



DAVIS CENTRAL PARK

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF DAVIS, CA
ROYSTON HANAMOTO ALLEY & ABEY
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Davis City Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2010, The City of Davis contracted with Royston Hanamoto Alley & Abey (RHAA) to facilitate a process to update the Central Park Master Plan. The process has included the integral involvement of representatives of Parks and General Services, Davis Police, CDBG, RDA, and the Community Services Department. Public meetings have been held to ensure that the broader community's interests are also heard.

The goal of the Central Park Master Plan Update project is to create a cohesive plan that refines the master plan prepared by CoDesign in the 1990's and guides future improvements to the park. These improvements primarily concern the dilapidated bathroom and underutilized horseshoe pits in the original north area of the park, as well as the currently non-functional fountain adjacent to the Farmers Market. The plan also outlines additional ideas to improve the park's sustainability, circulation, and ability to accommodate a growing park-user population.

BACKGROUND

Davis Central Park provides an approximately five acre open space heart in downtown Davis and adjacent to the University of California, Davis campus. This important site accommodates a variety of public uses and significant city events, and also serves as an example of community-championed place-making. The master plan created by CoDesign reflected the city's desire for a large central open space by expanding the park, at the time half the size, one block south across fourth street. Since then the southern area of the park has flourished, with popular and well used amenities like the Farmers Market, Central Park Gardens, and the Bicycle Hall of Fame.

The original north portion of the park has remained relatively untouched, with some of its features falling into disrepair. Various city departments have discussed improvements to better accommodate maximize the portion's programming and recreational value. This document lays out a vision for Central park in broad terms, improving various park amenities while considering the original master plan and overall park experience.

VISION

The vision presented in this Master Plan Update ensures that future improvements to Central Park will be made in a cohesive fashion that enhances and compliments the current vibrant experience of the park, fulfills the park potential as outlined in the original master plan, and ultimately improves the park's ability to serve the community of Davis.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

The Davis Central Park Master Plan was developed by CoDesign in the 1990's with extensive community input, which contributed to the park's successful expansion to the southern block despite previous development proposals for the space.

As part of the current process, the City of Davis organized two community meetings that were facilitated by RHAA. Residents, city staff, nearby property owners, and special interest groups were invited. Public discussion was encouraged and those attending were asked to voice opinions on the issues they found to be most crucial, as well as their favorite design elements. This crucial feedback was then incorporated into the proposed master plan update.

COMMUNITY MEETING ONE

In the first meeting, Anne Brunette introduced the project background, and RHAA presented site analyses, opportunities and constraints, and site strategies for the overall park as well as the five "opportunity areas" outlined in this document. Attendees were encouraged to share their own ideas and experiences about the park, and provide suggestions for the proposed design strategies. In addition to the public meeting, city staff presented the boards at an informational table at a Saturday Farmers Market event in the park, garnering more community input.

COMMUNITY MEETING TWO

Combining the site analyses and site strategies with community input from the first meeting, RHAA developed designs for the five opportunity areas and presented these in the second community meeting. Here attendees were able to critique the design and provide more specific suggestions.

The ideas received from the public have been vital to the development of the master plan update presented in this document, and public participation will continue to play an important role as the park improvements are implemented in the future.



Community lawn functions well.



Gardens provide a buffer from B Street traffic.



Sycamore grove lacks a buffer from B Street traffic. **Picnic area** could use more tables.



Northwest zone lacks an inviting program, perimeter path, and sense of enclosure.



Northern edge lacks park announcement, a buffer, and visual interest.



Fountain provides an iconic focal point and gathering space, but is not up to code and too steep to meet ADA accessibility requirements.



Garbage and storage structure are unattractive and encroach on adjacent walkways.



Restrooms are old and dilapidated. They divide the **museum** from the park.



Asphalt area feels barren and unwelcoming. Seatwalls are damaged by skateboard activity.



Horseshoe pit is underutilized and divides the surrounding space.

The southern areas of Central Park are well used and accommodate a variety of popular activities, while the older north end is relatively underutilized.

- 1 Central Park Gardens
- 2 Bicycle Hall of Fame
- 3 Fountain Plaza
- 4 Community Meadow
- 5 Farmers Market Playground
- 6 Farmers Market
- 7 Heritage Oak Deck
- 8 Sycamore Grove
- 9 Picnic and Barbecue Area
- 10 The Flying Carousel of the Delta Breeze
- 11 Horseshoe Pits
- 12 Northern Playground
- 13 Restrooms
- 14 Hattie Weber History Museum
- 15 Rose Garden



Central Park is an important open space heart for the City of Davis, providing a variety of vibrant public amenities and hosting important community events. The southern parts of the park are especially successful, with popular and well used features like the Farmers Market, Central Park Gardens, and the Bicycle Hall of Fame.

This master plan update returns the community focus to the original, northern areas of the park, currently underutilized. There are four discrete opportunity areas in the north end of the park, as well as the fountain in the south, that are examined in this updated master plan, with the goal of creating more spaces for people and program to fulfill the park potential as outlined in the original master plan.

- 1 Northwest Corner: A Shade Structure and Patio, Park Entry Path, Pedestrian Circuit, and Gardens. Gateway walls create a sense of entry, and new park sign announces programs and events. (Un-funded)
- 2 Universal Play Environment: Agriculture-themed accessible play features allow children of all abilities to play side by side. The existing and new playgrounds are united by a common fence.
- 3 History Plaza: This open plaza better connects the Hattie Weber History Museum to the park and accommodates events, while a pavement-illustrated agricultural map of Davis connects plaza users to Davis' history and geography.
- 4 Restroom Building: A new restroom building provides modern and safer facilities in a more central location. The building also integrates the existing garbage and equipment storage--all within one attractive structure.
- 5 Fountain: The iconic Central Park fountain is repaired and brought up to code to once again provide a water play feature and flexible gathering space. A new bicycle spoke pavement pattern links the fountain to the Bicycle Hall of Fame. (Un-funded)

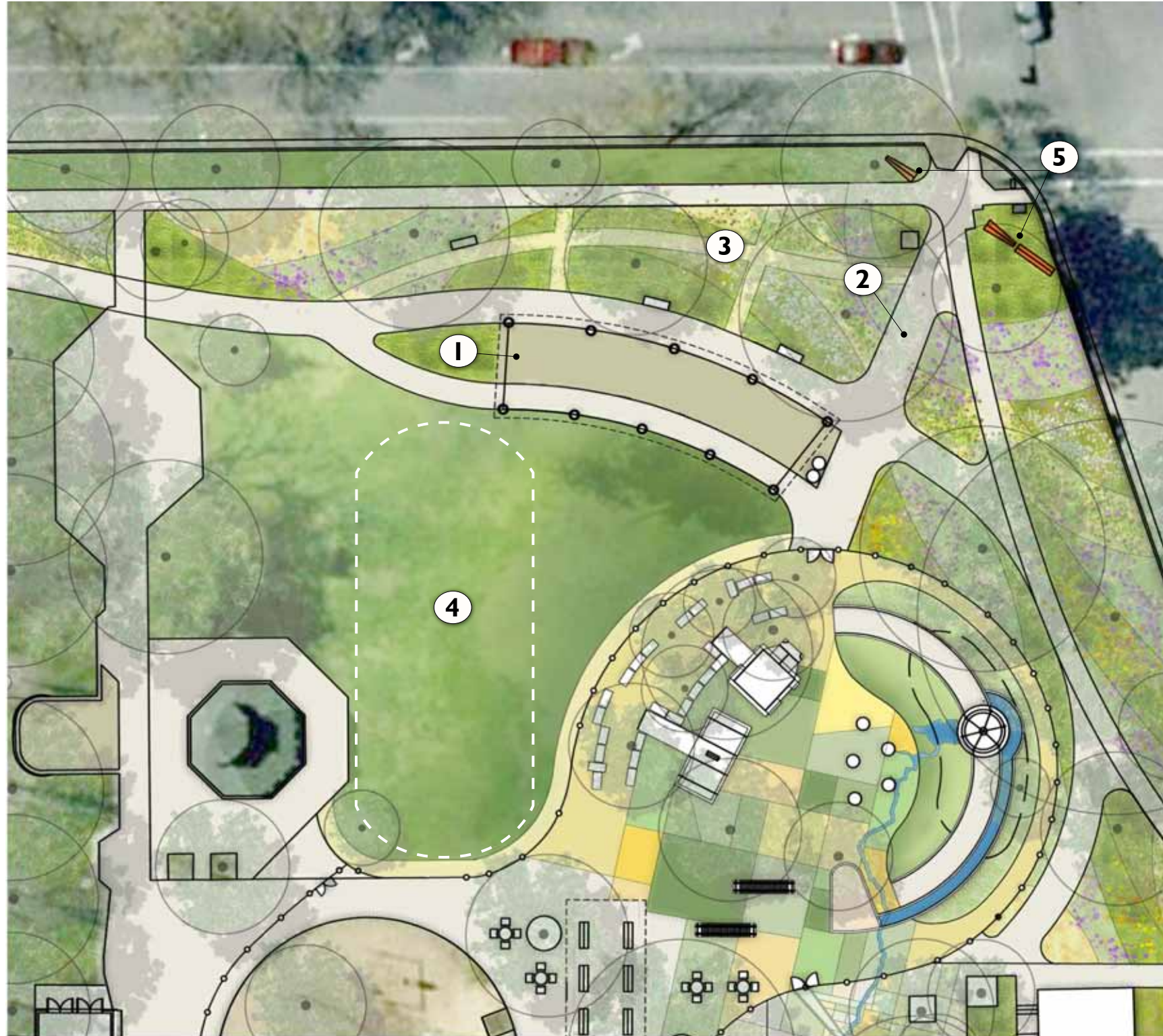


This master plan update will maximize the northern end of the park's ability to accommodate people, activating the currently underutilized spaces with new programming while enhancing current uses.

- 1** Native and climate-adapted gardens
- 2** Interior Pedestrian "Strolling" Walkway and Northwest Corner Entry Path
- 3** Shade Structure and Flexible-use Patio
- 4** North Meadow
- 5** Universal Play Environment
- 6** History Plaza
- 7** Restrooms and Storage/Garbage
- 8** Repaired and updated Fountain and Plaza



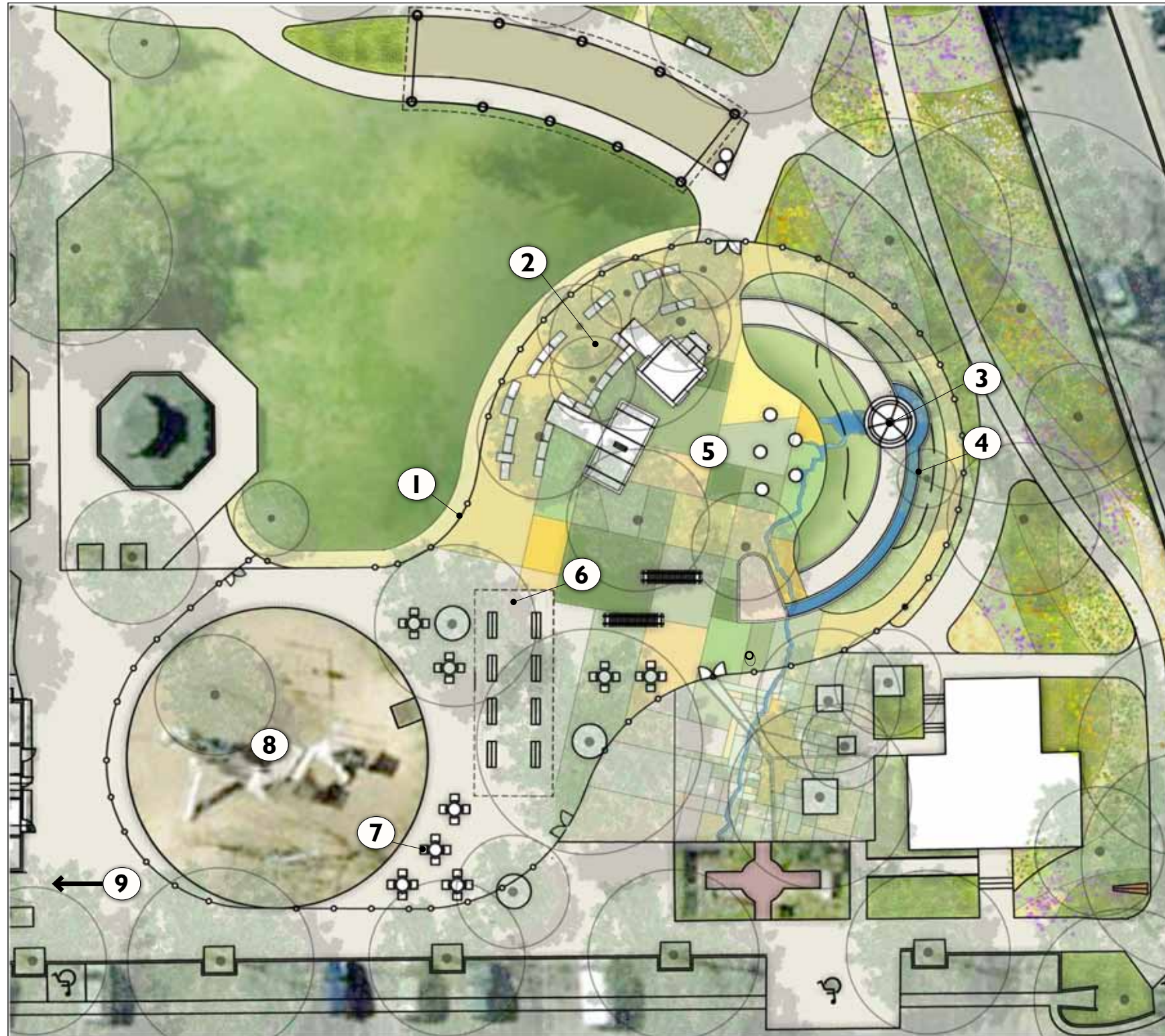
This master plan update reinvigorates the northwest corner of the park, improving its ability to accommodate activities and creating a stronger park identity. A grand park entry path and new gateway signs create a welcoming entrance, while a new message board announces events. Creating a new interior pedestrian walkway brings people closer to the park core and completes the park “strolling circuit.” Replacing unused areas of turf with gardens of native and climate adapted planting creates an attractive buffer from the traffic while reducing water use and providing habitat. A new shade structure and flexible-use patio accommodates more users and encloses the northern meadow, activating it with programming on all sides.



- 1 New shade structure and patio bring people and program. (Un-funded)
- 2 A broad park entry path creates a gateway into the park, while an interior pedestrian path allows for garden strolling and completes the park circuit.
- 3 Extended Central Park Gardens add a buffer and enclosure while enhancing beauty, reducing the lawn area; as well as providing habitat and educational opportunities.
- 4 The North meadow is activated by programming on all sides. The space is large enough to accommodate a temporary ice skating rink in the winter.
- 5 New park gateway signs and announcements board are provided in a more visible location.



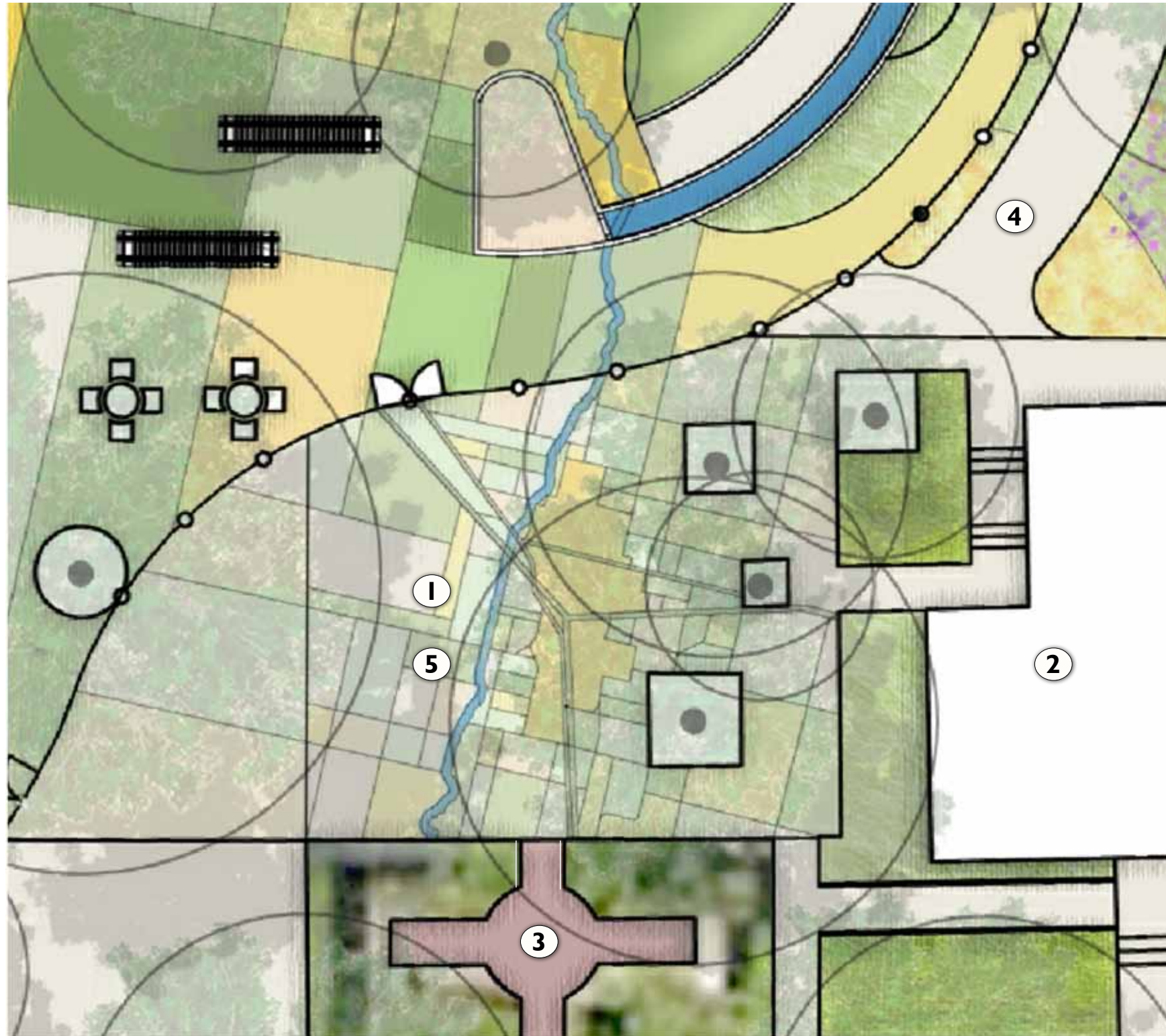
Children of all abilities deserve a place to play. This master plan update takes the opportunity to provide such a place in the otherwise underutilized space in and around the horseshoe pits, creating the first Universal Play Environment in Davis. This environment provides fully accessible play features that allow children to develop their physical, social, imaginary, and creative skills. An agricultural theme teaches children about Davis' geographic, agricultural, and economic legacy as they collaboratively play out the everyday processes that bring food from the farms to their plates.



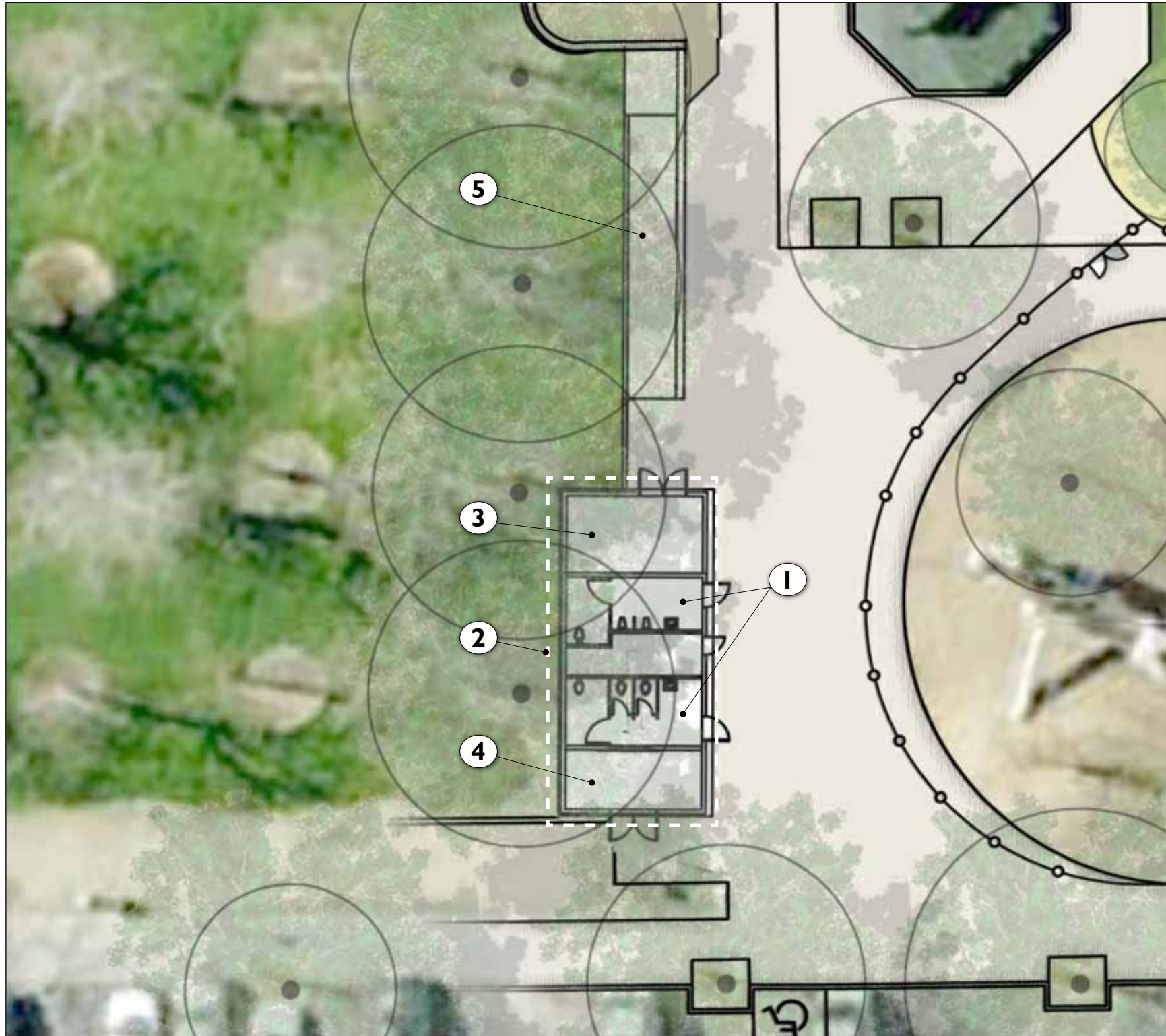
- 1 A new fence defines the space, unites existing and new play-grounds, protects children, and includes decorative and interactive play features.
- 2 The existing grove of trees creates an ideal space for retreat and quiet time. Stacked haybale sculptures offer places for seating, running, and exploration.
- 3 A planted berm offers a buffer zone and is crowned with a "Water Tower Playhouse" which offers vistas and social space, as well as interesting textures along its interior walls. Hand pumps allow children to pump water up the to water tower, illustrating how water is raised and redirected for agricultural uses, as well as providing upper body activity.
- 4 A sluice runs from the Water Tower playhouse down into an accessible sand pit, providing manipulative play. Children can control the flow of water with check dams along the sluice.
- 5 A central open play area provides active play features, including an accessible tractor, swaying hay wagon, livestock rockers, and conveyor belts. The resilient play surface portrays an agricultural field pattern. Putah Creek, a vital resource in Davis, is a central organizing element, and connects the play area to the adjacent history plaza.
- 6 A child-sized Farmers Market unites the two play areas and allows for social and imaginative play with make-believe vendor booths and music makers.
- 7 New tables, chairs, and a drinking fountain provide seating and play break amenities, and can accomodate childrens' parties.
- 8 Potential to add shade cloths to the existing play structure.
- 9 Potential to add water spigot at the Farmers Market play area sand box.

The Hattie Weber History Museum is an important landmark and park amenity, however it feels disconnected from the park by the existing restrooms. Relocating the restrooms creates an opportunity for an open plaza that reconnects the museum to the park, while providing a gathering space that can also accommodate events. Davis and its surrounding fields are illustrated in the ground-plane with a paving pattern, inviting park users to “walk” the city’s geographic, agricultural, and economic history.

- 1 Relocating the restroom opens up space for a gathering plaza.
- 2 The plaza connects the History Museum to the park in a more direct manner.
- 3 The Rose Garden is opened and integrated into history plaza as a gateway.
- 4 A broad path connects the plaza and park to the north.
- 5 A paving pattern illustration allows visitors to “walk” the history and geography of the agricultural fields that surround Davis, as well as Putah Creek, the Southern Pacific Railroad, and major freeways.



The existing restrooms are dilapidated, poorly located, and unable to accommodate the larger park user population. Relocating them to a more central position in the park allows them to better serve the Farmers Market, picnic tables, and play areas. This open, more visible location is also safer and allows parents to better supervise the restroom users. The new structure can also accommodate the existing garbage and park supply storage in a more attractive and practical manner, with the possibility of installing a green roof or solar panels.

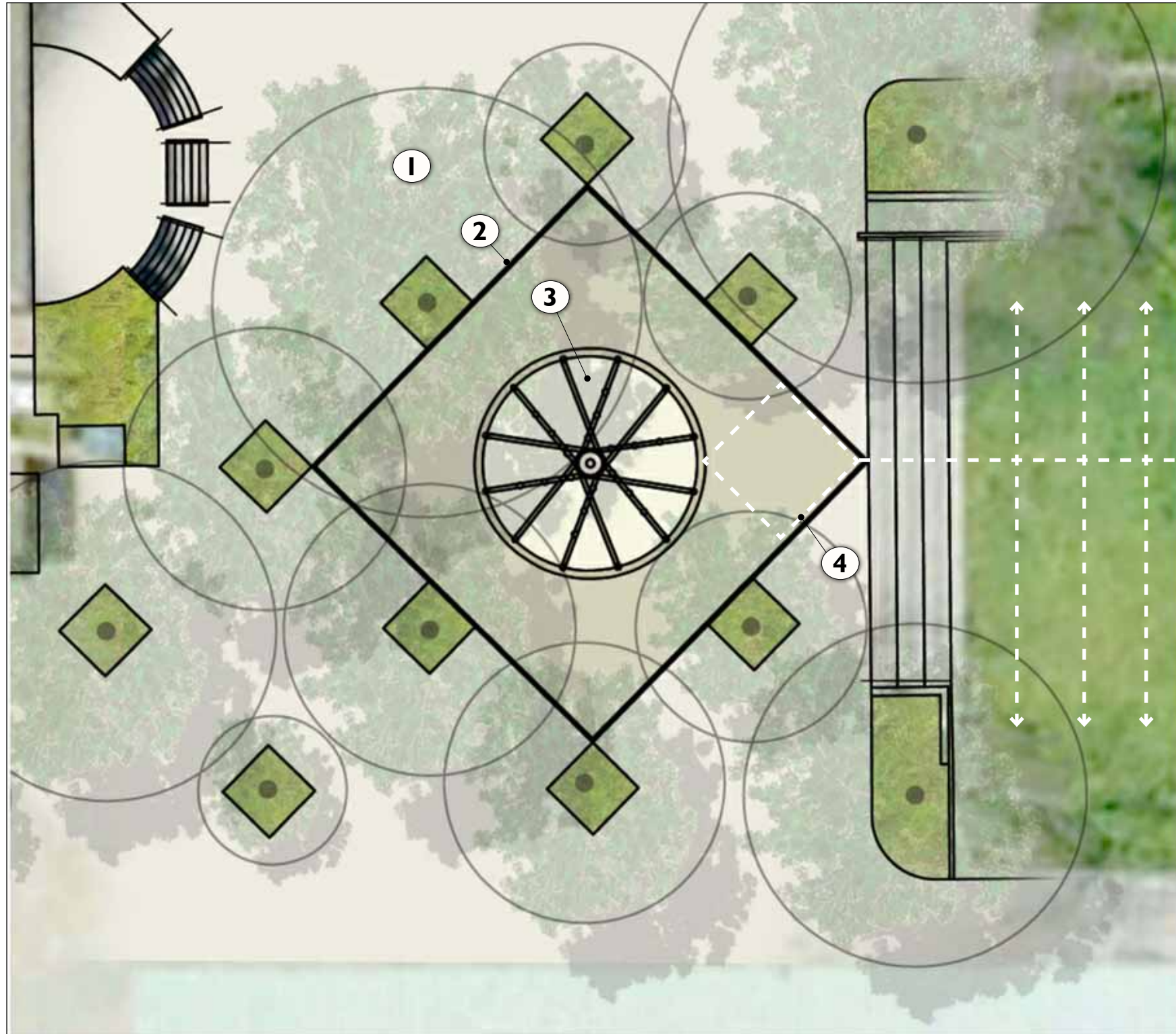


- 1** The new restroom building is more centrally located and better serves the park program areas. The open location allows for better visibility and safety.
- 2** There is a possibility of installing a green roof or solar panels on the restroom roof.

Existing storage shed and garbage enclosure can be integrated into the restroom.
- 3** Storage Shed
- 4** Garbage Enclosure
- 5** Ramp provides ADA access to Sycamore grove. Existing bicycle racks to be relocated.



The Davis Central Park fountain provides an iconic focal point, important play amenity, and well-used flexible plaza space. Unfortunately the fountain's mechanical systems are broken. The plaza and fountain also do not meet modern codes concerning handicap accessibility and sanitary water recirculation. A redesigned fountain and plaza restore and modernize this important park feature, while also providing opportunities to make it more artistically meaningful and sustainable. A new bicycle wheel paving pattern expresses the City's long standing enthusiasm for bicycles. The fountain water could potentially be stored to irrigate the adjacent community meadow to reduce maintenance requirements and conserve water.



- 1 The plaza slopes are re-graded to conform to code requirements
- 2 The plaza drains into perimeter valley drain, while the fountain water is collected in a central drain.
- 3 At-grade fountain jets and misters create a Universal Play feature. These jets are integrated into a new bicycle wheel paving pattern that speaks to the adjacent Bicycle Hall of Fame.
- 4 There is a potential for storing the used fountain water in an underground cistern and recycling it for subsurface turf irrigation to conserve water and reduce maintenance.



