TILDEN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Community Outreach #1

January 31, 2024

East Bay Regional Park District

ehdd

cmg Landscape Architecture

ALDRICHPEARS ASSOCIATES

What

Replace the existing Tilden EEC facility & exhibit with a new facility:

- **A building complex fully integrated with its surrounding natural and cultural landscape**
- **A state-of-the-art education and exhibit experience that is inviting and accessible**
- **A facility that reflects the District's commitment to sustainable and resilient design practices**

What

photo courtesy 2017 TEEC Feasibility Study

Where


SAN PABLO BAY
SUISUN BAY
HONKER BAY
SOLANO COUNTY
MARIN COUNTY
TILDEN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY
PACIFIC OCEAN
ALAMEDA COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO
EBRPD Regional Parkland
Other Open Space
County Line
EBRPD Visitor Center
Tilden EEC
NORTH
FIVE MILES

Where

RICHMOND
CUTTING BLVD.
CARLSON BLVD.
I-580
I-80
ARLINGTON AVE.
WILDCAT CANYON REGIONAL PARK
SAN PABLO RESERVOIR
BRIONES RESERVOIR
EL CERRITO
TILDEN NATURE AREA
KENSINGTON
TILDEN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
TILDEN REGIONAL PARK
ALAMEDA COUNTY
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
SOLANO AVE.
ALBANY
TILDEN PARK GOLF COURSE
GRIZZLY PEAK BLVD.
ORINDA
SAN FRANCISCO BAY
SAN FRANCISCO, MARIN COUNTY
SAN PABLO AVE.
BERKELEY
UC BERKELEY CAMPUS
SHATTUCK AVE.
TELEGRAPH AVE.
SIESTA VALLEY RECREATIO AREA
EMERYVILLE, OAKLAND, ALAMEDA
UNIVERSITY AVE.
BERKELEY MARINA
CLAREMONT CANYON REGIONAL PRESERVE
CA-24
NORTH
ONE MILE

Why

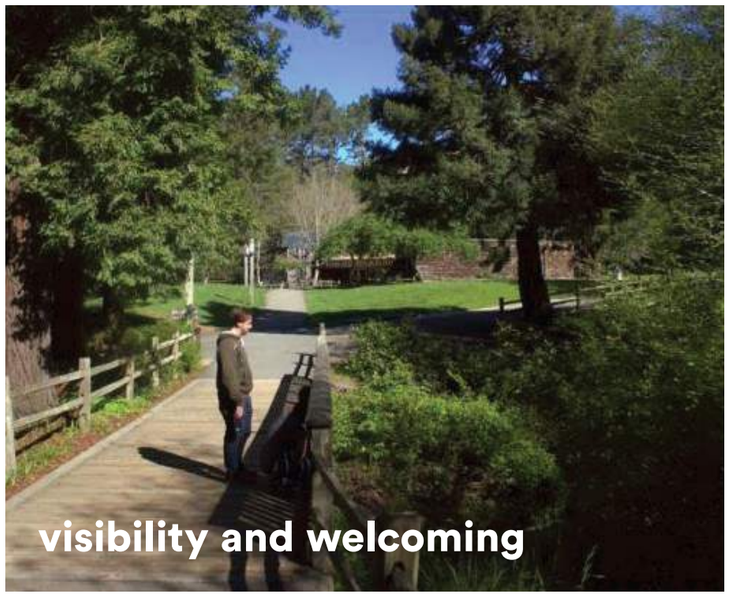
District Feasibility Study reviewed option of renovating vs. replacement.

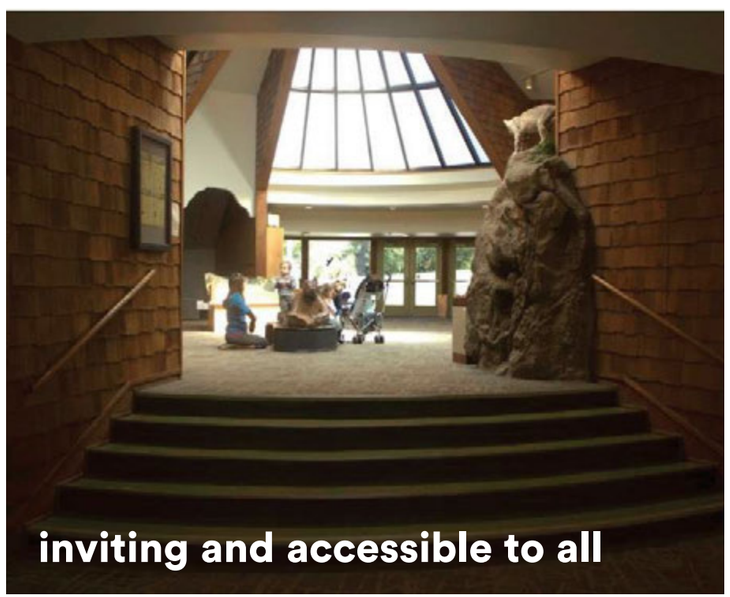
Study recommended replacing 50+ year building.

- **Building systems reached end of life**
- **Exterior envelope is deteriorating**
- **Does not meet current building and accessibility codes**
- **Need for fire protection upgrades**
- **New facility will allow for improved connections to Tilden Nature Area's natural and cultural resources**

Why

photos courtesy 2017 TEEC Feasibility Study





COMPLETED

Feasibility Study

Contracted design consultants:

- Architectural design team (EHDD, CMG Landscape, engineers, etc.)
- Exhibit design (AldrichPears Associates)

Pre-design phase for building and site

Pre-design phase for exhibit design

IN-PROCESS

Community Outreach #1

- On-site exhibit
- Online survey

PLANNED

Schematic Design phase for both building/site and exhibits

Project Process

Kickoff Site Visit, Tilden EEC / May 31, 2023

Programming Session 1, Tilden EEC / June 13, 2023

Adjacency Exercise, Programming Session 1, Tilden EEC / June 13, 2023

Pre-Design Visioning

TILDEN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

PROJECT GOALS

A building complex fully integrated with its surrounding natural and cultural landscape

A state-of-the-art education and exhibit experience that is inviting and accessible

A facility that reflects the District's commitment to sustainable and resilient design practices

PROJECT VISION

The experiential and cultural hub of Tilden Nature Area

The District's flagship visitor-serving facility

A model of stewardship of the wildland-urban interface

A place of belonging that provides the opportunity for a growing and diverse community to experience nature nearby

Site and Context

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- The EEC consists of two structures: the Visitor Center and the Security Residence.
- The EEC is part of an important cluster of structures and programs that serve TNA (it is immediately adjacent to Little Farm and the Ranger Lodge, and near a handful of trailheads that take visitors out into the greater nature area).
- Visitors primarily access the EEC from the parking lot to the south.
- The EEC is located at a clearing between wooded areas (Wildcat Creek and its riparian corridor to the southwest; wooded hillsides to the east and north). Little Farm and the Wildcat Creek siltation pond bound the site's southeastern edge.
- A network of service roads and paths extend along three sides of the site, providing access to Little Farm, the District's nearby maintenance yard, and trails throughout TNA and TRP.

Site and Context

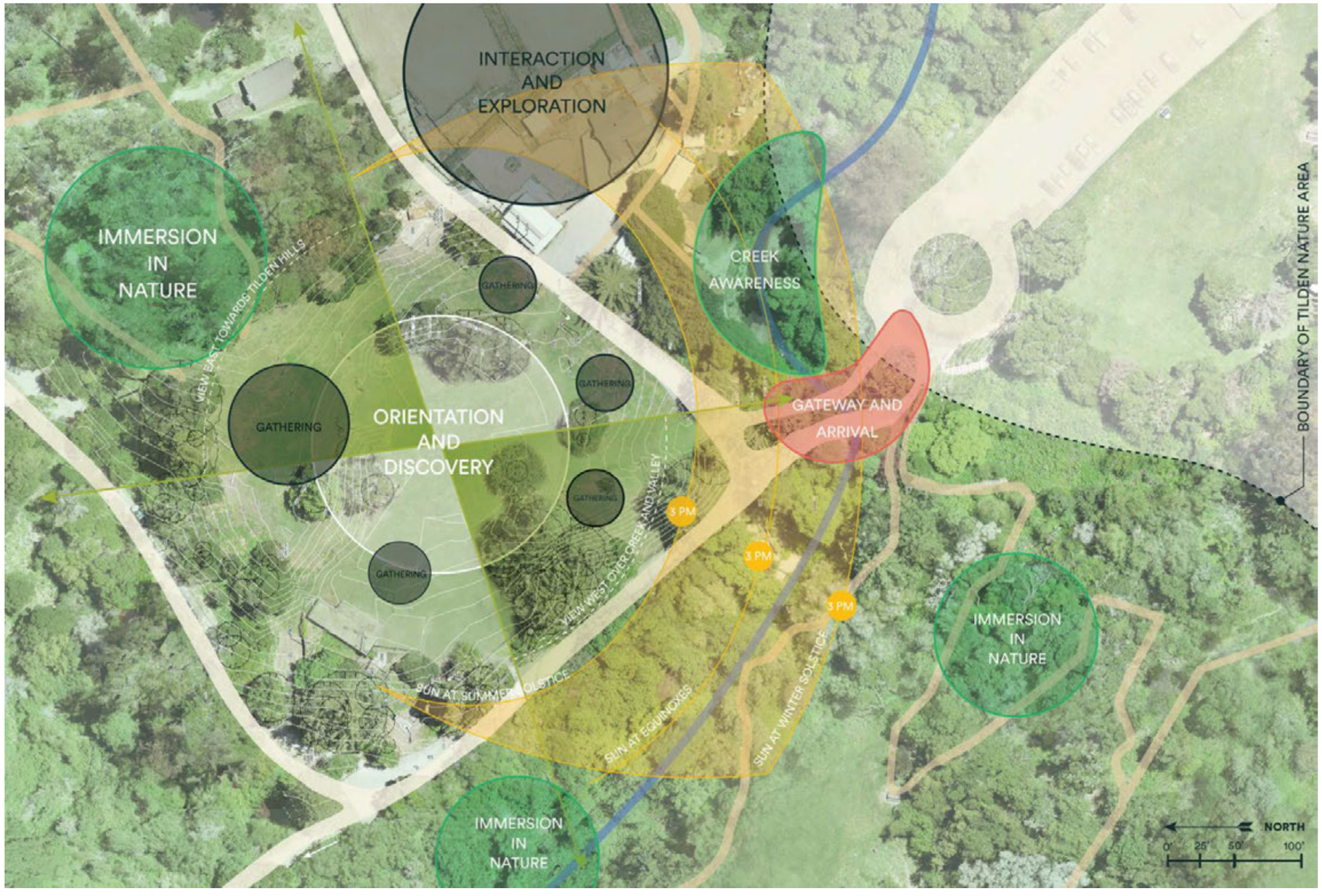
PLACE AND EXPERIENCE

- As a destination for all visitors arriving in Tilden Nature Area, the EEC site is a place of discovery and orientation. First-time visitors, returning visitors, and community members alike will be met with important information before heading out into the park—and insightful stories to enrich their understanding of this place. This is where journeys begin.

- The site clearing accommodates gathering spaces at a variety of scales. Expansive views reach out to the riparian corridor at the west and up to the hills at the east. The openness and orientation of the site should allow for effective daylighting of interior spaces (with solar control provided as needed) and intriguing shadow play across the site.

- The transition from the parking lot into Tilden Nature Area across Wildcat Creek has potential to provide a more organized and impactful sense of arrival.

- The surrounding attractions offer a range of experiences (direct interaction with animals at Little Farm, visual connection to the creek and its watershed, immersion in the trail systems and the flora/fauna of the park, etc).



Site and Context

DRIVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

Aside from the programmatic uses and experiential qualities of the existing site, notable factors that may inform the siting of the EEC include:

- The location and length of the accessible pathway from the site entry to the EEC (and to Little Farm)
- Proximity and visibility from site entry and Little Farm
- Areas of relatively flat grading
- Proximity to edges of forested areas, for fire safety needs
- Preservation of prominent desirable trees
- Service vehicle access and relationship to trail networks. [see Landscape and Civil sections of report]
- Proiximity to Wildcat Creek [see Landscape and Civil sections of report]

Site and Context

SITE ACCESS AND ACCESSIBILITY

This project will require site access improvements to provide an accessible path of travel from the existing parking lot to the EEC. It is understood that this accessible path of travel is also desired to reach Little Farm. See *Landscape* and *Civil* sections of this report for further analysis.

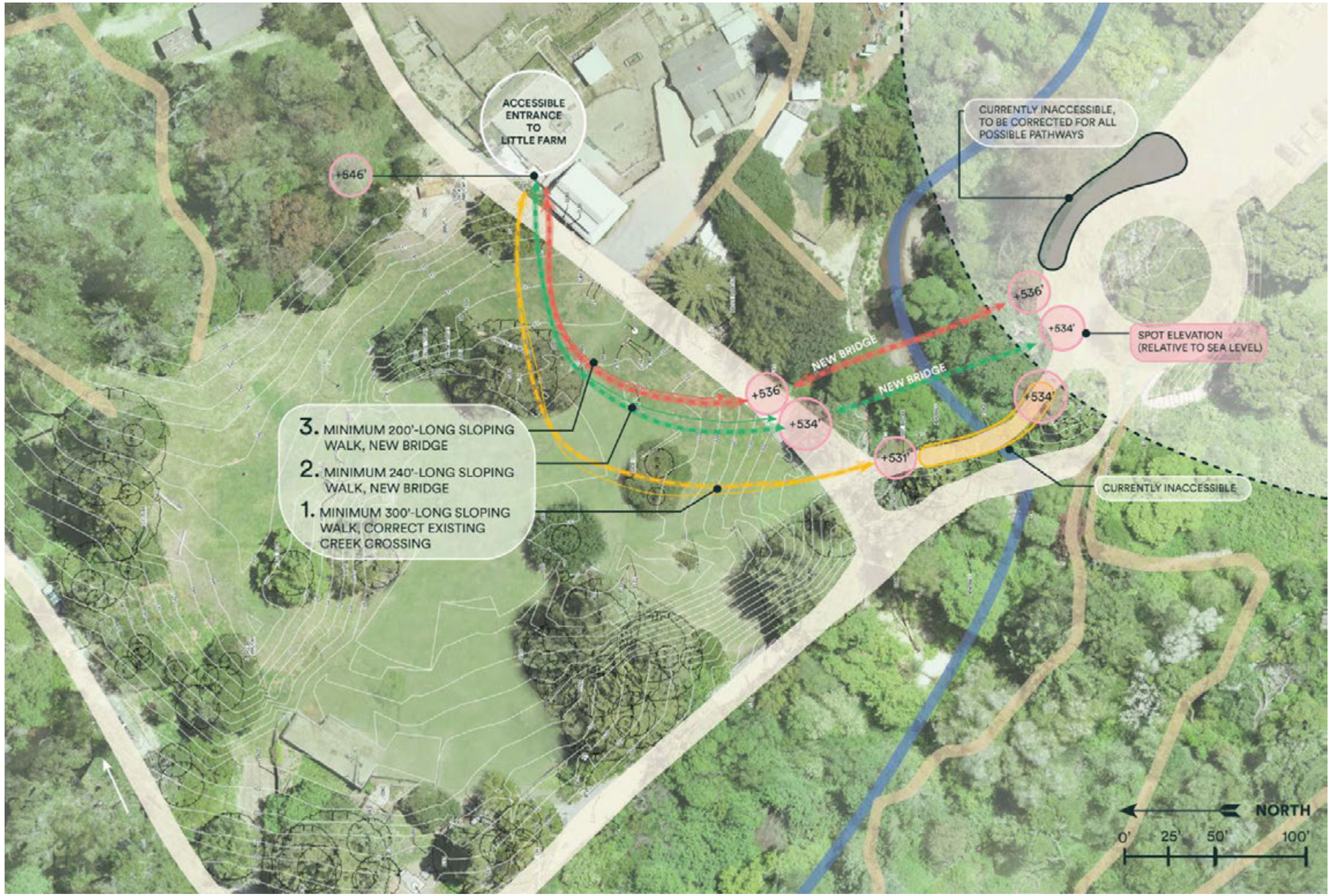
Certain portions of the existing pathway at the parking lot and turnaround have been identified as inaccessible due to excessive slope and will require correction. Once the accessible path of travel arrives at the crossing of Wildcat Creek, a number of potential approaches have been identified. Each of these approaches would be in addition to improvements to the inaccessible portions of the path of travel at the parking lot and turnaround as described above:

Scheme 1: Correcting the existing creek crossing in-place

The existing creek crossing drops down to a low point before meeting pathways that rise to the existing EEC and Little Farm. Providing an accessible path of travel at this location will require adjustments to the grading of the existing crossing (and modifying surrounding conditions to conform to the new accessible grade); this will require the most extensive minimum length of accessible sloping walk to connect to the existing grade at the accessible entrance to Little Farm.

Schemes 2/3: New bridge

A new connection across the creek from a higher elevation at the turnaround would allow the accessible path of travel to avoid the fall-and-rise of the existing creek crossing and may result in a shorter total length of accessible path of travel. Schemes 2 and 3 depict potential crossings at two different elevations. This potential connection is imagined as a footbridge (for pedestrians, strollers, and small service vehicles as required). These schemes would not likely require improvements to the existing creek crossing.



Program

Revised November 2023

VISITOR CENTER PROGRAM

LOBBY
600 SF

Primary public entrance. Includes staffed front desk and open space for entry/gathering.

EXHIBIT
3590 SF

EXHIBIT LOBBY
690 SF

Flexible area for multiple interactive exhibits. Power/technology should be distributed throughout and allow for ease of changing exhibits. Exhibit areas may benefit from surrounding views and daylighting opportunities. Includes "lobby" space for introductory exhibitry at entry point(s) to exhibits.

LARGE PUBLIC SPACE
1375 SF

Akin to “Auditorium”. Imagined as a flexible space for large gatherings. May be distinct and separate from Medium Public Space.

MEDIUM PUBLIC SPACE
625 SF

Akin to “Classroom”. Imagined as a flexible space for groups, classes, and other visitors. If located near Exhibit, this space may function as overflow or satellite exhibit space when not in use as Medium Public Space.

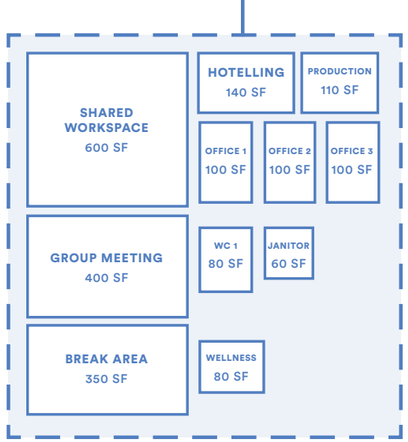
PUBLIC RESTROOMS
600 SF

Accessed from inside VC and from exterior.

ADMINISTRATION
2120 SF

Staff offices and operational support space.

See breakdown of Administration program below.



Breakdown of Administration program.

These spaces are based upon the understood requirements for EEC staff [assuming (12) full-time employees: (3) with individual offices and (9) with workstations in shared workspace; assuming up to (4) temporary staff (office assistants and docents)].

SUPPORT
1060 SF

Includes Mechanical/Electrical/IT space and Storage, along with Animal Room. Note: Storage may be distributed throughout the EEC, but will likely be focused at Administration areas and Public Spaces.

GROSS AREA FACTOR
1300 SF

Based on 12.5% of assignable square footage, for circulation and walls (this factor may range from 10% - 15% for this project type).

SHOP
450 SF

Area includes shop storage. It is not critical that the Shop be contiguous with the EEC. It is possible it may stand alone and/or be located near the Staff Parking and Service Area.

SECURITY RESIDENCE

RESIDENCE
1000 SF

Housing for staff overseeing after-hours security of site. Two bedrooms, one bathroom. It is possible the existing Security Residence may be renovated in place (instead of being new construction in a new location), depending on overall EEC siting strategy.

EXTERIOR PROGRAM

[see Landscape Program Matrix for additional, landscape-specific program]

EXTERIOR STAFF AREA
[~200 SF]

Work space and staff break space outside Administration program area(s).

STAFF PARKING AND SERVICE AREA
[~5200 SF]

Location and distribution of parking/service area TBD.

BRIDGE [~800 SF]

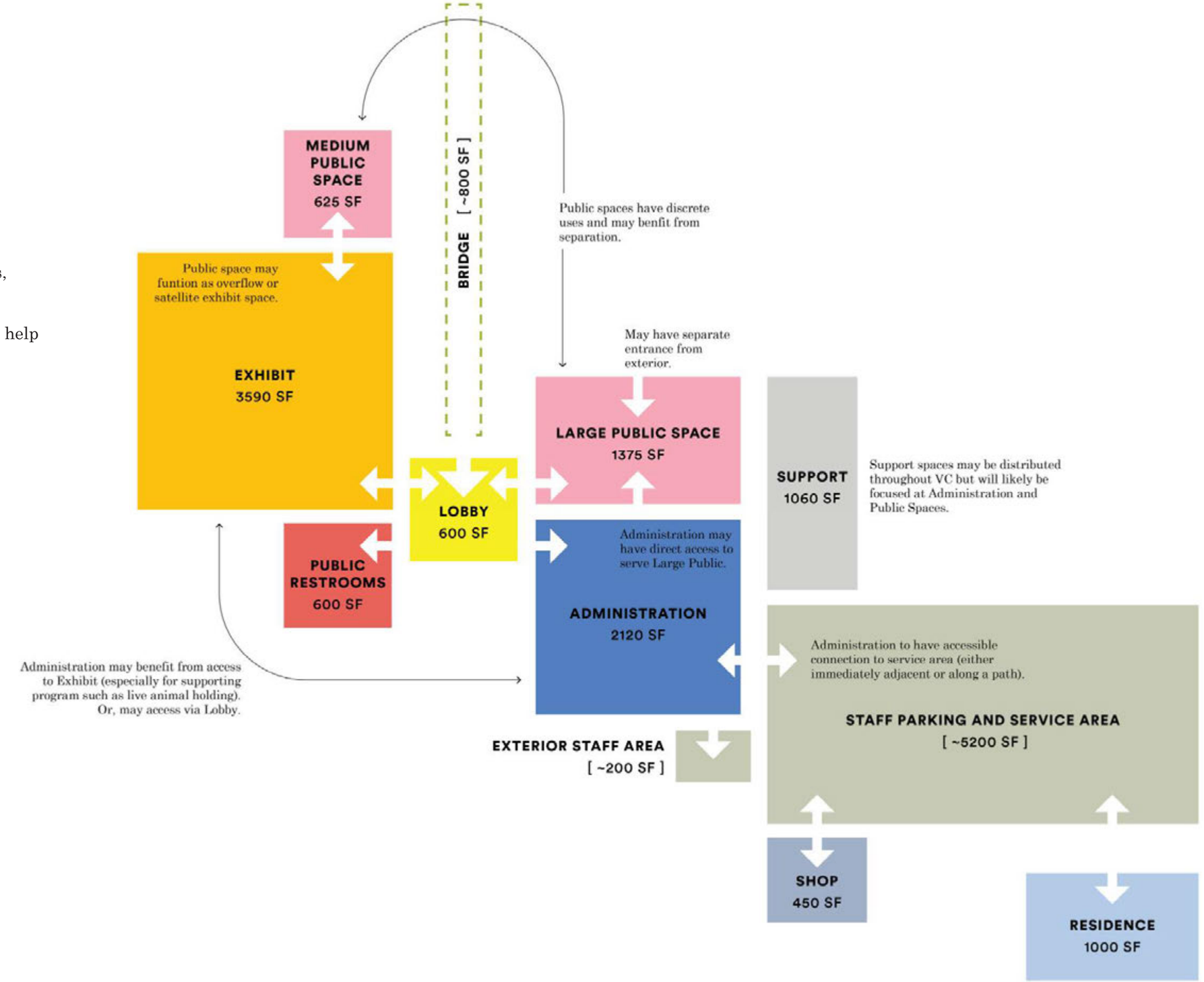
Length and width of potential bridge TBD; will be informed by resolution of accessible pathway to/through site.

Program

Revised November 2023

ADJACENCIES

As the program elements were discussed during pre-design, EBRPD and the design team identified some important proximities, efficiencies, and affinities between certain program areas. These relationships will be revisited in future project phase(s) and will help to inform building layout and siting.



Existing Conditions

EXISTING LANDSCAPE SITE CONDITIONS

Tilden Nature Area is beloved by residents of the Bay Area as a place to explore nature and the Little Farm. In its current state, the landscape leading to and surrounding the Environmental Education Center does not provide a welcoming and clear gateway to guide visitors to their destinations. The design of the new EEC is an opportunity to reimagine a landscape that intuitively directs visitors to their destination while supporting the educational and environmental goals of the center and of the East Bay Regional Park District.

The project kicked off with a site walk with CMG and representatives from Tilden Nature Area to discuss the challenges with the existing landscape and contemplate the possibilities for the site.

The challenges that emerged during that site walk include:

- Lack of clear wayfinding from the entry, especially to the Environmental Center.
- Many of the current pathways do not meet current ADA requirements.
- The lawn is valued as a flexible place for events and for children to play, but it is high maintenance and does not align with the environmental goals of the park.
- Conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular routes.

EXISTING LANDSCAPE SITE CONDITIONS

Existing Conditions

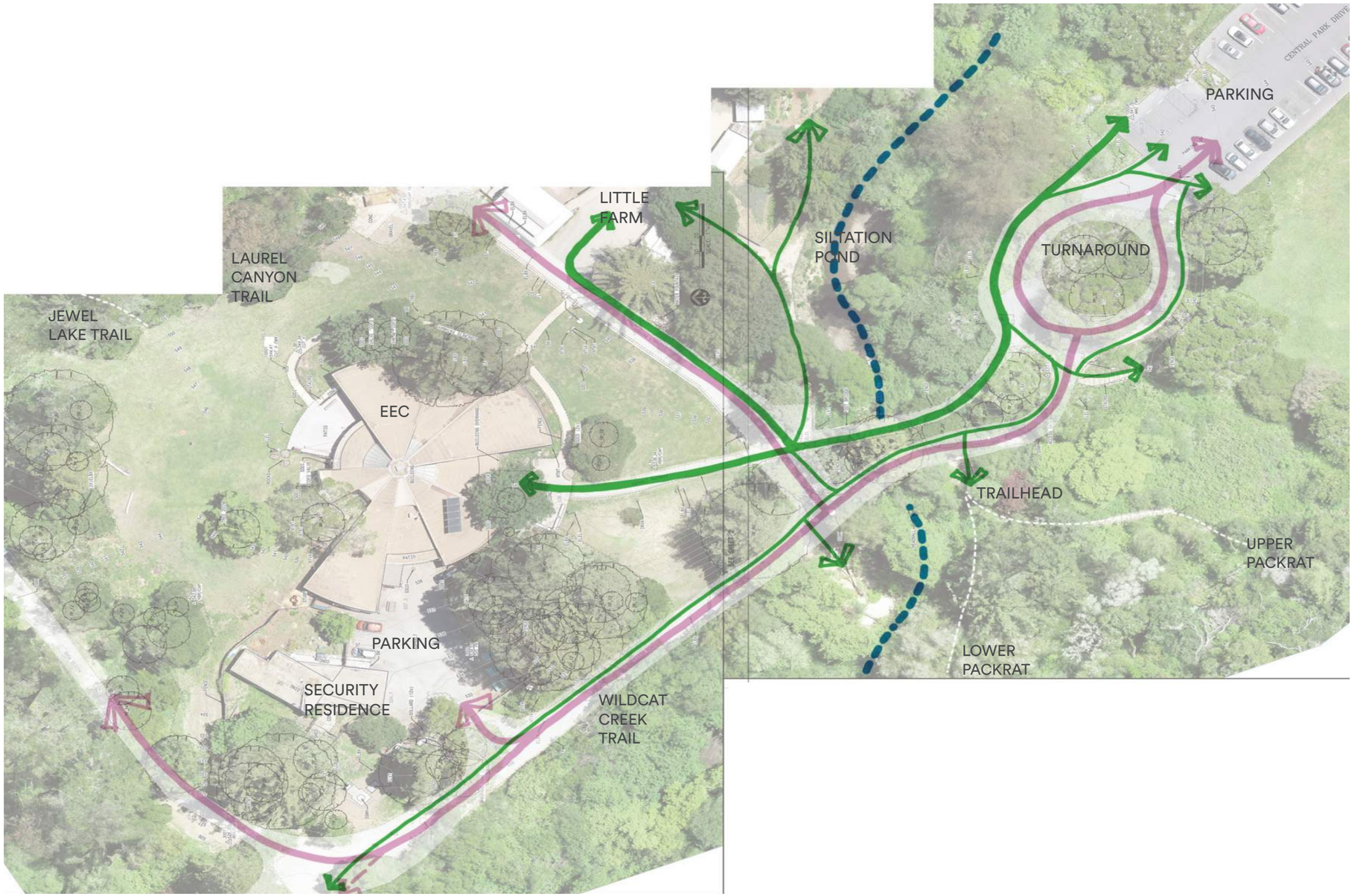
The goals and opportunities for the new landscape include:

- More native planting, especially plants local to the watershed or immediate context of the Nature Area (as opposed to California Natives more generally).
- Demonstrating fire-safe best practices modeling defensible space and fire resistant planting.
- Anticipating climate change and using plants that will be resilient into the future.
- Reusing wood from trees removed during on-going tree thinning.
- Enhancing the pedagogical value of the landscape to tie into educational programs like the Nature Ramble, Pond Studies and Native American Lifeways courses.
- Creating outdoor gathering spaces for simultaneous use by different classes or programs.
- Maintaining some lawn and/or flexible plaza space.

Note: See meetings notes for a full list of challenges and opportunities.

EXISTING SITE CIRCULATION

Following the site walk, CMG analyzed the existing circulation patterns for both pedestrians and vehicles. This analysis shows the overlap of vehicular and pedestrian circulation and the confusing network of pedestrian circulation. Currently the entry to the site has too many 'decision points' where paths converge and diverge. Depending on their route, visitors may not see the wayfinding signage as they enter the site.



EXISTING SITE CIRCULATION

TILDEN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

EMERGENT THEME

The dynamic Wildcat Creek watershed embodies dramatic changes that define the landscapes, the values, and the natural and cultural ecosystem of the East Bay.

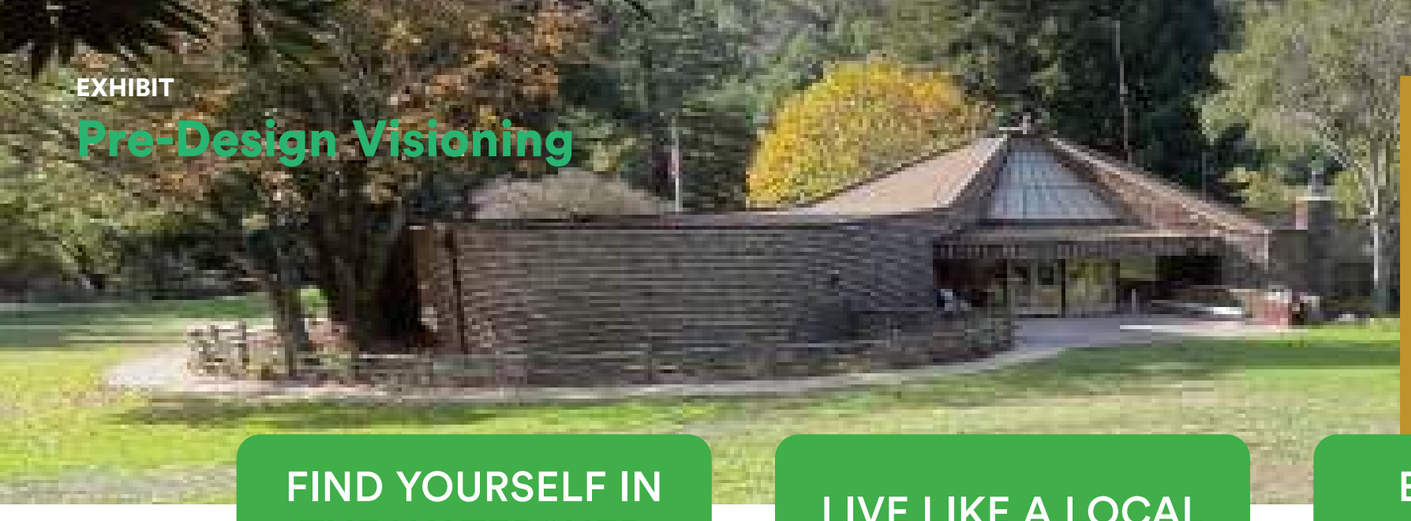
SUBTHEMES

Through time, the watershed has been a source of sustenance, a commercial water supply, grazing land, a eucalyptus plantation, flood hazard, and a place of refuge and recreation.

Plants and animals reveal their roles and relationships within our changing ecosystem.

Wildcat Creek carves and shapes the land and provides rich and varied habitat for many plant and animal species.

People have a role to play in the health of this ecosystem, from personal to policy levels.



VISITOR EXPERIENCE CATEGORIES

What will people see, hear, touch and do in the new visitor center?

FIND YOURSELF IN THE WATERSHED

Understand the physical boundaries of the watershed and your place within it.

LIVE LIKE A LOCAL

Experience the watershed from animal perspectives.

ENTER HIDDEN WORLDS

Witness events that are usually inaccessible because of scale/time/remoteness.

SENSORY PLAY AND ENGAGEMENT

Use all the senses to connect with the watershed.

WHOLE-BODY ENACTMENT

Explore aspects of the watershed physically.

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Connect to stories of people in the watershed.

NOW YOU TRY!

Get hands-on with activities.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Engage with live animals.

TAKE IT OUTSIDE

Link the visitor center exhibits to exploration of the Nature Area.

CHOICES OVER TIME (NATURE OF CHANGE)

Grasp the impact of human choices on the landscape.

YOU ARE PART OF OUR STORY

Share your memories and opinions.

REST AND REFLECT

In a natural setting, take a break physically and mentally.

Next Steps

SCHEMATIC DESIGN

- Develop (3) building/site plan options
- Select (1) building/site plan option to develop further
- Develop exhibit designs

UPCOMING COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Meeting #2

- February 28, 2024 (Wednesday evening, Zoom)
- Topic: Design Options

Meeting #3

- April 10, 2024 (Wednesday evening, Zoom)
- Topic: Design Progress and Project Timeline

Questions?

For more information and an opportunity to comment on the project please go to the project website:

ebparks.org/tilden-eec-project

[thank you!]