



**PLAY**   
**YOUR** 

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**PARK**

The Campaign for Hermann Park

**The Commons at Hermann Park**  
**Project Naming Opportunities**  
**May 2019**

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## Project Introduction

The Commons at Hermann Park is a 26-acre area in the southwest portion of Hermann Park. Conceived by landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, the project will transform this currently under-utilized area into a welcoming destination and threshold into Hermann Park, drawing visitors from the Texas Medical Center and its new TMC<sup>3</sup> facility, Rice University and its new Innovation District in Midtown, and adjacent neighborhoods. The new site will include improved park entry at the corner, expanded parking, public art spaces, new food services, a destination play area for children, expanded picnic areas, spacious wood decking under historic live oaks, open areas of trees and lawn, and extensive enrichments to the southern and western shores of McGovern Lake. These major developments – thematically organized below – will lead improvements to the overall experience, function, and integration of this area of Hermann Park.

[Access](#) | [Art](#) | [Children’s Play](#) | [Play for All Communal Areas](#) | [Lakefront Enhancements](#)

*Click words above to jump to related pages. For a full project map, click the rocket icon at bottom of page.*



*The Commons as it stands today, bordering the Houston Zoo to the east, Cambridge Street to the south, Fannin and Main Streets to the west; immediately to the north-northwest is Hermann Park’s Japanese Garden and McGovern Lake.*



*Project completion will see The Commons as a multi-use space replete with children’s play areas, communal greenspaces with food options, special public art zones, and a completely re-invigorated lakefront area – all with more streamlined access.*



## Lead Gift: The Commons at Hermann Park \$15 million

The centerpiece of the Play Your Park Campaign, [The Commons at Hermann Park](#) revitalizes the idea of play and recreation for all Houstonians. The lead contributor to the project will name the project and launch the bold twenty-year master plan for Hermann Park.

*Naming example: The Mary and Roger Broussard Commons at Hermann Park, The Broussard Commons*

*Click the images or project map icon below to jump to related information.*



The Commons at Hermann Park  
Project Map



## Lead Naming Opportunities

*as of May 2019, pending final design*

**CLICK NAMES BELOW TO JUMP TO DETAILED INFORMATION**

Lead Gift: The Commons at Hermann Park <i>Naming example: The Mandy and Frank Smith Commons</i>	\$15,000,000
Play Garden (Central Playground) <i>The new, central playground for Hermann Park</i>	\$7,500,000
Entry Gardens at George Hermann Corner <i>Park entry at Cambridge and Fannin Streets</i>	\$5,000,000
Grand Meadow <i>Central communal lawn in The Commons</i>	\$3,000,000
Historic Pavilion <i>Renovation and refurbishment of historic, open-sided pavilion</i>	\$2,500,000
Live Oak Terrace <i>Expansive, decked outdoor area near new food options</i>	\$2,000,000
Carousel House <i>Naming example: Bruce Sampson Carousel</i>	\$1,500,000
Rest Pavilion <i>New covered area for public programs and visitor enjoyment</i>	\$1,000,000
Dining Bosque <i>Outdoor courtyard between Historic and Rest Pavilions</i>	\$1,000,000
Main Street Promenade <i>Area redevelopment and landscaping adjacent to Palmer Church</i>	\$1,000,000



[Project Map](#)

*Gifts can be made in one-payment or pledged over a period of one to five years. All naming opportunities are subject to availability, awarded to the first request, and valid for the useful life of the area, building, or item dedicated.*



## Other Naming Opportunities

*as of May 2019, pending final design*

**CLICK NAMES BELOW TO JUMP TO DETAILED INFORMATION**

### Children's Play - Play Garden (Central Playground)

Canopy Walk	\$1,000,000
Moon Crater, Net Climbing Tower and Slide Hill	\$1,000,000
Rocket Ship and Space Capsule	\$1,000,000
Meteor Crater	\$500,000
Main Entry Plaza	\$500,000
Rattlesnake Roost	\$500,000
Splash Cove	\$500,000
Water Lab	\$500,000
Aquadrat	\$400,000
Central Plaza	\$400,000
Lizard Lair and Slide	\$400,000
Play Bayou	\$400,000
Canebrake Forest	\$350,000
River Delta and Sand Play Area	\$350,000
Overlook Lawn	\$300,000
Toddlers Burrow	\$250,000
Water Play Picnic Area	\$200,000
Meteor Crater Picnic Area	\$100,000



### Children's Play - Play Nodes

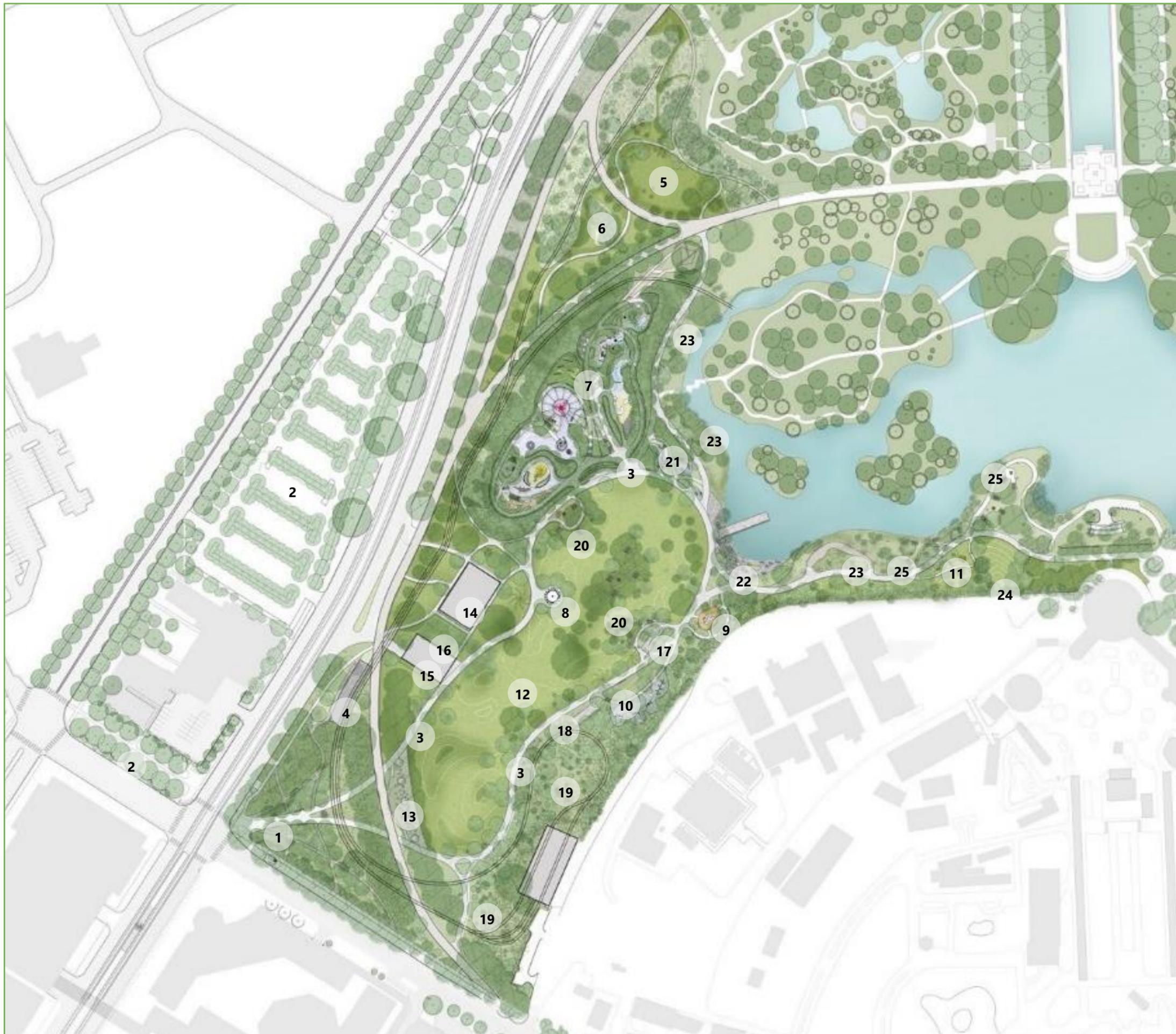
Gorilla Forest	\$650,000
Swing Hill	\$400,000
Cypress Grove	\$350,000

### Art and Access

Grand Meadow Promenade (central pedestrian thoroughfare)	\$750,000
The Commons Train Station	\$500,000
Art Zone North	\$500,000
Picnic Pavilion	\$400,000
Shade Pavilion	\$400,000
Art Zone South	\$350,000
Train Forest	\$250,000
Grand Meadow Picnic Groves – 2 AVAILABLE	\$100,000

### Lakefront Enhancements

Water Garden	\$500,000
Stone Cove	\$400,000
Lake Prospect Overlook	\$350,000
Lakefront Nature Habitats – 2 AVAILABLE	\$250,000
Lakeside Picnic Grove – 3 AVAILABLE	\$100,000



# PLAY YOUR PARK

The Commons

The Campaign for Hermann Park

## Access and Mobility

1. Entry Gardens
2. Main Street Promenade and Parking
3. Grand Meadow Promenade
4. Commons Train Station

## Public Art

5. Art Zone North
6. Art Zone South

## Children's Play

7. Play Garden (Central Playground)  
SEE NEXT PAGE
8. Carousel House
9. Gorilla Forest Play Node
10. Swing Hill Play Node
11. Cypress Grove Play Node

## Play for All Communal Areas

12. Grand Meadow
13. Live Oak Terrace
14. Historic Pavilion
15. Rest Pavilion
16. Dining Bosque
17. Shade Pavilion
18. Picnic Pavilion
19. Train Forest
20. Grand Meadow Picnic Groves

## Lakefront Enhancements

21. Water Garden
22. Stone Cove
23. Lakefront Nature Habitats
24. Lake Prospect Overlook
25. Lakeside Picnic Groves



**Play Garden (Central Playground)**

**Entry & Observation Areas**

- 26. Main Entry Plaza
- 27. Meteor Crater Picnic Area
- 28. Overlook Lawn
- 29. Water Play Picnic Area
- 30. Central Plaza

**Dry Play Area**

- 31. Rattlesnake Roost
- 32. Lizard Lair and Slide
- 33. Canebrake Forest
- 34. Toddlers Burrow
- 35. Meteor Crater
- 36. Rocket Ship and Space Capsule
- 37. Moon Crater, Net Climbing Tower and Slide Hill
- 38. Canopy Walk

**Water Play Area**

- 39. Water Lab
- 40. Splash Cove
- 41. Play Bayou
- 42. River Delta and Sand Play Area
- 43. Aquadrat



## Access and Mobility

### Four Naming Opportunities

The Commons at Hermann Park breathes life into the historic George Hermann Corner at Fannin and Cambridge streets, restoring this under-utilized area into a pristine entry point for visitors. Access and mobility is central to the project, creating a welcoming entrance for the surrounding Texas Medical Center and Rice University, moving and upgrading the Hermann Park Railroad train depot to a more usable location, expanding visitor parking, and creating a vibrant landscape adjacent to Palmer Church to forge a stately promenade along Cambridge between Main and Fannin streets.

*Access and mobility features within The Commons at Hermann Park*





A major feature of The Commons is a civic entrance at the corner of Fannin and Cambridge streets to invite and connect visitors from the Texas Medical Center and Rice University. The new **Entry Gardens** create this clear and welcoming portal for visitors. Amidst lush shade gardens covered with century-old live oaks, a gracious promenade leads into the Park, while a secondary network of paths allows for multiple routes through the landscape. The statue of founder George Hermann will continue to occupy a prominent location.



Long forgotten, nine acres between Main and Fannin will become a vibrant entry point from Rice University and the Texas Medical Center into The Commons at Hermann Park. Landscaping improvements, expansion of parking, lighting, and signage will completely transform this vital transition area. **Main Street Promenade** will transform underutilized green space into a shaded and ecologically designed parking lot that provides a valuable point of arrival for visitors. The pedestrian connection to the crossings into Hermann Park will become linear gardens along the existing sidewalk with groundcover, shrubs, and perennials that relate to the planting palette of the Entry Garden at Cambridge and Fannin as well as the and the Main Street crosswalks.



Traversing the 6.7-acre central lawn area, the **Grand Meadow Promenade** is the main pedestrian path through The Commons. Dotted with lighting and resting benches, the walk begins at the Entry Gardens and meanders throughout the area, connecting walkers to the various pavilions and play areas, arriving at the lakefront before looping back.

## The Commons Train Station

**\$500,000**



The beloved Hermann Park Railroad will find a new stop at [The Commons Train Station](#). The project design calls for rerouting existing tracks to avoid cutting through the Grand Meadow. The new route adds 900 linear feet of track and moves the less-used existing train station to a more visitor-friendly location near dining areas. All aboard! Next stop, The Commons at Hermann Park!



## Public Art Zones

### Two Naming Opportunities

The Commons gives public art pride of place in two dedicated art zones, carrying on the tradition of showing innovative contemporary art for all in Hermann Park. Centered on two dedicated “art zones” at the north end of the site an active art program gives a previously



non-descript area of Hermann Park a new identity and draw. For many coming from the north side of the Park, these zones – replete with public art exhibitions – will mark the entry into the new area. Visible from Fannin Street, the artwork announces the presence and activity of the Park to people driving past. The path network leads the visitor through lawn and prairie areas of different scales and enclosure that host a range of permanent or temporary installations. Smaller-scale tree planting helps to create an episodic barrier with the street and the fence of the well-loved Japanese garden.

The Commons Art Zones are the centerpiece of the larger [Public Art Initiative](#), which includes the permanent [Fund for Public Art](#) and a re-launching of the popular [Art in the Park](#) series with a stellar opening exhibition to showcase the new public art zones.





The Common gives public art pride of place in two dedicated art zones, carrying on the tradition of showing innovative contemporary art for all in Hermann Park. The largest of the two areas, **Art Zone North** is a raised, verdant field for unique installations, viewable from Fannin Street and bordering Hermann Park's well-loved Japanese Garden.



**Art Zone South** extends the art viewing experience along the Park border with Fannin Street. The smaller of the two zones, the southern branch of public art space has level terrain, interspersed with tree plantings to create more shaded, contemplative areas for viewing art.

## Play for All Communal Areas Nine Naming Opportunities

Beyond the children’s recreation areas, communal areas are the heart of The Commons at Hermann Park. This includes restoration of the historic Fannin Pavilion, a new Rest Pavilion with public programming areas and facilities, decking and food service beneath historic live oak trees, an expansive central lawn for informal sports and relaxation, new grilling and picnic areas, shade structures for picnics and parties, and an enhanced forest zone surrounding the shared border with the Houston Zoo.

*Communal gathering places in The Commons at Hermann Park*





An expansive lawn is at the center of The Commons – a generous, open area providing cohesion for other Hermann Park amenities and perfect for a range of activities. With loose groves of trees dissolving in from the edges and a gently rolling topography, the **Grand Meadow** unfolds as visitors move through it, offering shady places to sit, platforms for picnics, and ample room for games and recreation.



Hermann Park's iconic live oak trees have spanned the historic carriage trail for nearly a century. While the trees are glorious, the only people currently enjoying them simply walk by as there is no place to sit. By reimagining this area and providing expansive decking with tables and chairs, the **Live Oak Terrace** will provide a refuge for visitors – from medical center employees to families of patients undergoing long-term care who need a break from the hospital. Adjacent to the Grand Meadow in the shade and fresh air, visitors can lunch, take a break from work to read a book, or simply meditate and relax.

One of the oldest structures in Hermann Park, the 1916 **historic Fannin Pavilion** will be renovated and celebrated as a central feature of the site. Major refurbishments will restore this once-airy building, allowing more light to enter and its timber roof structure revealed. Its stately central fireplace will become more prominent, with new custom wood tables and benches installed to replace the existing metal tables.

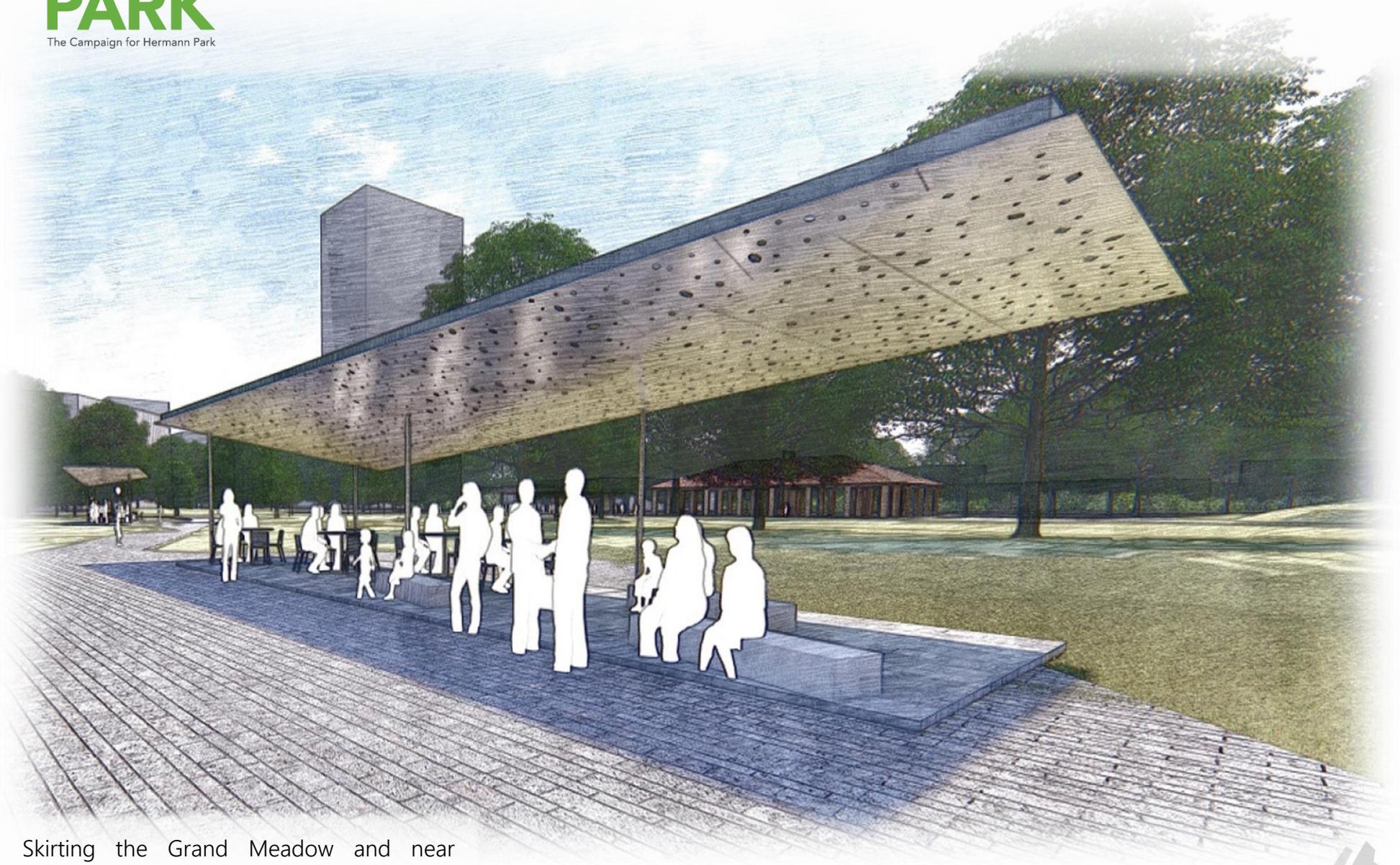




Adjacent to the Historic Pavilion (shown in background, left), the new Rest Pavilion provides shaded seating areas, space for public programs, and sparkling new facilities for visitors to Hermann Park.



An expansive outdoor seating area covered by shade trees will soon be nestled between the Historic Pavilion and Rest Pavilion. With new food options nearby and twinkling lights hung between the trees, the informal **Dining Bosque** will be the perfect spot for lunch or drinks at dusk in Hermann Park.



Skirting the Grand Meadow and near children's play areas, a new **Shade Pavilion** will offer quiet seating options or a gathering place for small groups in Hermann Park.

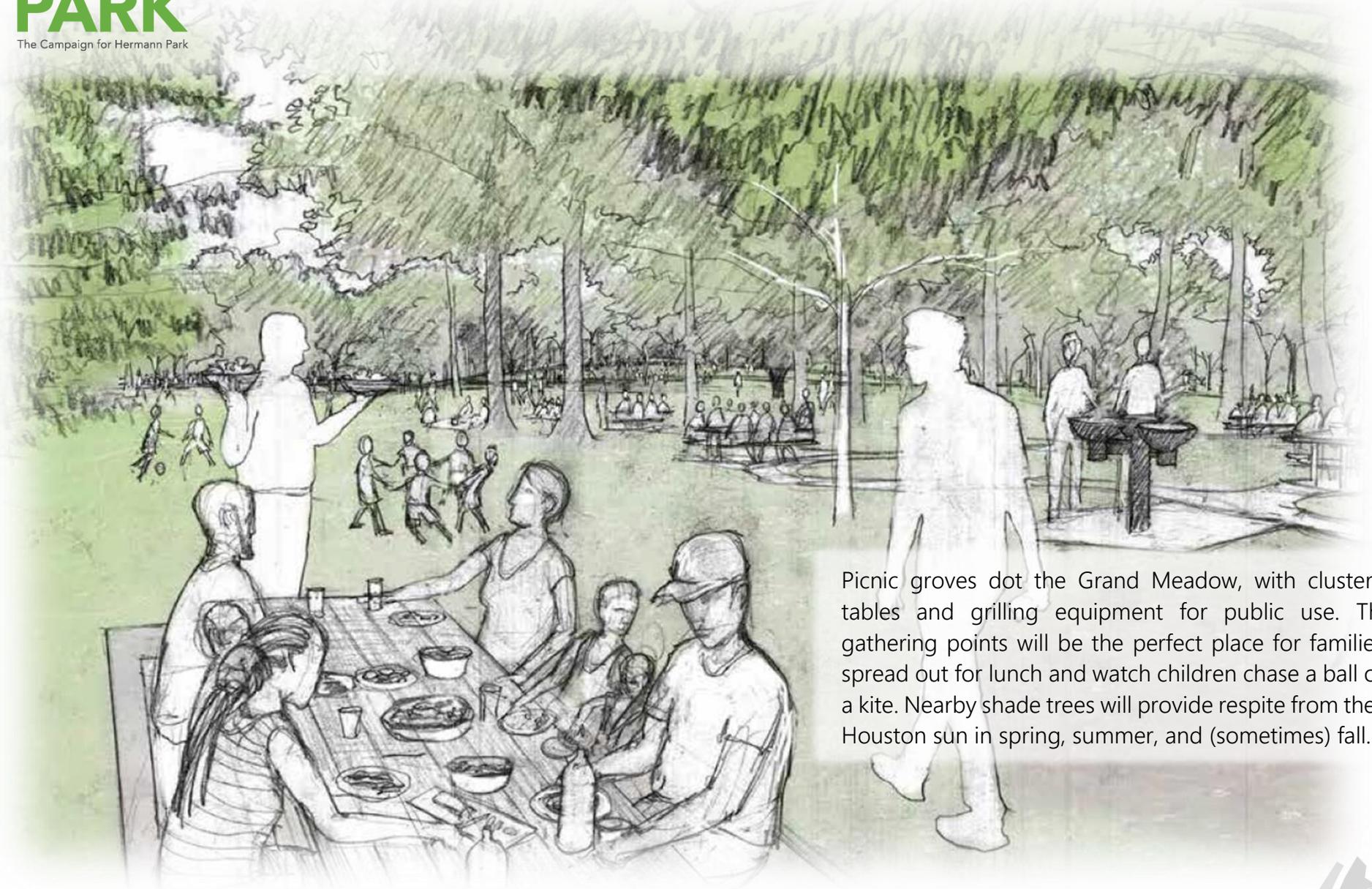


Adjacent to the Swing Hill play node, a new Picnic Pavilion becomes the perfect spot to host an outdoor birthday party or family celebration in Hermann Park.

Now well-known due to artist Trenton Doyle Hancock's whimsical work gracing its interior walls, the Hermann Park Railroad tunnel sits in a under-utilized Park area lined by the Houston Zoo boundary fence. The transformation into **Train Forest** will see this area come alive with additional trees, natural groundcover, and landscaping to create a forest oasis.



**Grand Meadow Picnic Groves**  
**\$100,000 each**



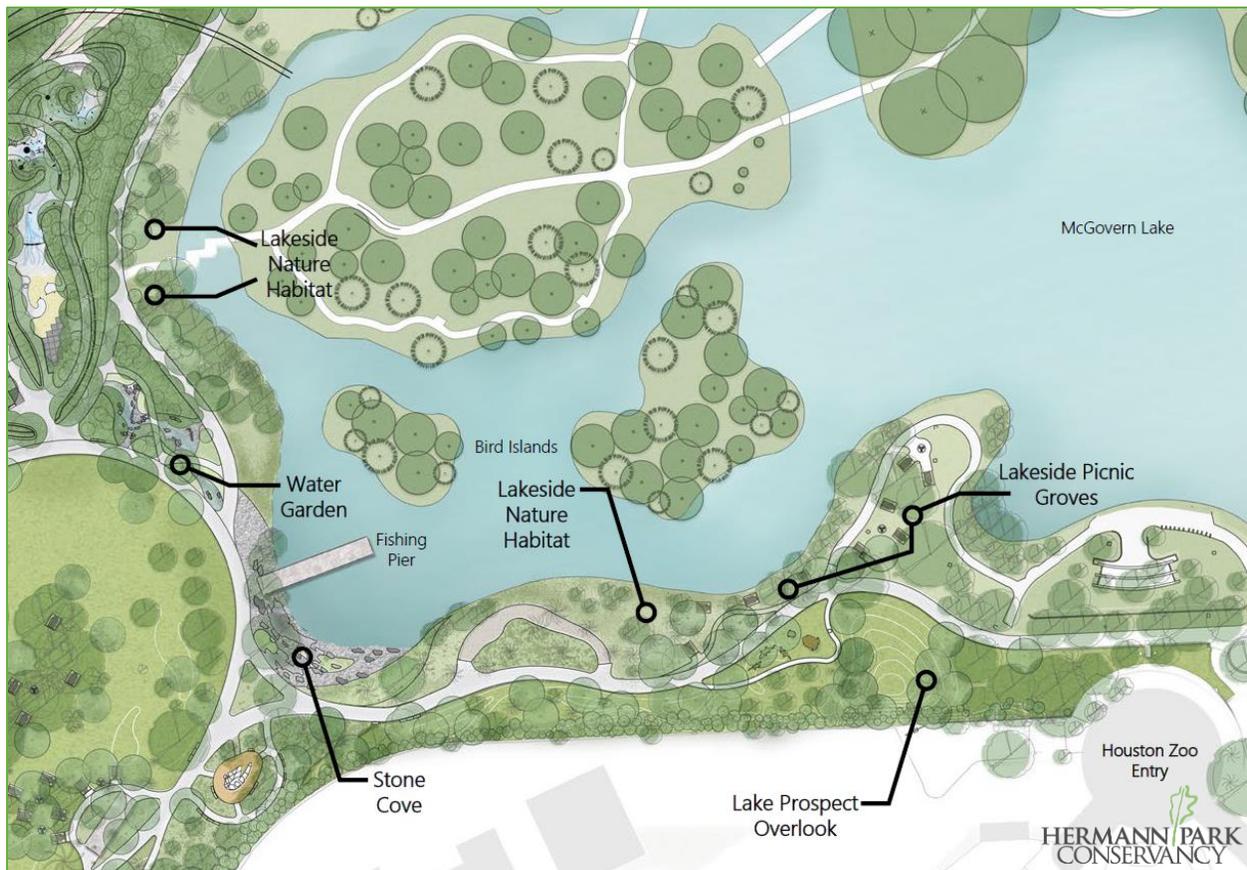
Picnic groves dot the Grand Meadow, with clusters of tables and grilling equipment for public use. These gathering points will be the perfect place for families to spread out for lunch and watch children chase a ball or fly a kite. Nearby shade trees will provide respite from the hot Houston sun in spring, summer, and (sometimes) fall.

## Lakefront Enhancements Eight Naming Opportunities

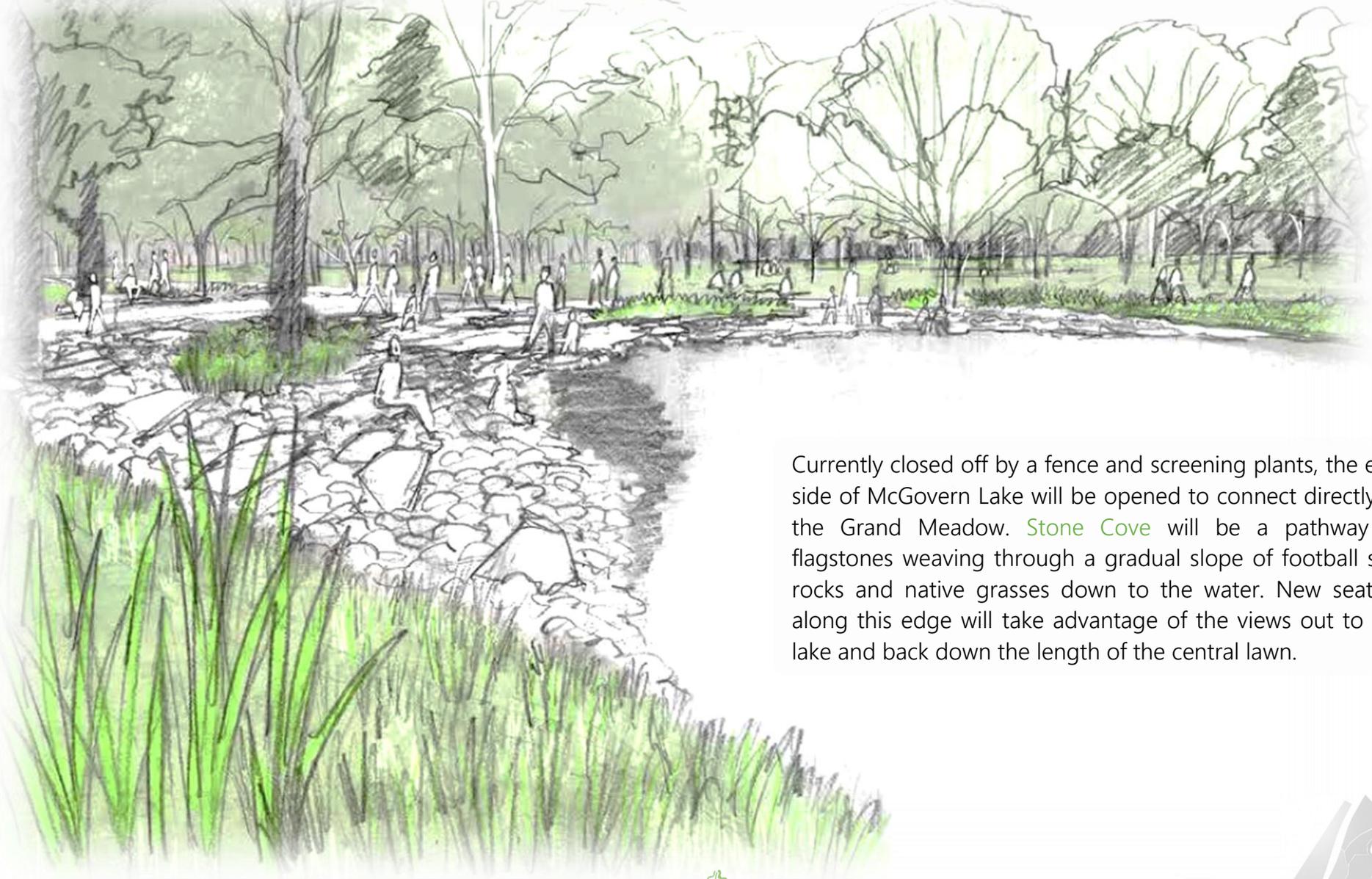
Central to The Commons project is an extensive upgrade and conservation of the lands bordering McGovern Lake to the west and to the south. Nature habitats and environmentally-appropriate activity areas, massive improvements to the natural vegetation along the lake, and the Lake Prospect Overlook.

Scattered throughout are additional and improved picnic areas. Bird-friendly natural habitats will stretch from the area surrounding the Bird Island bridge in the northwest, curving with the lake, and running through to the Houston Zoo entrance at the southeast. Project plans include an experiential Water Garden to the north of the existing fishing pier, and a Stone Cove immediately to the south of the pier. Collectively, the work on these contiguous areas will make the lakefront an even more desirable destination for nature lovers.

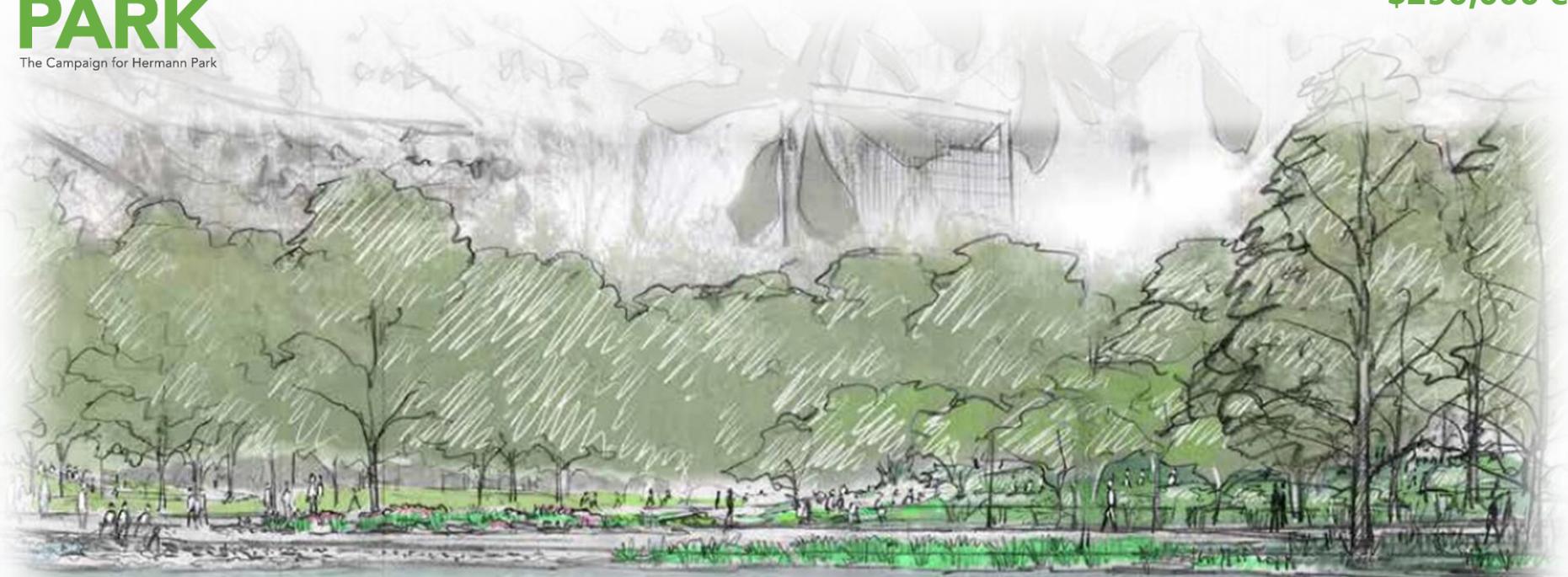
*Lakefront enhancements in The Commons at Hermann Park*



The **Water Garden** is a unique ecological feature constructed around the flow of water from the nearby children's Play Garden's water areas to McGovern Lake. Draining water follows a meandering path, supporting riparian plants and animals. Visitors move through the garden on small gravel pathways that traverse the flow of water and open up in a couple of intimate seating areas with shade trees, large boulders and benches. The plantings and sand bed help to filter out impurities picked up in the play area before the water reaches the lake.



Currently closed off by a fence and screening plants, the east side of McGovern Lake will be opened to connect directly to the Grand Meadow. **Stone Cove** will be a pathway of flagstones weaving through a gradual slope of football size rocks and native grasses down to the water. New seating along this edge will take advantage of the views out to the lake and back down the length of the central lawn.



With Bird Island just across the water, the areas surrounding the southern shore of McGovern Lake will get a needed upgrade and refurbishment. Minimally invasive landscaping intervention will make way for prairie planting and other foliage native to the region, giving a more stable, expanded home or migratory resting spot to various birds and water fowl in the area.



Transformed from a virtually unused section of Hermann Park, a new elevated area with views of the water will create a landscaped boundary with Houston Zoo while affording visitors pristine views of the McGovern Lake. With plenty of shade for lounging and enjoying the outdoors, **Lake Prospect Overlook** promises to become a favorite for the nature-loving, contemplative sort.



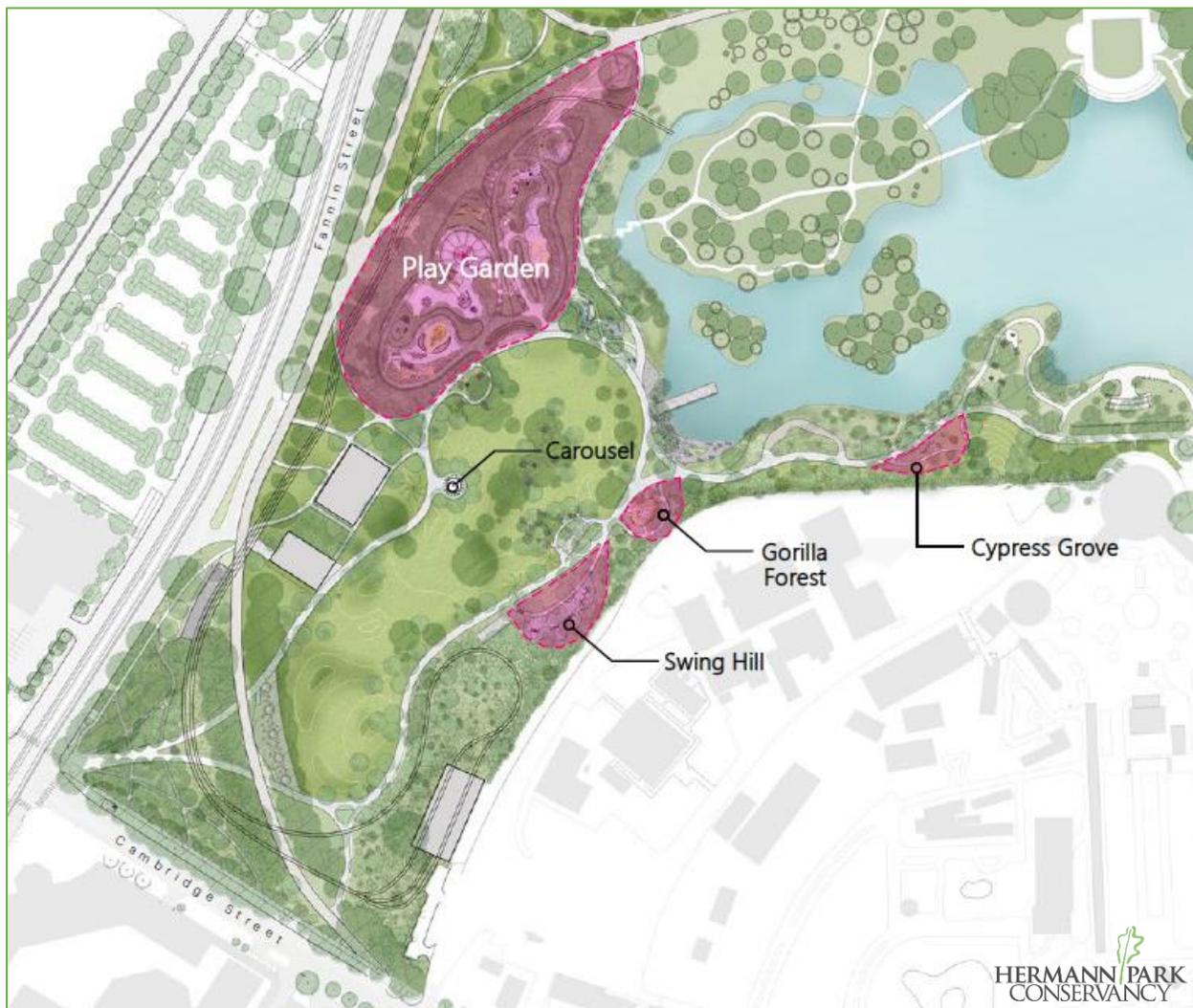
Situated near the well-trafficked pedestrian path to the Houston Zoo, clusters of seating areas form **Lakeside Picnic Groves** dotting the newly landscaped southern shores of Lake McGovern. Close to the water's edge, these new picnic groves will offer visitors a place to relax and take in the scenery.

## Children's Play 23 Naming Opportunities

Children's play areas center on an expanded and upgraded central playground called the Play Garden replete with state-of-the-art equipment, interactive wet and dry play areas, and ample natural vegetation to integrate play and nature. In addition, three distinct "play nodes" complement the area: Gorilla Forest, Swing Hill, and the Cypress Grove.

A carousel also figures into the design, allowing Hermann Park Conservancy an additional future earned income stream.

*Children's play area within The Commons at Hermann Park*

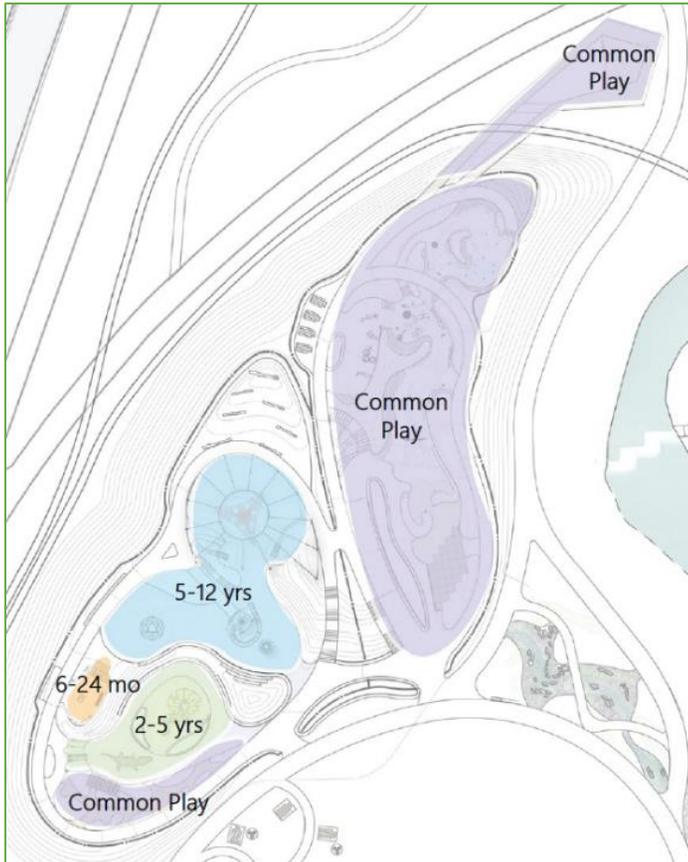


**Play Garden (Central Playground)**  
**\$7.5 million**

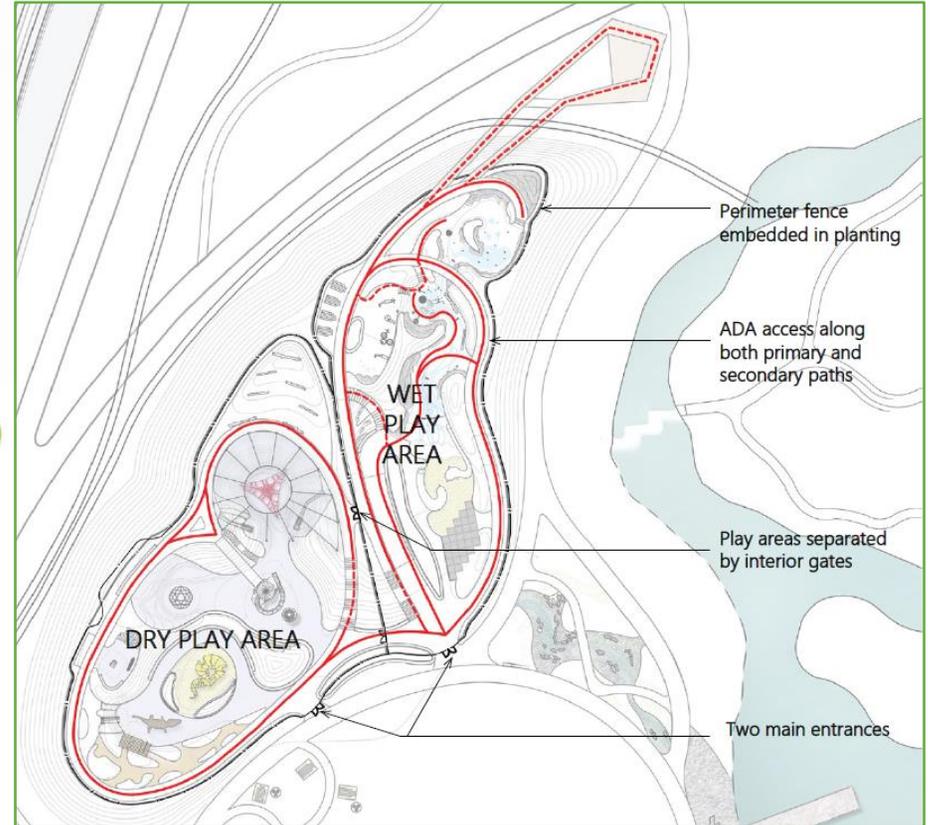
The centerpiece of The Commons is its expansive **Play Garden**, the central playground for Hermann Park, building upon the legacy of the historic Buddy Carruth Playground for All Children, opened in 1995 for use by children of all abilities. CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



The new **Play Garden** continues this inclusive legacy with play opportunities for all children, while seamlessly integrating dedicated **areas for specific age-groups** with common play areas (see below, left). Expansive **dry and wet play areas** feature numerous educational, interactive activities increasing appreciation of nature and the environment as well as providing teaching moments around water management (see right).



2.01 Acres



Spanning approximately 2 acres, the Play Garden is designed to provide a safe, interactive, engaging experience for children and parents. **Secure entrances** ensure safety and peace-of-mind for visiting families (see above, right), while plentiful observation zones and picnic areas give parents key vantage points to relax while overseeing their children.

# Play Garden – Entry and Observation Areas

**\$100,000 to \$500,000**

**Water Play Picnic Area**

**\$200,000**

Map #29

**Overlook Lawn**

**\$300,000**

Map #28

**Meteor Crater  
Picnic Area**

**\$100,000**

Map #27

**Central Plaza**

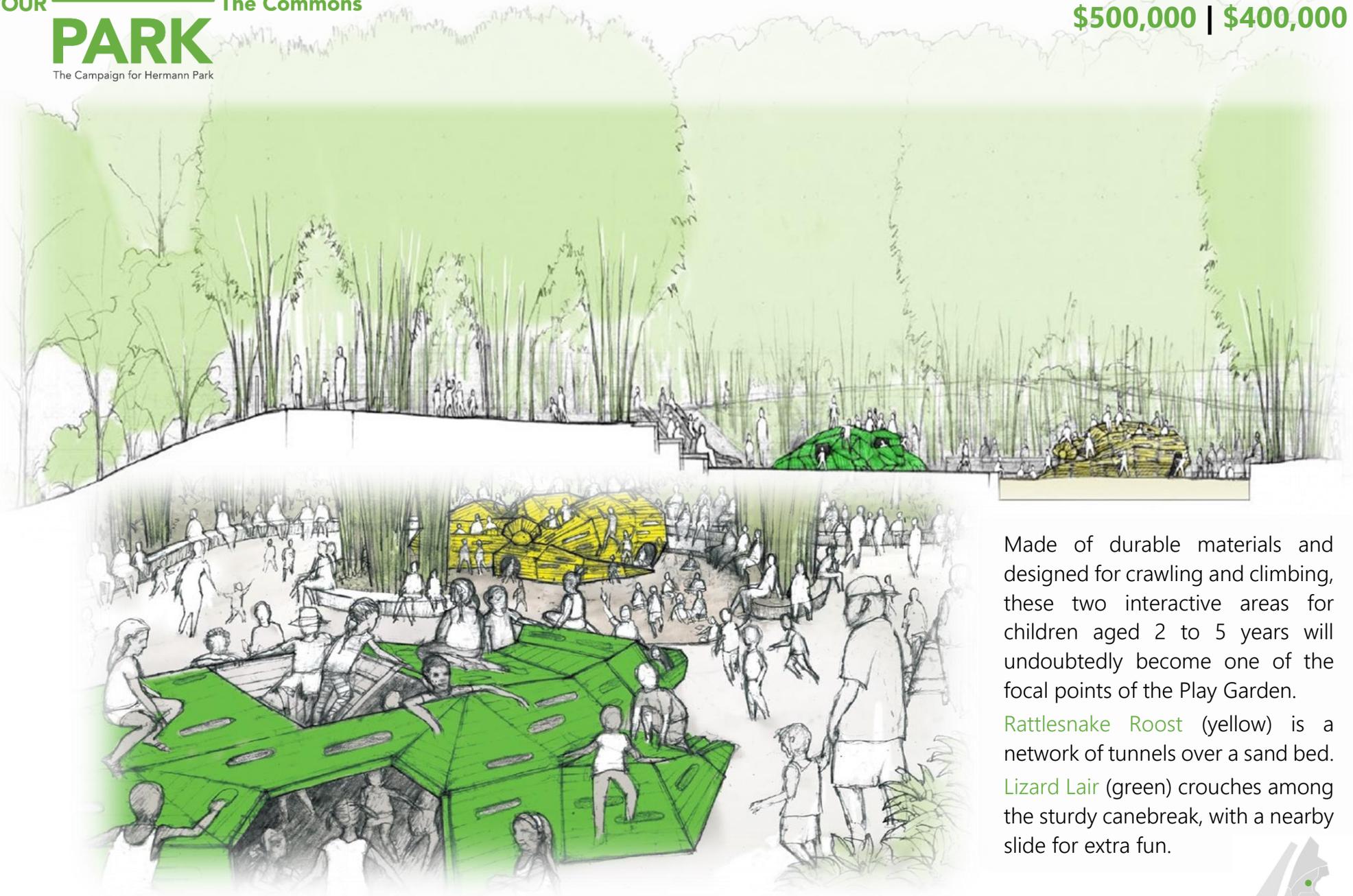
**\$400,000**

Map #30

**Main Entry Plaza**

**\$500,000**

Map #26



Made of durable materials and designed for crawling and climbing, these two interactive areas for children aged 2 to 5 years will undoubtedly become one of the focal points of the Play Garden.

**Rattlesnake Roost** (yellow) is a network of tunnels over a sand bed.

**Lizard Lair** (green) crouches among the sturdy canebreak, with a nearby slide for extra fun.



Nestled in the Play Garden’s southern tip, a jungle of canebrake with towering foliage and intricate passages is a dedicated areas for children aged 2 to 5 years. **Canebrake Forest** might sound foreboding, but it will be a delight for the adventurous youth; a parental seating area lies adjacent to the verdant area, so little ones are never out of sight.

## Play Garden – Toddlers Burrow

**\$250,000**

**Toddlers Burrow**

Even little ones (6 to 24 months) have a dedicated space in the Play Garden. **Toddlers Burrow** sits in a raised area nestled deep amongst verdant foliage. Safe and sturdy play equipment take center stage, offering age-appropriate exploration and activity.

**Meteor Crater** —

Reflecting Houston's storied space past, **Meteor Crater** is a friendly activity zone for children from 5 to 12 years old. A rounded climbing orb plays center stage, with easy inclines and seating area in orbit around it. Ground treatment gives the feel of a landscape pockmarked by space debris.

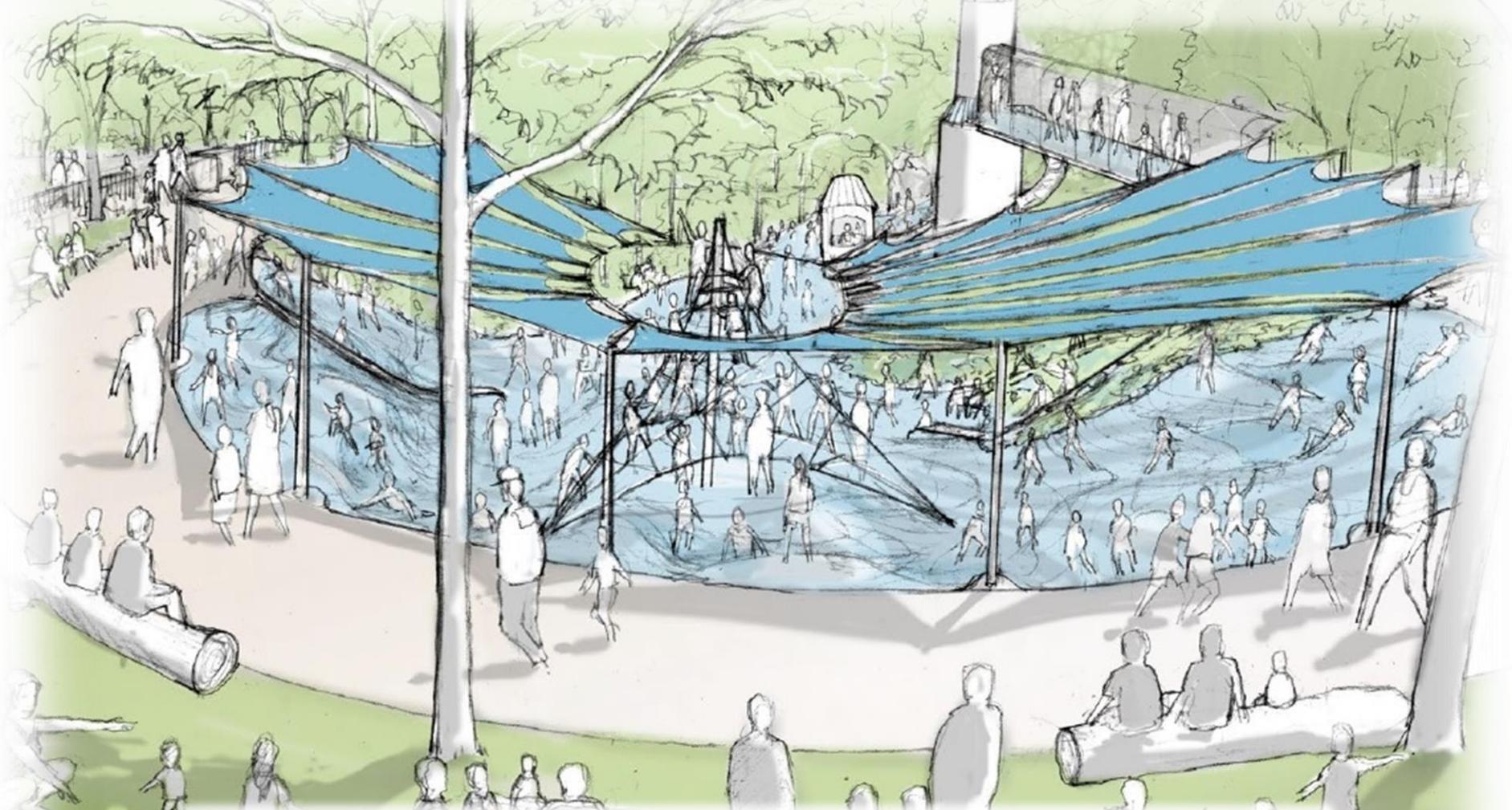
**Play Garden – Rocket Ship and Space Capsule**  
**\$1 million**



A nod to NASA and Houston's role in space exploration, the dynamic **Rocket Ship** will be the tallest structure in the Play Garden and visible from surrounding areas. With slides for fun and easy departures, and stairs and a walkway for quick entry, this iconic element is sure to be one of the most memorable elements of the project. A nearby **Space Capsule** (not pictured) completed the scene of earthbound exploration with an extraterrestrial twist.

## Play Garden – Moon Crater, Net Climbing Tower and Slide Hill

**\$1 million**



Shaded from the sun with an other-worldly canopy, a **Moon Crater** for children ages 5 to 12 is one of the largest areas of the Play Garden. Marked by a hill of slides leading into the crater's mouth, the center piece is an expansive net climbing tower. Seating areas dot the upper perimeter, with prime views of the lunar landscape from the Overlook Lawn.



Extending from the water play area out above the western edge of Hermann Park, the **Canopy Walk** gives children of all ages a chance at treehouse living. Suspended wooden walkways trace round a stately live oak tree, centuries old, while tunnels and nets create an highline adventure.

**Play Garden – Water Play Area**  
Pricing Below

The Play Garden’s multi-faceted **water play area** combines fun with experiential learning. Each interaction section offers particular educational opportunities demonstrating cause-effect in water flow, and loads of water-based fun to beat the head of Houston.



**Aquadrat**  
**\$400,000**  
Map #44

**River Delta and Sand Play Area**  
**\$350,000**  
Map #42

**Play Bayou**  
**\$300,000**  
Map #41

**Splash Cove**  
**\$400,000**  
Map #40

**Water Lab**  
**\$500,000**  
Map #39



Part science workshop and part play area, the new **Water Lab** is outfitted with innovative and interactive water learning equipment. One of many examples will be a working Archimedes' screw helping children discover engineering basics by raising water levels manually with the twist of the device.

Spinning and cascading aquatic features mark **Splash Cove** as an exhilarating activity area for water play. Tall, slim towers project cyclones of water in the air, creating a vibrant zone of cooling relief – sure to be popular during Houston summers. Central stone outcroppings equipped with water jets provide similar excitement.





Nothing says Houston like a bayou. Divided into an upper and lower area, Hermann Park's new **Play Bayou** offers a first-hand look at the inner-workings of Houston's central water features. Built-in activities, such as water dams and releases, give children an opportunity to work collaboratively and experience cause-effect in water management.



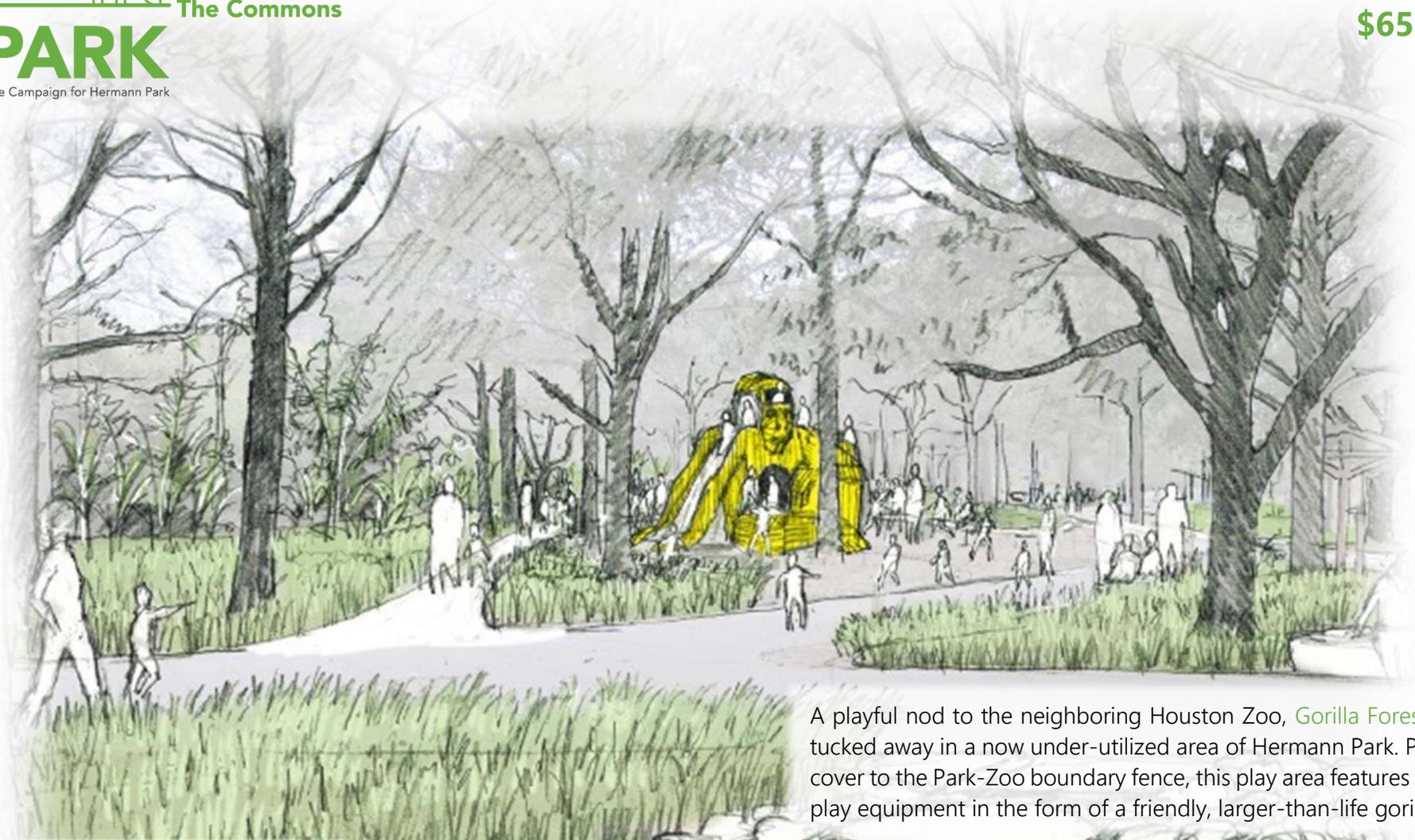
As the Play Bayou meanders downhill, it narrows into an interactive **River Delta** before reaching the **Sand Play Area**. This fun-filled adventure zone offers shallow water play and important learning opportunities for children of all ages.

A pinnacle of learning and fun, the **Aquadrat** makes water management serious business. Sturdy wooden decking on multiple levels creates a stage for manual pumps to move water into a cascade of trays which then forge liquid canals running through the area.





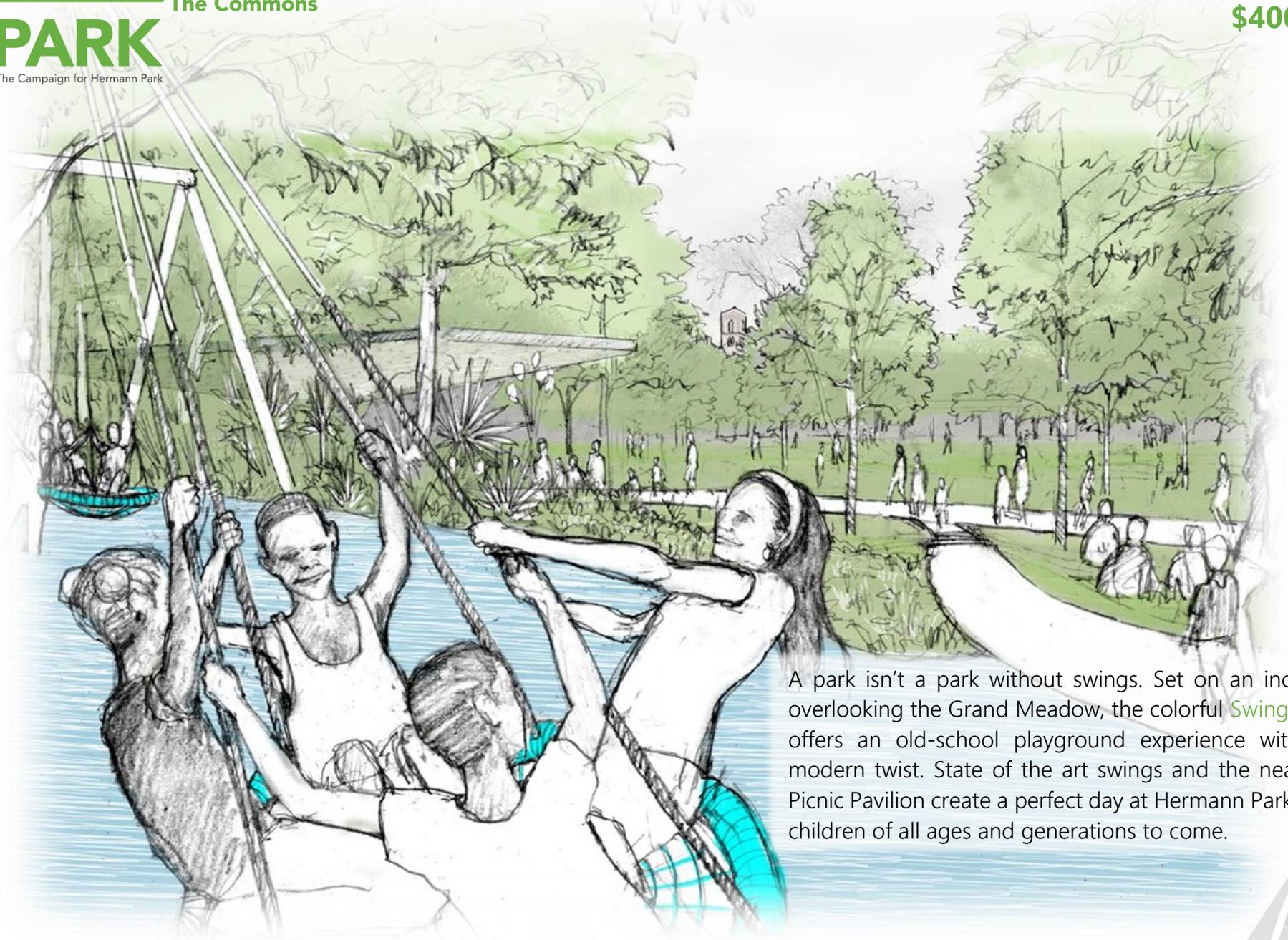
Taking pride of place in the Grand Meadow, a new **Hermann Park Carousel** arises. With a nod to tradition and this historic area of the Park, the sleek Carousel House is a modern update for The Commons and promises to become a destination for generations to come.



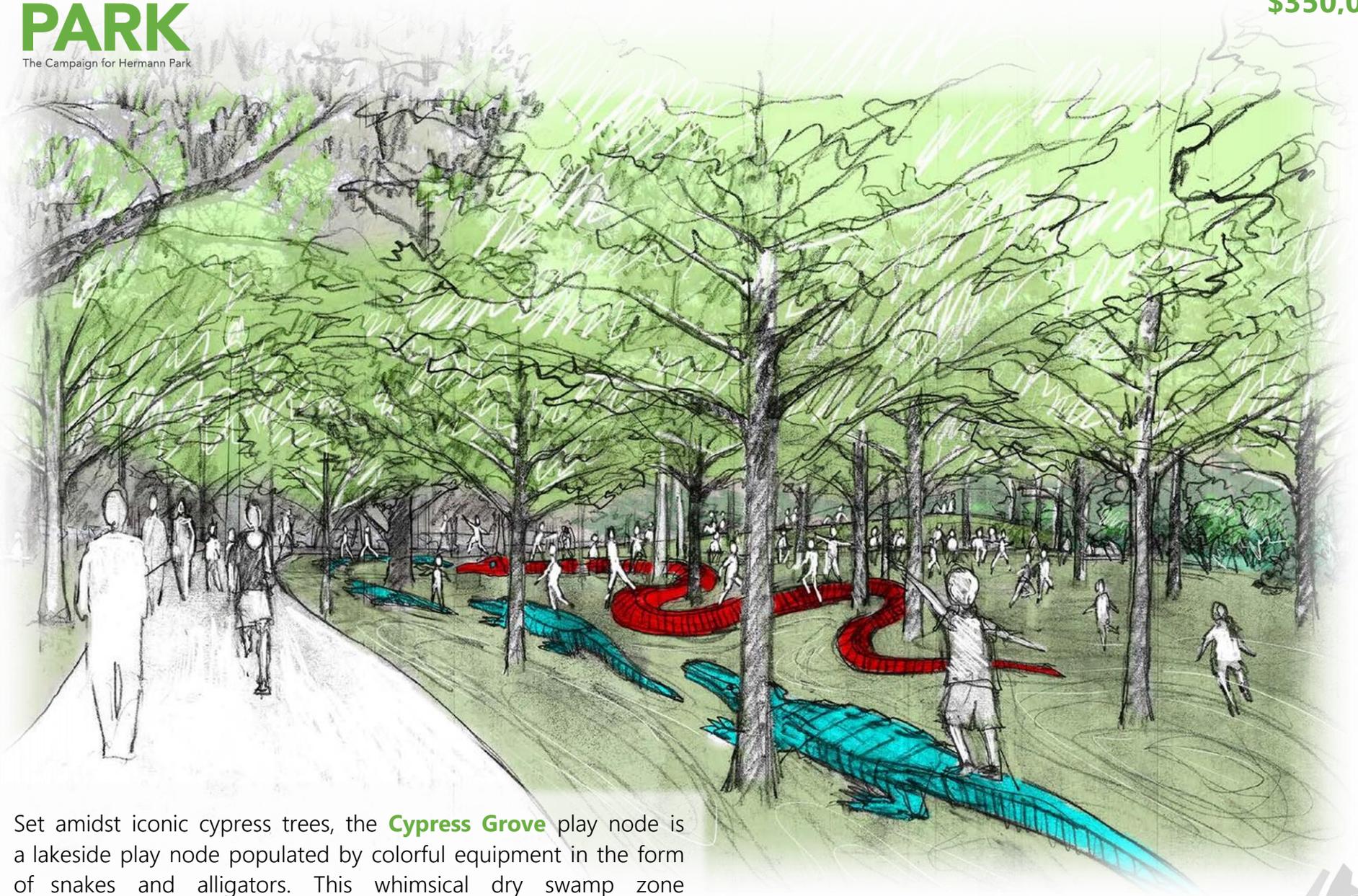
A playful nod to the neighboring Houston Zoo, **Gorilla Forest** will be tucked away in a now under-utilized area of Hermann Park. Providing cover to the Park-Zoo boundary fence, this play area features climbing play equipment in the form of a friendly, larger-than-life gorilla.



**Swing Hill Play Node**  
**\$400,000**



A park isn't a park without swings. Set on an incline overlooking the Grand Meadow, the colorful **Swing Hill** offers an old-school playground experience with a modern twist. State of the art swings and the nearby Picnic Pavilion create a perfect day at Hermann Park for children of all ages and generations to come.



Set amidst iconic cypress trees, the **Cypress Grove** play node is a lakeside play node populated by colorful equipment in the form of snakes and alligators. This whimsical dry swamp zone celebrates Houston's native flora and fauna.