



GLEN ELLYN DOWNTOWN EVENT PARK

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Glen Ellyn Park District
185 Spring Ave
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

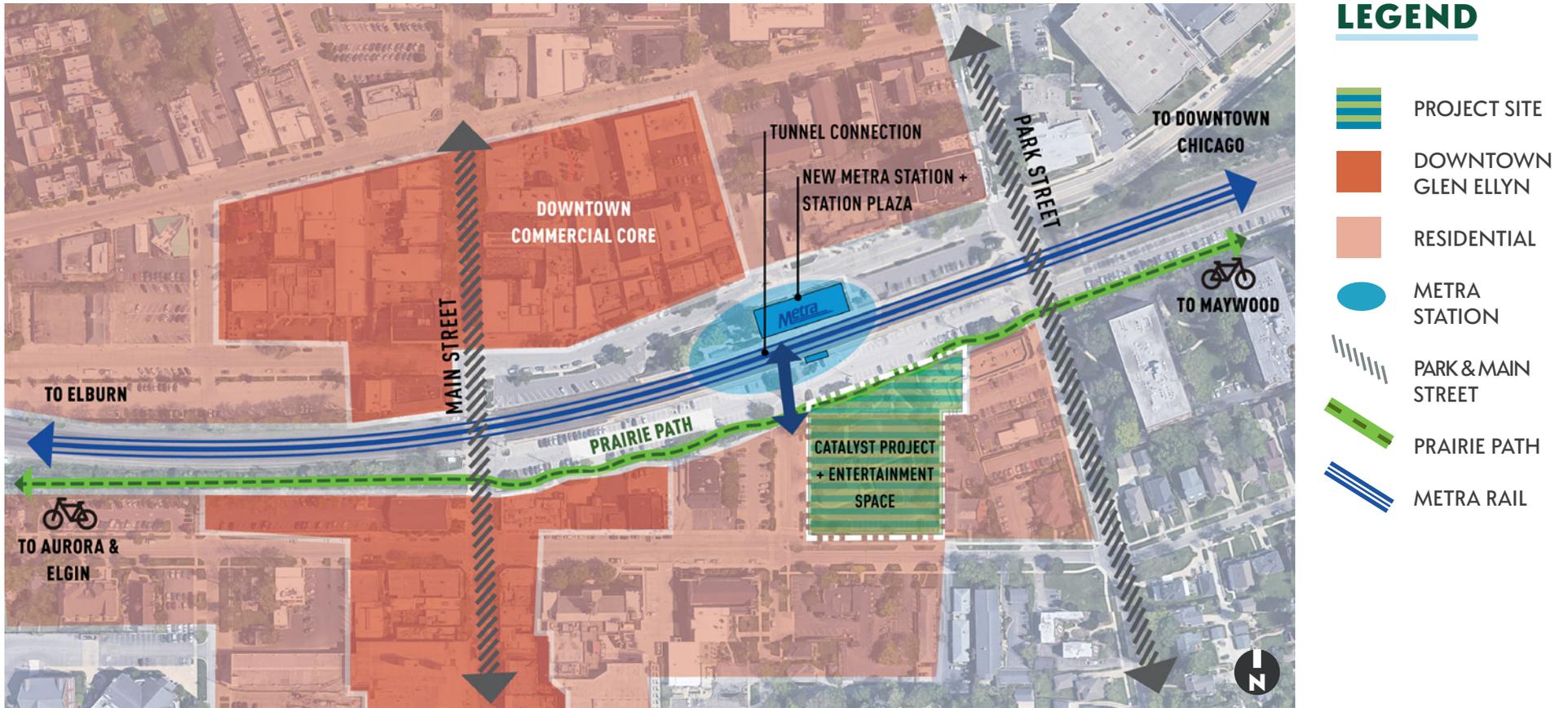


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1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

EXISTING SITE



DOWNTOWN EVENT PARK

The Village of Glen Ellyn and the Glen Ellyn Park District are collaborating on the purchase, development, and operation of the future downtown events park. The property, formally the U.S. Bank site, located at 453 Forest Avenue in downtown Glen Ellyn, was purchased recently by the Village.

The Park District’s plan is to transform this site and expand the existing Prairie Path Park into a dynamic open space within the heart of Glen Ellyn’s Downtown. The site will create a “front yard” for commuters, Prairie Path users, Downtown residents, and the entire Glen Ellyn community. The project will fulfill an initiative driven by the Village’s Downtown Plan and Comprehensive Plan, which call for the addition of green space within the Downtown area. Development of the site will also serve as a catalyst for improvements to adjacent properties and bring new events to the area.

CONSULTANT TEAM



Figure 1. Design Team Organization

2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

PROJECT TIMELINE

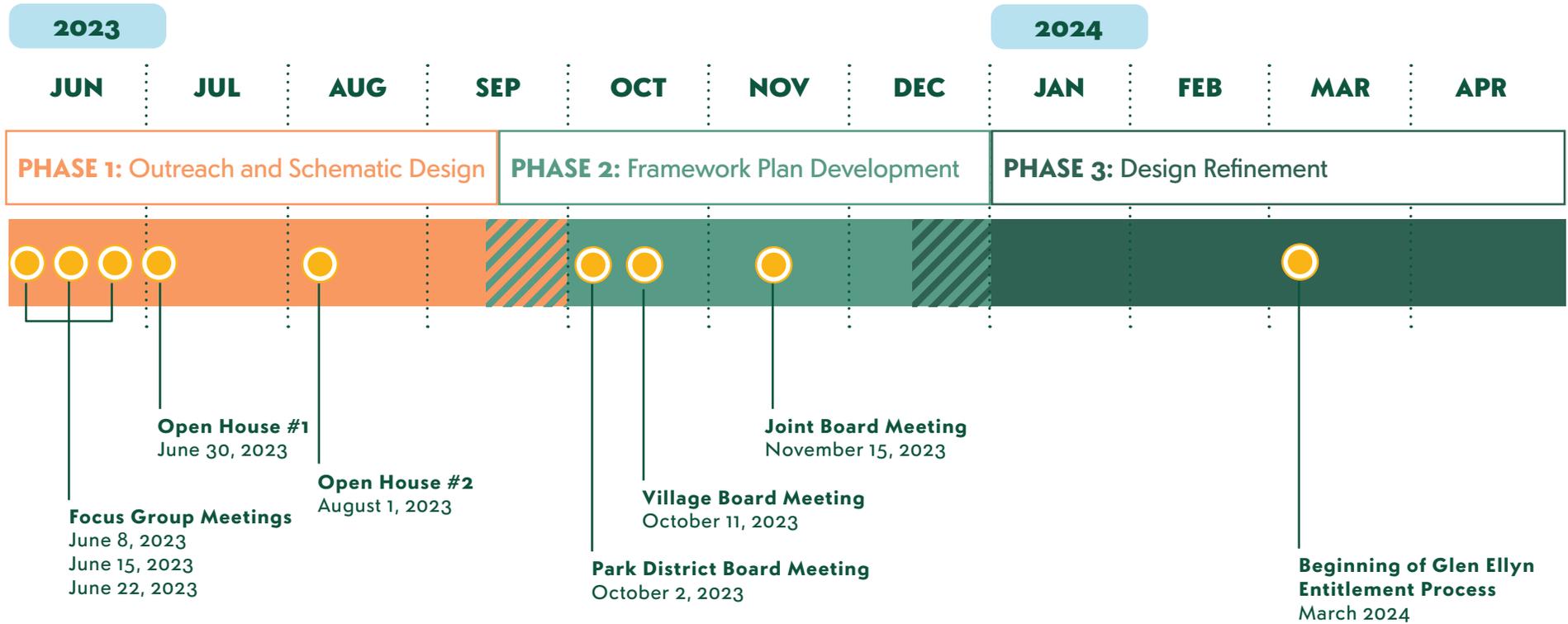


Figure 4. Project Timeline

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Throughout the public engagement and design process, the Glen Ellyn Park District, in partnership with the consultant team, identified key engagement tools to successfully create awareness of the future Downtown Event Park to gather input, build consensus, and foster a sense of ownership within the community.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

At the beginning of the planning process, the consultant team met with key community leaders in small groups to discuss the opportunities and challenges of the Downtown Event Park. These groups included representatives from municipal operations and public safety officials, small business owners, as well as advocates, arts, events, and programming specialists. The information gathered from the focus group meetings helped guide the approach for the first community open house event at Summer Break at the Lake on June 30, 2023.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE EVENTS

Three community open house events were planned at various stages throughout the design process to engage directly with the end users of the park. At Summer Break at the Lake, the consultant team hosted a tent where members were asked to vote on key programs, features, and functions for the Downtown Event Park. A second open house event was hosted at National Night Out on August 1, 2023 to bring the schematic designs back to the community for comment.

DIGITAL SURVEYS

Digital surveys were developed and shared in tandem with each open house event to give the broader community the opportunity to provide feedback. This enabled individuals who were unable to attend the open house events to share their opinions with the consultant team, providing beneficial data to the design process.

WEBSITE, NEWSLETTER & SOCIAL MEDIA

As the final tool, a dedicated webpage on the Glen Ellyn Park District's website, digital newsletters and social media channels were utilized to keep community members informed about upcoming events and digital surveys.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GOALS:

- Outreach & Awareness;**
- Accessible Input Gathering;**
- Consensus Building; and,**
- Foster Community Ownership.**

OVERVIEW

The design process began with three community focus group meetings. The groups of stakeholders included Operations and Advocacy groups, local and small Business owners, and Arts, Events, and Programming professionals from the Glen Ellyn community. The consultant team then went to the public, hosting booths at both the Summer Break at the Lake event, as well as National Night Out. Throughout the engagement process, over eight hundred (800) digital surveys were collected after each Open House.

4 Focus Group Meetings

2 Open House Events

3 Board Meetings

800+ Survey Responses



Figure 5. Focus group meeting - small business focus



Figure 6. Open House #1 - consultant team explaining the park's capacity for future events



Figure 7. Open House #1 - design your own park exercise to engage community members and gather ideas



Figure 8. Open House #2 - schematic design

3 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

A PARK FOR THE COMMUNITY

WHAT WE HEARD

The Park District's early conceptual plan for the Event Park included open greenspace, the integration of the Prairie Path Park, and a permanent stage and support facility, among other enhancements. With this framework, the consultant team designed engagement tools and graphics to gather feedback from the community regarding their vision for the Downtown Event Park.

Online survey and in-person engagement data from Summer Break at the Lake (Open House Event #1) suggests a collective vision for a versatile public space that complements the unique character of Downtown Glen Ellyn.

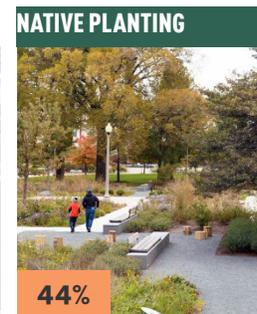
The community answered a series of questions regarding the desired programs, features, and natural elements they'd like to see in the Downtown Event Park. In addition to programs and features, the community was also asked to describe what they like most about Downtown Glen Ellyn, and what they feel it is missing. The responses were analyzed by identifying key themes and words used by the respondents. The outcome of those surveys can be seen in the provided graphs and images.

What programs and amenities are you most interested in engaging with at the Downtown Event Park?

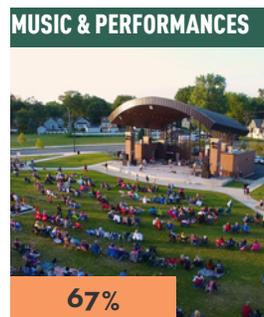
AREAS TO GATHER AND RELAX



NATURE PROGRAMS



FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS



WHAT WE HEARD CONTINUED

Respondents were vocal about their desire for a park that can accommodate a spectrum of activities and programs, including concerts, public and private events, gatherings, play, and passive daily use. Additionally, ensuring opportunities for winter activation was frequently mentioned.

Core concerns voiced by respondents included common safety considerations (traffic, lighting, maintenance, and oversight), the imperative for programming flexibility, and the strategic siting of the pavilion. Many users stressed the importance of sound mitigation in relation to the pavilion, urging the project team to carefully consider the adjacent railroad tracks and explore feasible sound mitigation techniques.

This data provided a robust foundation with which to begin building a design framework, programming vision, and broader park identity.

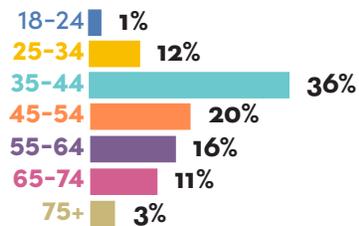
"I commute on the train for work. I've always felt the Village misses out on community activities that could happen 4-7pm during weekdays as you get off the train. Happy hours, music, food, professional networking."

"The demographic of Glen Ellyn has been trending towards young families leaving the city. There needs to be greater efforts to build out diversity in options for downtown destinations. Many of us spend more time in Wheaton than we do in Glen Ellyn as a result."

"This is such an exciting opportunity for Glen Ellyn. We have been sorely lacking this type of space in/near the downtown. It will be wonderful to have a space for residents to walk to and congregate that are more centrally located than Lake Ellyn, provides a unique look to our downtown, and that also includes entertainment and seating."

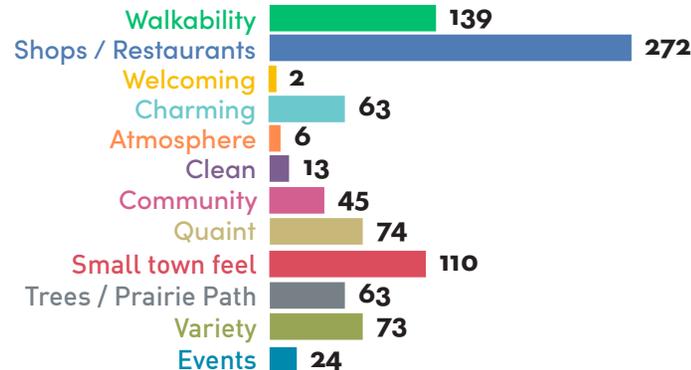
Who we have heard from:

Ages of participants (713 total respondents)



What do you like most about downtown Glen Ellyn?

of times the word was use (672 total respondents)



What is downtown Glen Ellyn Missing?

of times the word was use (654 total respondents)



Figure 9. Results from phase 1 of the engagement process

DESIGN CRITERIA

FOUNDATION OF DOWNTOWN EVENT PARK DESIGN

After compilation and review of Focus Group meeting notes, online survey results, and in-person public engagement activities, the consultant team developed a framework of design criteria to guide the ideation and programming process. The design criteria was established to ensure a unique and inspiring design for the Downtown Event Park. With the design criteria established, the consultant team developed three (3) Schematic Design concepts as seen on the following page.

Design Criteria

1. Support a wide range of events, functions, and users.
2. Contribute to the local sense of identity (of Glen Ellyn).
3. Enhance and support Prairie Path and greater downtown.
4. Respond to local context, opportunities, and constraints.
5. Anticipate future expansion.

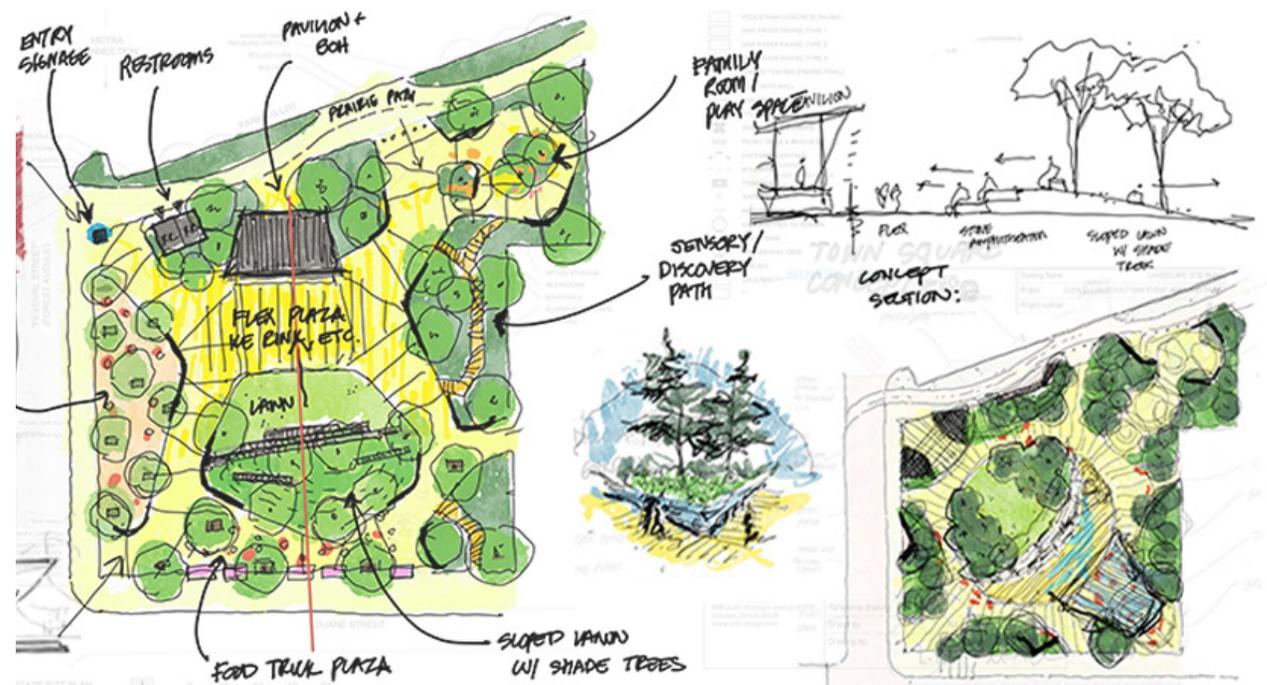


Figure 10. Schematic design sketches

4 SCHEMATIC DESIGN PROCESS

EVENT PARK - BASIS OF DESIGN



TERRACED PARK CONCEPT

- 1 Permeable north edge, pavilion frames entrance into the site and engages Prairie Path.
- 2 Best option for acoustics, uses natural slope to create amphitheater effect.
- 3 Restrooms visible from Prairie Path for ease and access for every day use.



GREAT LAWN CONCEPT

- 1 Pavilion creates a grand, open feel upon entering the park from Forest Avenue, frames southeast corner.
- 2 North edge of park is buffered by natural berm lawn, existing shade trees and additional landscape.
- 3 Large, flexible lawn space with berms and seat walls designed to accommodate multiple uses.



TOWN SQUARE PLAZA

- 1 Design celebrates a "Town Square" concept with a modern twist, Pavilion as "centerpiece."
- 2 Area beneath pavilion is open hardscape optimizing the multi-functionality of the park.
- 3 Perimeter spaces around the park provide unique, programmed places of gather.

SCHEME 1 - TERRACED LAWN PLAZA



Figure 13. View looking north towards pavilion and restroom building creates a portal for entry from the Prairie Path and Metra Station

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT TERRACED LAWN PLAZA?

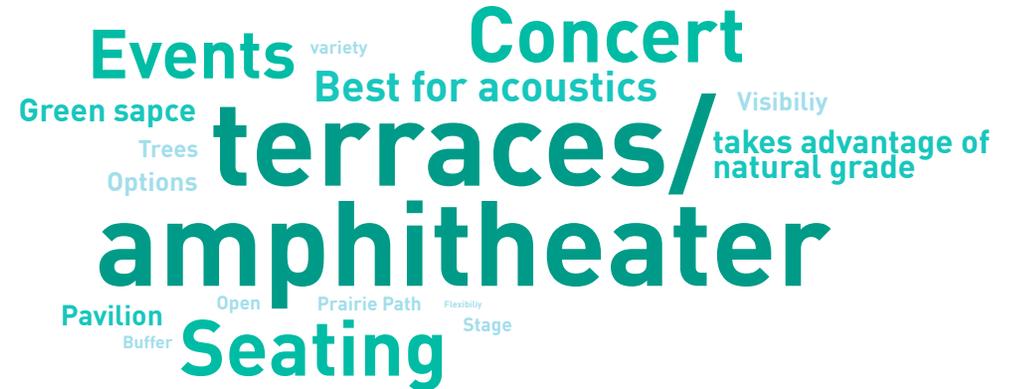


Figure 14. View entering the park from Forest Avenue and the commuter lot



Figure 15. View looking northwest - seated on the terraced lawn, concept takes advantage of the site's natural slope

SCHEME 2 - GREAT LAWN CONCEPT



Figure 16. View looking southeast - great lawn with berms and seat walls provide multiple places to sit and play

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT GREAT LAWN CONCEPT?



Figure 17. View looking south - large seating platforms creates opportunity for range of events near the pavilion



Figure 18. View looking southeast - bathroom facilities located off Forest Ave & commuter lot for ease and access

SCHEME 3 - TOWN HALL CONCEPT



Figure 19. View looking north - pavilion and restroom building act as "centerpiece" of the town square concept

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT TOWN HALL CONCEPT?



Figure 20. View looking southeast - entering the park from Forest Avenue and the commuter lot



Figure 21. View looking south - unique pavilion structure creates multi-functionality in central plaza area

DESIGN FEEDBACK

VISITOR PREFERENCE

I see myself enjoying a concert or special event in this space

I see myself enjoying this space on a weekly basis

This space provides opportunities for a range of events and programmatic needs



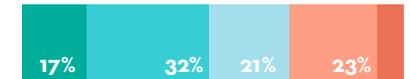
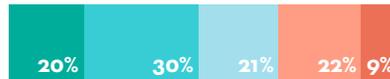
SCHEME 1



SCHEME 2

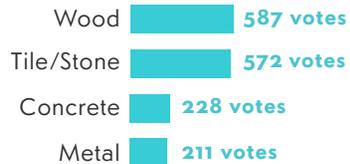


SCHEME 3

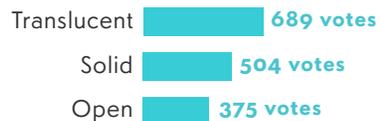


PAVILION DESIGN

Favorite pavilion material



Favorite roof type



WHAT WE HEARD

The public evaluation of the three Schematic Design concepts illuminated a series of informative findings to further guide design refinement. While preferences and positive comments often varied for specific elements within each design, broader concerns were generally common across all three schemes.

Overall, there is a shared concern regarding the flexibility of spaces, with specific attention to the siting, orientation, and materiality of the pavilion structure. Additionally, respondents expressed apprehensions about general park safety, parking and traffic, cost, and the overall character of the Park in relation to Downtown Glen Ellyn's established charm and small-town feel.

In the **Terraced Park** scheme, respondents expressed enthusiasm for the amphitheater styling of the central lawn and its suitability for event seating. However, there was a simultaneous worry that the terracing might limit the park's future flexibility beyond specific programmed events.

Conversely, the **Great Lawn** scheme garnered appreciation for its open and inviting central lawn, deemed "greener" and "more versatile" than the other schemes. Nonetheless, some respondents felt the concept lacked enough definition, resulting in a somewhat bland and uninspiring open area without distinct programmed zones.

Lastly, in the **Town Square** scheme, many respondents appreciated the centralized pavilion as a bold, grounding, and flexible focal point able to support a diversity of programs along the site's edges. Still, this scheme proved very divisive due to concerns around the perceived lack of open-program areas in favor of a busy and rigid spatial arrangement, as well as a pavilion structure that seemed out of sync with the Village's inherent character.

Compiling and synthesizing the data from the community, the consultant team designed a **Framework Site Plan**, creating a hybrid of the desirable features, program spaces, and elements desired by the end-users of the Downtown Event Park. The Framework Site Plan can be seen in Section 5: Design Solution.



5 DESIGN SOLUTION

FRAMEWORK SITE PLAN



Figure 22. Framework Site Plan

DESIGN SOLUTION

The Downtown Event Park offers a verdant setting for both special events and daily life in Glen Ellyn. Anchored by a spacious, centralized event lawn and performance pavilion, the Park can accommodate diverse performances, large gatherings, and seasonal activities alike. Meanwhile, the Park's edges and thresholds provide variety, scale, and programming for daily users and Downtown visitors. This flexible, porous design ensures a park that can grow and adapt with Downtown Glen Ellyn.

Legend:

- 1 Park Entry Plaza W/ Signage
- 2 Existing Prairie Path
- 3 Support Building, Restrooms, & Bike Racks
- 4 Pavilion W/ Support Building & Restroom
- 5 Play Area with Spinner Seats & Balance Beams
- 6 Seating Nook
- 7 Central Lawn & Winter Skating Rink
- 8 Terraced Seating
- 9 Reading Lawn
- 10 Picnic Grove
- 11 Benches



DESIGN PERSPECTIVES



Figure 23. Birds eye view perspective looking northwest towards the Metra station and greater downtown



Figure 24. Perspective drawing looking south towards the stage



Figure 25. Perspective drawing looking northeast, entering the Park from Duane Street



Figure 26. Birds eye perspective - winter ice rink

DESIGN NARRATIVE

Entries and Thresholds: ■

Clear welcoming entries and porous site edges are integral to an activated Downtown Event Park. Primary marked entries complete with ornamental landscaping and branded signage will beckon users into the Park from a variety of contexts, notably the northern approach from Downtown Glen Ellyn, the Metra Station and future underpass, and the Prairie Path. Additional entries along the site's western and southern edges look to enliven Forest Avenue and Duane Street going forward.

Central Lawn: ■

At the Park's core is a 15,000 square-foot event lawn, versatile enough to host various events, performances, and a large winter ice skating rink for extended seasonal use. Additionally, human-scale design considerations, such as lush border plantings, seating opportunities, and framed entries will allow the Lawn to be inviting for informal, everyday uses and passive programming.

Structures and Support Facilities: ■

To address the needs of both local park-goers and users of the regional Prairie Path, an accessible restroom facility with drinking fountain, storage, and adjacent bicycle parking is located along the Park's northeast boundary. Additional support facilities are located at the Park's southeast corner within the pavilion structure. This dynamic architectural focal point serves as a community hub for live performances and cultural events, and informal day-to-day covered seating.

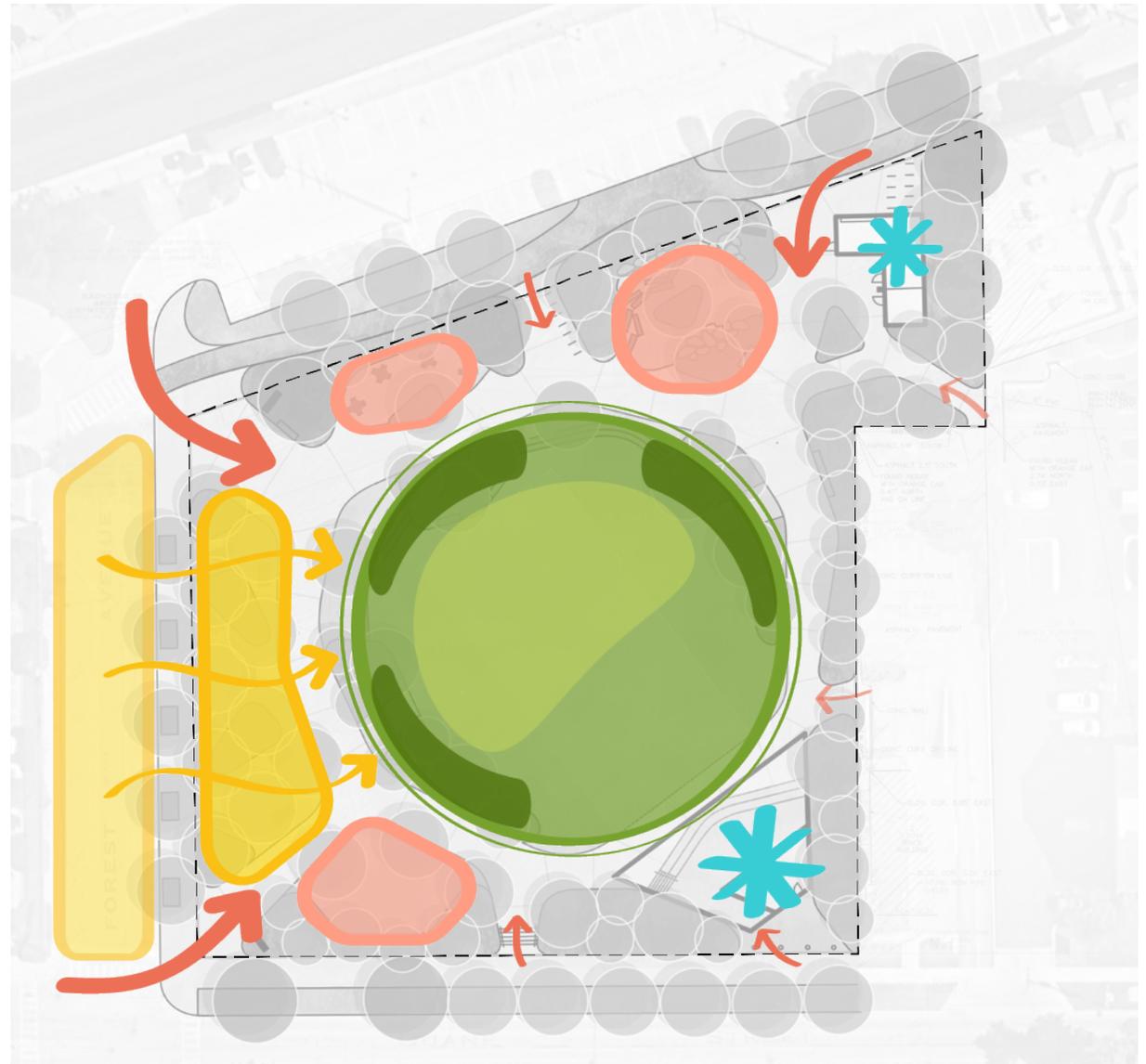


Figure 27. Framework Diagram

DESIGN NARRATIVE CONTINUED

Picnic Grove & Forest Avenue:

At the interface of Forest Avenue along the Park's western edge, the Picnic Grove offers a flexible seating space and gathering space that can transform into an extended venue for future street festivals and farmer's markets as needed.

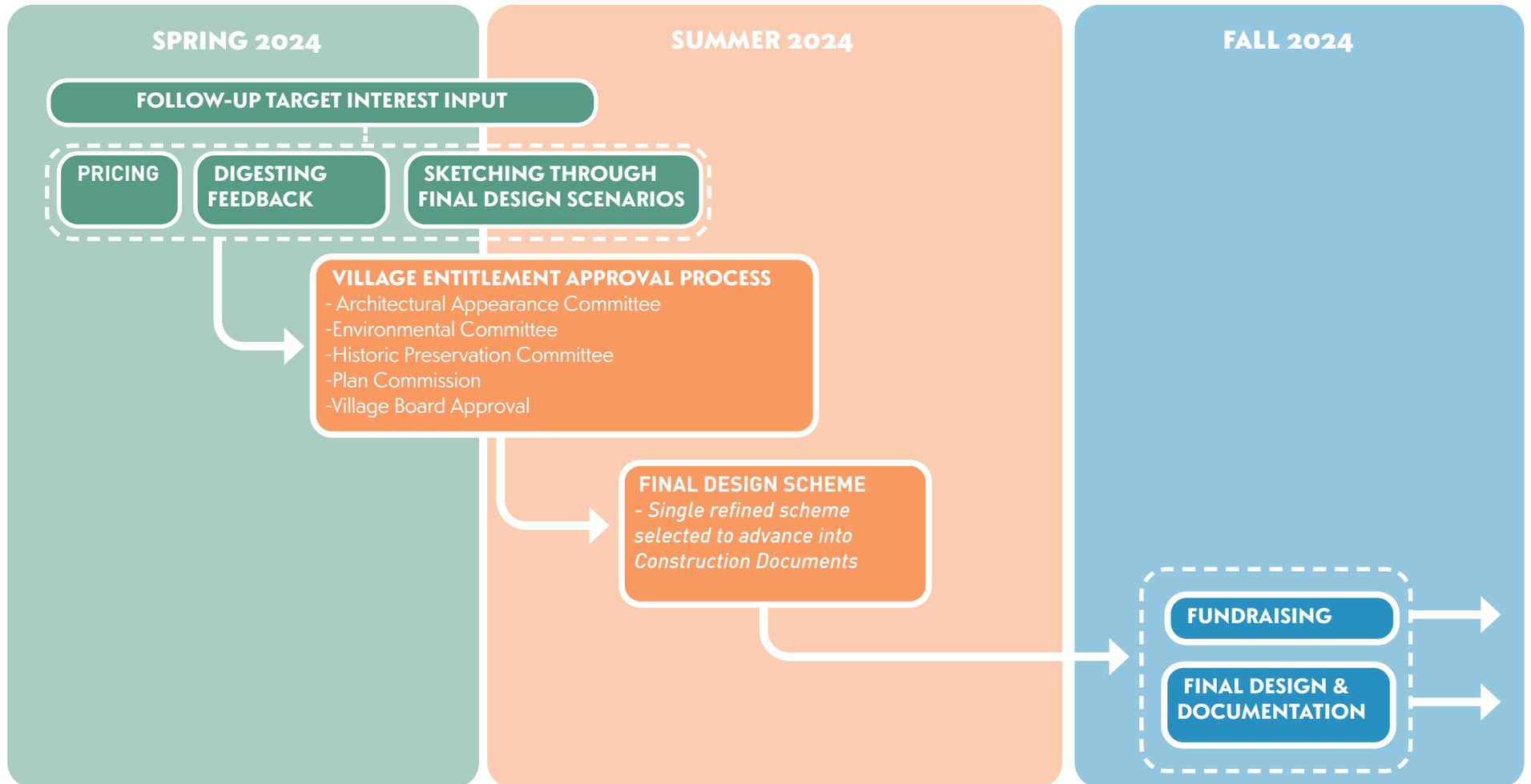
Nooks and Rooms:

For those seeking tranquility, the Reading Lawn offers a serene escape in the park's southwest corner, surrounded by thoughtful landscaping and comfortable seating elements. To the north, a Seating Nook provides an intimate alternative to the bustling Picnic Grove in the southwest, catering to those seeking a quieter retreat. Finally, a small Nature-Inspired Play Area invites families and children to engage in moments of socialization, learning, and play.



Figure 28. Site Section Drawing

NEXT STEPS



WHATS NEXT FOR THE DOWNTOWN EVENT PARK

The purpose of this report is to share with the community the findings, responses, and data collected throughout the public engagement process for the Downtown Event Park. From here, the Framework Plan will be presented to Village committees to garner feedback, leading to further refinement and design development. Once approved, the project will move into fundraising and final documentation.

THANK YOU

For more information on this project, please contact
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