

ROBERTSON HILLS PARK MASTER PLAN

Town of Mills, Wyoming

July 31, 2018



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:



Table of Contents

I.	Acknowledgments	2
II.	Project Description	5
III.	Site Information	7
IV.	Existing Conditions	8-9
V.	Public Input	10-11
VI.	Inspiration	12-13
VII.	Concepts / Options	14-16
VIII.	Do It Yourself Base	17
IX.	Master Plan Description	19
X.	Master Plan	
	Phase 1	21
	Phase 2	23
	Phase 3	25
	Phase 4	27
	Master Plan Poster	29
XI.	Community Trail Connections	31
XII.	Strategic Implementation	33-34

Acknowledgments



TOWN OF MILLS

Mayor Seth Coleman

Town Council

Gary Edds

Cecil Engel

Ruth Pitts

Sarah McCarthy

Mike Coleman, Public Works Director

Kevin O'Hearn, Building Official

Scott Radden, Planning Zoning Director

DESIGN TEAM

Matt Fridell, Landscape Architect

Tanya Olson, Landscape Architect

Copyright © 2018 by
Tallgrass Landscape Architecture, LLC
All rights reserved.

Published by Tallgrass Landscape Architecture, LLC
Custer, South Dakota

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher and the Town of Mills, Wyoming.

Limit of Liability / Disclaimer of Warranty: While the design professionals who have crafted this report have used their best efforts in preparing this document, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this report. The advice and strategies contained herein may be subject to modification based upon further study, the revelation of new information relating to the project and reinterpretations of existing knowledge of the project area.

This report is also available in electronic format from the author.

Tallgrass Landscape Architecture, LLC
413 North 4th Street
Custer, SD 57730
605.673.3167 Phone
www.tallgrasslandscapearchitecture.com

Thank You to Our Stakeholders

July 31, 2018

Town of Mills
Town of Mills Town Hall
704 Fourth Street
Mills, WY 82644

RE: Robertson Hills Master Plan

Dear Stakeholders in the Town of Mills,

Thank you for participating in the Master Planning process for the new park in your new neighborhood! Your contributions are appreciated and valued.

Each time we act in the public sphere we help move our communities forward by being part of the most democratic of processes - showing up. Participating in the community forums and events that our communities pursue is the very foundation of what makes us citizens.

The Town of Mills Mission is:

“To service our residents, businesses and visitors through leadership while providing a clean and sustainable community for our present and future citizens.

To develop and grow as a vibrant community that recognizes the value of economic prosperity through investments and partnerships.

Finally, to inform and involve our citizens by providing accountability, continued fiscal health and a community spirit that provides opportunities for all Town of Mills businesses and citizens.”

Thank you again.



The Town of Mills created this Master Plan to guide the future development of the new Robertson Hills Park within this new and upcoming neighborhood.

The town of Mills has five dedicated parks within its borders. All of the parks within the city function as Neighborhood Parks, and this one is no different. However, it is new! The site is a blank canvas. Site drainage is installed in the low spot, a gas pipeline transverses the north side, and new homes border the park on two sides. But that is all!

METHODS

In addition to assessing the park site for general concerns and reviewing the neighborhood utility plans, a public meeting was held to receive public comment.

Several standards and laws are referenced, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the National Recreation and Parks parks metric. Playground safety is determined using the Public Playground Safety Handbook, published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

DECISION MAKING

Mills staff and council reviewed public comment and provided direction to the design team at staff meetings. Staff and council are deeply committed to the quality of their public spaces and are working hard to create long term plans for improving their parks and the overall community. At these two parks, improvements are needed, the community generally wanted to keep the core organizational principles of the parks in tact for practical, functional and nostalgic reasons.



Image 1: Windshield tour of the park location.

SITE INFORMATION

Robertson Hills Park is a newly designated 4.06 acre park on the rapidly developing and newly annexed west end of the Town of Mills. It is a neighborhood park, intended for the residents of this new neighborhood, but is visible from the adjacent Robertson Road. It will represent the public aspects of the community forming here.

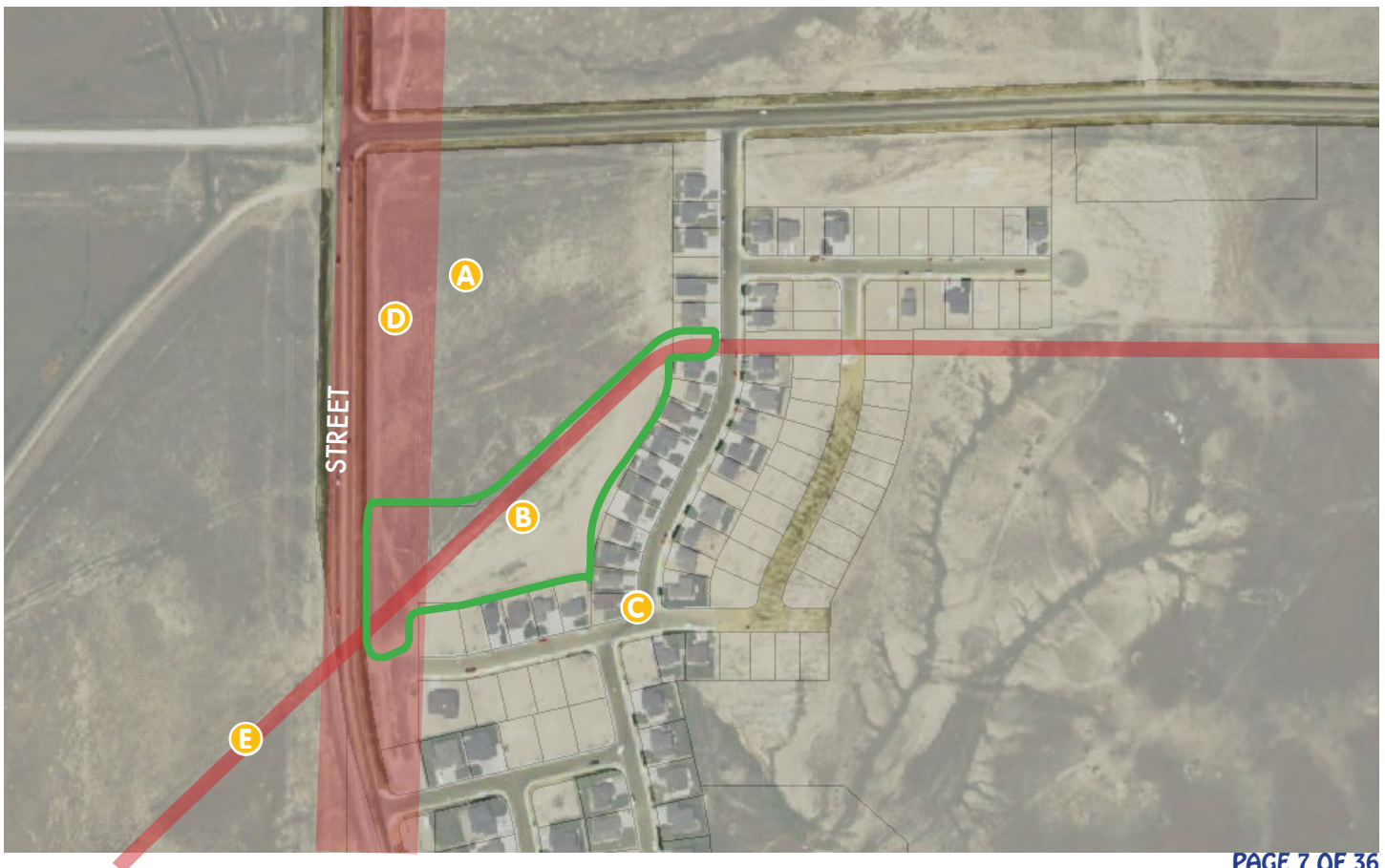
The key attribute of a neighborhood park is that they (as the name implies) serve a specific neighborhood. They typically range in size from 1- 5 acres, and benefit from strong pedestrian connections such as trails and sidewalks to residents within the service radius. Neighborhood parks generally include a playground, tables with or without a shelter, open areas for active play, and quite often hard surface courts for basketball, tennis or other racket sports. They are intended to serve the active and passive needs of all segments of the neighborhood from children to mature adults. Generally they are not used for events that involve large groups of people.

This park fits that description well.

Major Features (continues numbering from left):

- A. Adjacent commercial lot
- B. Robertson Hills Park
- C. Neighborhood
- D. Overhead Power Utility Corridor
- E. Underground Pipeline Utility Corridor

The site is currently empty and awaits the implementation of this plan.



EXISTING CONDITIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS



PUBLIC INPUT

COMMUNITY INPUT OVERVIEW

Community input was gathered at one Town Council meeting (no public attended this meeting) and a Public Meeting held at the Senior Center January 23, 2018.

Town Council

The Town Council provided direct feedback to the park options that were presented to them. Their feedback was directly received in a meeting.

Public Input

Kids and adults were invited to weigh in with several exercises including:

- Design your own park
- Concept Plan Commenting
- Money and Dot Voting

The results of the Money and Dot Voting follow:

	Amenities	\$	Dots	Notes
A	Large Playground	\$416	9	Included, playgrounds rated very high
B	Amphitheater	\$240	2	Included in grading package (with irrigated Grass)
C	Small Playground	\$236		Included.
D	Irrigated Grass	\$136	2	Included.
E	Balance Bike Track	\$130		Included.
F	Natural Playground	\$120	5	Not specifically included, but could be part of playgrounds.
G	Picnic Area / Gazebo	\$112	4	Included.
H	Park Shelter	\$66	2	Small Shelter Included.
I	Exercise Area (6 station min.)	\$51	3	Not specifically included at this time, room allowed for it.
J	Basketball Court	\$38	2	Included as all age activity.
K	Bike - Jump Park	\$35	4	Not included - areas to east of neighborhood available.
L	Skate Park	\$20	2	Not included.
M	10' Wide Trail	\$20	2	8' Trail included.
N	Restrooms (Portable)	\$20	2 + 3	Not specifically included at this time, room allowed for it.
O	Multi-Court	\$15	3 + 1	Not specifically included at this time, basketball could allow it.
P	Multi-Station Fitness Course	\$7	2 + 1	Not specifically included at this time, room allowed for it.
Q	Park Shelter - Large	\$5	+ 1	See Gazebo.
R	Park Shelter - Medium	\$1		See Gazebo.
S	Picnic Area - No Shelter	\$0		Not specifically included at this time, room allowed for it.
T	Plaza or Decorative Paving	\$0	1	Not specifically included at this time.
U	Medium Playground	\$0	1	See Playgrounds above.
V	Irrigated Grass - small area	\$0	1	Large area included.
W	Tennis Court	\$0	+1	Not included due to space and slope requirements.
X	Volleyball Court	\$0	1	Not included due to space and slope requirements.
Y	Public Art	\$0		Not included due to costs.
Z	Community Garden	\$0	+1	Not included. Space within park could be opened for it later.














PUBLIC INPUT



PUBLIC MEETING



INSPIRATION

PARK ITEM	TYPICAL PLANNING COSTS	
Multi-Station Fitness Course	24,000	
Exercise Area (6 Stations at single location)	20,000	
Irrigated Grass Field - Large	50,000+	
Irrigated Grass Field - Medium (15,000 sf)	25,000	
Irrigated Grass Field - Small (5,000 sf)	8,000	
Multi-Court	20,000	
Basket Ball Court	30,000	
Tennis Court - Small	87,500	
Bicycle Track - Balance Bike Loop for Small Kids	5-10,000	
Bicycle Track - Jump Park	20-200,000	
Skate Park	100,000	
Volley Ball Court	50,000	
Amphitheater (could combine with lawn)	50,000	

PARK ITEMS

Park Shelter - Large

2100,000



Park Shelter - Medium

45,000



Park Shelter - Small

25,000



Picnic Area -
No shelter (table, bench,

grill, trash)

4-5,000



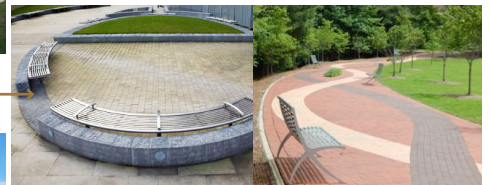
Gazebo

25-40,000



Plaza or Decorative Pavement

10-20,000



8-10 per LF

Restrooms (Portable Only)

10,000



10' Wide Trail Through Park (1,250 or so)

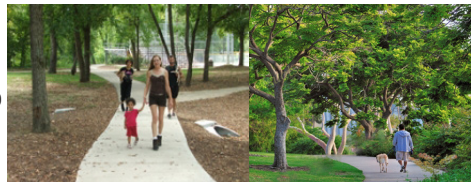
50,000



40 per LF

Trail Loops within Park

36,000



24 per LF

Playground - Large

500,000



Playground - Medium

100-200,000



Playground - Small

50-100,000



Natural Playground

50-100,000

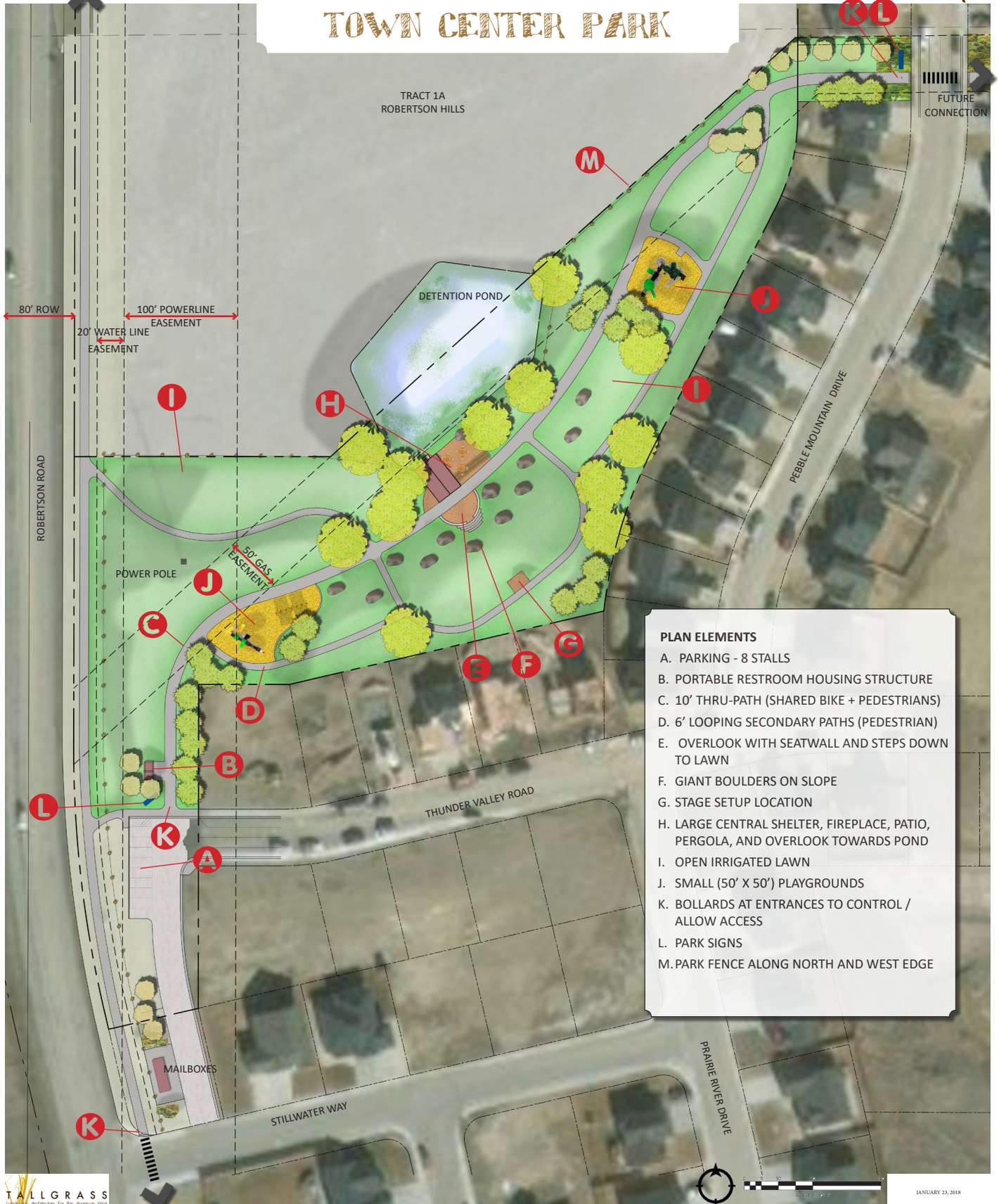


« ROBERTSON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK »

CONCEPT PLAN A TOWN CENTER PARK



300' TO POISON SPIDER ROAD
THEN 0.5 MILES TO 257



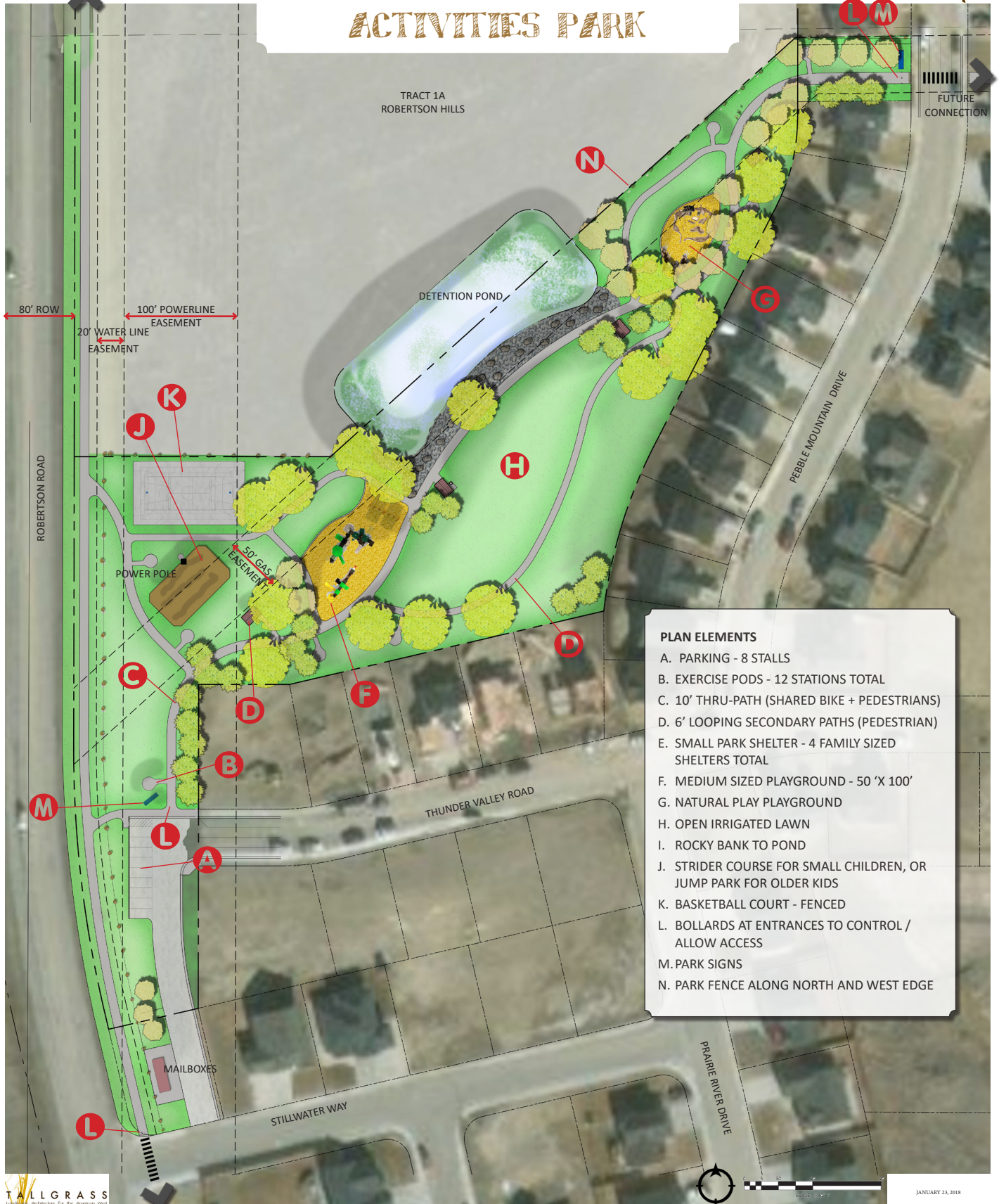
- PLAN ELEMENTS**
- A. PARKING - 8 STALLS
 - B. PORTABLE RESTROOM HOUSING STRUCTURE
 - C. 10' THRU-PATH (SHARED BIKE + PEDESTRIANS)
 - D. 6' LOOPING SECONDARY PATHS (PEDESTRIAN)
 - E. OVERLOOK WITH SEATWALL AND STEPS DOWN TO LAWN
 - F. GIANT BOULDERS ON SLOPE
 - G. STAGE SETUP LOCATION
 - H. LARGE CENTRAL SHELTER, FIREPLACE, PATIO, PERGOLA, AND OVERLOOK TOWARDS POND
 - I. OPEN IRRIGATED LAWN
 - J. SMALL (50' X 50') PLAYGROUNDS
 - K. BOLLARDS AT ENTRANCES TO CONTROL / ALLOW ACCESS
 - L. PARK SIGNS
 - M. PARK FENCE ALONG NORTH AND WEST EDGE

« ROBERTSON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK »

CONCEPT PLAN B ACTIVITIES PARK



300' TO POISON SPIDER ROAD
THEN 0.5 MILES TO 257



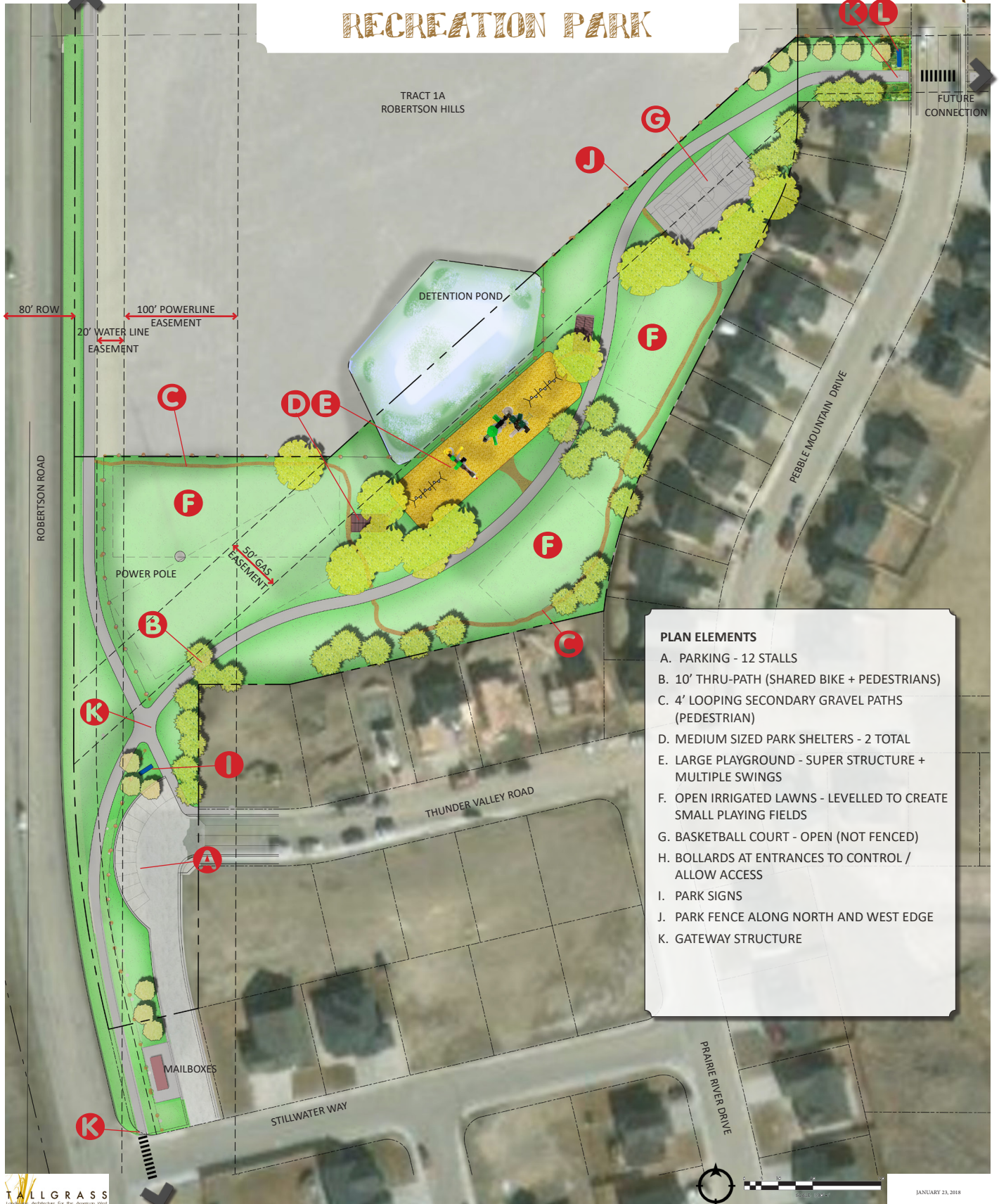
- PLAN ELEMENTS**
- A. PARKING - 8 STALLS
 - B. EXERCISE PODS - 12 STATIONS TOTAL
 - C. 10' THRU-PATH (SHARED BIKE + PEDESTRIANS)
 - D. 6' LOOPING SECONDARY PATHS (PEDESTRIAN)
 - E. SMALL PARK SHELTER - 4 FAMILY SIZED SHELTERS TOTAL
 - F. MEDIUM SIZED PLAYGROUND - 50' X 100'
 - G. NATURAL PLAY PLAYGROUND
 - H. OPEN IRRIGATED LAWN
 - I. ROCKY BANK TO POND
 - J. STRIDER COURSE FOR SMALL CHILDREN, OR JUMP PARK FOR OLDER KIDS
 - K. BASKETBALL COURT - FENCED
 - L. BOLLARDS AT ENTRANCES TO CONTROL / ALLOW ACCESS
 - M. PARK SIGNS
 - N. PARK FENCE ALONG NORTH AND WEST EDGE

« ROBERTSON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK »

CONCEPT PLAN C RECREATION PARK



300' TO POISON SPIDER ROAD
THEN 0.5 MILES TO 257



PLAN ELEMENTS

- A. PARKING - 12 STALLS
- B. 10' THRU-PATH (SHARED BIKE + PEDESTRIANS)
- C. 4' LOOPING SECONDARY GRAVEL PATHS (PEDESTRIAN)
- D. MEDIUM SIZED PARK SHELTERS - 2 TOTAL
- E. LARGE PLAYGROUND - SUPER STRUCTURE + MULTIPLE SWINGS
- F. OPEN IRRIGATED LAWNS - LEVELLED TO CREATE SMALL PLAYING FIELDS
- G. BASKETBALL COURT - OPEN (NOT FENCED)
- H. BOLLARDS AT ENTRANCES TO CONTROL / ALLOW ACCESS
- I. PARK SIGNS
- J. PARK FENCE ALONG NORTH AND WEST EDGE
- K. GATEWAY STRUCTURE

« ROBERTSON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK »

300' TO POISON SPIDER ROAD
THEN 0.5 MILES TO 257

PARK DESIGNER DO IT YOURSELF





PARK CONCEPT

Based upon discussion with Town Staff, Town Council, and a review of the public input the following ideas for the Master Plan at Robertson Hills Park were formed:

- Play should happen at each end of the park.
- Smaller picnic areas fit into the park better than large.
- Usable lawn areas for activities, block party, games, catch, running, playing, sledding, etc.
- A play area for young kids would be great in this neighborhood full of young families.
- Have multi feature playgrounds. Have fast slides! Most of the money spent in the public meeting went to playgrounds!
- No pond, though it would be nice. It would be too much of a hassle.
- Paved walkways will be easier to maintain over the long term.
- Include a basketball court.
- Integrate connective trails.
- Dogipots!
- Let some features happen naturally. These features are often desired but not the core need: community gardens, fitness courses, stages, etc.

FINAL PLAN DESCRIPTION

The final plan is for a neighborhood park that fits cozily into the new neighborhood, but does not try to be all things. Great playgrounds define the park, with easy looping trails, shade, and a couple of picnic areas. A nearby parking lot provides a place to park for the occasional visitor, but most people are walking to the park from their home. Occasionally a bicyclist will slow down as they ride a larger loop within Mills after town-wide trail connections are made..

PROJECT ELEMENTS

Design concept includes these major elements:

1. Lawn! Great maintained outdoor areas are needed in this neighborhood! The lawn will have several flatter areas for play and a couple of slopes that could be used for gatherings. The slopes are a necessary feature of the park and the initial grading will make them deliberately to maximize their use for seating and play.

2. Paths! Walking paths will make this park easy to integrate into the lives of the nearby residents.
3. Two big play areas. The idea is to provide two major play equipment features, one for 5-12 year old range and one play equipment feature geared towards younger kids (often referred to as 2-5 Playgrounds or Preschool Playgrounds). Also included would be plenty of room for minor single play pieces, swings, and other secondary features.
4. A large shelter or gazebo in the center of the park and at least one smaller shelter so there is always at least one other place to gather in the shade..
5. Recreation features: a location for a basketball court is identified on the site. A small area is also set aside as a balance bike course for small children adjacent to the playground.
6. The park plan allows for flexibility over time. It is not fully built out and has room for additional features the neighborhood may desire, if approved by the Town.

The Park fence established by the First Street Park Master Plan will now be a common feature thorough out the community of Mills. This fence is modular, clean, easy to maintain, yet distinguished and representative of the long term vision for parks that the community is currently pushing forward.

Restroom facilities are not provided. The Town of Mills provides portable restroom structures to their parks, but because the location for this facility would be near the parking lot on the south end there is a concern that passing traffic would be invited into the park. This is a concern that can be looked at again by the town council and neighborhood.

PHASE 1

PHASE 1: FOUNDATIONS

The initial phase is meant to do four things:

1. Create the final surface of the earth in most of the park areas through a major grading project.
2. Provide access across the site via an 8' wide concrete trail that connects the park through to the neighborhood on the northeast and the south.
3. Provide the parking lot and final street configuration where Thunder Valley turns into the alley that accesses the mailboxes.
4. Create a finished feel to the park by seeding the grass.
5. Provide park signs at each end to designate the area as a public park - "Robertson Hills Park".

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS:

- The goal is to provide the mass grading desired in this phase of construction.
- Mass grading includes making a "hill" or gentle mound where the gazebo is planned, leveling the basketball courts and playground areas, and generally providing a contour for the overall park that will not need adjustment when the paths are cut in.
- A final grading plan is required to determine the ultimate extents and needs for the grading operation.



PHASE 2

PHASE 2: PATHS

The second phase expands the walking loops:

1. Adds a 6' wide secondary loop concrete path to the primary trail, diversifying the walking experience in the park and finalizing the grading in the lower basin.
2. Connects the parking lot and the primary park trail to a sidewalk that follows Robertson Hills Road north and south.
3. Formalizes the edge of the park by placing a "Mills Fence" along the outward edge of the park.
4. Major irrigation project, including the point of connection, backflow prevention, controller, mainline, quick couplers, and the major spray head valves that will irrigate the park. Valves and heads will be placed to avoid future improvements.

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS:

- This phase further defines the boundary of the park and expands the trail network.



PHASE 3

PHASE 3: PLAYGROUNDS

This phase makes the park fun! It adds:

1. A north playground with swings, a large play feature, and is geared towards younger users. While all equipment might not be pre-school age, the intent is to carefully select equipment that a very young age feels comfortable playing on.
2. Four swing chairs are built to provide seating for visitors who don't want to play on the north playground.
3. A south playground with a major play feature, swings, group swing, climber, and secondary play event. This equipment is geared towards school aged children - the standard play equipment you might see in a park.
4. Both would be complete playgrounds, with drainage, surfacing, signage, and other minor details.

All play equipment selections will be subject to bidding or procurement.

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS:

- This phase assumes both playgrounds are part of a single phase of construction



PHASE 4

PHASE 4: FULL PARK DEVELOPMENT

This phase is the final phase of development for the park, fulfilling the details and rounding out the recreation opportunities for the park, including

1. A basketball court, fully fenced.
2. The iconic gazebo and shade structure that will represent the park to the community.
3. A balance bike (strider bike) course for little kids near the younger kid playground.
4. All landscape plantings

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS:

- This phase assumes both playgrounds are part of a single phase of construction



ROBERTSON HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

MASTER PLAN



300' TO POISON SPIDER ROAD
THEN 0.5 MILES TO 257



PLAN ELEMENTS

- A. PARKING - 8 STALLS
- B. 10' THRU-PATH (SHARED BIKE + PEDESTRIANS)
- C. 6' LOOPING SECONDARY PATHS (PEDESTRIAN)
- D. 5-12 YEAR OLD ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND
- E. 2-5 YEAR OLD TODDLER PLAYGROUND
- F. BASKETBALL COURT
- G. AMPHITHEATER LAWN
- H. GAZEBO / LARGE SHADE STRUCTURE WITH PICNIC TABLES
- I. SMALL SHADE STRUCTURE WITH BBQ AND PICNIC TABLES
- J. BALANCE BIKE/STRIDER BIKE TRACK
- K. BOLLARDS AT ENTRANCES
- L. PARK SIGN
- M. PARK FENCE ALONG NORTH AND WEST EDGE
- N. LOW WATER USE GRASSES
- O. LOW WATER USE TREES
- P. BENCH SWINGS
- Q. GAS LINE MARKER, TYPICAL

THE TRAIL IS A VERY IMPORTANT CONNECTION AT ROBERTSON HILLS PARK:



THE TOWN OF MILLS HAS A LONG TERM VISION FOR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY TRAIL NETWORK. THE INTENT IS TO TIE INTO THE EXISTING CASPER AREA TRAIL NETWORK WHILE CREATING NEW SAFE CONNECTIONS WITHIN TOWN. THESE ARE MULTI-USE CORRIDORS THAT WILL FOLLOW UTILITY CORRIDORS AND PUBLIC LAND. PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS WILL BE PURSUED WHERE APPROPRIATE AND BENEFICIAL TO ALL PARTIES. SOME CONNECTIONS WILL FOLLOW ROAD CORRIDORS.

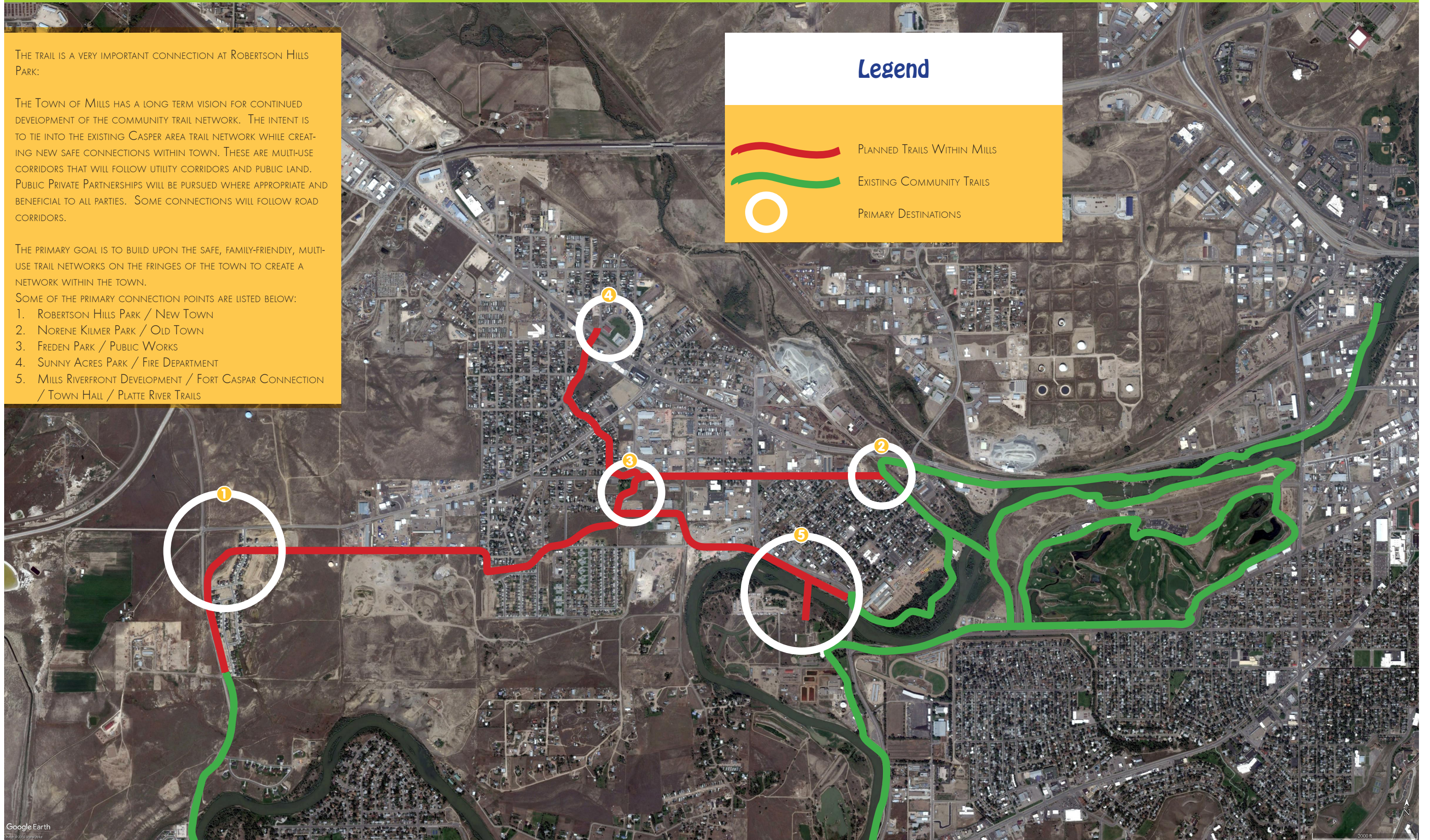
THE PRIMARY GOAL IS TO BUILD UPON THE SAFE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY, MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORKS ON THE FRINGES OF THE TOWN TO CREATE A NETWORK WITHIN THE TOWN.

SOME OF THE PRIMARY CONNECTION POINTS ARE LISTED BELOW:

1. ROBERTSON HILLS PARK / NEW TOWN
2. NORENE KILMER PARK / OLD TOWN
3. FREDEN PARK / PUBLIC WORKS
4. SUNNY ACRES PARK / FIRE DEPARTMENT
5. MILLS RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT / FORT CASPAR CONNECTION / TOWN HALL / PLATTE RIVER TRAILS

Legend

-  PLANNED TRAILS WITHIN MILLS
-  EXISTING COMMUNITY TRAILS
-  PRIMARY DESTINATIONS



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

This Master Plan outlines a phased strategy to allow the neighborhood to use the park as soon as possible. The goal is to get grass growing and make a place to be sooner than later!

COSTS

Typical planning numbers for this type of project are as follows:

- Design: 6-12% of total costs, depending on the specific features, required specialists, and complexity.
- Overhead and Mobilization by the contractor: 10-20% of total costs, but these may also vary greatly in a public bid - a competitive bidding season will see lower numbers, but already busy contractors will be willing to risk losing the project for a higher profit.
- Contingency: Planning books recommend up to 25% for Master Plan phase, reducing to 5-8% for construction estimates.

REDUCING THE COSTS

Parks are often at the end of the budget line - but parks are one of the defining aspects of a town, they comprise a big part of the intangible quality of place. Put them at the beginning of budgeting, make a plan and stick to it!

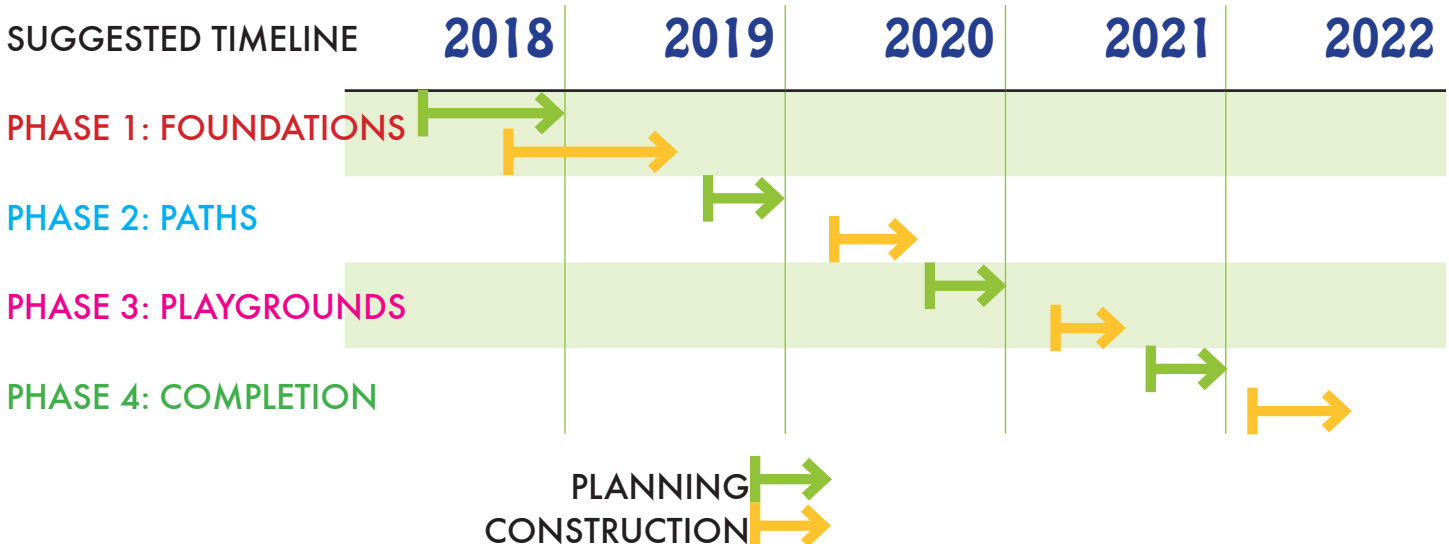
There are other ways to reduce the costs itemized in the opinion of probable cost provided with this document. Some ideas include:

- Specialty clubs and sports groups: Active groups within your community may be looking for places to play their sport. Receive their interest openly and they may provide much of the labor needed to build these features.
- Small projects: The phases of this project can be approached as small projects that staff implements through different budgets, i.e. streets for parking lots.
- Big donor: Rare!
- Collaborate with the developers of the adjacent neighborhoods!
- Collaborate with the Homeowners Association in the adjacent neighborhood!
- Pursue grant opportunities.
- Incorporate Robertson Hills Park Master Plan elements into the Town's long term financial planning.

RECOMMENDED PATHS TO IMPLEMENTATION

The following planning steps are necessary to reach complete park redevelopment:

- Master Plan - Complete!
- Survey - a complete site survey allows the accurate development of future design plans and cost estimating. Preliminary surveys of both parks have been made. Additional information will be necessary for both parks to complete construction documents.
- Schematic Design and program verification - The stakeholders for each of the park's planned "Phases" should be involved in the final design and feature



selection for those parts of the park. This will allow continued community involvement in the park's development.

- Construction Documentation - the creation of bid ready documents ensures the improvements will be constructed according to code and applicable regulations. During this time opportunities for community groups and volunteer efforts are also identified by the community and design team, coordinated with the activity groups, scheduled to minimize conflict with the overall construction, and planned out logistically. There are many opportunities for volunteer involvement in this project.
- Public Bid - A public bid allows fair competition and ensures a competitive price for the improvements.
- Construction - The period of time where active construction takes place on the site.
- A contractor will be responsible for installing improvements, and will be responsible for safety on the site during their construction period.
- A designated City Project Manager will be responsible for coordinating the volunteer efforts with the contractor and making sure materials and supplies arrive on time. The project manager will act as the City's Project Representative during construction, making final decisions and responding to requests from the contractor for information.
- The Project Designer will be responsible for Construction Observation, reviewing submittals by the contractor and ensuring compliance with the plans.

Additionally, in specific cases there will be opportunity to procure amenities directly from a contractor or manufacturer. For example, in the case of the playground the town may choose to develop the play area and host bids from play equipment provider/installers for the play equipment based on a not-to exceed bid or through another buying program.

These are clear paths for organizing the park feature development. Others may exist, but these are the direct routes to implementing these proposed improvements.

Phased Development: Focus on developing each phase, utilizing the stakeholders for each area to drive

the extent and implementation of those improvements. The advantage is that improvements are focused in one area of the park with smaller incremental expenditures. The disadvantage is that it is easy to lose momentum with this approach.

Combined or Complete Development: Develop the complete project at one time. The advantage is that construction prices are usually better with a larger project and that there is only one project to manage. The disadvantage is that there is a large price tag to pay at one time.

The primary concern for either development plan is identifying funding and fund raising strategies through the town, through grants, and through opportunities identified by the parks department. The survey and Schematic Design are necessary to identify fund raising targets.

