

Splash!

at Charles Young Park

Project Update February 2022



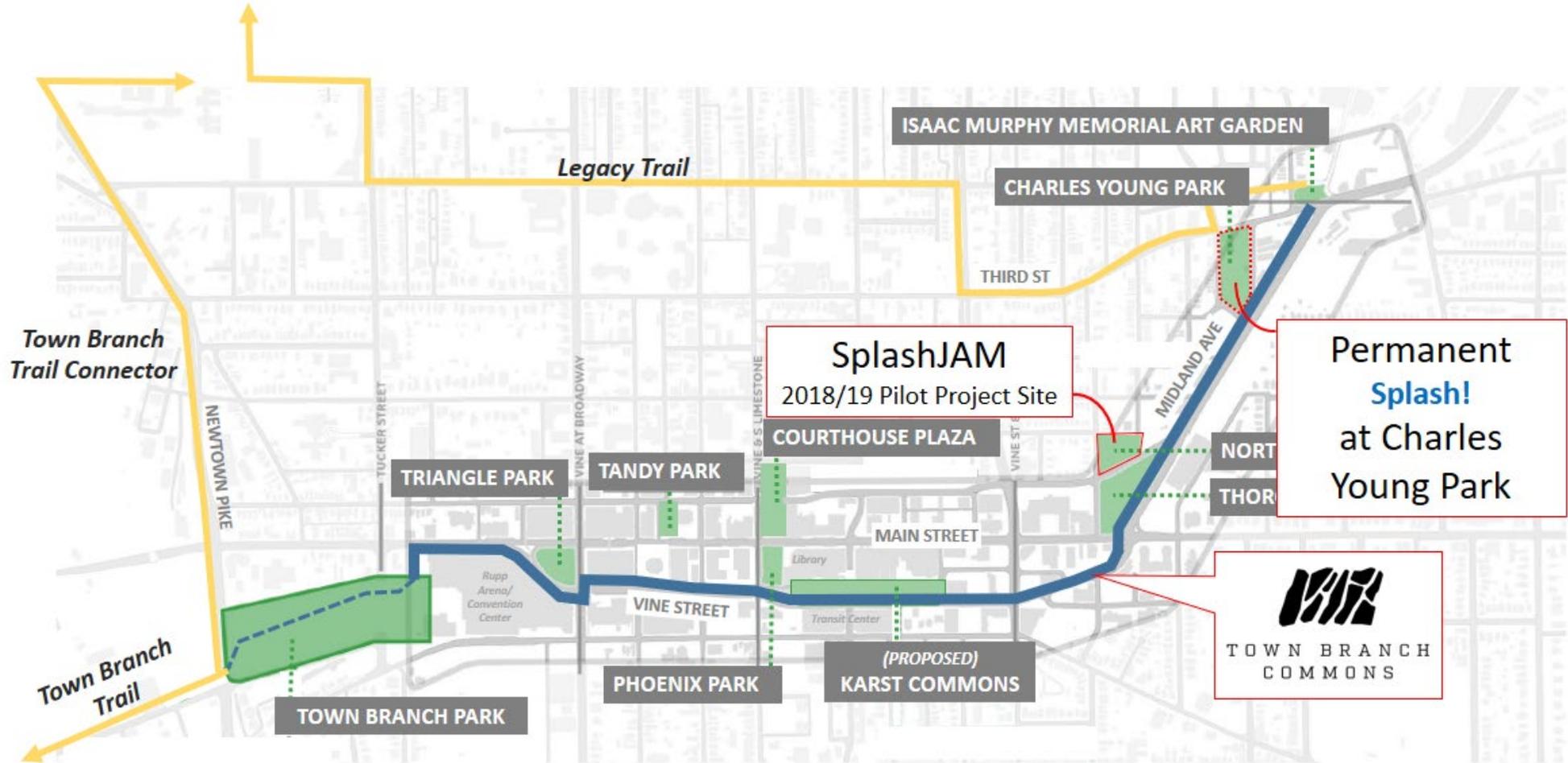
LEXINGTON

*A Mayor's Office project in partnership
with the Division of Parks and Recreation*

Charles Young Park

Charles Young Park is located directly off the Town Branch Commons which transforms a vehicular passage into a safe multi-modal public space that expands our urban tree canopy and manages stormwater. The Commons connects diverse neighborhoods along its length through downtown as it follows the historic path of Town Branch – Lexington’s original water source. Once completed this trail will link the downtown core with the greater Bluegrass Region through its connections to the city-wide trail system.

Charles Young Park is one of 9 downtown spaces connected by the trail system, and Splash! is the missing piece to provide a direct and meaningful connection between the Charles Young Park’s existing amenities and the city-wide trail system.



Over two summers a temporary pop-up splash pad at NorthEastern park known as SplashJAM, offered a safe space for water play. SplashJAM offered residents and visitors an opportunity to relax, stay cool and get out and play. And offered a much needed amenity in downtown for water play. The success of SplashJAM confirmed a water feature at Charles Young Park was welcomed by the residents and now a permanent installation will of Splash! will happen at Charles Young Park.

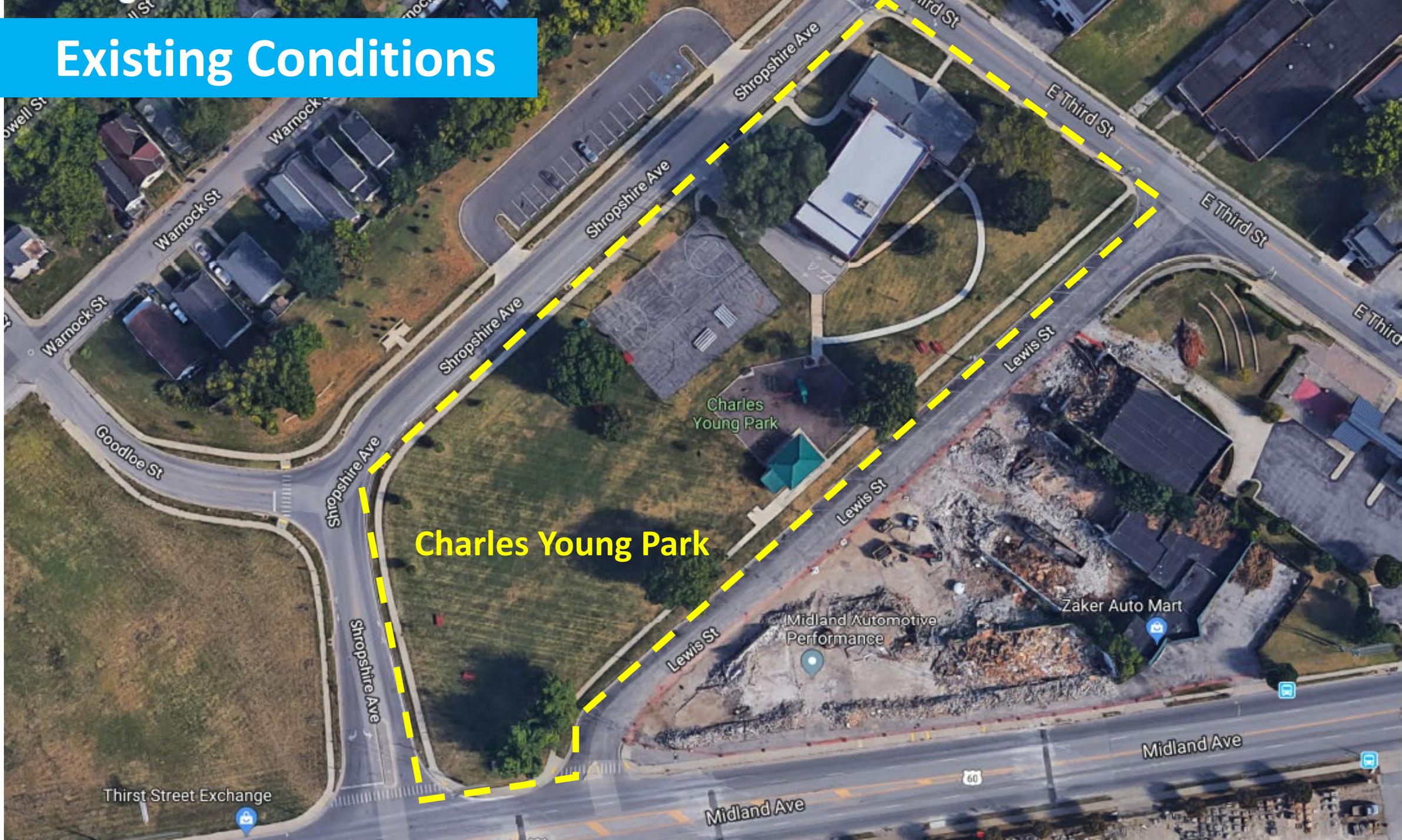


HISTORIC CONTEXT VISUAL

The Greater East End neighborhood, including William Wells Brown, is a diverse neighborhood that lies northeast of Downtown and has a rich history beginning after the American Civil War. Charles Young Park is located in the East End of Lexington – an area that is currently experiencing a renaissance through economic development, housing and an increased appreciation of the culture of the area.

We also recognize and have heard from the neighborhood that this site is a local community landmark and cherished amenity. During an era of social segregation, the Charles Young Community Center was established in 1934 as the city's first indoor public recreational facility for African-Americans, and the adjacent park was only the second outdoor public recreational facility for African-Americans in Lexington. Additionally, the park was named after Charles Young – who was a soldier, diplomat, and civil rights leader. Both the center and park are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, affirming and celebrating the important role of Charles Young Center and Park, for its contribution to the cultural & ethnic history of Lexington, and particularly of the African-American community. Our efforts with Splash! and other improvements at the park are meant to enhance and build upon its previous successes.

Existing Conditions



Renovated Playground

The Community Development Block Grant funded improvements have been completed and a public celebration and ribbon cutting for the playground was held in August 2021. Improvements have led to this park becoming the number one visited park in downtown Lexington and continues to support numerous programs and community events for the adjacent neighborhoods.

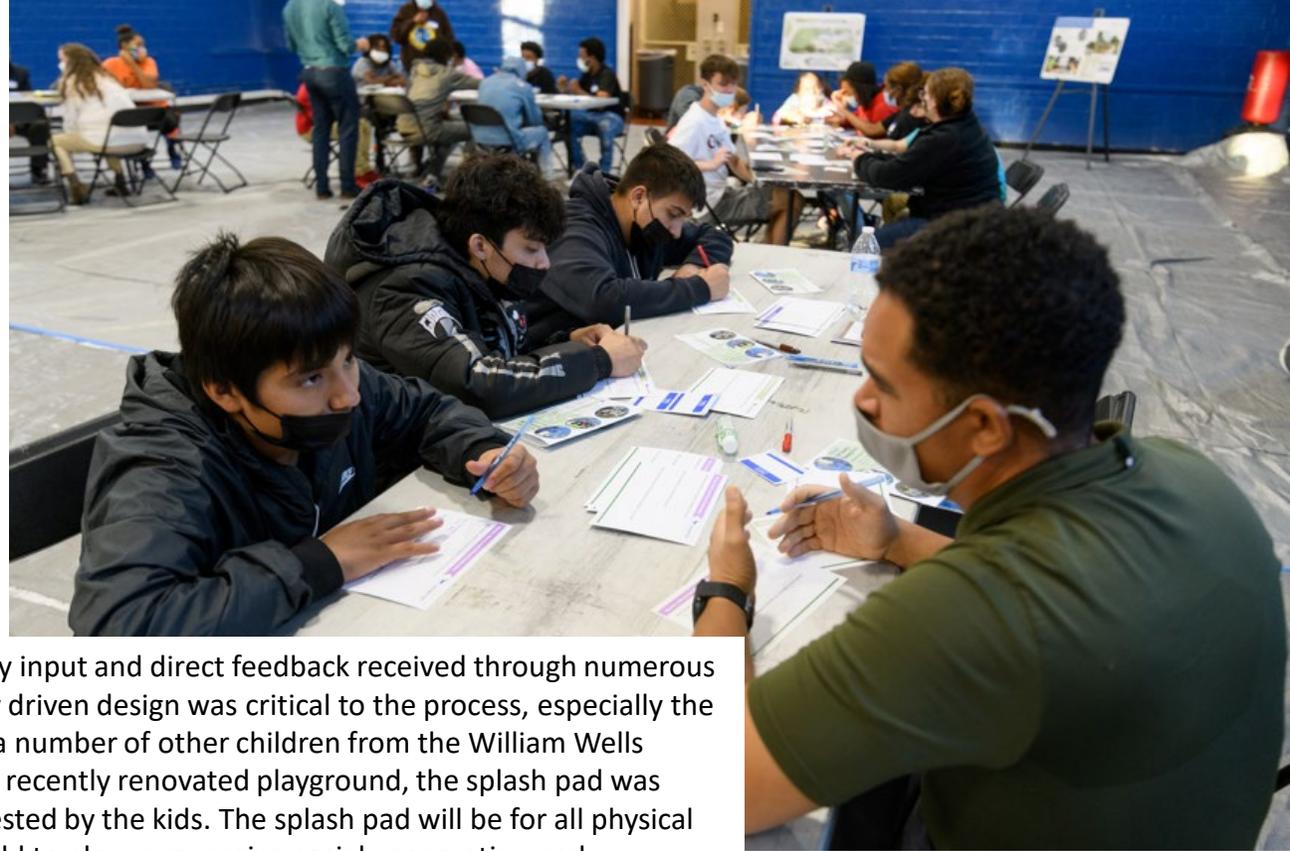
The equipment includes pieces for all physical abilities as well as many opportunities for more than one child to play encouraging social cooperation and interaction. Additionally, several places within the playground were identified and reserved for potential cultural interpretive opportunities in the future.



Splash! Conceptual Plan

Splash! will be a nature inspired water play zone within Charles Young Park. Located steps away from the newly renovated playground and community center, Splash! will offer various water-based sensory and educational experiences. The project aims to open up access to the park and create a welcoming sense of arrival, offer a new amenity to the East End Neighborhood that faces toward the neighborhood, and ensure improvements are all implemented while continuing to preserve the park's significant historic features and ensuring flexible space for pop-up community programming.





The Splash! plan responds to two years' worth of community input and direct feedback received through numerous engagement events, zooms, and online surveys. Community driven design was critical to the process, especially the input of our youth ambassadors from the Colonel Club and a number of other children from the William Wells Brown Community Center. Building upon the success of the recently renovated playground, the splash pad was carefully designed to encourage playing “together” as requested by the kids. The splash pad will be for all physical abilities and offer many opportunities for more than one child to play encouraging social cooperation and interaction.



The work underway at Charles Young Park is historic. The neighborhood kids are taking part in a project that is changing the face of this neighborhood, and someday they will proudly look back and say I did that, I made a difference!

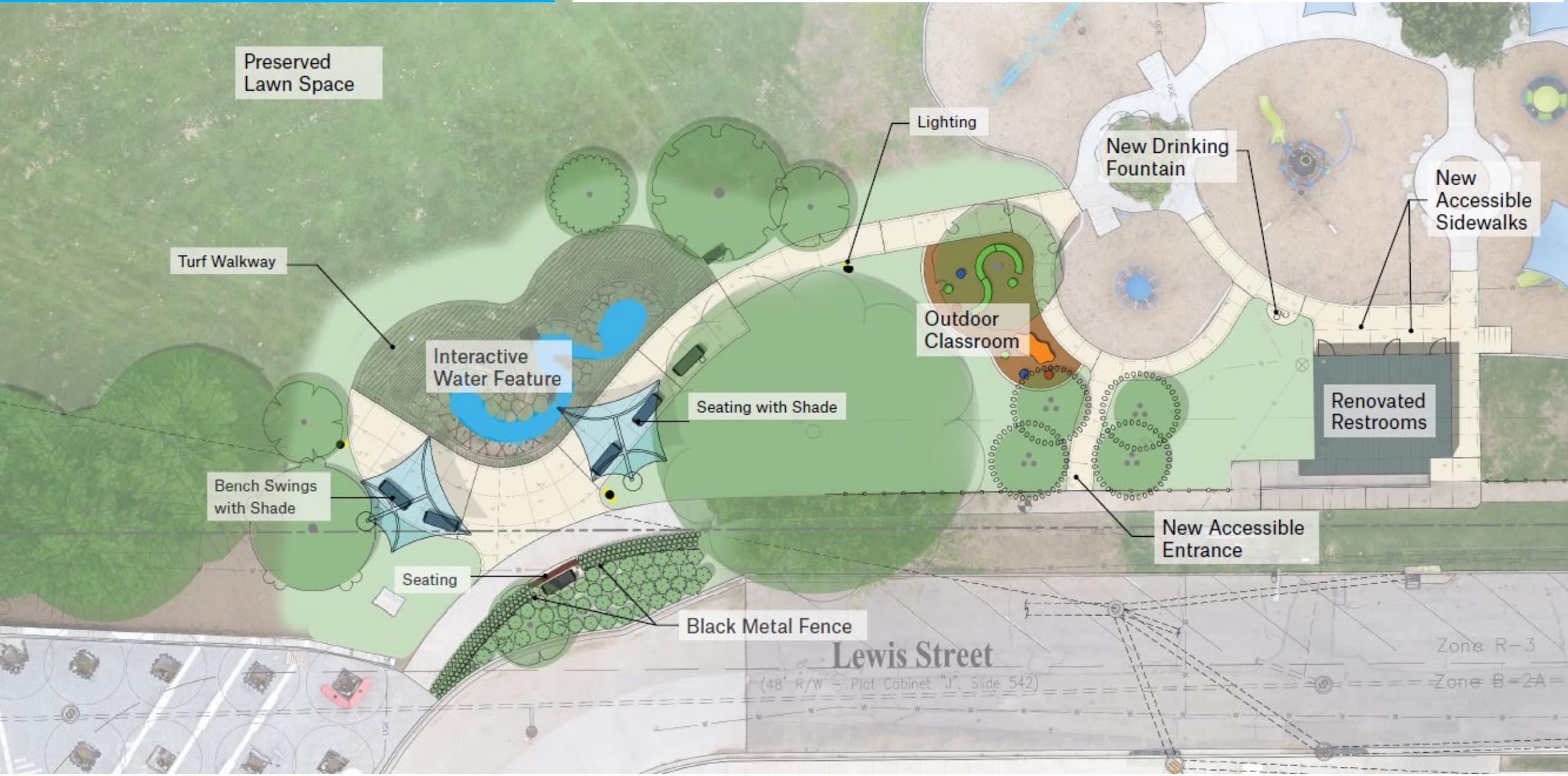
-Jill Wilson, Director of William Wells Brown Community Center

-Anthony Jackson, Parks and Recreation



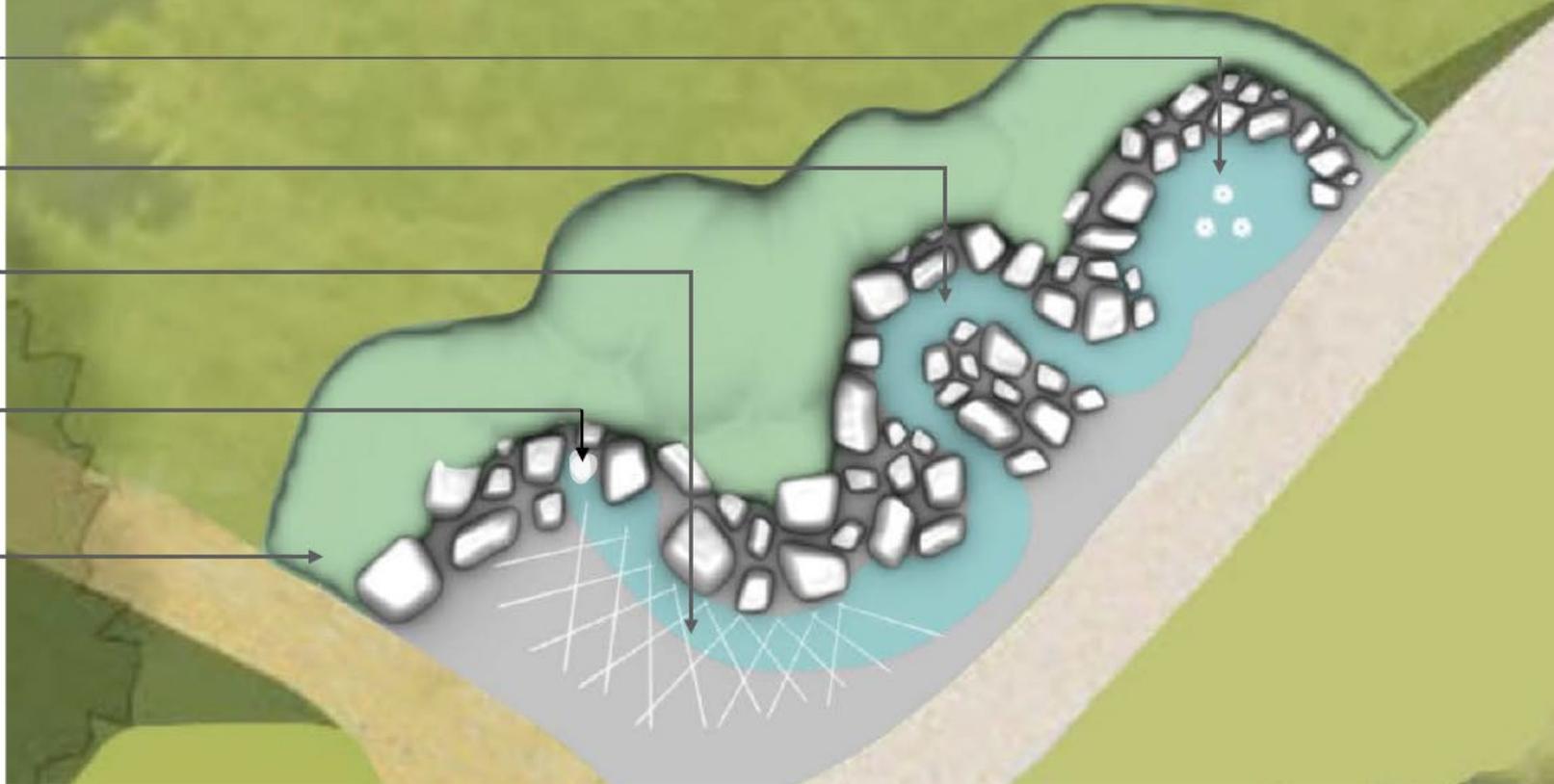
Splash! Design Plan

The Splash! project will be the first of its kind in downtown Lexington. Bringing nature based water play features and creating a significant neighborhood destination playspace. The play space will be universally designed, safe for a wide variety of age groups, and offer amenities for comfort for caregivers and those stopping in off the trail.



Unyielding Current – the Charles Young Narrative

- Mist Pool
Dies in Foreign Land -
- Bend don't break
Forced Retirement
- Success through determination
Braided Arm Band
- Breaking out of slavery -
broken boulder water origin
- Turf covered mound



The design of the water feature was not haphazard, as the project team was extremely thoughtful about the splash pad elements so that they are not only fun to play in but also provide opportunity for sharing the rich story of Charles Young, the park's namesake.

Kentucky native, Charles Young was a soldier, diplomat, and civil rights leader, he overcame stifling inequality to become a leading figure in the years after the Civil War when the United States emerged as a world power. His work ethic, academic leadership, and devotion to duty provided a strong base for his achievements in the face of racism and oppression. His long and distinguished career as a commissioned officer in the United States Army made him a popular figure of his time and a role model for generations of new leaders. ([from national parks webpage](#)). Governor Andy Beshear announced earlier this month, that the U.S. Department of Defense has approved the posthumous honorary promotion of U.S. Army Col. Charles Young to Brigadier General that the governor previously requested.



Military Aiguiette -
Arm band

Preserved
Lawn Space

Water Bubbler

Turf Walkway

Interactive
Water Feature

Seating with Shade

Bench Swings
with Shade

Seating

Black Metal Fence

Lewis



Preserved
Lawn Space

Water Arches

Turf Walkway

Interactive
Water Feature

Seating with S

Bench Swings
with Shade

Seating

Black Metal



Preserved
Lawn Space

Water Stream

Turf Walkway

Interactive
Water Feature

Seating v

Bench Swings
with Shade

Seating

Black Metal Fence

Lewis



Preserved
Lawn Space

Water Flowers & Shallow Pool

Turf Walkway

Interactive
Water Feature

Seating with Shad

Bench Swings
with Shade

Seating

Black Metal Fence



Nigerian National Flower - *Costus Spectabilis*

Lewis

Preserved
Lawn Space

Artificial Grass Mounds

Turf Walkway

Interactive
Water Feature

Seating with Sh

Bench Swings
with Shade

Seating

Black Metal F



Preserved
Lawn Space

Shade & Seating

Turf Walkway

Interactive
Water Feature

Seating with Shade

Bench Swings
with Shade

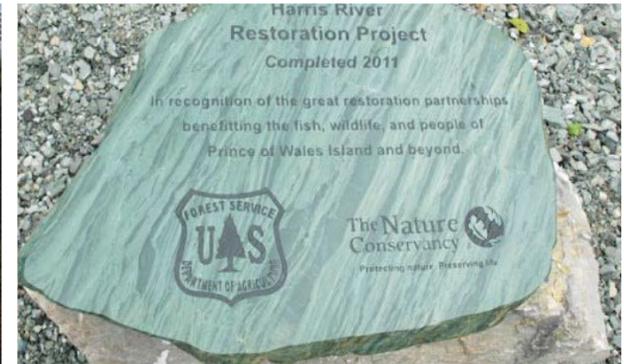
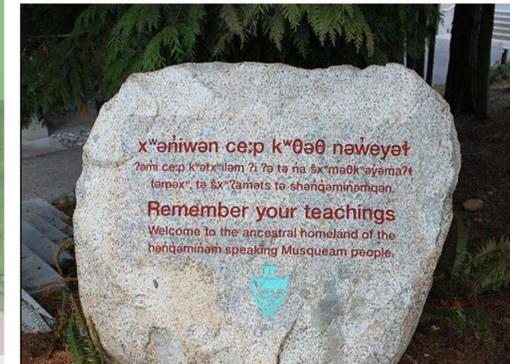
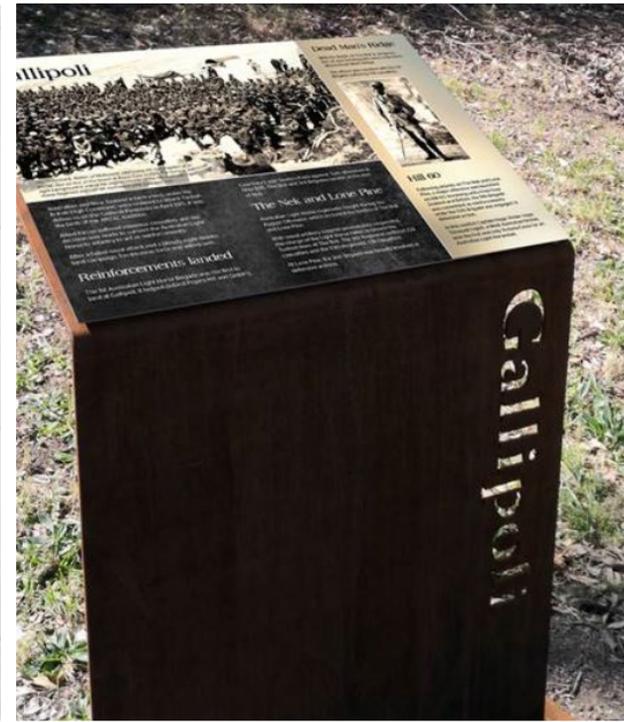
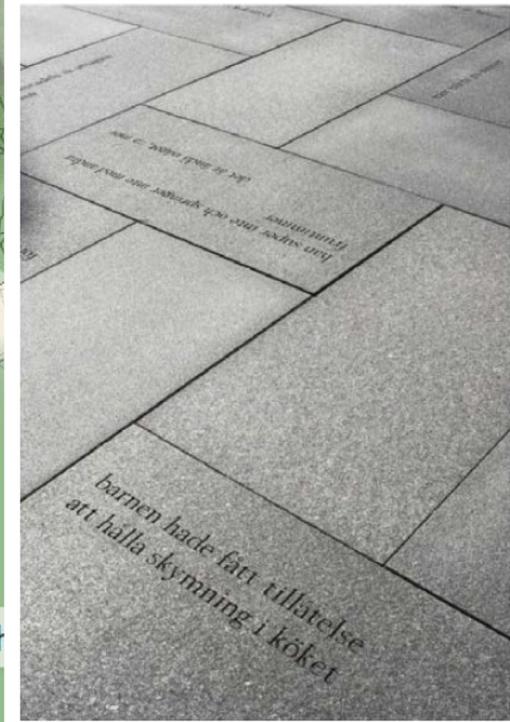
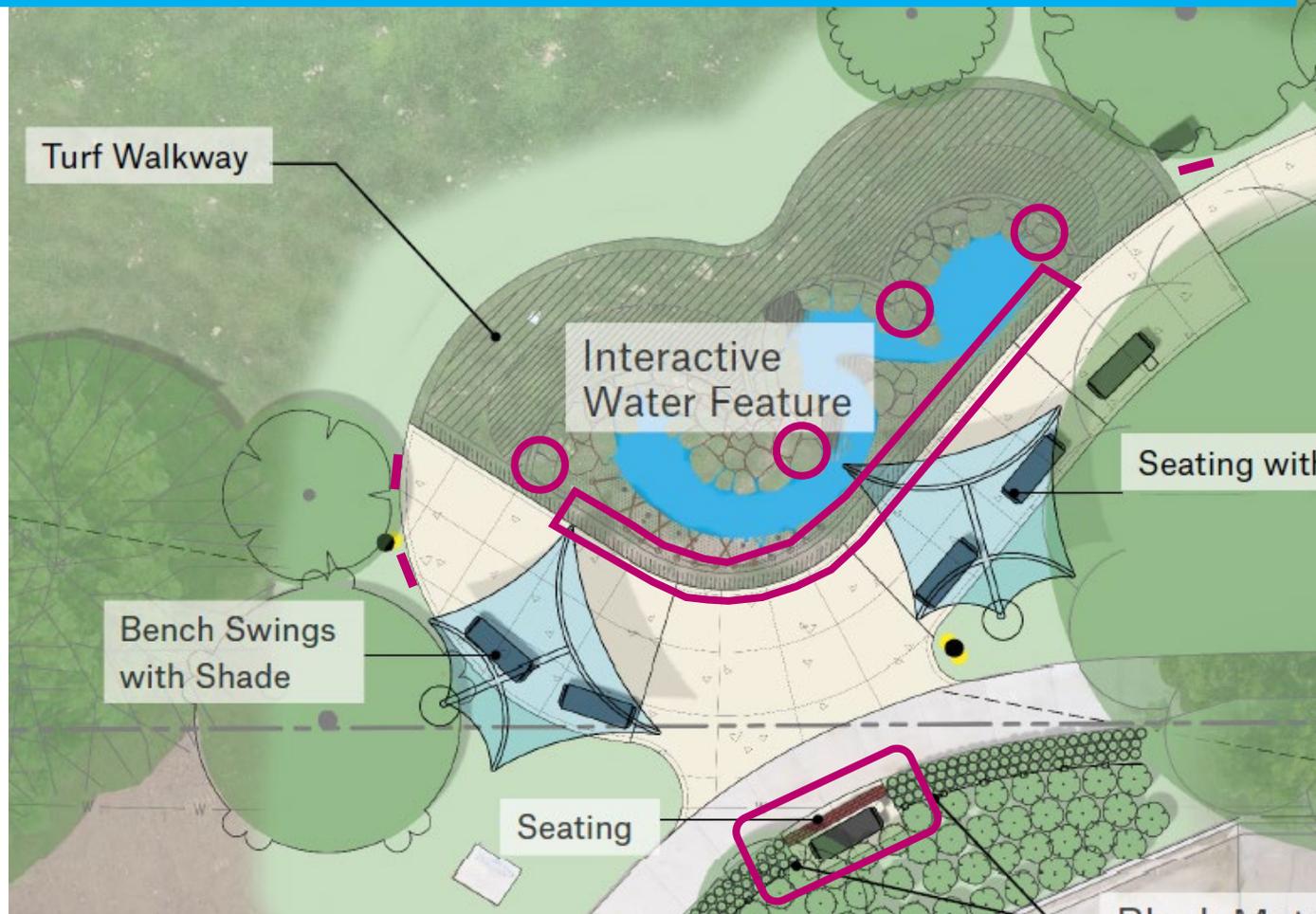
Seating

Black Metal Fence

Lewis



Splash! Signage Opportunities



Splash! will include a variety of signage opportunities too – possible installations include interpretive signs, etchings into the splash pad, or surrounding stones to tell the story of Charles Young, the history of the East End, and to educate visitors about water quality through the use of the new water feature. Other opportunities may exist for future installation, including memorial pavers, public art or other engaging educational and cultural features.

Splash! at Charles Young Park

Coming Spring 2023



Design and Consulting Team:
Gresham Smith
Fluidity Design Consultants
EHI Consultants
Joseph & Joseph + Bravura Architects
Shrout Tate Wilson Consulting Engineers

This project is made possible by a \$900,000 grant and the leadership of Blue Grass Community Foundation with support from the following charitable donors and BGCF fund holders: Blue Grass Community Foundation, Community Ventures, J.M. Smucker Co., James and Martha Monroe Charitable Fund, and the Knight Foundation Donor Advised fund. And our additional grant sponsor American Water Foundation and the National Recreation & Park Association in partnership with our local Kentucky American Water office who granted \$250,000 to the splashpad project..