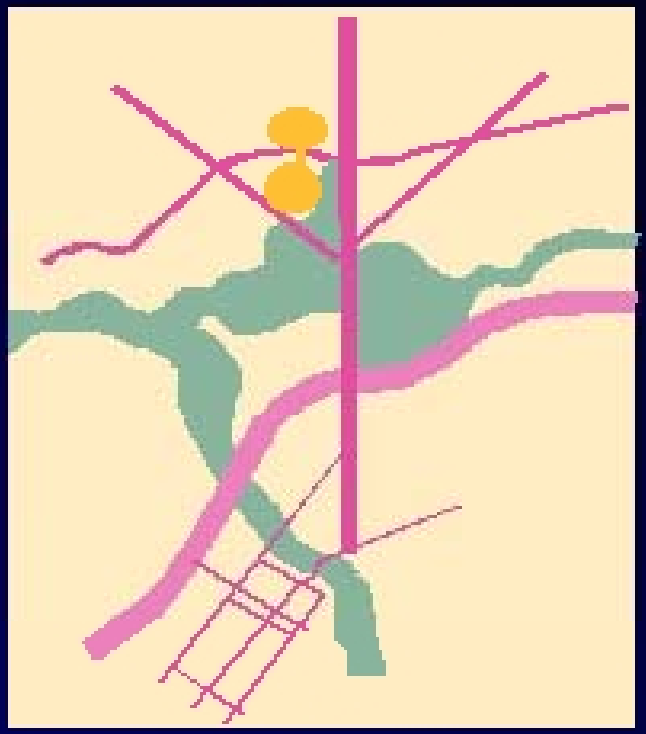
BLUE BALL PROPERTIES MASTER PLAN



January 10, 2000

Recreation and Historic Preservation Status Report

Legislators' Town Meeting

Brandywine High School

WRT

PRINCIPLES FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN OF STATE PARKLANDS WITHIN THE BLUE BALL PROJECT

Maximize Open Space within Project Boundaries for Both Passive and Active Recreation and Environmental Protection

Passive Recreation

State parklands on the west side of Rt. 202 should be devoted primarily to passive recreation and habitat enhancement. A priority for State parklands on the west side of Rt. 202 is the conversion of croplands, fields and the fill area into systems of wet and dry habitats that will address both stormwater quantity and quality. The goal is to address stormwater currently feeding directly into Alapocas Run, together with future stormwater runoff from AstraZeneca, transportation and park development, in a manner that is both aesthetically pleasing and a net benefit to the environment. Development of hiking trails on state parklands should be encouraged as part of the design phase of the project. Indigenous and sustainable landscapes should be promoted. All improvements made on project lands to the west side of Rt. 202 should be done recognizing that the vista of the historic A.I. duPont Estate, which includes the Blue Ball Dairy Complex, the A.I. duPont Carillon and adjoining agricultural fields, is an important community asset that should be preserved to the maximum extent possible.

Active Recreation

An active recreation complex should be located on State parklands on the east side of Rt. 202. The proposed relocation of Weldin Road, and suggested development of other non-park roads in this area, should be designed to maximize contiguous State parkland. The active recreation complex should accommodate a complement of multiple use fields plus any associated amenities. In keeping with the natural character of the area, fields should be provided that support soccer, field hockey, and lacrosse, but should not include football. Court games such as tennis or basketball will not be included. Parking lots and adjoining pathways should have low-level lighting to ensure public safety. The lighting standards for the parking lot should be of minimal height, and all lighting should be turned off after the completion of public activities. Priority should be given to providing a complex of four (4) multiple use fields, with the possible addition of other fields if space allows. Fields will not be lighted and all should have natural surfaces. Additional amenities to the active recreation complex should include a children's playground, "dog park" area and small shelter. Restrooms, a maintenance facility and adequate parking facilities must also be included. Determination of which governmental agencies will be responsible for development, operation and maintenance of the above-mentioned complex will be addressed outside the Committee process. The Committee recommends that the design of the field complex emphasize ample landscaped areas or open space between fields and include design features that create a park atmosphere.

Active Recreation, continued

The active recreation complex noted above complements existing adjoining active recreation opportunities available to the public. As part of the active recreation complex on state parklands, a teaching facility/driving range for golf of approximately 15 acres should be developed. Further, a goal of achieving an approximately 6,500 yard long, or longer, course for Rock Manor Golf Course should be a priority. To achieve this goal, the current configuration of the entire course should be examined. Potential course improvement through redesign should focus on including stormwater management as an amenity to the course. The course should continue to be an affordable course. Consideration should be given to rerouting the Northern Delaware Greenway that now connects through Weldin Ridge to a new location along the edge of a redesigned golf course. The Committee believes any golf course enhancements must be tied to a conservation easement, or other legal commitment that will keep the current Rock Manor Golf Course as permanently protected active parkland in perpetuity. The Committee recommends that the City and State work to identify acreage within the Porter Reservoir complex that is in excess of the City's needs, and to incorporate these lands within the Active Recreation Complex.

Renovate Historic Resources, Including the Blue Ball Dairy Complex, the Bird Husbands House, and the Murphy House For Reuse as Support Space That Will Benefit the Public.

The first priority for the above structures is to have them remain on their current sites and renovated for adaptive reuse. The historic viewsheds from these structures are important and must be factored into any road design. If final road alignments conflict with the current locations of any of these structures, the structure(s) affected will be relocated and renovated for adaptive reuse. Should the Weldin Husband's House be identified for acquisition as part of any transportation component of this project, this structure will be evaluated for structural integrity, and should be relocated and renovated for adaptive reuse if possible. Should the Weldin Husbands House not be acquired as part of this project, the Committee requests that State and County work with the owner, County Historic Review Board and other interested partners to protect the structure and facilitate an active reuse. Commitments made by the State relative to historic structures with regards to the Route 202 "safety project" must be honored.

Greenway Trail System

The Committee recognizes that Route 202 is the gateway to Brandywine Hundred, and that the design of roads and park improvements should reflect this importance. Creation of tree-lined boulevards and/or landscaped medians should be undertaken wherever possible. As part of this project, the Northern Delaware Greenway should be constructed so as to connect between the City of Wilmington at the Brandywine River and Talley Road. The trail should cross Route 202 via an expansive and aesthetically attractive underpass separated from vehicular traffic. Bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods surrounding this project, including but not limited to the general vicinity of Alapocas Drive, Rockland Road, Children's Drive, Route 141/Murphy Road, Route 202, Weldin Road, Foulk Road, Augustine Cut-off and adjoining neighborhood roads must be integrated into the overall transportation plan.

Relocation/Extension of Rockland Road, Augustine Cut-off and Weldin Road

The Committee recognizes that the transportation network for this project must work (i.e. meet the no degradation criteria), but should also be designed to maximize open space. A committee goal is to minimize the length and impact of park and non-park roads carrying vehicular traffic through lands acquired as part of this project. Any such roads identified in the final transportation alignments should be developed under an access easement between the Departments of Transportation (Del DOT) and Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). Under this arrangement, DNREC would grant an access easement on State parklands for public roads, with the right-of- way limited to roads having two (2) ten feet travel lanes where possible, and having eleven feet travel lanes where necessary. Development of such roads must incorporate design elements that create a park environment.

Reservoir Expansion/Matson Run

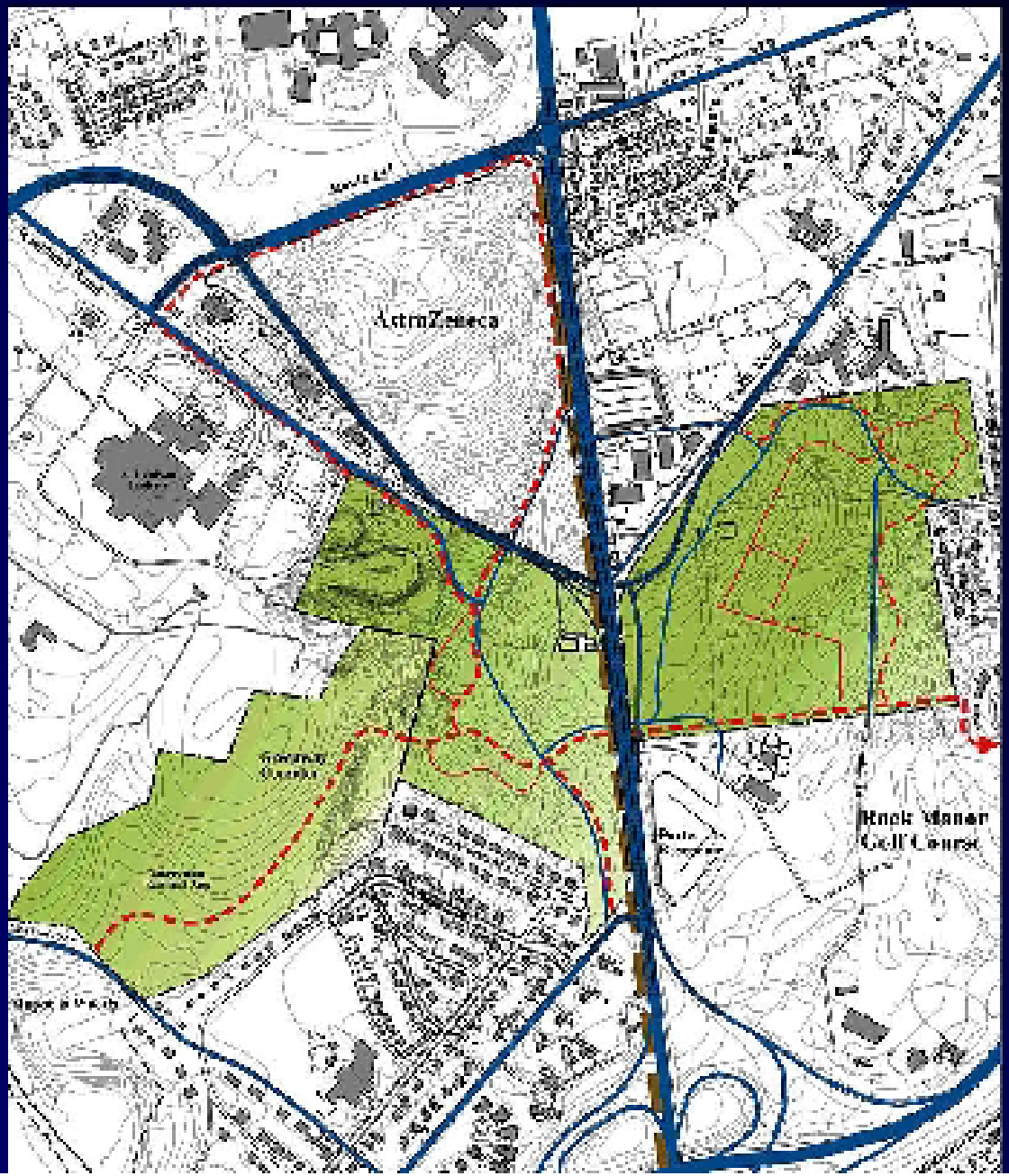
The Blue Ball properties were not acquired to be a solution to the water supply needs of northern New Castle County, and water storage will not come at the expense of the recreational amenities and adaptive reuse of historic structures commitments made to the community. Small-scale water storage from stormwater, designed and configured as ponds, could be accommodated if they also serve to support or enhance identified recreation, golfing, or habitat needs. The Committee has concluded that a water storage reservoir should not be located on the Blue Ball properties.

The Committee also recognizes that stormwater runoff and flooding within the Matson Run basin is a major problem, and that resolution of this issue should occur as part of this project. Mature trees along Matson Run should be protected as part of any stormwater management design.

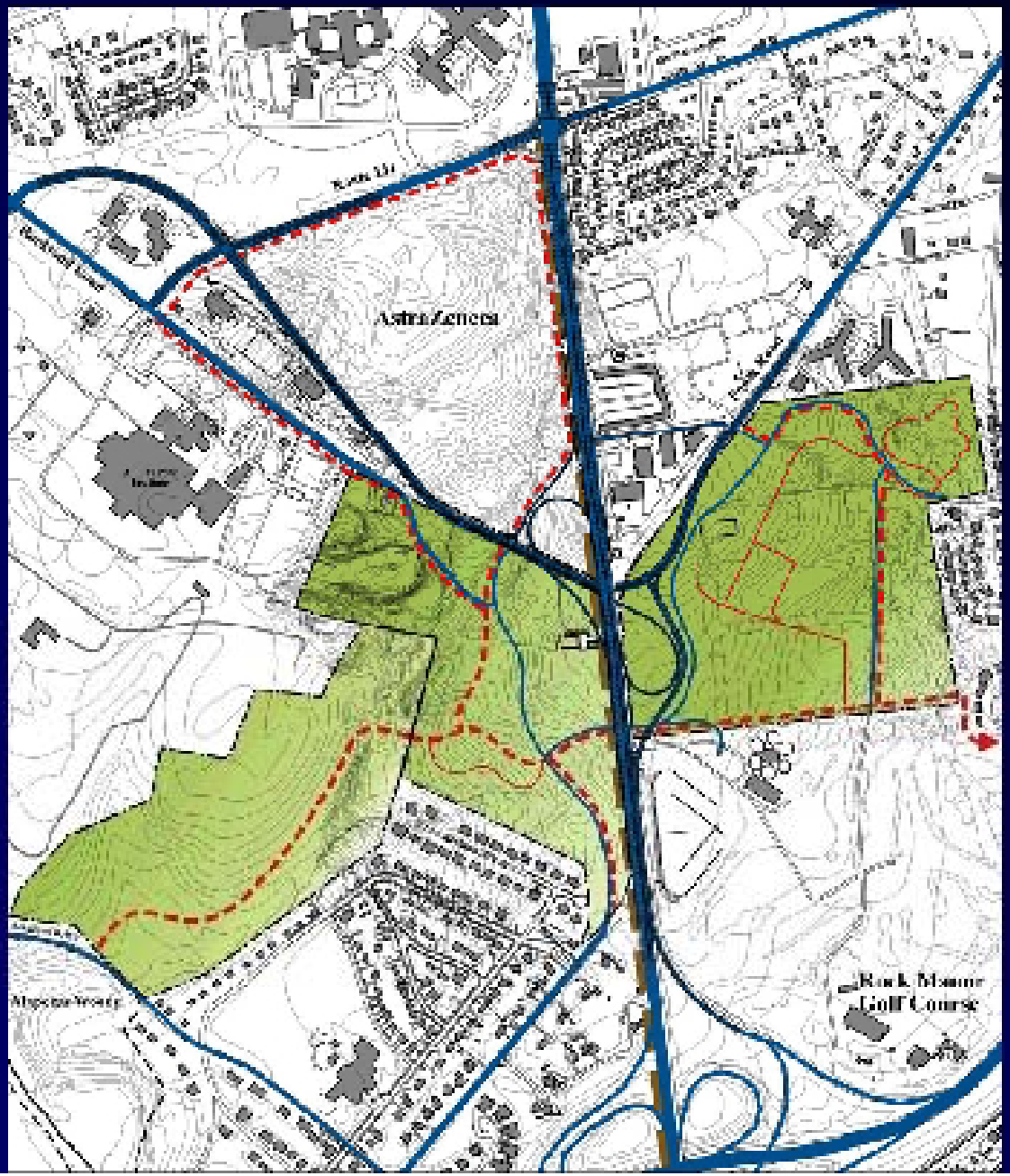
Mass Transit

The committee believes mass transit is important and therefore endorses the reservation of a corridor to support a mass transit system. The committee does not, however, support park and rides or a transit hub with a parking lot on state parklands. Once a transit corridor has been identified, it should be landscaped or otherwise enhanced to blend into the surrounding landscape until such time as it is developed. The reserved corridor must be located so as to minimize impacts to the natural, cultural and historic resources within State parklands.

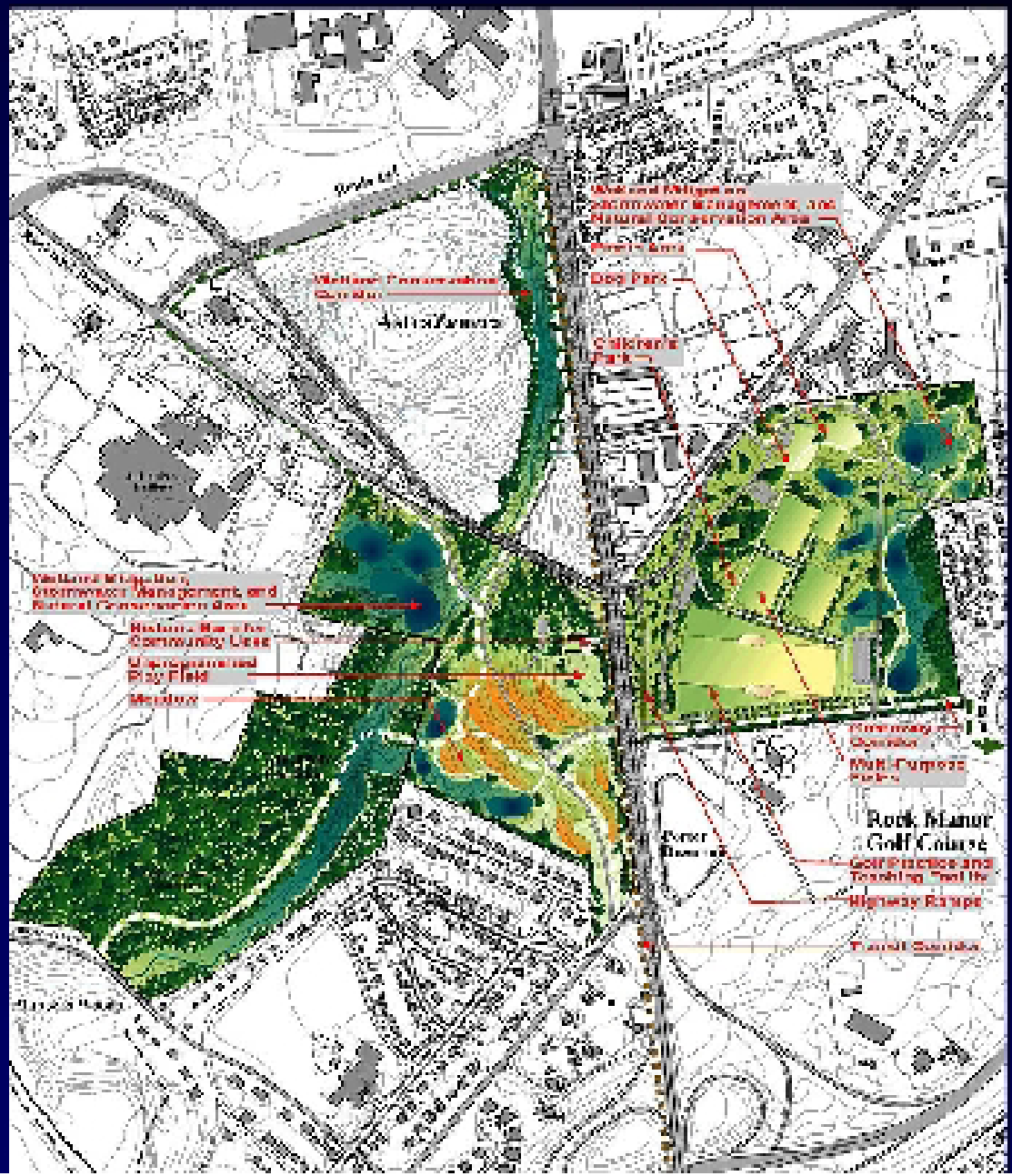
Draft Concept A - (Diamond Intersection)



Draft Concept B - (Bow-Tie Intersection)



Draft Concept A

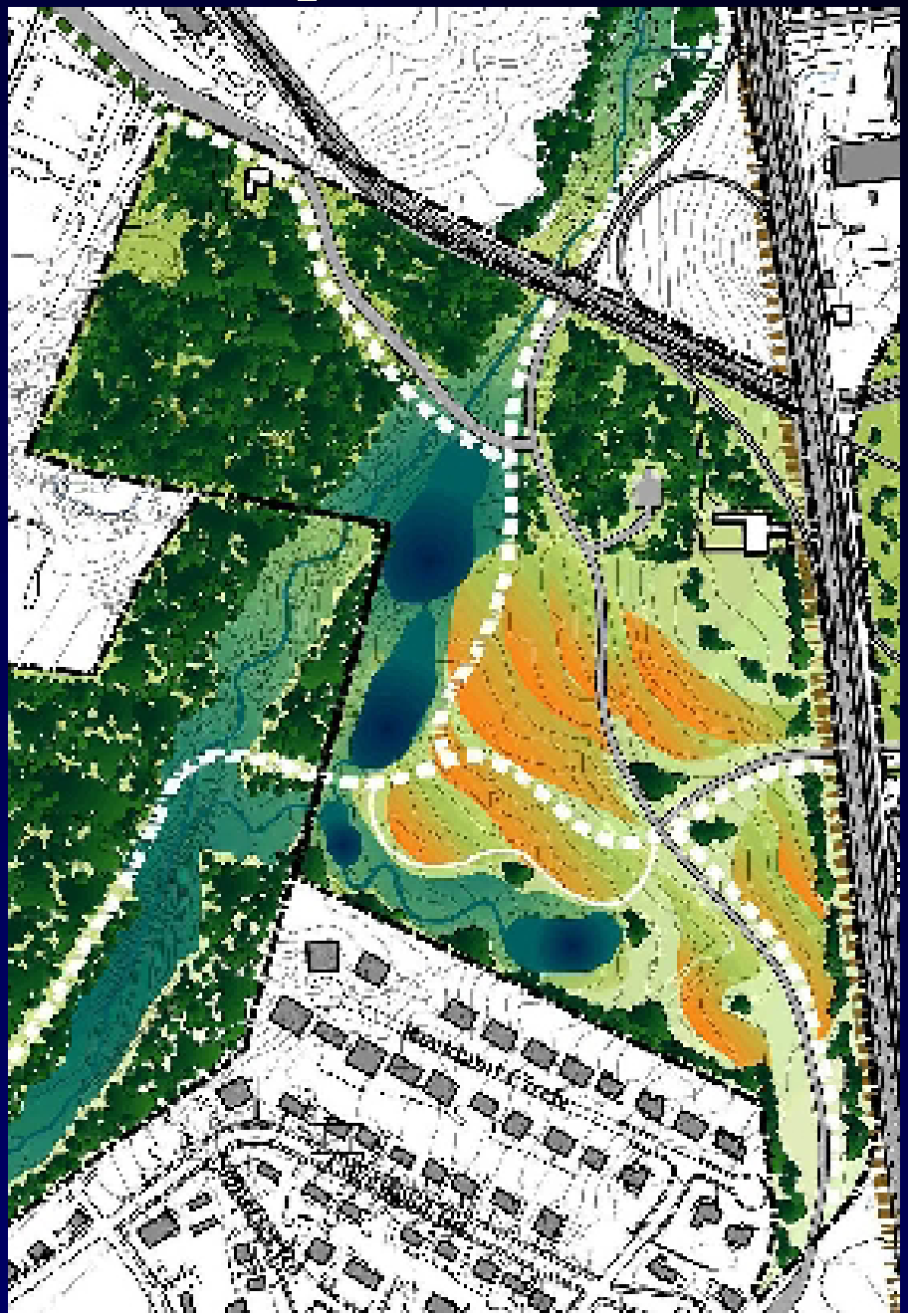


Draft Concept A - Westside Detail

Draft Concept A - Eastside Detail

Draft Concept B

Draft Concept B - Westside Detail



Draft Concept B - Eastside Detail

Aerial Photo of Site