



**HICKORY RIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**  
**Village Board Meeting Minutes**  
**February 9, 2026, at 7:30pm**

**Meeting recording:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81706309542?pwd=SNdIXuFngHd3E0nVo9zb31RdiBzwxD.1>

**Members Present:** Kristine Amari, Mark Covington, Steve Hannan, Mike McGarity, Mariah Robertson and Skye Anderson.

**Staff Present:** Laura Mayton & Emily Rieger

**Guests:** 21 attendees

**Call to Order:** 7:30pm

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Mr. Hannan made a request to move Old Business, A the Cluster Play Area Program, Replacement of HR-08 Crossbeam Play Area (Clemens Crossing) and HR-17 Play Meadow (Clary's Forest), Steve Boswell, Operations Manager, Capital Improvements, Community Operations, Columbia Association to New Business, B. Ms. Amari made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended. Dr. McGarity seconded, and the amended agenda was approved unanimously.
2. **Approval of January 12, 2026, Board Meeting Minutes:** Ms. Amari made a motion to approve the January 12, 2026, meeting minutes. Mr. Hannan seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Board Update:** No comments were made.
4. **Resident Speak-Out:** No comments were made.
5. **CA Board of Directors Report—Skye Anderson:** Ms. Anderson invited Board members and residents to attend her upcoming office hours on Wednesday, February 11, from 10:00–11:00 a.m. in the Hawthorn Center conference room. She also shared that at the second February meeting, the CA Board of Directors will vote on whether to direct staff to explore the possibility of creating a splash pad.
6. **New Business:**
  - a. **Chris Clem, Manager of Open Space Operations, Columbia Association Report:** Mr. Clem introduced himself and noted that he will present a report at the next Board meeting.
  - b. **Cluster Play Area Program, Replacement of HR-08 Crossbeam Play Area (Clemens Crossing) and HR-17 Play Meadow (Clary's Forest), Steve Boswell, Operations Manager, Capital Improvements, Community Operations, Columbia Association:** Mr. Heath reminded attendees of the proposed changes to HR-17 (Play Meadow) and HR-08. He thanked everyone for their feedback, emphasizing that it was heard and led to revisions. These changes include removing the cars at Play Meadow and replacing them with a duo rocker, which is expected to be installed in late spring or early summer. He also noted that the team is mindful of stormwater runoff concerns at HR-08 and will address that issue appropriately. Dr. McGarity expressed concerns about HR-11, noting that the monkey bars had been removed. Mr. Boswell explained that they were taken down due to safety concerns

related to rotting wood and added that regular inspections are conducted at tot lots to identify and address any maintenance or safety issues.

- c. New Town Task Force (addressing proposed New Town Zoning updates):** Mr. England, a Hickory Ridge resident and member of the New Town Task Force—a recommending body established to improve the New Town zoning model governing land use in much of Columbia—provided additional information about accessory dwelling units (ADUs). He expressed the need for the County to include all stakeholders, including Village Managers, Covenant Advisors, and others, when asking for input on New Town Zoning updates.
- d. Environmental Projects Proposed by CARES:** Ms. Wessner requested that the Board approve submitting two additional projects to CA for consideration: bamboo removal at the corner of Cedar Lane and Hickory Ridge Road, and the installation of a permeable pathway to the Hawthorn Pool. Ms. Amari made a motion to send the two project proposals to CA for consideration. Dr. Robertson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. Village Annual Charge Share, Report on Committee Decision and Recommendation:** Ms. Mayton shared that she has been meeting for several months with other Village Managers to reach an agreement regarding the allocation of the annual charge share from CA that is both equitable and appropriate. She requested that the Board approve the proposed 9.28% funding level to ensure consistency in CA funding from the current fiscal year to the next. Dr. Robertson made a motion to approve the 9.28% funding level, and Dr. McGarity seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Mayton also asked the Board to authorize her to send a letter to CA requesting additional funding for each Village to support operational expenses. Mr. Hannan made a motion to approve sending the letter, and Dr. Robertson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. Appoint Election Committee Member Wendy Steward, Review Online Voting & Election Committee Report:** Dr. Robertson made a motion to approve Wendy Steward to the Election Committee. Mr. Hannan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Warner, Election Committee Chair, updated the Board on recent activities of the Election Committee. He raised the topic of online voting and asked the Board to consider it. The discussion included viewpoints both in favor of and opposed to the idea; however, Board members agreed that their priority is to encourage the highest possible resident participation and to explore ways to achieve that goal. The Board decided to revisit the topic of online voting at its next meeting.

**7. Manager Report—Laura Mayton:** Ms. Mayton shared that the candidate documents are now available and encouraged all attendees to consider submitting their materials to run in the Hickory Ridge elections. She also noted that the next Election Committee meeting will be held on February 17<sup>th</sup>.

**8. Action Items:**

- a.** Ms. Mayton will send the environmental project proposal to CA.
- b.** Ms. Mayton will add Hickory Ridge to the request for additional funding from CA.

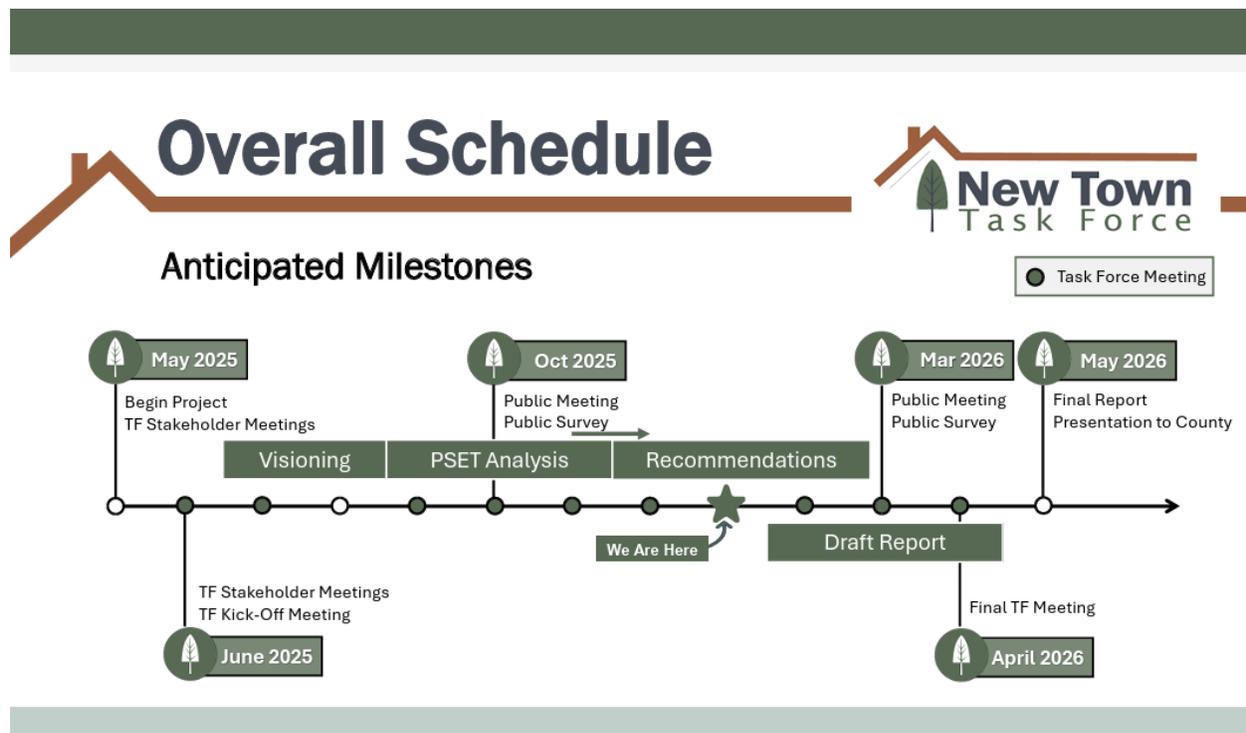
**10. Adjournment:** Dr. McGarity made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Robertson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:06pm.

# New Town Zoning Task Force

The Task Force will evaluate the present New Town regulations, found in Section 125 of the Howard County Zoning Code, and develop recommendations for improving the New Town zoning model that governs land use in much of the master-planned community of Columbia.

## **Task Force Vision**

- People and Community, Diversity and Inclusivity, Open Space and green space aid in maintaining the spirit of Columbia.
- Embrace the future while honoring the values that Columbia was based upon.
- Columbia is a place that needs to value its uniqueness / based on its history.



The New Town Task Force’s job is to make recommendations to update the New Town zoning model. The Task Force’s recommendations will then be filtered through the Office of Law and other County offices. Then, any recommendations will have to go through the legislative process at the County Council.

The Task Force will be reviewing their draft outline of recommendations at their meeting on Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. It may be worth waiting to review their recommendations before commenting.

***Hickory Ridge recommendation for a letter:***

When Howard County considers how to accommodate Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), the County should assemble stakeholders (Village Board members, Managers and Covenant Advisors) and solicit input in order to make the ADU zoning rules work together with those of the Villages.

## POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT PROJECT IN HICKORY RIDGE VILLAGE #6

The following documents an area of interest/concern in Hickory Ridge Village on CA Open Space where an environmental/sustainability project could be considered

### LOCATION

HCA Open Space at the southwest corner of Cedar Lane and Hickory Ridge Road, adjacent to Topbranch Lane townhouses



### DESCRIPTION OF CONCERN OR ISSUE

CA has been actively trying to eliminate running bamboo from their properties. Running bamboo is an aggressive invasive plant with fast-spreading underground rhizomes that can quickly invade yards, damage property (patios, foundations, pipes), and choke out native plants. It is difficult to eradicate.

There is a stand of bamboo at the corner of the property that is quite tall.



**INDICATE HOW CONCERN OR ISSUE IMPACTS PEOPLE/ NEIGHBORHOOD/WILDLIFE**

Village residents who live in the adjacent properties might see the bamboo creating issues with their gardens, patios and homes.

**IF YOU HAVE IDEAS OR OPTIONS TO FIX THIS WHAT WOULD THEY BE**

The CARES team would like to have CA focus one of their bamboo removal efforts on this area of Open Space. CA will need to determine best possible removal approach and if they can preserve any native trees that are sharing the area with the bamboo.

**POSSIBLE CONCERN WITH SUGGESTED IDEA**

CA needs to communicate with the adjacent homeowners and HRV management about the possible removal, including the approach they will use, BEFORE it happens. CA needs to understand any concerns the adjacent neighbors have and determine if CA can replace the bamboo with other fast-growing native trees or bushes to provide shielding from the traffic noise/lights along Cedar Lane. CA should provide a brief article about the removal plan that HRV can publish in the LOG.

**SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET**

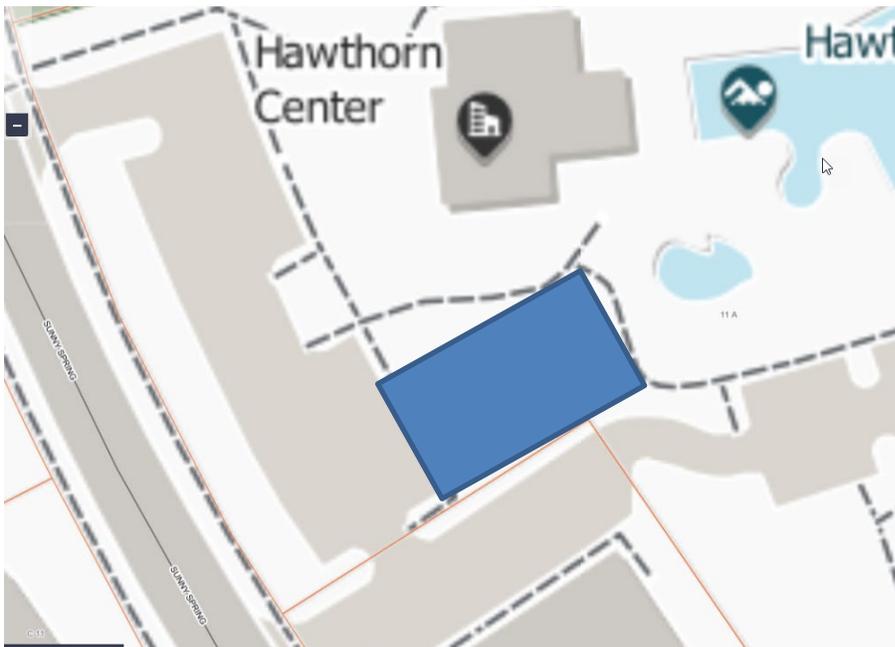
Unknown

**POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENT PROJECT IN HICKORY RIDGE VILLAGE #7**

The following documents an area of interest/concern in Hickory Ridge Village on CA Open Space where an environmental/sustainability project could be considered

**LOCATION**

CA has recently removed some of the “hill” that separates the Hawthorn Center from the parkinglot adjacent to the nearby Daycare Center. CA has planted some native trees and intends to plant a garden with native plants at the southern end of the area. (See flags in photos below that outline the area.)  
HCA Open Space at the southwest corner of Cedar Lane and Hickory Ridge Road, adjacent to Topbranch Lane townhouses



**DESCRIPTION OF CONCERN OR ISSUE**

The newly refreshed area may encourage children or adults who are eager to get to the pool from the parking lot a “shortcut” directly across the grass and new landscape.



Looking from Hawthorn Office toward the Day Care Center – Area that was “flattened”



View from Day Care parking lot – note flags outline area to be landscaped

**INDICATE HOW CONCERN OR ISSUE IMPACTS PEOPLE/ NEIGHBORHOOD/WILDLIFE**

The new area will have a native garden that should be preserved to allow birds and insects a foraging opportunity.

**IF YOU HAVE IDEAS OR OPTIONS TO FIX THIS WHAT WOULD THEY BE**

Adding a permeable pathway across the new area would suggest that foot traffic stay away from the plantings while showing that permeable surfaces can be attractive while allowing for rain to be absorbed where it falls. Further, the landscaped bed would be preserved from footfalls.

**POSSIBLE CONCERN WITH SUGGESTED IDEA**

The new pathway may increase the amount of snow removal if we get a heavy snowstorm.

**SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET**

Unknown

**Assessment Share Committee Report**

The Committee's final decision is to follow the below funding stated in Option 1, which keeps the percentages from the previous three fiscal years.

Other options considered by the Committee are on the following pages. The Village Manager will report on how the Committee came to this decision.

**Option 1-The continuation of the following Share Allocation proportions on a Village-by-Village basis for the period of FY27 and FY28:**

**DSCA 8.57%**

**HCCA 10.36%**

**HRCA 9.28%**

**KCCA 8.97%**

**LRCA 14.76%**

**OMCA 10.16%**

**OBCA 9.78%**

**RHCA 8.66%**

**TCCA 8.96%**

**WLCA 10.50%**

Separate consideration should be made on participation in an InterVillage Grant Sharing Arrangement.

- Village participation in the Arrangement would be voluntary.
- Participation in the Arrangement would be managed by the Village Associations.
- For FY26-FY28, HCCA, LRCA, OMCA, TCCA, and WLCA would be possible contributors.
- For FY26-FY28, DSCA, HRCA, KCCA, OBCA, And RHCA would be possible recipients.
- The proportion of grant receipts for FY26-FY28 would be
  - DSCA 23.38%
  - HRCA 27.46%
  - KCCA 22.58%
  - OBCA 15.49%
  - RHCA 11.09%
- Each DSCA, HRCA, KCCA, OBCA, and RHCA would be responsible for completing a grant application (TBD).
- This arrangement does not require participation by any Village and is **voluntary**.

Villages' Base Allocation for FY20-26

	DSCA	DSCA %	HCCA	HCCA %	HRCA	HRCA %	KCCA	KCCA %	LRCA	LRCA %	OMCA	OMCA %	OBCA	OBCA %	RHCA	RHCA %	TCCA	TCCA %	WLCA	WLCA %	Total
FY20	\$ 284,963		\$ 356,691		\$ 292,190		\$ 281,788		\$ 466,788		\$ 358,617		\$ 320,724		\$ 275,775		\$ 284,282		\$ 365,047		\$ 3,286,665
FY21*	\$ 255,656		\$ 307,549		\$ 272,854		\$ 260,559		\$ 439,993		\$ 302,309		\$ 288,342		\$ 250,504		\$ 255,629		\$ 309,668		\$ 2,943,263
FY22**	\$ 264,278		\$ 318,221		\$ 284,408		\$ 274,978		\$ 455,982		\$ 311,964		\$ 301,935		\$ 268,166		\$ 267,672		\$ 323,603		\$ 3,071,207
FY23	\$ 277,175		\$ 333,750		\$ 298,287		\$ 288,397		\$ 478,234		\$ 327,188		\$ 316,669		\$ 281,253		\$ 280,734		\$ 339,395		\$ 3,221,032
FY23 %	8.61%		10.36%		9.26%		8.95%		14.85%		10.16%		9.83%		8.73%		8.72%		10.54%		100.00%
FY24	\$ 263,010		\$ 343,083		\$ 307,338		\$ 297,185		\$ 488,889		\$ 336,454		\$ 323,841		\$ 286,968		\$ 296,726		\$ 347,605		\$ 3,311,999
FY24 %	8.57%		10.36%		9.28%		8.97%		14.76%		10.16%		9.78%		8.66%		8.96%		10.50%		100.00%
FY25	\$ 294,342		\$ 355,690		\$ 318,631		\$ 308,105		\$ 506,853		\$ 348,818		\$ 335,741		\$ 297,512		\$ 307,629		\$ 360,378		\$ 3,433,699
FY25 %	8.57%		10.36%		9.28%		8.97%		14.78%		10.16%		9.78%		8.66%		8.96%		10.50%		100.00%
FY26	\$ 303,172		\$ 360,300		\$ 328,190		\$ 317,348		\$ 522,050		\$ 359,282		\$ 345,813		\$ 308,438		\$ 316,858		\$ 371,190		\$ 3,536,710
FY26 %	8.57%		10.36%		9.26%		8.97%		14.76%		10.16%		9.78%		8.66%		8.96%		10.50%		100.00%
FY27 Amt Prior Rat	\$ 312,267		\$ 377,351		\$ 338,036		\$ 326,868		\$ 537,721		\$ 370,060		\$ 356,187		\$ 315,631		\$ 326,364		\$ 382,326		\$ 3,642,811
FY27 Prior Ratios	8.57%		10.36%		9.28%		8.97%		14.76%		10.16%		9.78%		8.66%		8.96%		10.50%		100.00%
FY27 CA Budget	\$ 312,816		\$ 384,543		\$ 324,744		\$ 312,291		\$ 561,649		\$ 378,809		\$ 340,945		\$ 306,780		\$ 328,531		\$ 391,703		\$ 3,642,811
FY27 CA Budget	8.59%		10.56%		8.91%		8.57%		15.42%		10.40%		9.36%		8.42%		9.02%		10.75%		100.00%
Diff OLD v (NEW)	\$ 549		\$ 7,192		\$ (13,292)		\$ (14,577)		\$ 23,928		\$ 8,749		\$ (15,242)		\$ (8,851)		\$ 2,167		\$ 9,377		\$ -

#REF!

This is Option 2 considered by the Assessment Share Committee. While Hickory Ridge and three other underfunded Villages voted in favor of this option, four Villages voted for Option 1 (keeping funding at the current percentages), and two Villages abstained.

**Option 2** Considered by the Assessment Share Committee

Option 2 as detailed in the spreadsheet (on the following page) would raise the Administrative Credit, maintain the covenant and population credit, and reduce the facility credit. The result is calculated and highlighted in yellow on the **Grand Total** line on the spreadsheet. The difference to each Village has been calculated and is highlighted blue. This difference in grant funding would be administered by CA and not the Villages.

Higher Mission , Same Covenant Credit

OPTION 2

Same population, Lower Facility Credit

	<u>DSCA</u>	<u>HCCA</u>	<u>HRCA</u>	<u>KCCA</u>	<u>LRCA</u>	<u>OMCA</u>	<u>OBCA</u>	<u>RHCA</u>	<u>TCCA</u>	<u>WLCA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Base Amount	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	0.54
Administrative OH	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 192,749	\$ 1,927,490
Number of Village Properties	2,074	2,260	3,125	2,817	5,089	2,551	3,326	2,267	1,008	2,196	26,713
Advisor package	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	\$ 25.16	19%
Covenant Credit	\$ 52,172	\$ 56,851	\$ 78,610	\$ 70,863	\$ 128,016	\$ 64,171	\$ 83,667	\$ 57,027	\$ 25,357	\$ 55,241	\$ 671,975
County Population Estimate	7,443	8,471	12,295	10,519	15,821	9,153	10,621	6,230	6,657	7,001	94,209
Events & Newsletter Avg.	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	\$ 4.13	11%
Population Credit	\$ 30,736	\$ 34,981	\$ 50,771	\$ 43,437	\$ 65,331	\$ 37,795	\$ 43,861	\$ 25,726	\$ 27,490	\$ 28,910	\$ 389,038
Total Square Footage	8076	14962	4192	4519	22607	12426	6824	7436	12984	16487	110513
Remaining Share divided by Sq. Ft.	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	\$ 4.96	16%
Total Facility Credit	\$ 40,062	\$ 74,220	\$ 20,795	\$ 22,417	\$ 112,144	\$ 61,640	\$ 33,851	\$ 36,887	\$ 64,408	\$ 81,785	\$ 548,208
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 315,719</b>	<b>\$ 358,802</b>	<b>\$ 342,925</b>	<b>\$ 329,465</b>	<b>\$ 498,240</b>	<b>\$ 356,356</b>	<b>\$ 354,127</b>	<b>\$ 312,388</b>	<b>\$ 310,004</b>	<b>\$ 358,685</b>	<b>\$ 3,536,711</b>
Current Share Allocation	\$ 303,172	\$ 366,360	\$ 328,190	\$ 317,348	\$ 522,059	\$ 359,282	\$ 345,813	\$ 306,438	\$ 316,858	\$ 371,190	\$ 3,536,710
Difference-More (Less)	\$ 12,547	\$ (7,558)	\$ 14,735	\$ 12,117	\$ (23,819)	\$ (2,926)	\$ 8,314	\$ 5,950	\$ (6,854)	\$ (12,505)	\$ 1

# Risk Register for Online Voting

		Severity of Consequences				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood of Occurrence	Rare					
	Unlikely					
	Possible					
	Likely					
	Almost Certain					

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Pluses</b>      | <b>Minuses</b>                           |
| More participation | Loss of confidence                       |
| Ease of use        | Reps not selected by residents           |
| Save \$ on postage | Push projects not supported by residents |

# Hickory Ridge Play Area Cluster Program



# Presentation Outline

- Brief historical background of the Play Area Cluster Program
- Implementation Flow Chart
- Cluster play area overview
- Isochrone GIS analysis
- Proposed play area improvements

# Historical Background – Cluster Play Area Program

- Meetings with the playground work group began in the summer of 2023 and a Columbia-wide survey was initiated
- Based on the results of the survey and input from the work group, the cluster play area policy was developed
- Columbia Board approved the policy on April 25, 2024

*"It is resolved that the corporation will accept the Cluster Play Area Program Policy as the strategic plan for play areas to serve Columbia for the next 20 years. Any deviation or changes to the guidance document will be sent to the board in an annual play area update. The policy will be reviewed and updated every five years."*

# Program Flow Chart



Use GIS to create 10-min walk isochrones (forming a cluster)

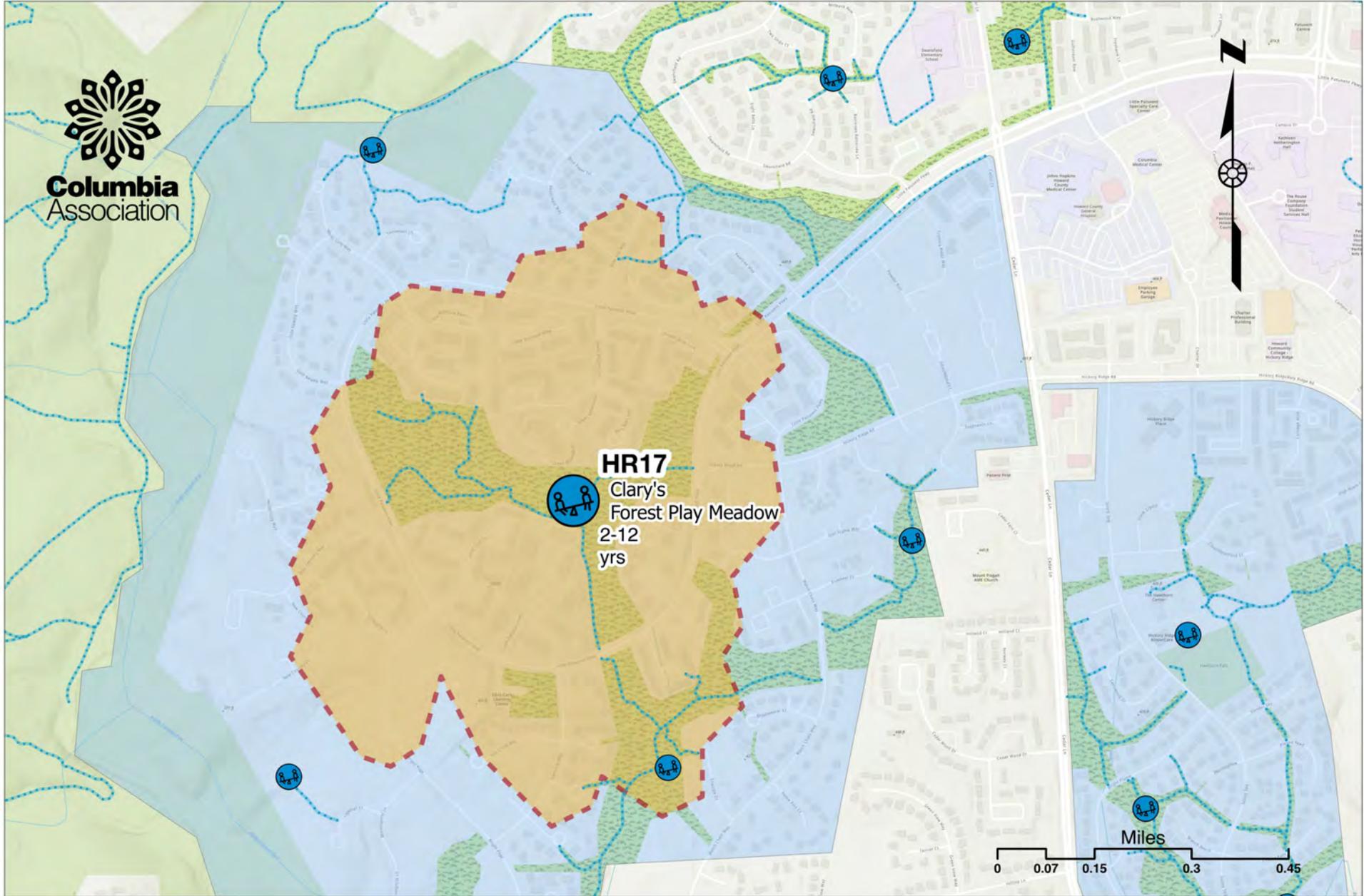
Assess play areas in each cluster for unique aspects

Prioritize 5-12 age group, climbing, and expanded seating

Repurpose play areas that cannot meet safety standards (seating area)

Coordinate with the village on design specifics for the cluster

# HR 17 Play Meadow

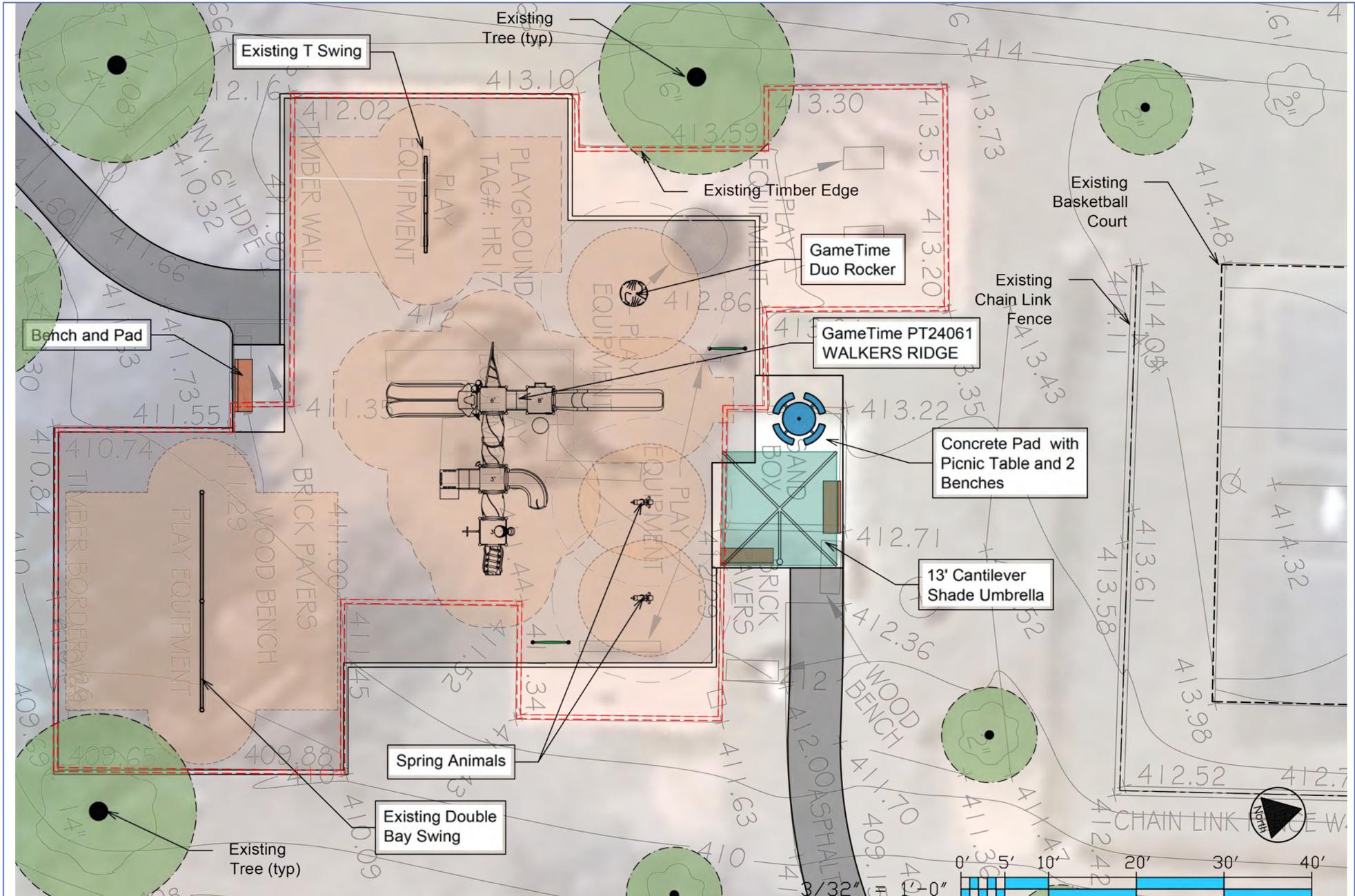


# Play Cluster Overview

Existing – HR 17 Play Meadow



# HR 17 Concept



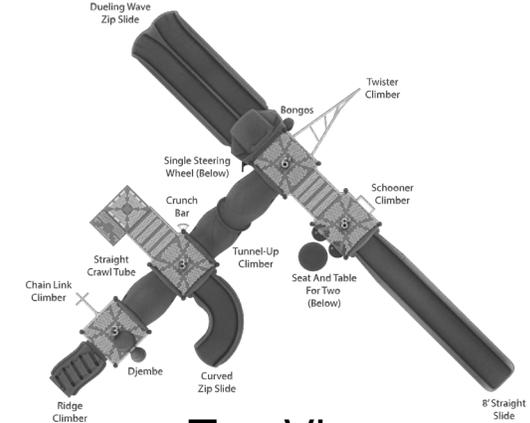
# HR 17 Play Meadow- Walkers Ridge



View 1



View 2

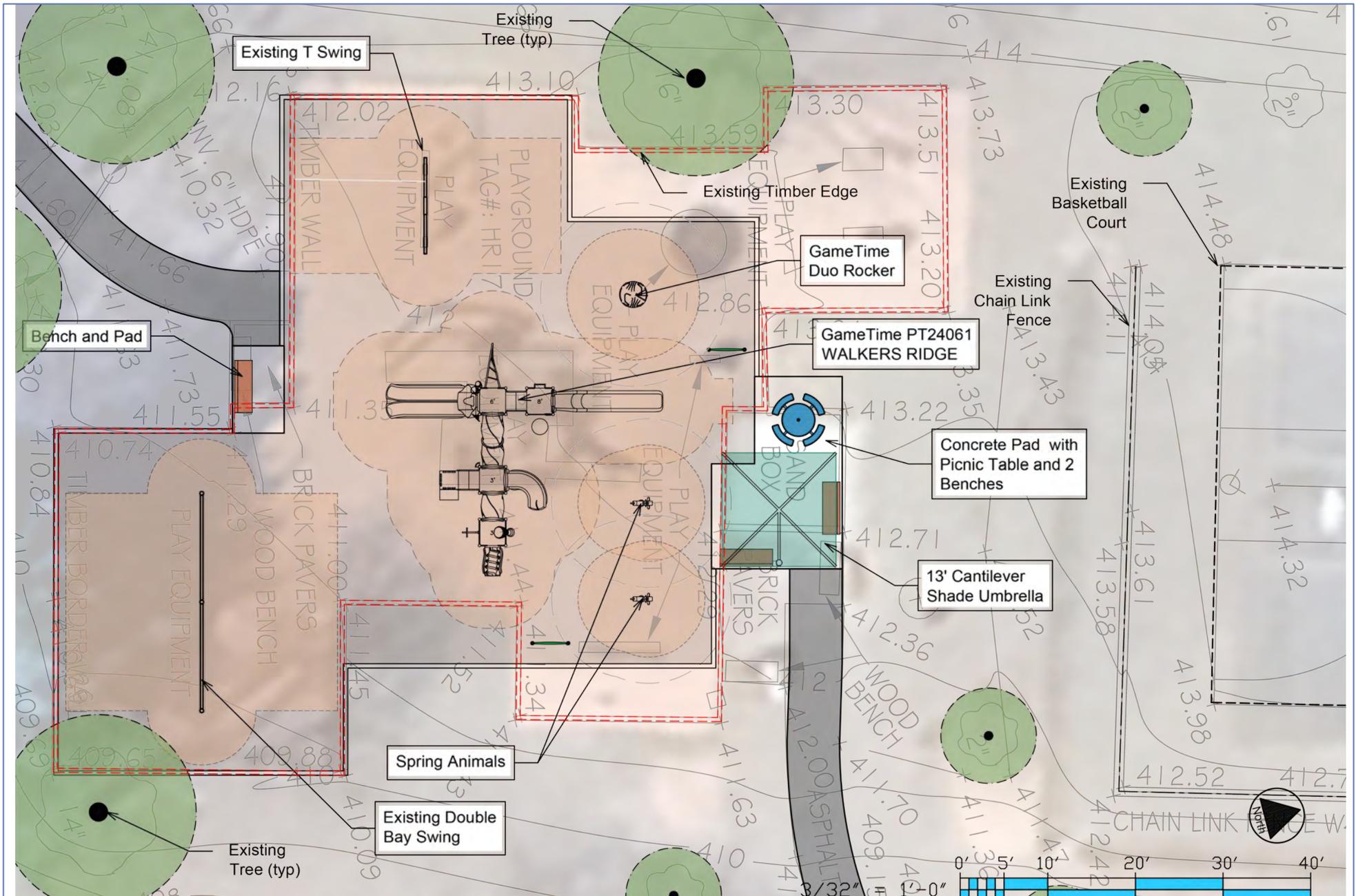


Top View

## Play Elements

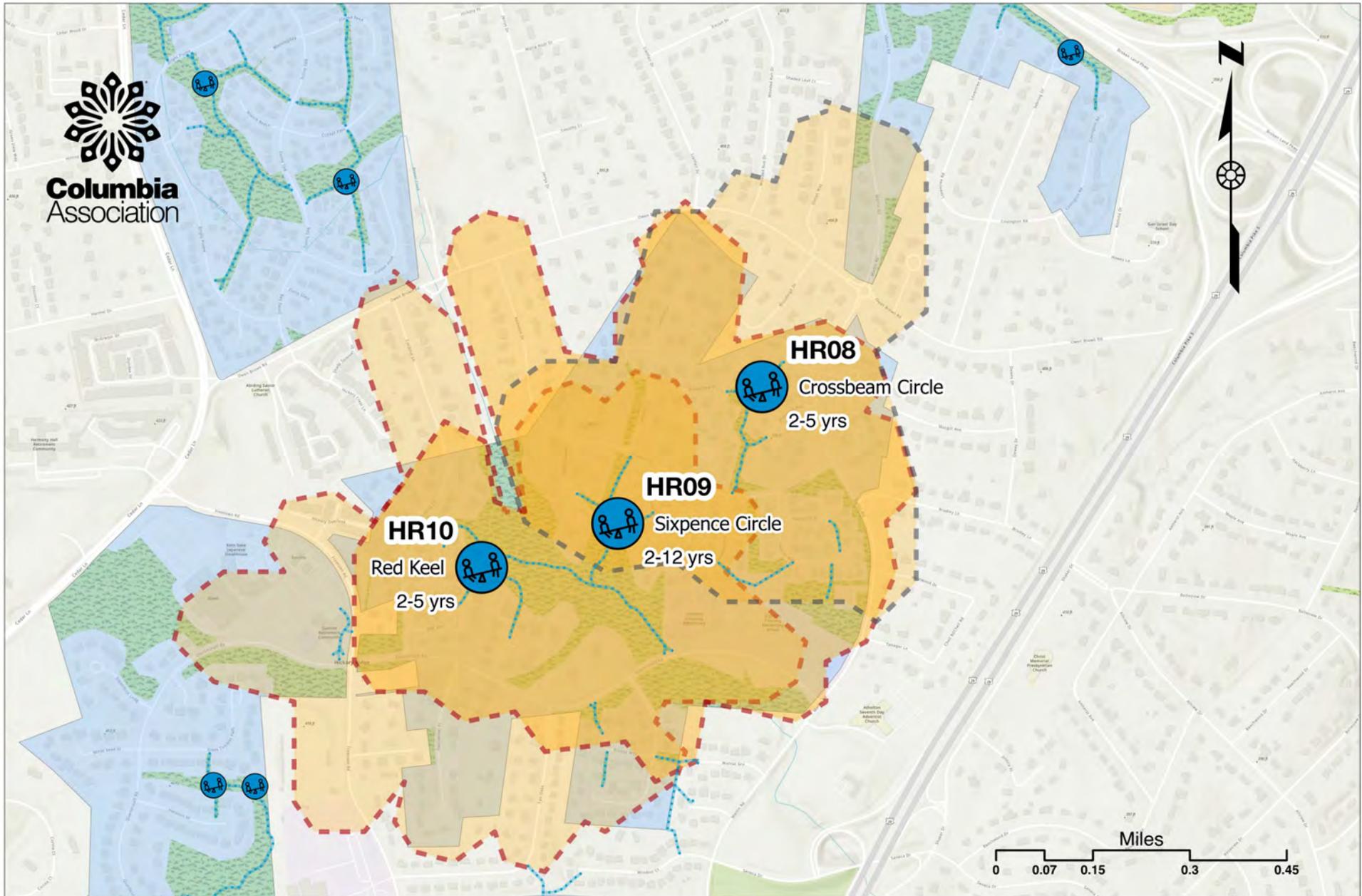
- Dueling Wave Zip Slide
- Curved Zip Slide
- 8' Straight Slide
- Ridge Climber
- Chain Link Climber
- Straight Crawl Tube
- Tunnel-Up Climber
- Twister Climber
- Schooner Climber
- Djembe Drum
- Bongo Drums
- Crunch Bar
- Single Steering Wheel
- Seat and Table for Two

# HR 17 Questions



# HR 08 Crossbeam Circle

Existing



# Play Cluster Overview

Existing – HR 08, HR 09, HR 10



HR 08  
Crossbeam Circle



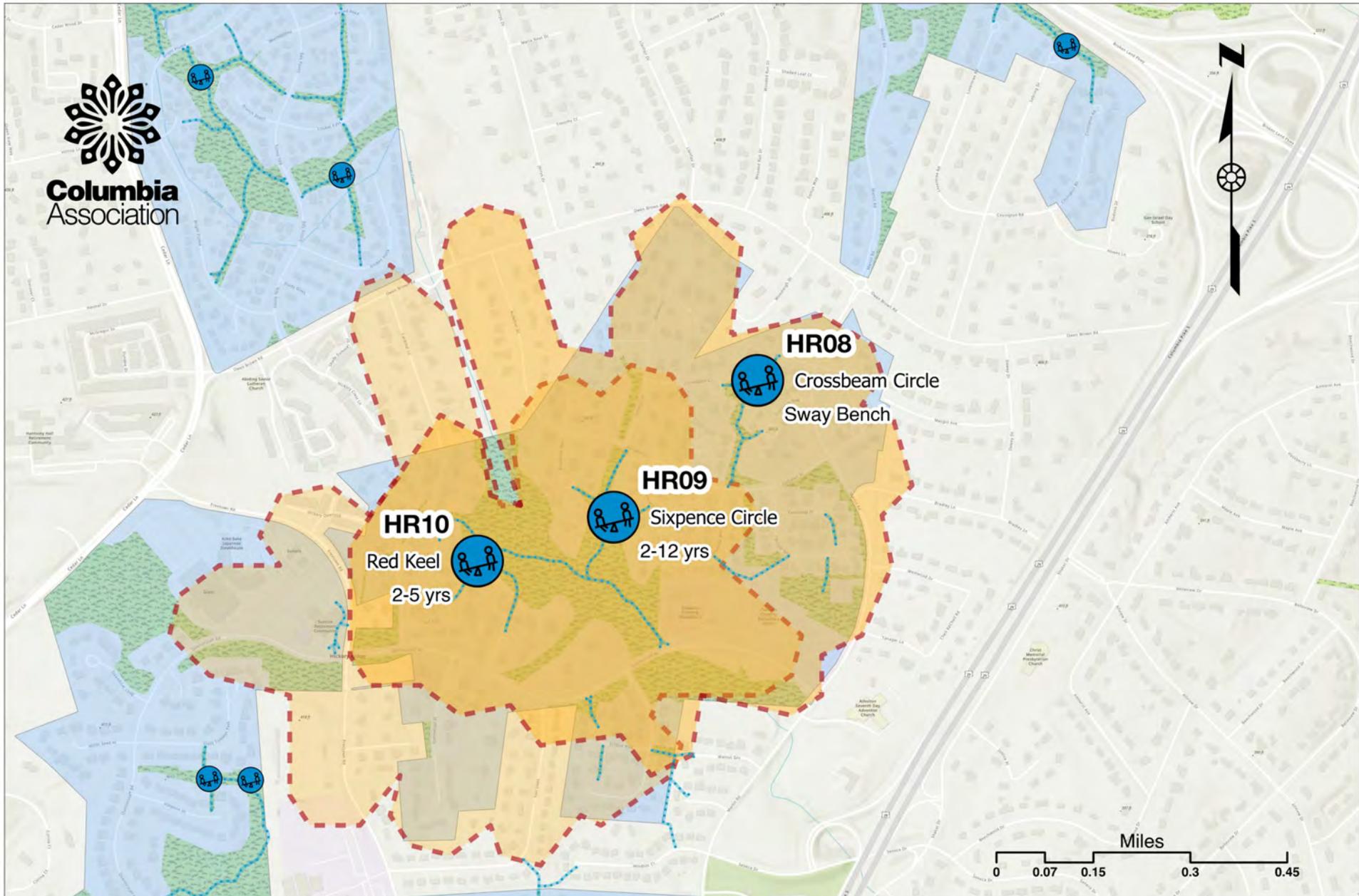
HR 10 Red Keel



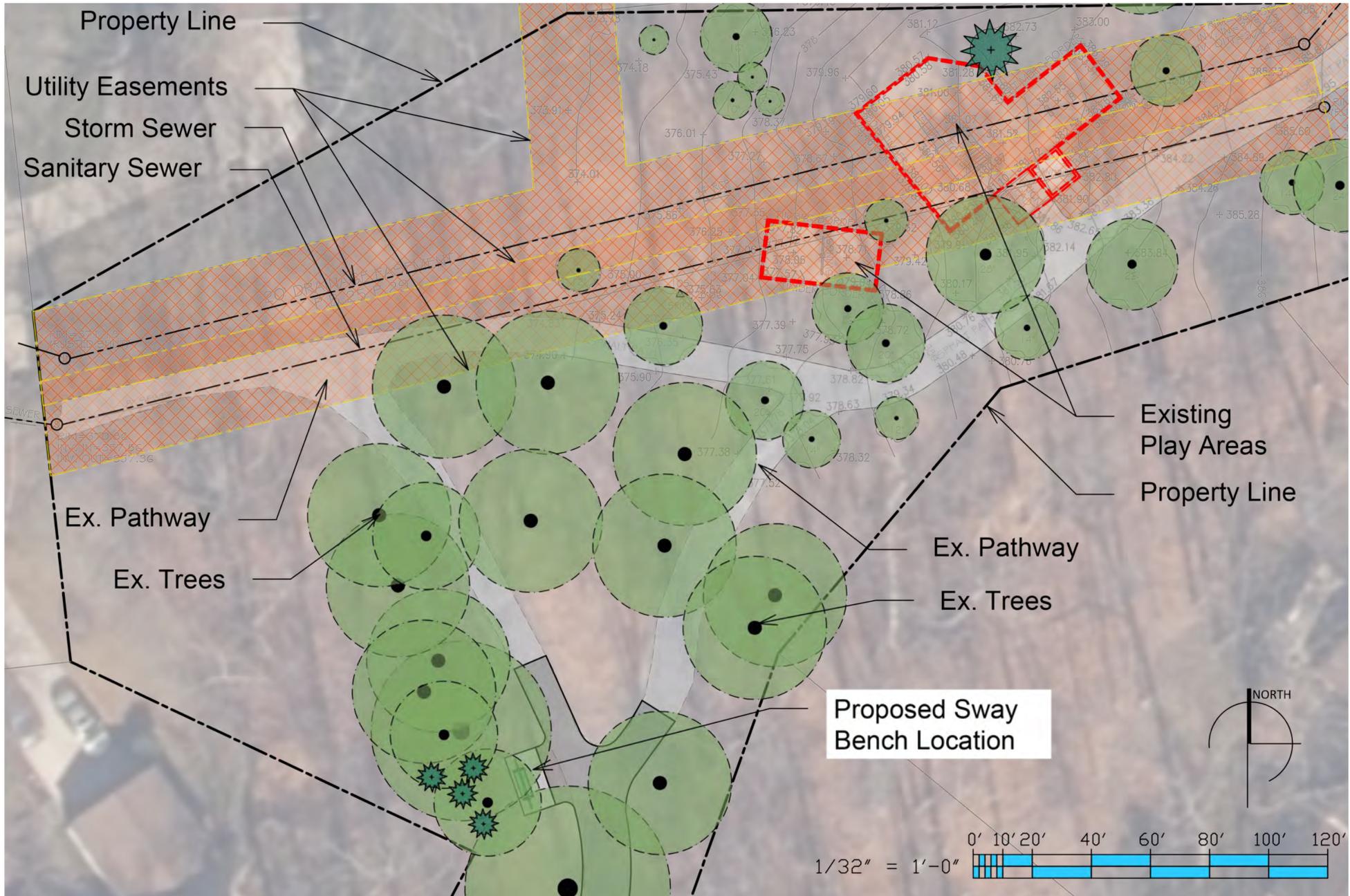
HR 09  
Sixpence Circle

# HR 08 Crossbeam Circle

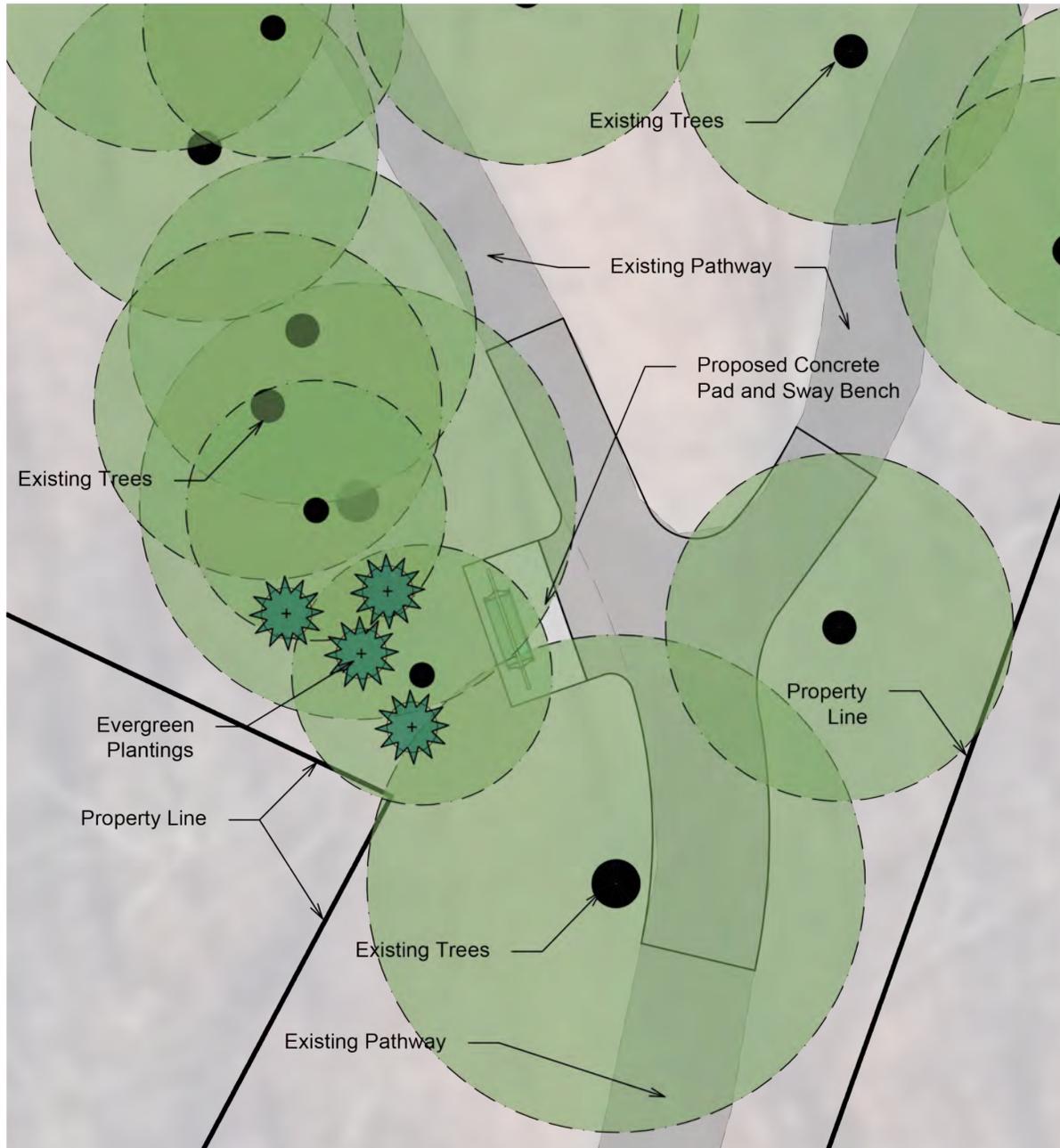
Proposed



# HR 08 Existing Play Area



# HR 08 Concept



Sway Bench Example - Kennedy Gardens



Sway Bench Concept Sketch





## Manager's Report February 9, 2026

### 1. Dates to Note:

- **February 10 & 11**, 9:30am, Monster Story Time
- **February 18**, 7:30pm, RAC meeting, virtual
- **February 19**, e-issue of The Log newsletter
- **February 19**, 7:00pm, CARES meeting, virtual
- **February 19**, 5:00pm, Candidate Information Session for Columbia Council, virtual (see [CA website](#) for more information)
- **February 23**, 7:30pm, Board meeting, *if needed*

**1. Run for the Village Board or Columbia Council:** Hickory Ridge needs energetic residents LIKE YOU to run for the five Village Board seats and Hickory Ridge's Columbia Council seat. The Annual Meeting/Election this year will be on Saturday, April 25th. Keep an eye out for your absentee ballot arriving in the mail in April with more information. Anyone interested in running for the Village Board or the Columbia Association Council must be a member of the Association (own or rent CA assessed property in the Village) and complete a candidate statement and other forms. The Village Board meets on the second and sometimes fourth Mondays of the month at 7:30pm. The Columbia Association Council meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Have questions? Call Laura at 410-730-7327 or email [manager@hickoryridgevillage.org](mailto:manager@hickoryridgevillage.org). Candidate's Handbook is here: <https://hickoryridgevillage.org/village-board/>.

**2. Monday Community Walks:** On Monday mornings, walk The Mall with members of the community. Meet at the second-floor entrance of Macy's by the escalators at 10:00am. Happening almost every Monday. Follow Hickory Ridge on Facebook or Instagram using the QR code below for weekly updates or email [community@hickoryridgevillage.org](mailto:community@hickoryridgevillage.org) for more information!

**3. Open Space Issues:** The recent snow and ice storm wreaked havoc on sidewalks and pathways. Our Open Space team is five people who are responsible for clearing all the sidewalks and pathways in both Hickory Ridge and Harper's Choice. It's a huge job, encompassing more than 20 miles of paths. Let's all appreciate the progress and exercise patience. Report issues on CA Open Space via a form on their web site. Photos may be included. It is also helpful to note the location, if possible. Tot lots and bridges are marked with identification numbers. Visit CA's web site here: <https://columbiaassociation.org/open-space/contact-us/>  
To view current CA Open Space projects, visit <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/400d4f61a51e4db6acebe2daf5971244>

**4. Follow Hickory Ridge:** Find all the ways to connect with [Hickory Ridge here:](#)



### 5. Committee Reports:

- **Resident Architectural Committee:** The RAC continues to review applications as usual.
- **CARES Committee:** CARES meets regularly on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00pm. For meeting information, see the calendar on our website.
- **Aging Well in Columbia (AWC) at CA:** No updates for this meeting.