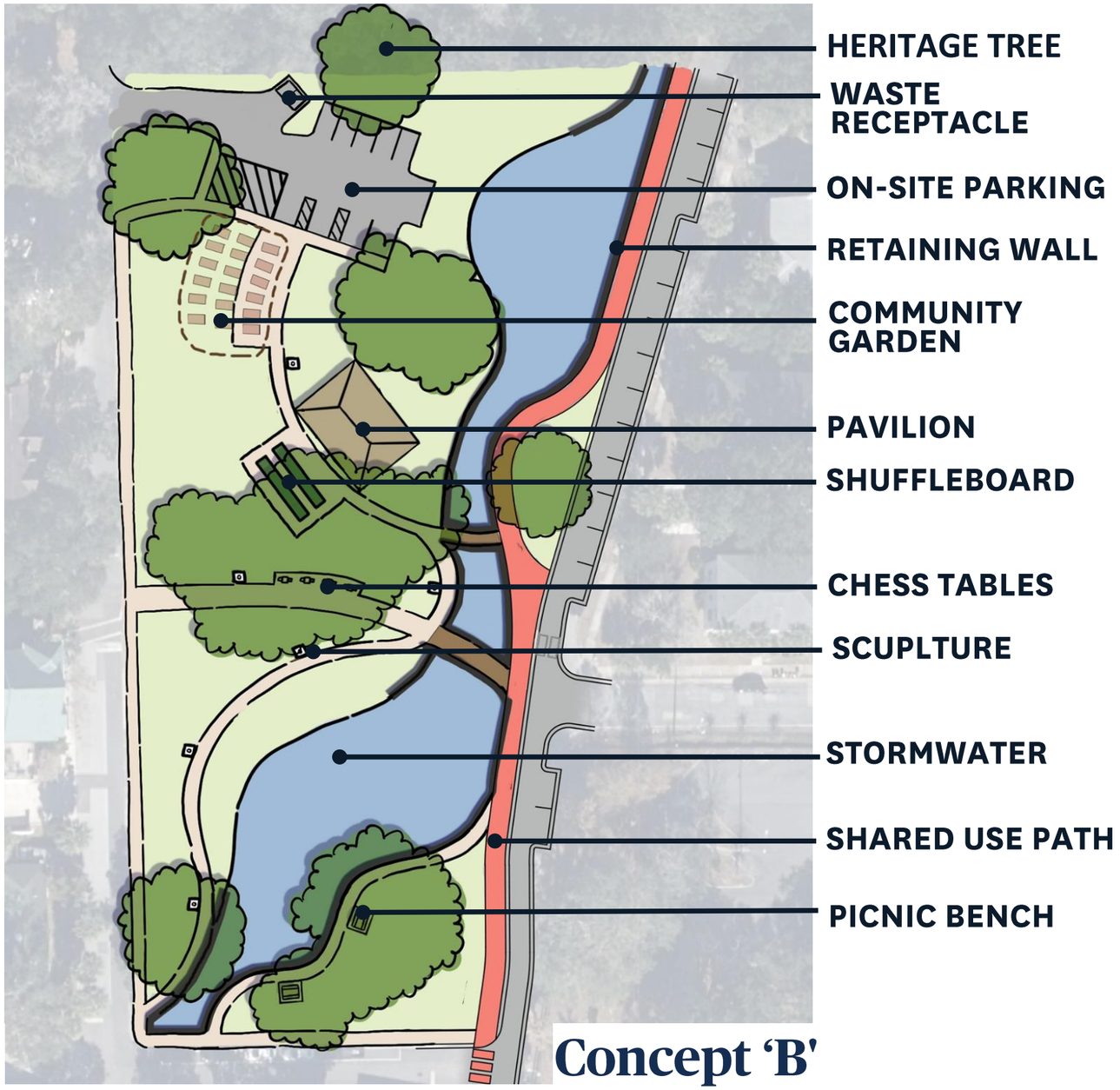


Image Board selected during Public Workshop #1

Concept Comparison



Concept 'A'



Concept 'B'

Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

- A “Shared Use Path” is an approximate 10’ or wider pathway that accommodates multiple modes of transportation.

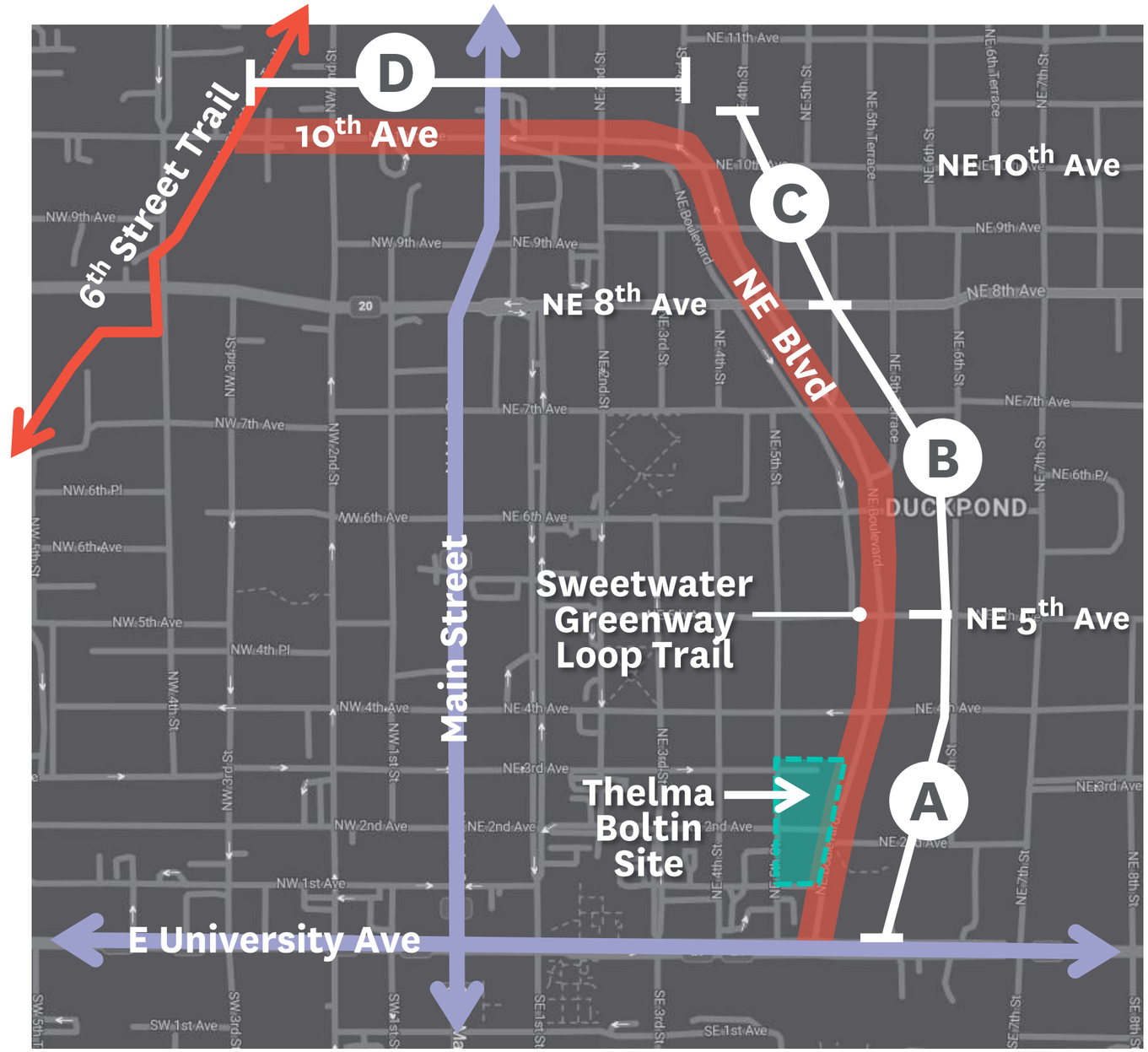
- Anticipated Design Considerations:
  - Available ROW
  - Tree Impacts
  - Creek structures (walls, culverts, etc.)
  - Managing stormwater and improvements to reduce flooding

Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

The proposed Sweetwater Greenway Trail Corridor follows NE Boulevard from University Avenue to 10th Avenue and follows 10th Avenue west to connect with the existing 6th Street Trail.

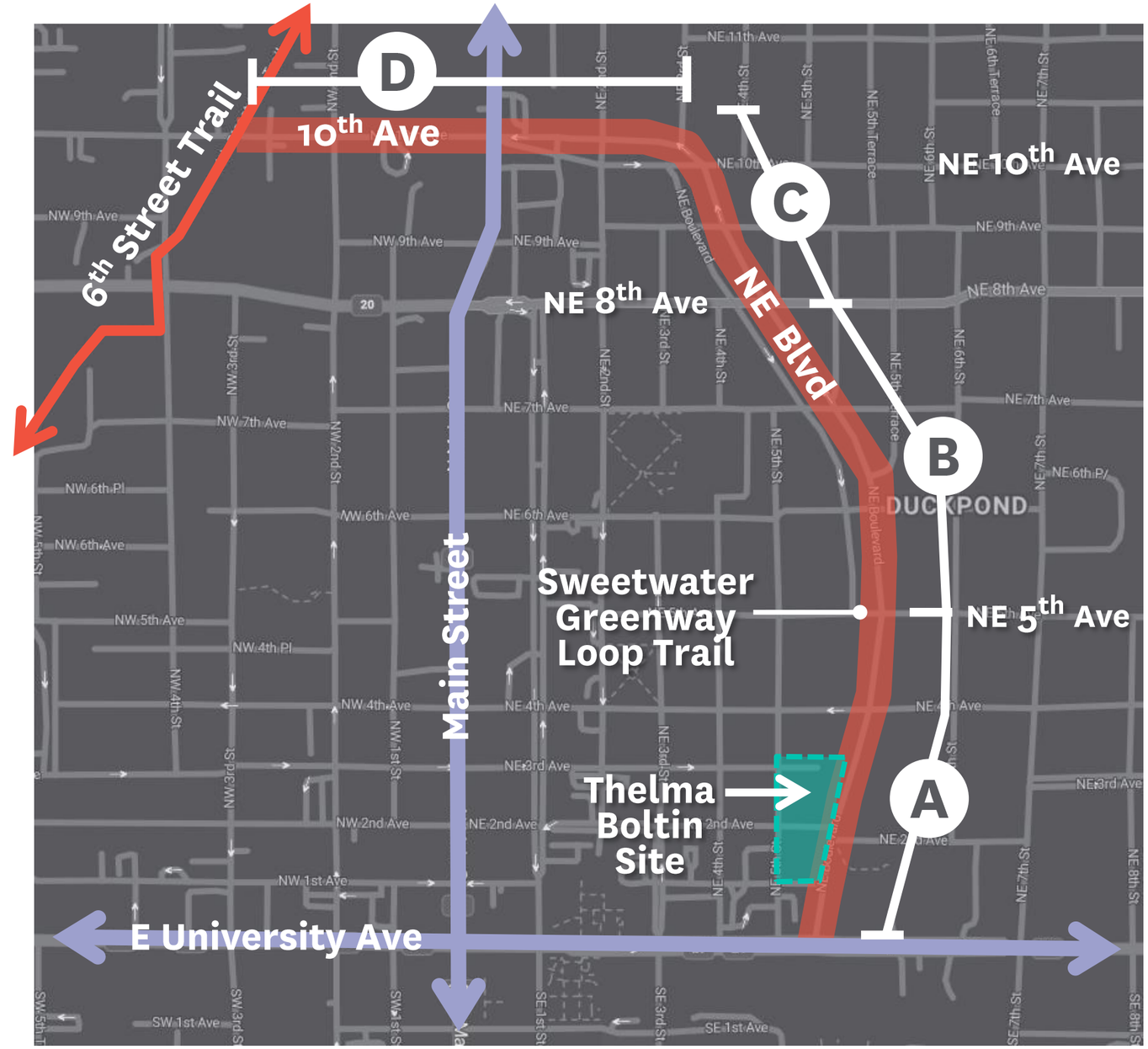
For ease of review, the proposed trail concepts are divided into segments:

- **A** E University Avenue to NE 5th Avenue
- **B** NE 5th Avenue to NE 8th Avenue
- **C** NE 8th Avenue to NW 10th Avenue
- **D** 10th Avenue from NE Boulevard to 6th Street Trail



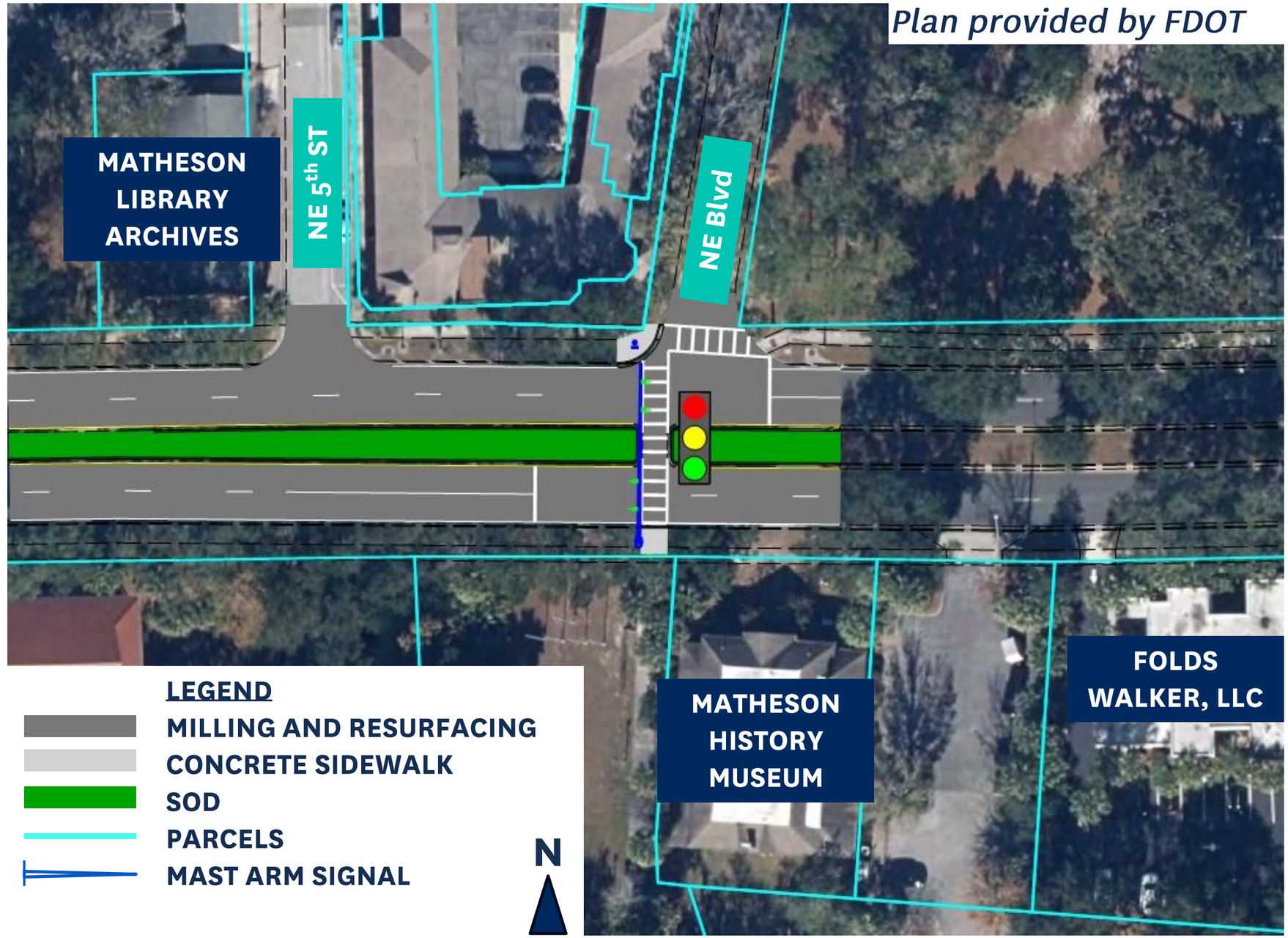
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Ⓐ E University Avenue to NE 5th Avenue



E. University Avenue Crosswalk

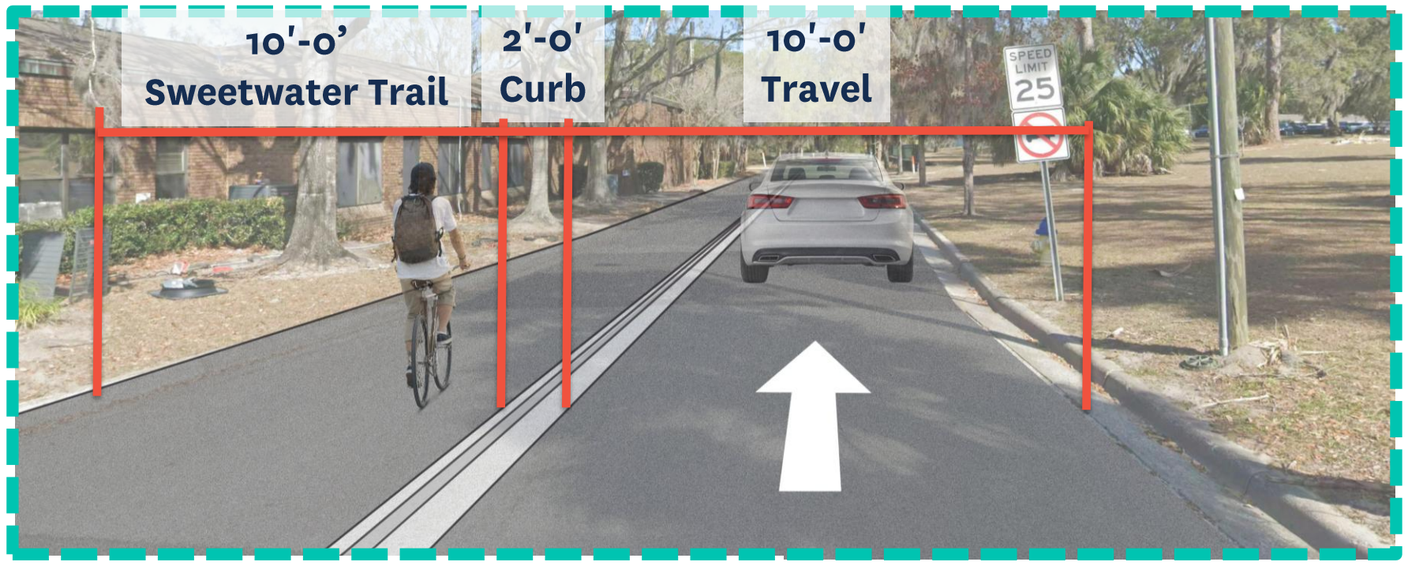
- **FDOT** has a planned future crosswalk across E University Blvd on the west side of NE Blvd



Plan provided by FDOT

Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment A: E University Avenue to NE 5th Ave



Concept 1: West Trail Alignment

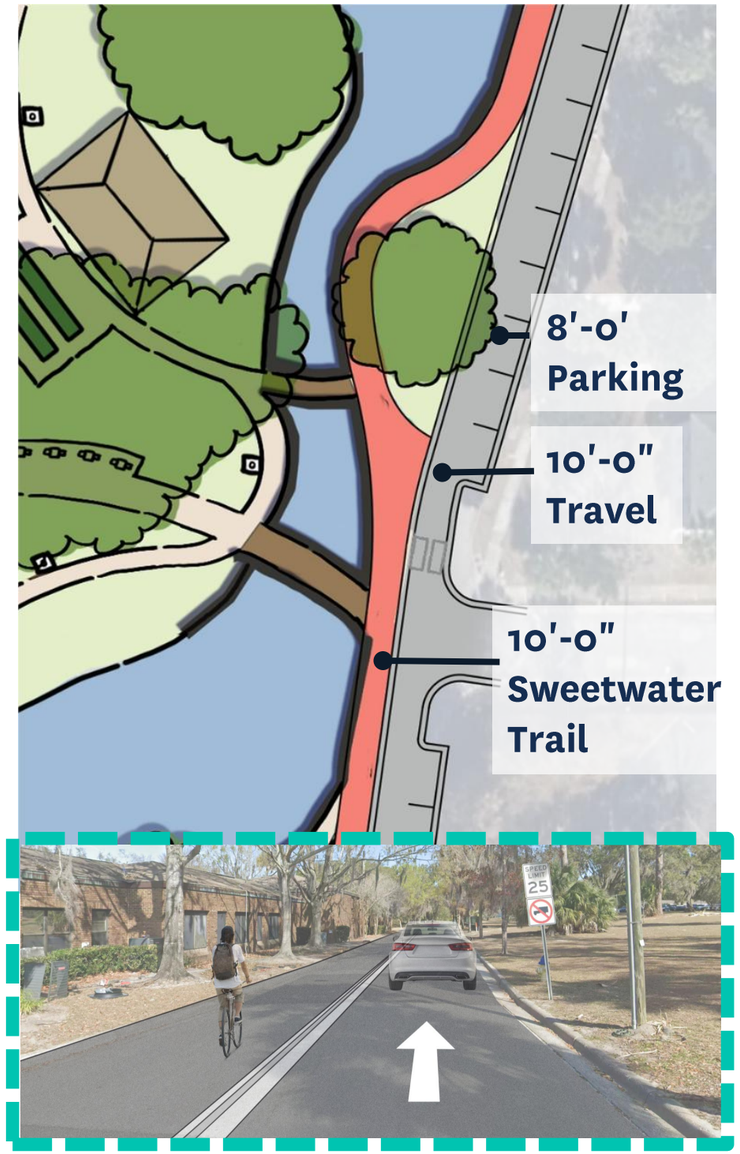
Concept 2: East Trail Alignment

Existing Conditions

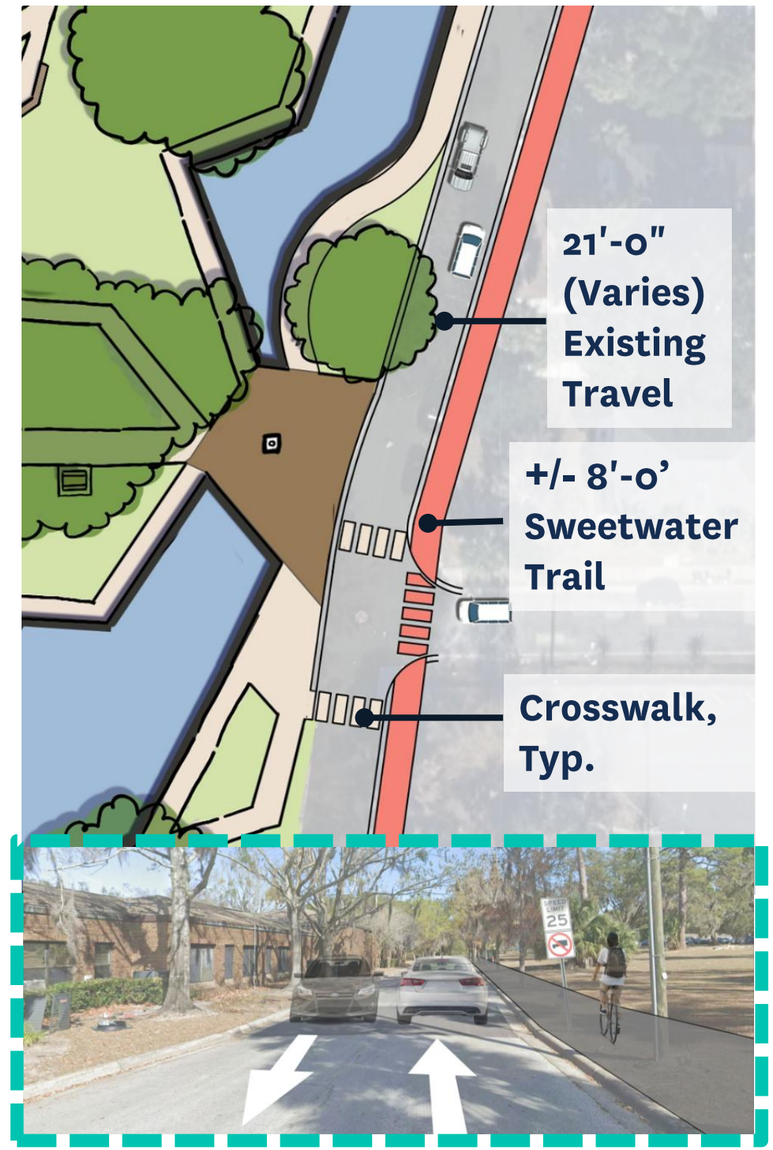
Map Key

Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment A: E University Avenue to NE 5th Ave



Concept 1: West Trail Alignment



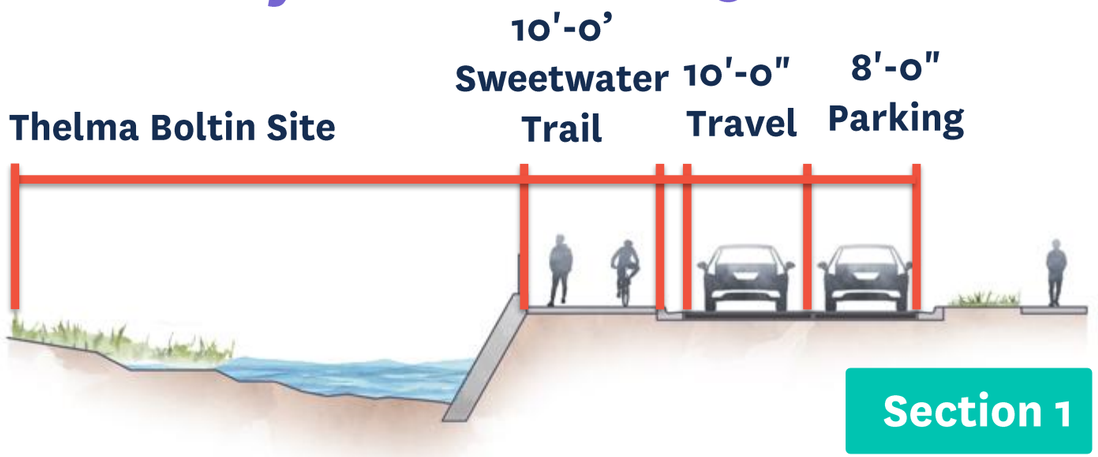
Concept 2: East Trail Alignment

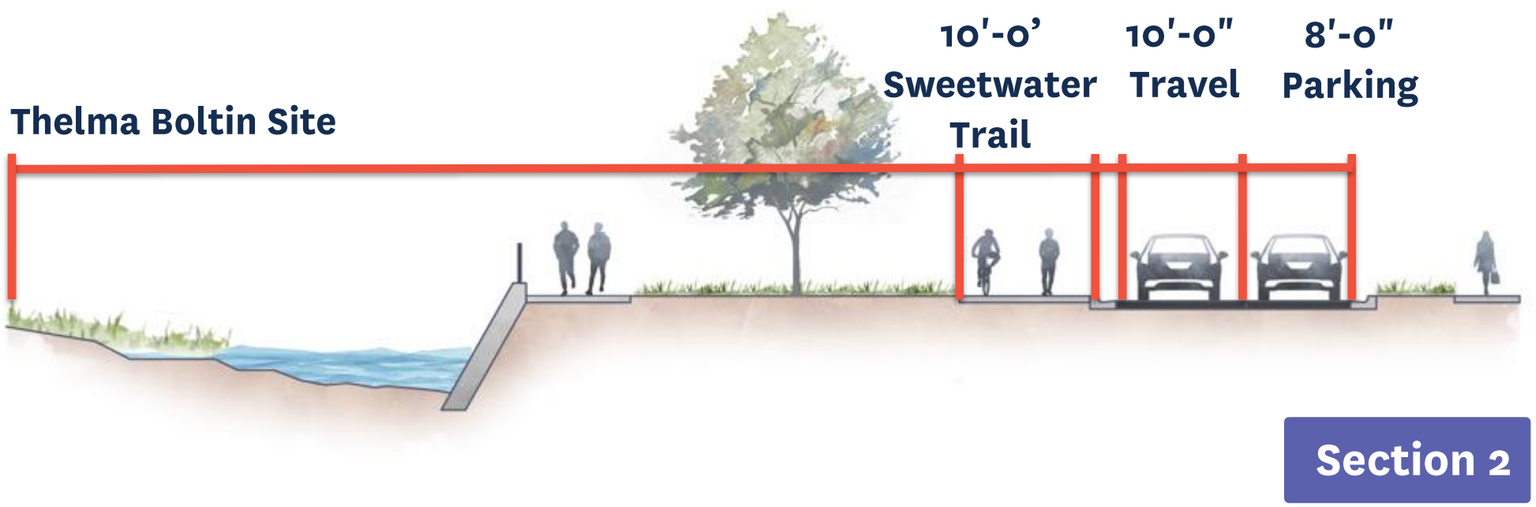
Existing Conditions

Map Key

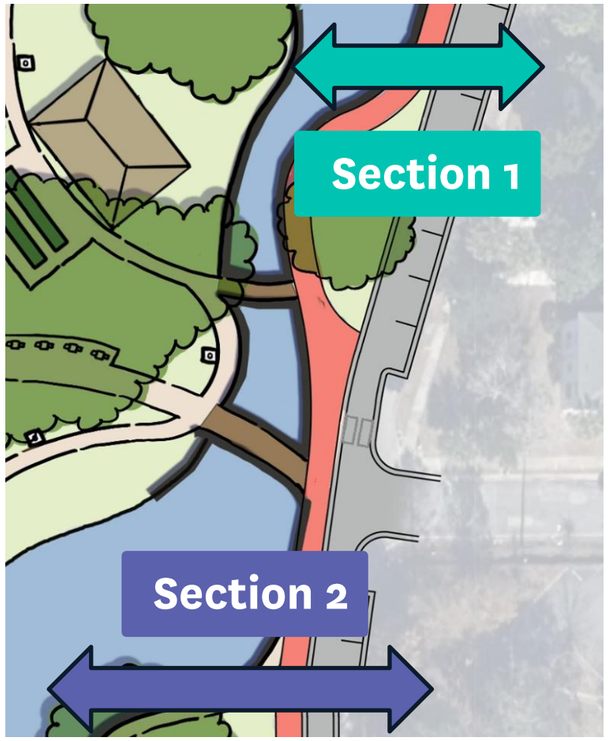
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment A: E University Avenue to NE 5th Ave





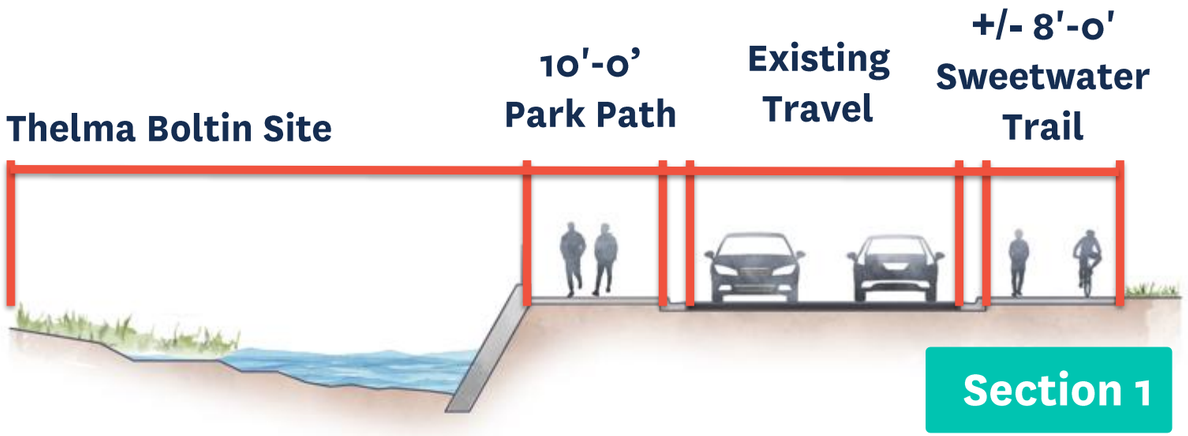
Concept 1: West Trail Alignment

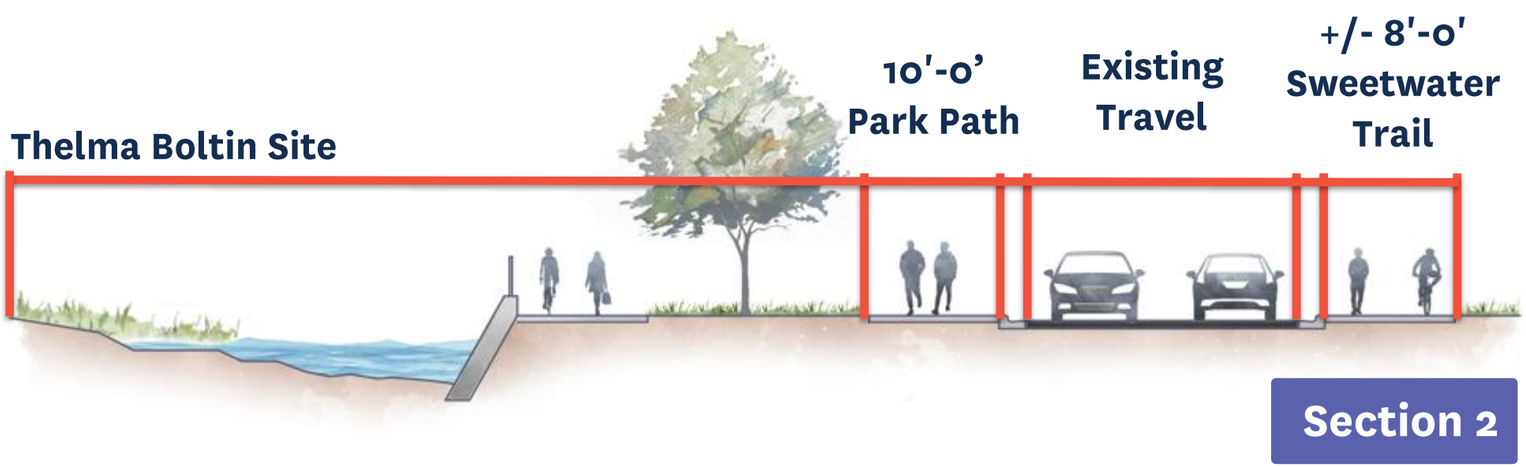


Map Key

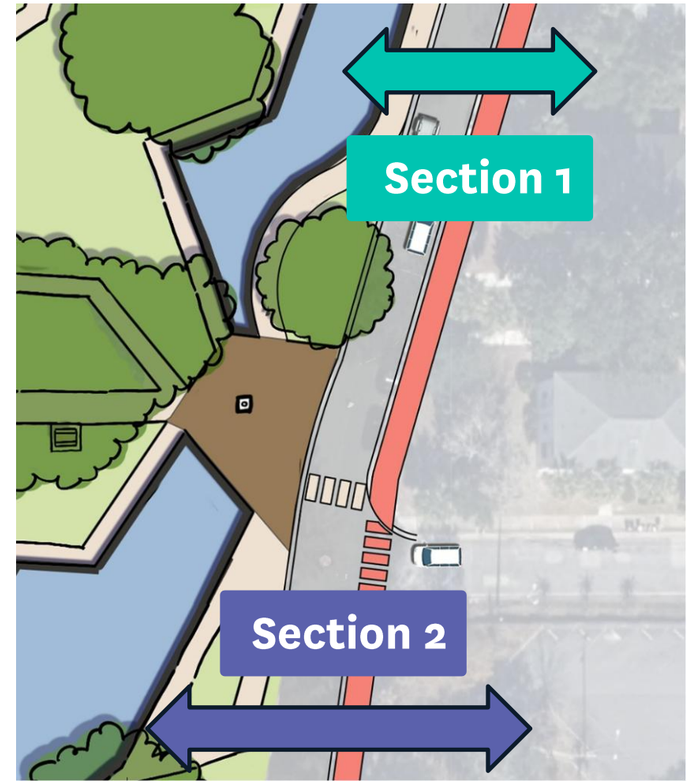
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment A: E University Avenue to NE 5th Ave





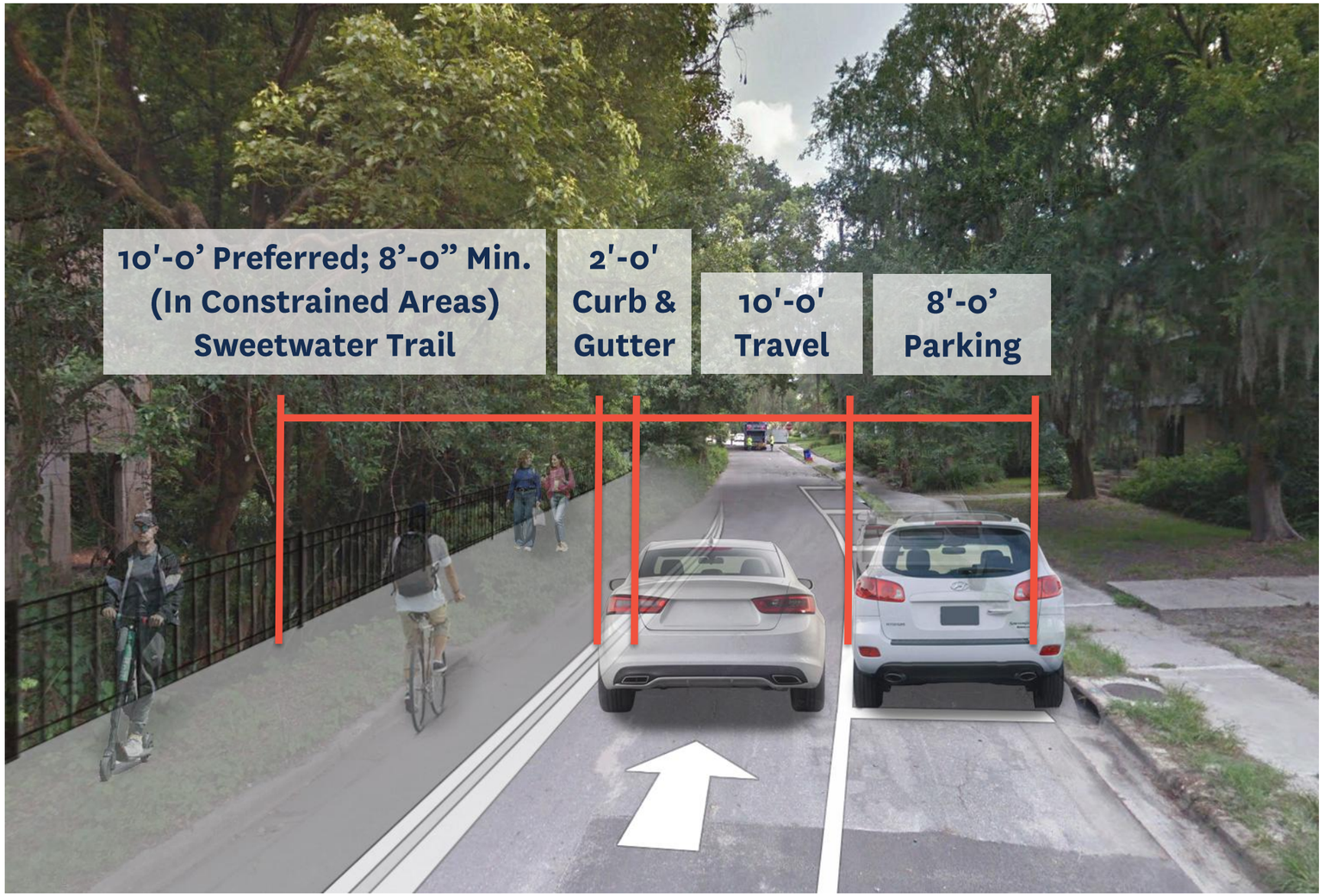
Concept 2: East Trail Alignment



Map Key

Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment A: E University Avenue to NE 5th Ave



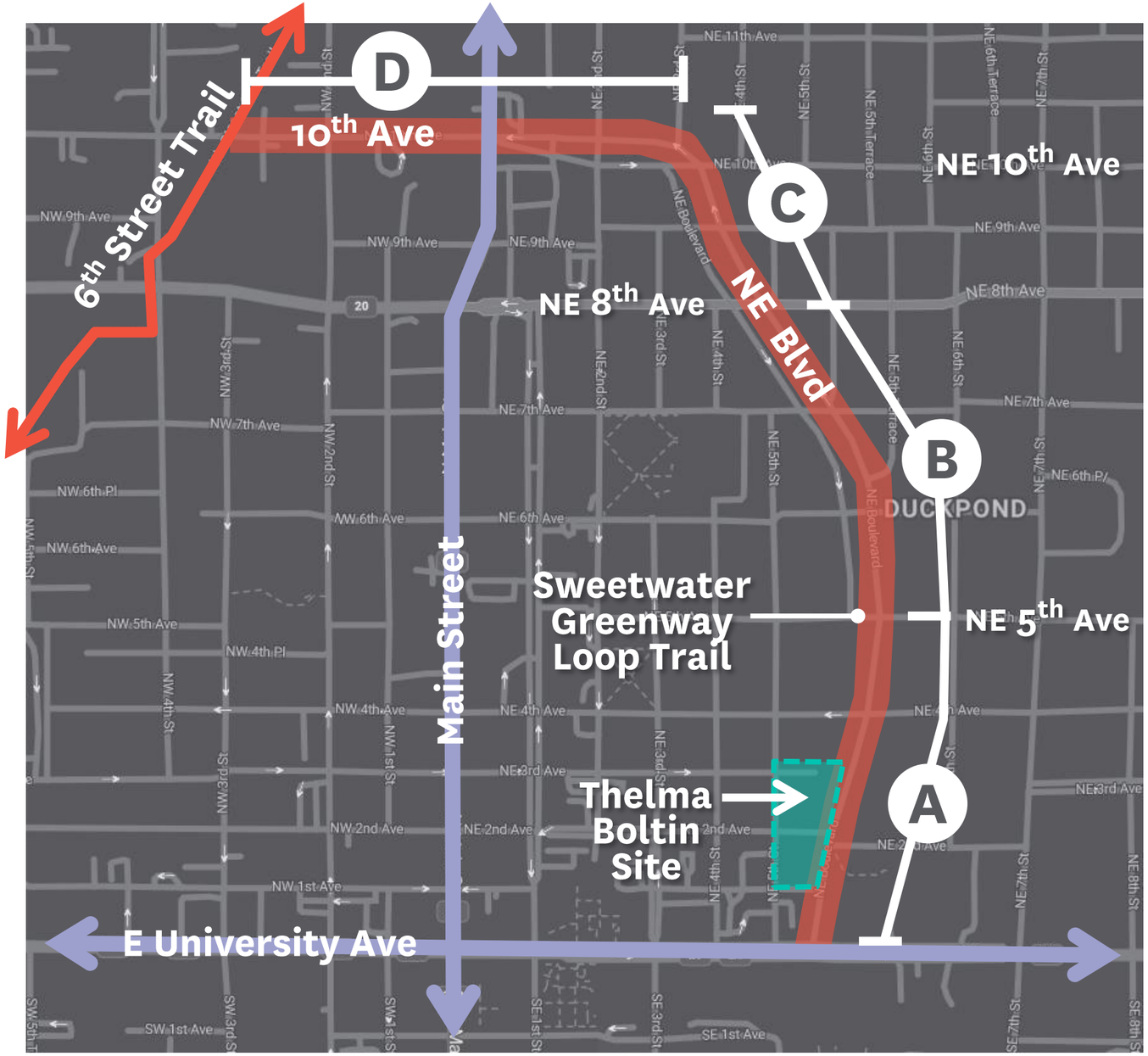
Concept 1: West Trail Alignment

Existing Conditions

Map Key

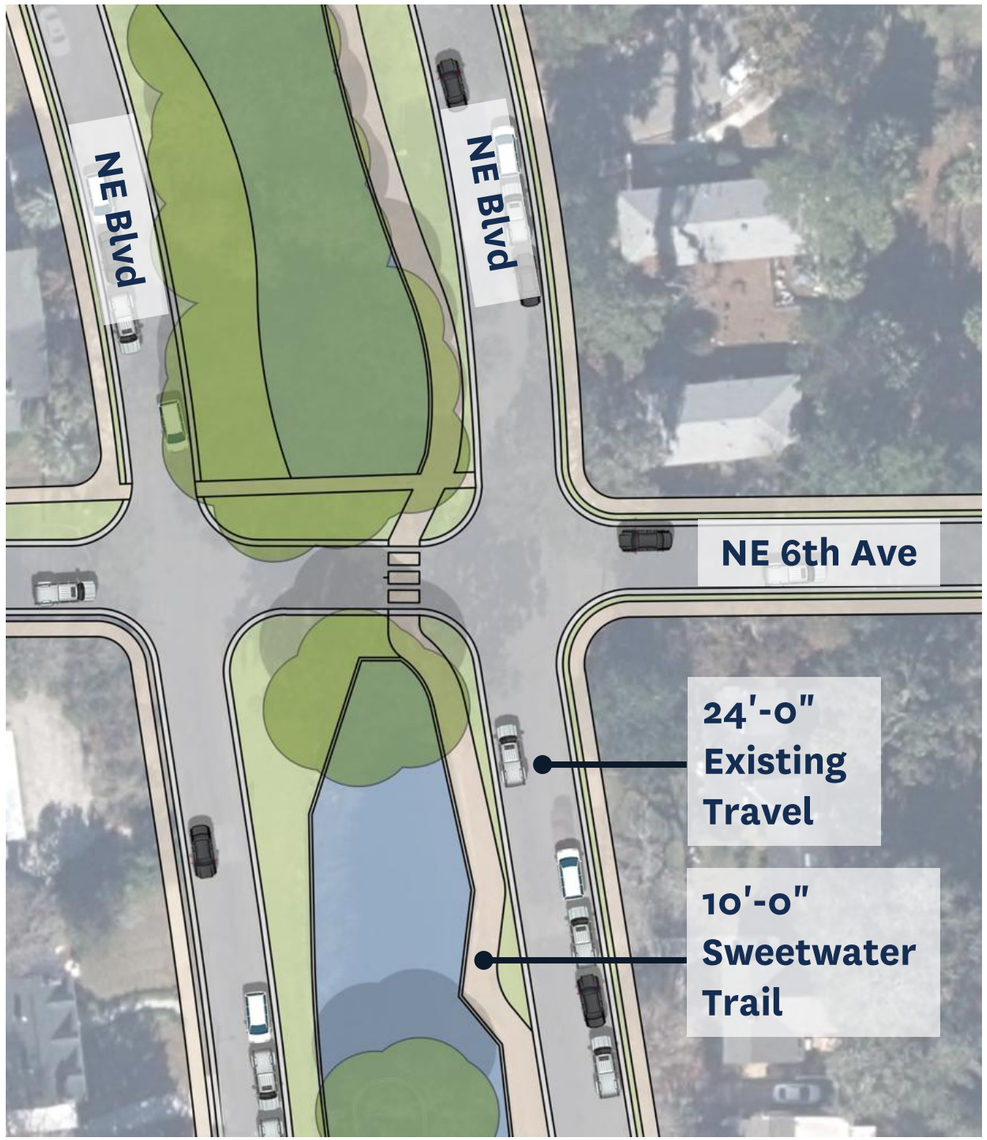
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

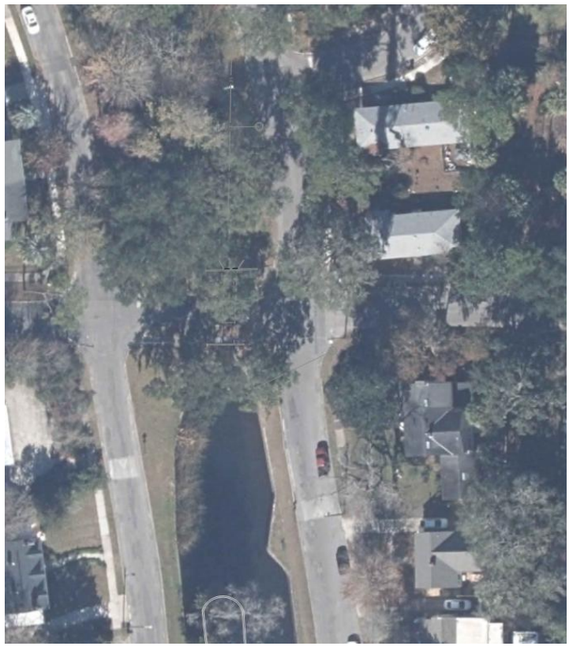
B NE 5th Avenue to NE 8th Avenue



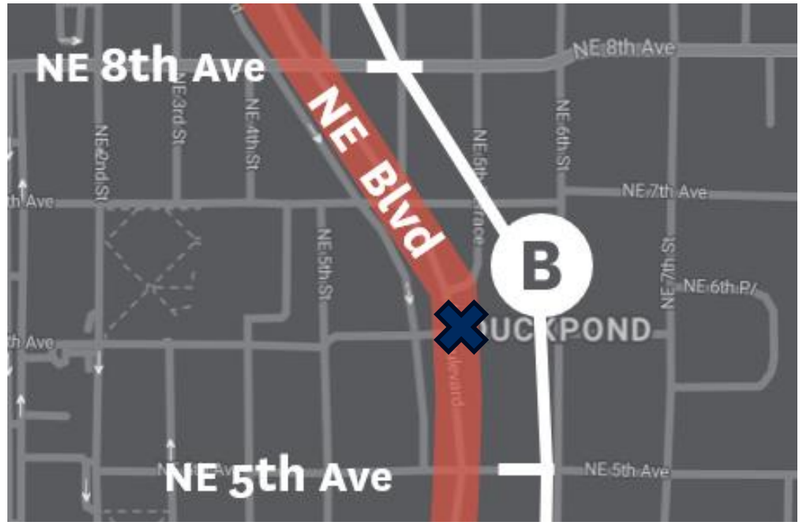
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment B: NE 5th Ave to NE 8th Ave





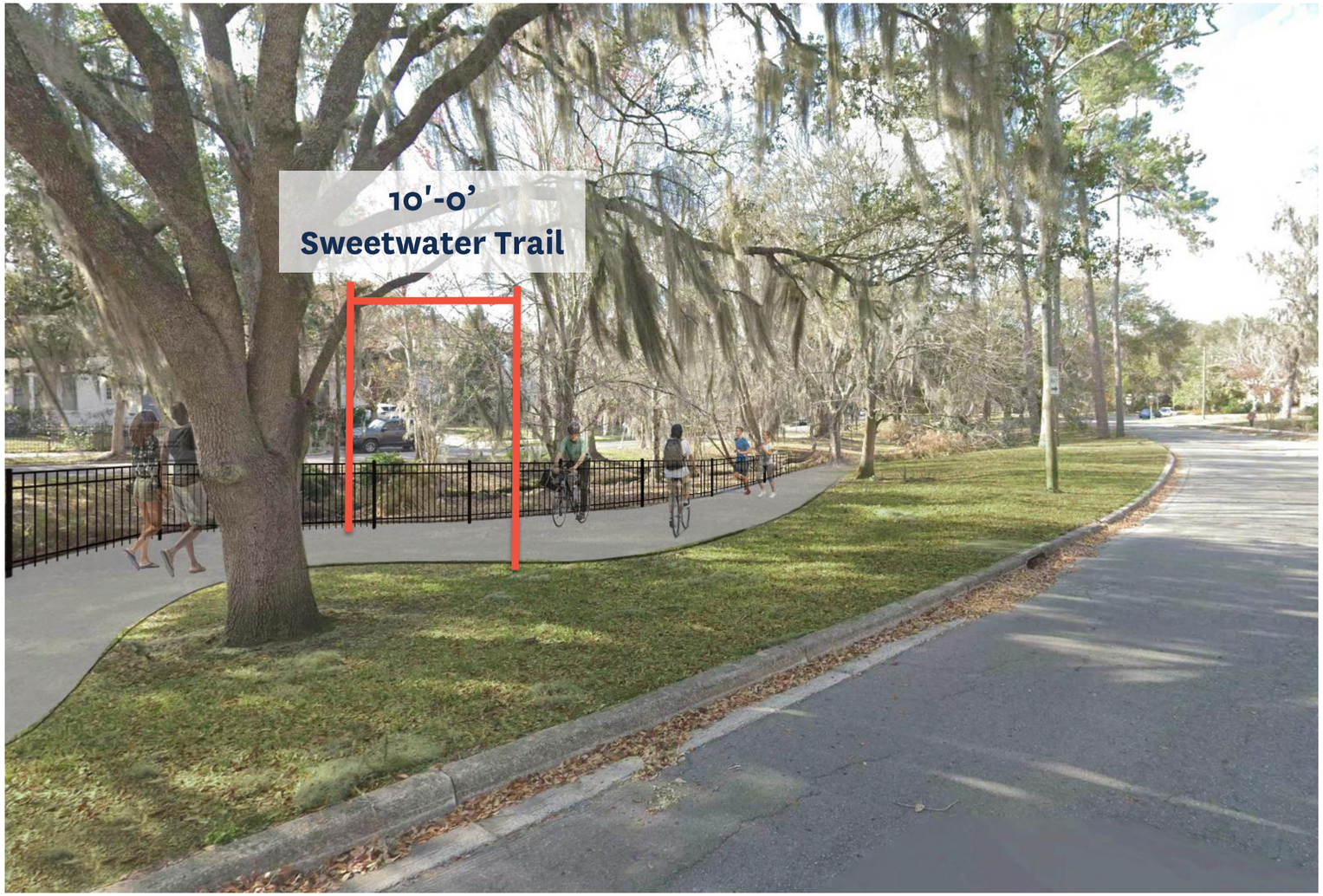
Existing Conditions

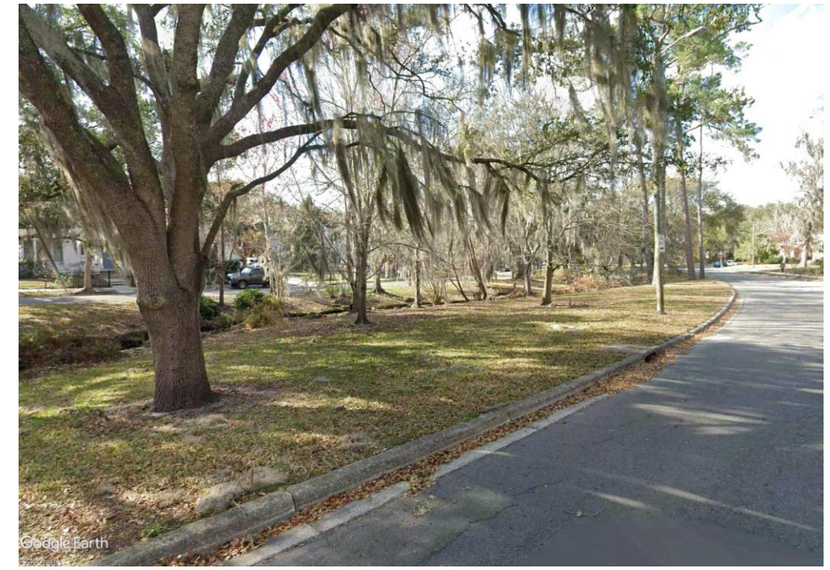


Map Key

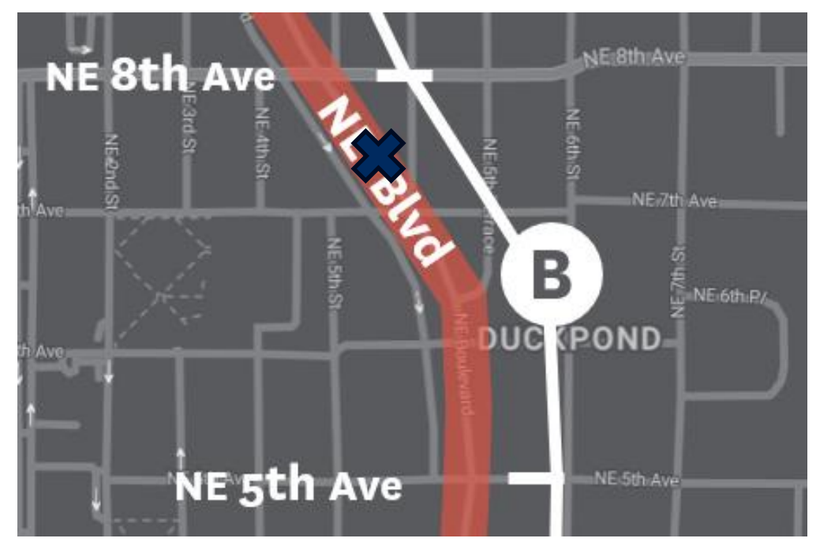
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment B: NE 5th Ave to NE 8th Ave





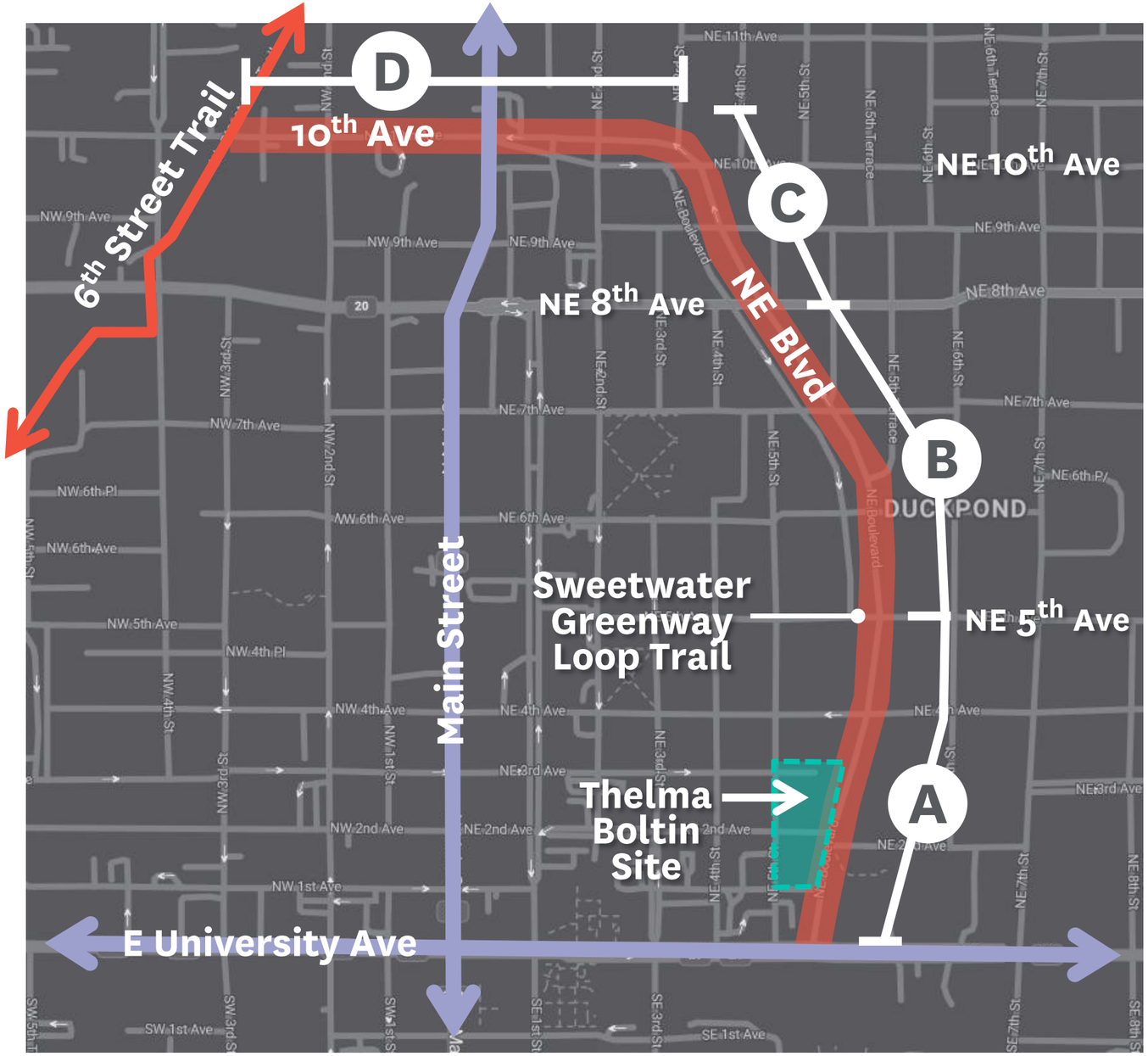
Existing Conditions



Map Key

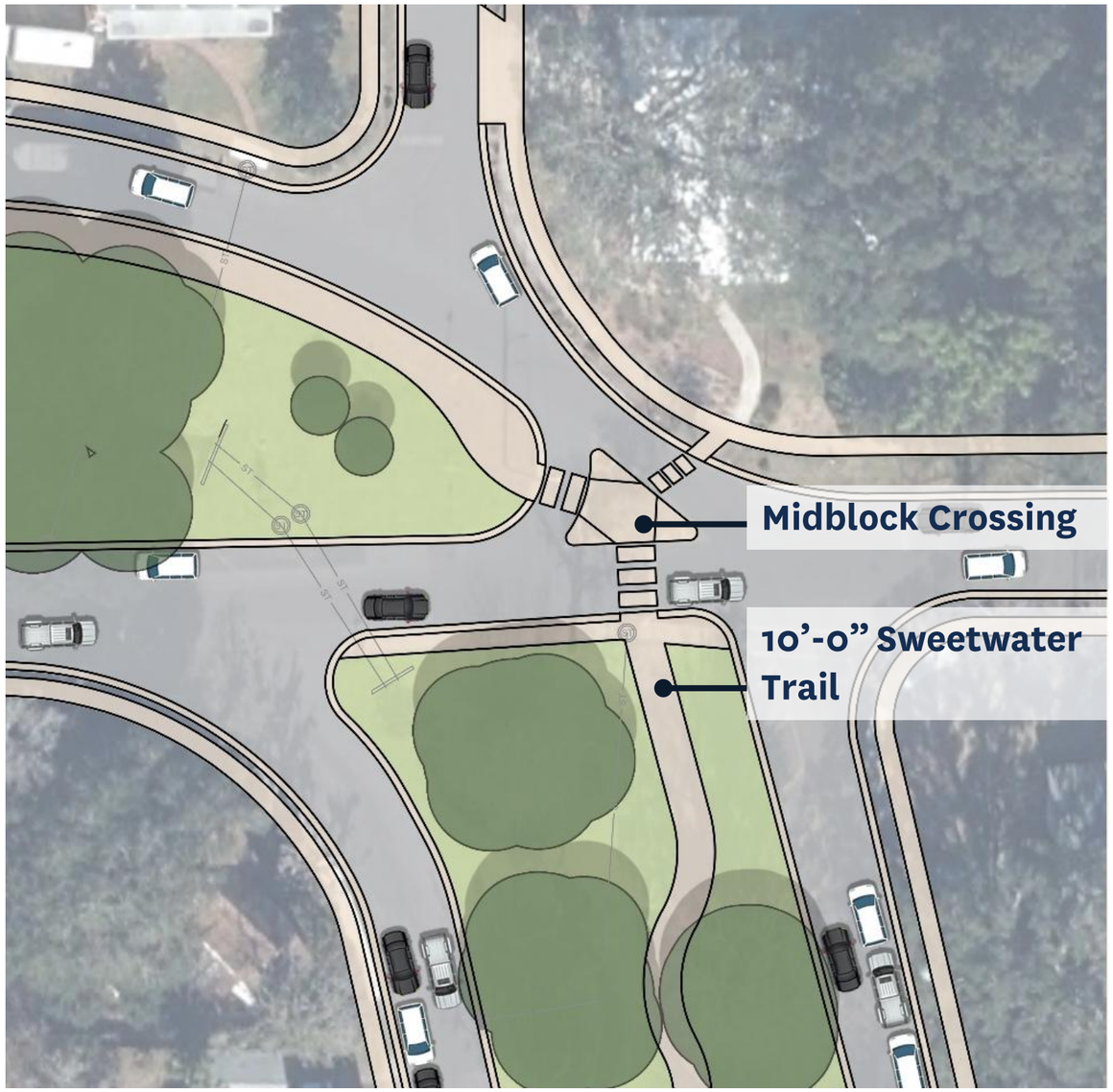
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

C NE 8th Avenue to NW 10th Avenue



Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Segment C: NE 8th Ave to NW 10th Ave

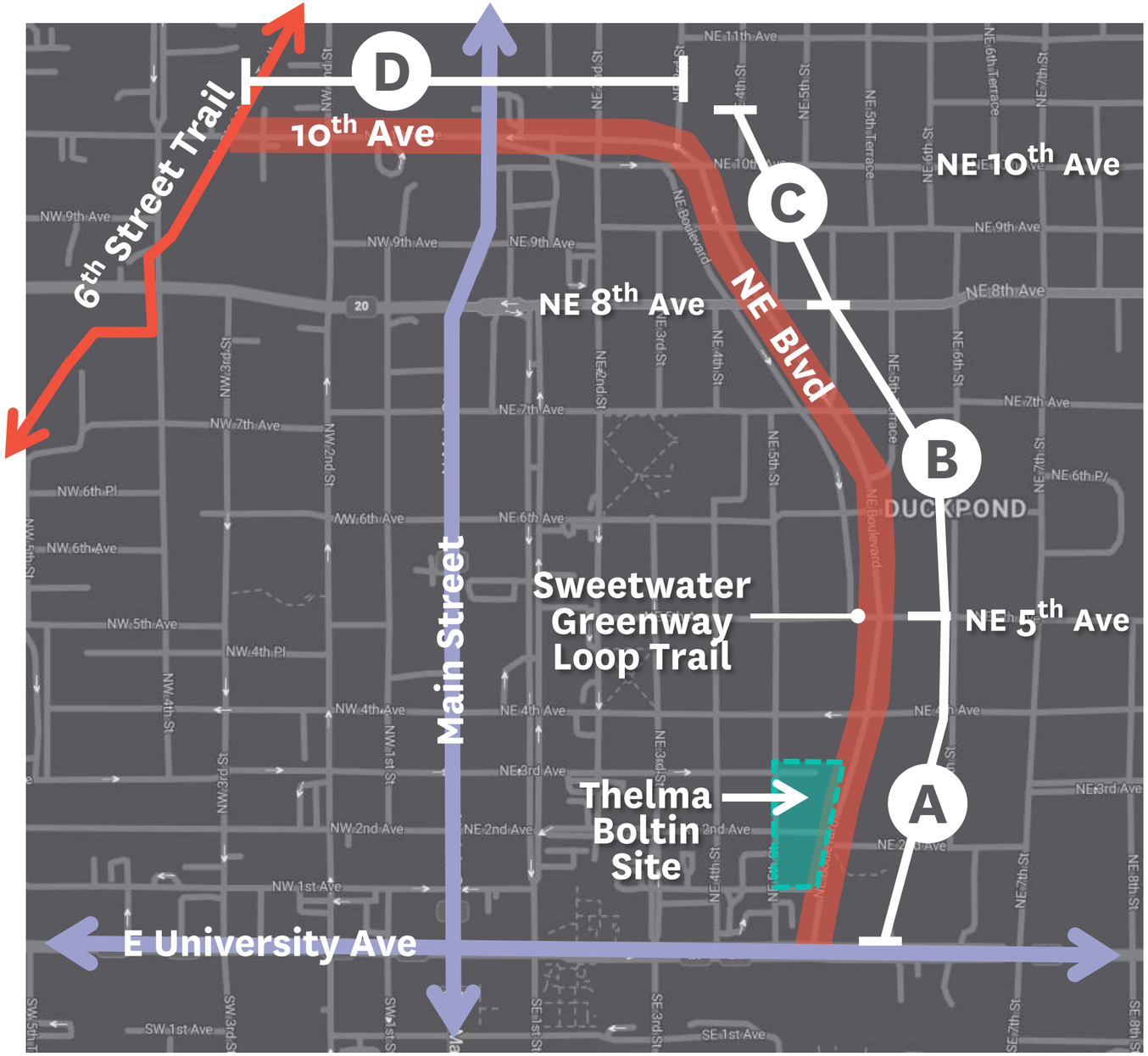


Existing Conditions

Map Key

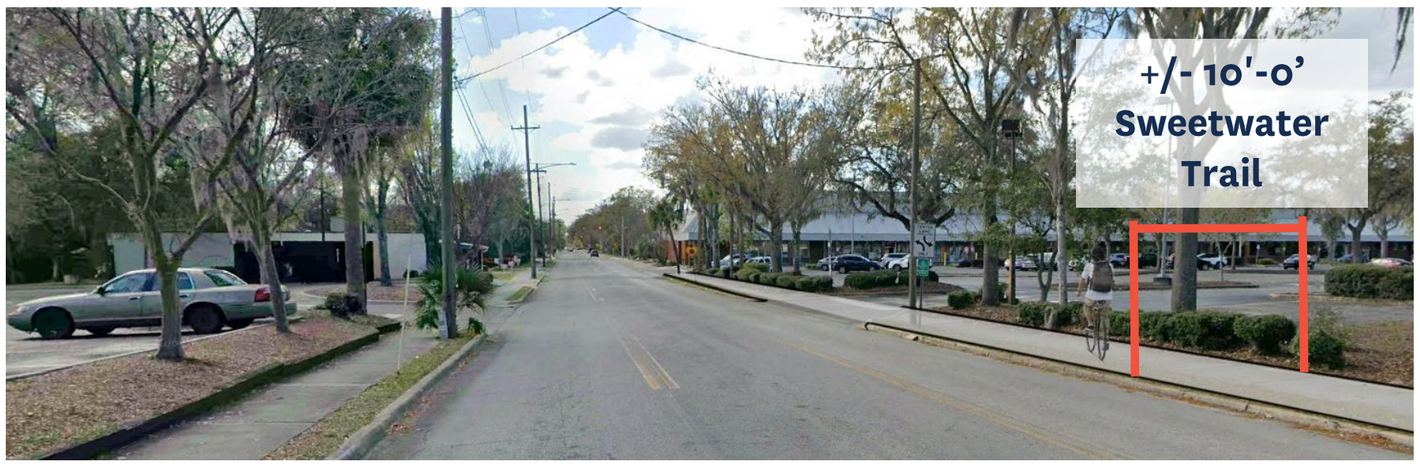
Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

Ⓒ 10th Avenue from NE Boulevard to 6th Street Trail

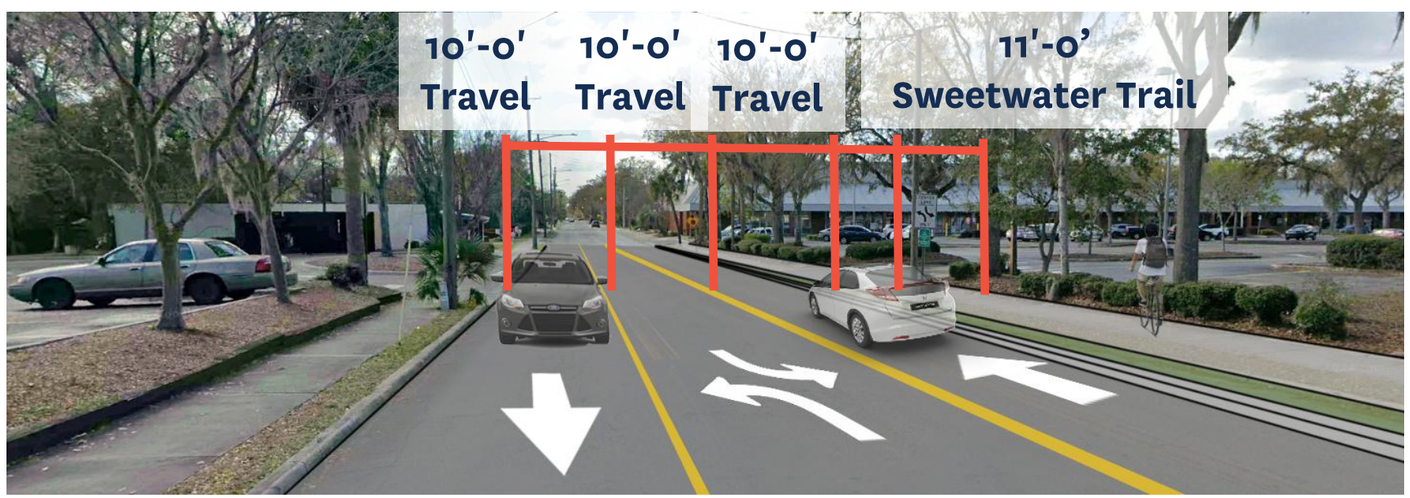


Preliminary Plans: Sweetwater Loop Trail

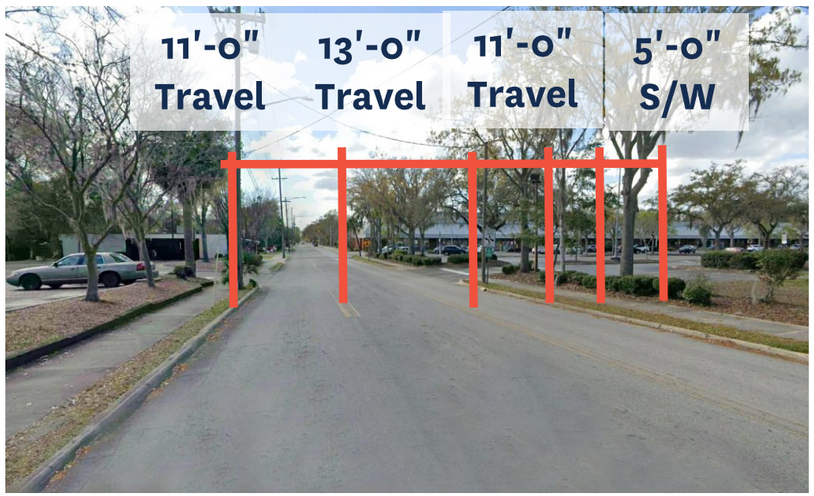
Segment D: 10th Ave from NE Boulevard to 6th Street Trail



Concept 1: Expanded Sidewalk



Concept 2: Narrowed Travel Lanes



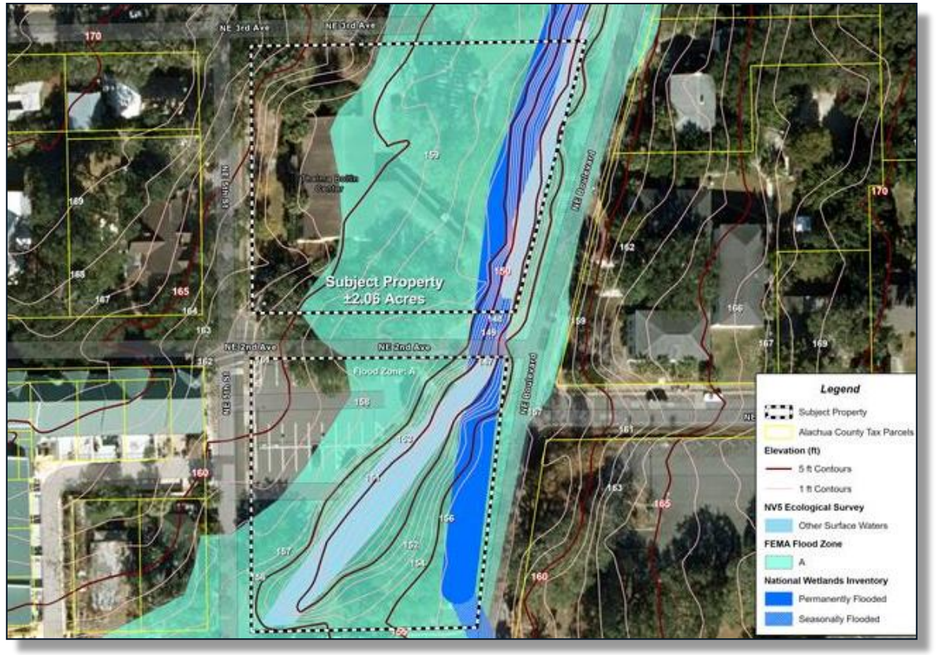
Existing Conditions

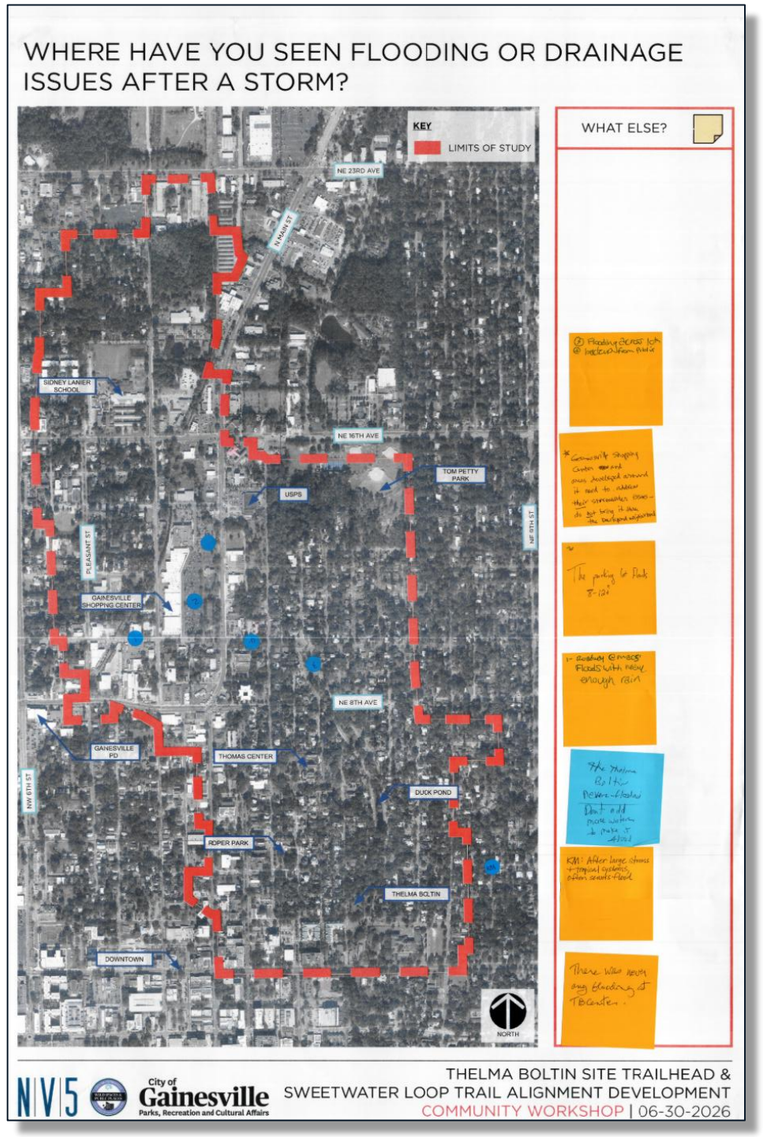
Map Key

Preliminary Plans: Stormwater Improvements

FOCUS OF WORK

- Perform Hydrologic Analysis to Determine Feasible Floodplain Storage/Restoration on Site
- Identify current choke points and problem areas to make recommendations & propose solutions





Preliminary Plans: Stormwater Improvements

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the Project Site:

- Propose floodplain storage
  - South parcel of the site
  - Floodplain storage widens the creek on the west side
  - Creek wall on east side should remain to protect existing trees

Within the Study Area:

- Repair or replace creek walls in areas where poor condition impacts effective water flow

- Remove "choke points" at identified locations by replacing or upsizing stormwater pipes

EXISTING CREEK WITH WALLS

EXISTING CREEK WITH WALLS

PROPOSED FLOODPLAIN STORAGE

CONCEPT PLAN

PROPOSED FLOODPLAIN STORAGE

CONCEPT PLAN

Next Steps

Next Steps

Join us!

Thelma Boltin Trailhead & Sweetwater Greenway Loop Trail Alignment Project

City of Gainesville

CITY OF GAINESVILLE
WILD SPACES & PUBLIC PLACES
FUNDED BY YOUR HALF-CENT SALES TAX

Community Workshop #2

Learn more about the project and share your feedback.

When:

Tuesday, Sept. 29
from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Where:

Matheson History Museum
513 E. University Ave.
Gainesville, FL 32601

Contact:

Rachel Mandell, project manager
352-393-8544 or mandellrc@GainesvilleFL.gov