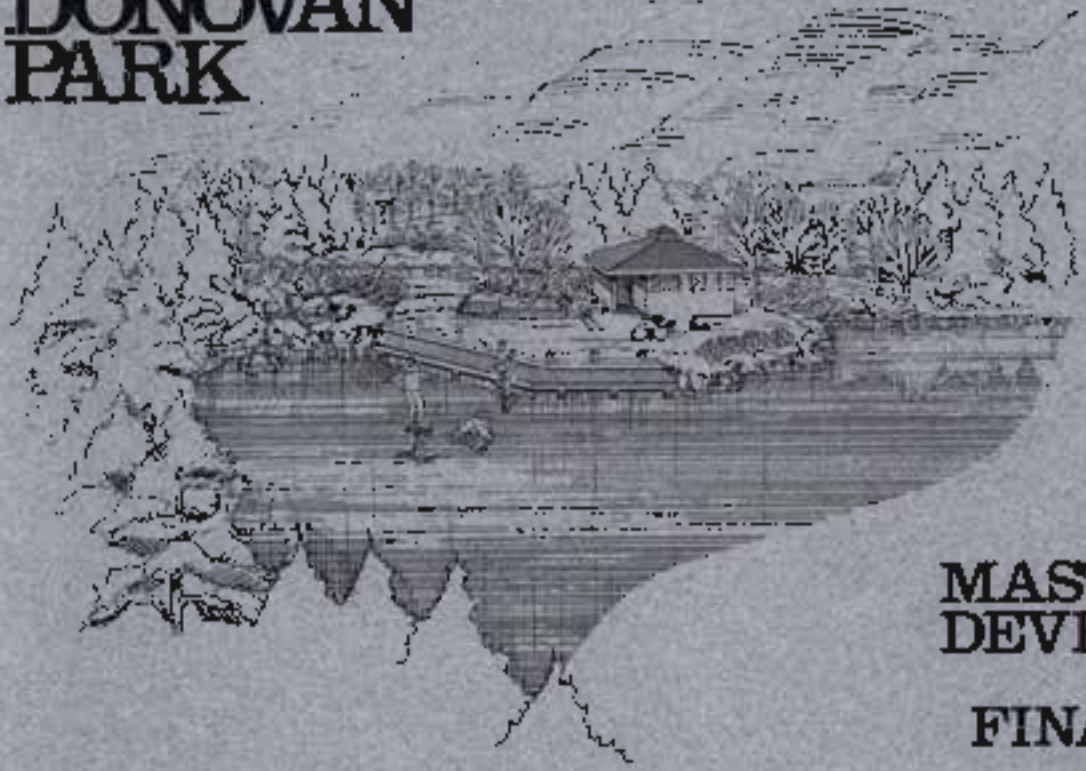
GERALD R.
FORD PARK

DONOVAN PARK



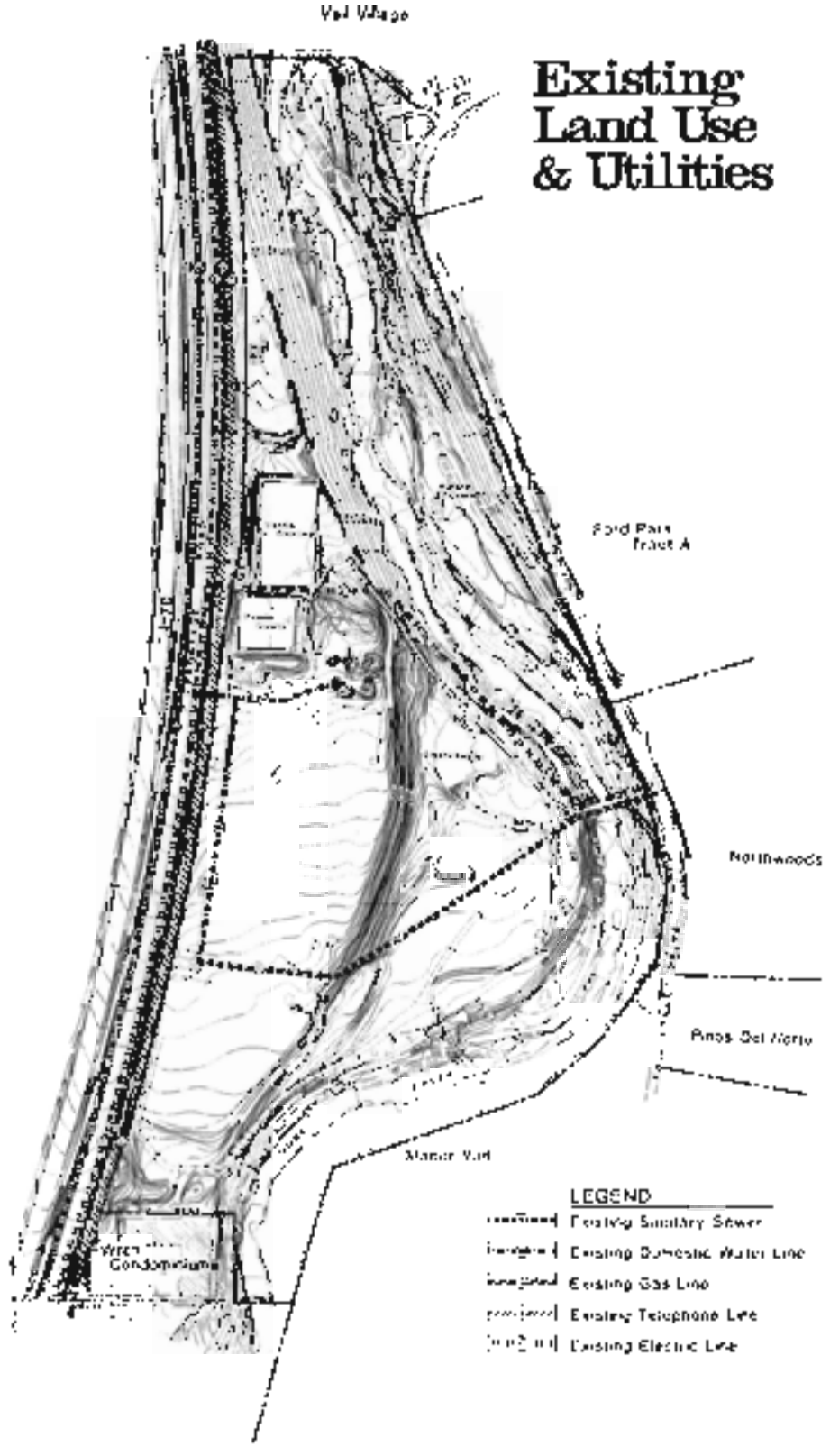
MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

FINAL REPORT

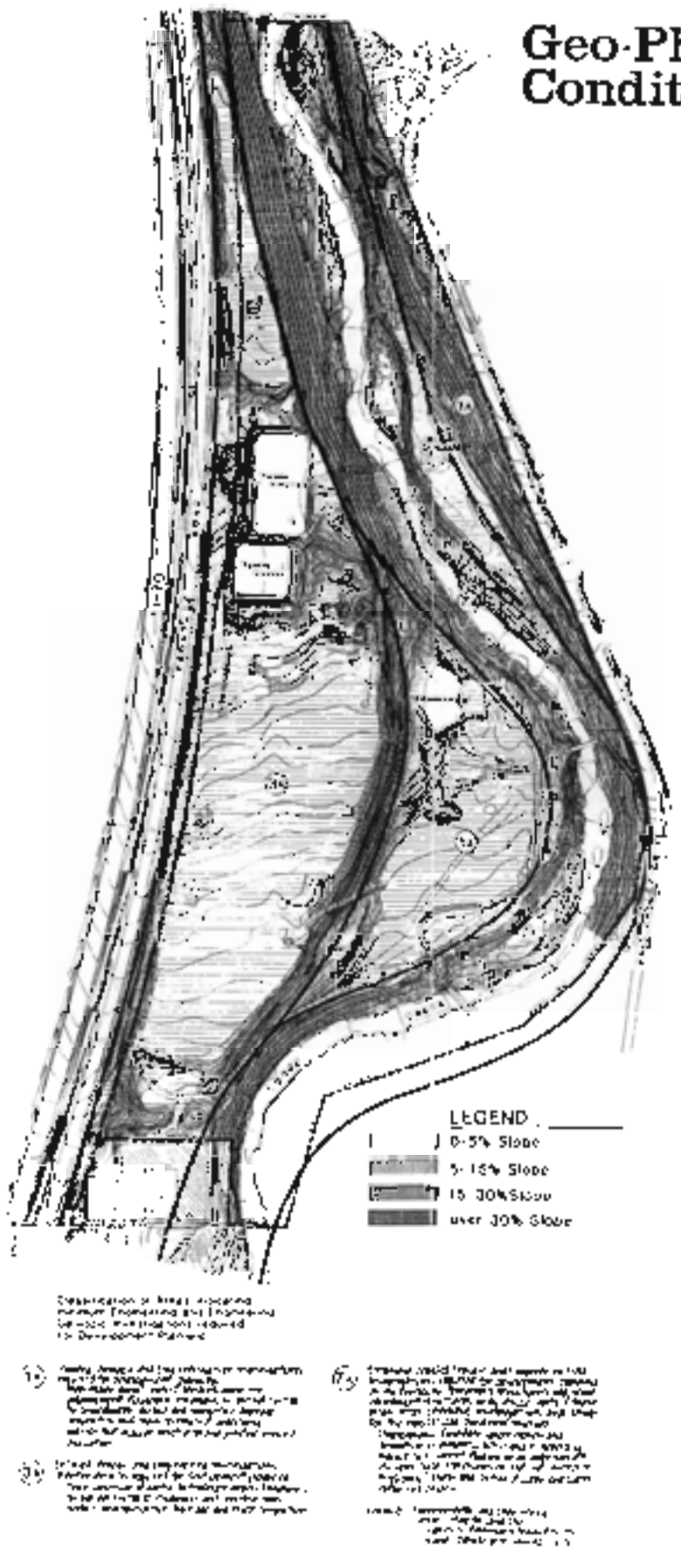
Town of Vail
office of community development

THK associates, inc.

Existing Land Use & Utilities



Geo-Physical Conditions



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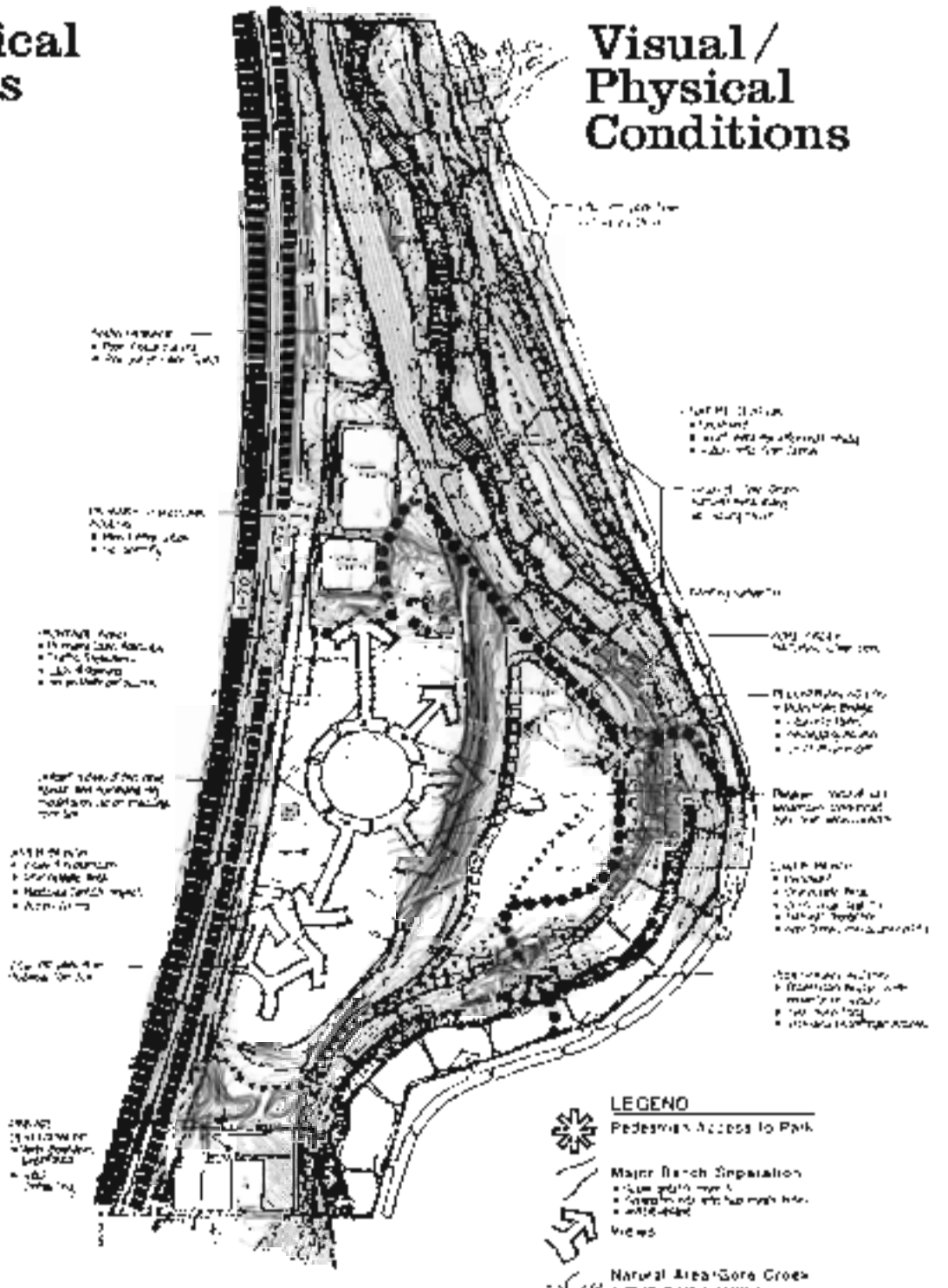


FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Town of Vail
office of community development

THK

Introduction

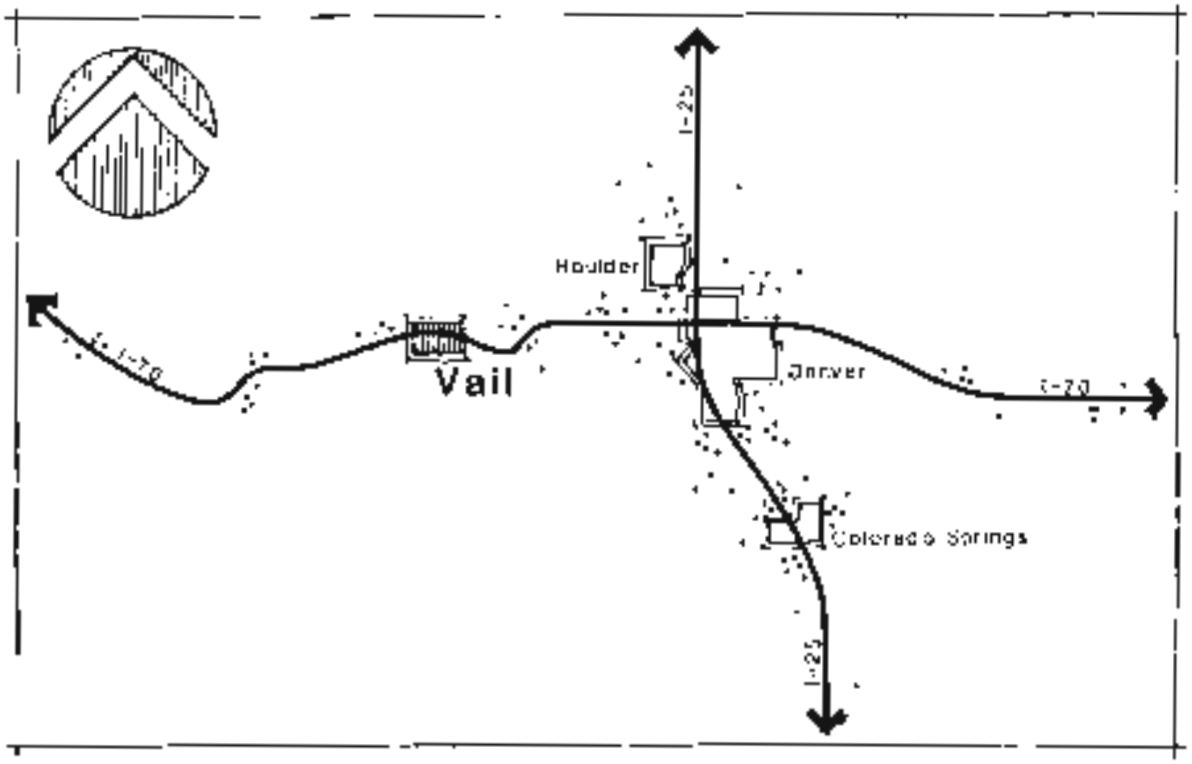
The Rocky Mountain landscape of the Gore Valley embraces a pleasant mosaic of vegetation, water features and land forms. The discerning observer will recognize this landscape as the product of both nature and man, reflecting a complex history dating from the last glaciation and spanning early exploration, the westward expansion, the pioneer mining era and, finally, the birth and growth of the recreational skiing industry.

This area is the setting for the Gerald R. Ford and John F. Donovan Parks, part of over 560 acres of land acquired by the Town of Vail and set aside for use as open space and park areas within the developed valley. This land acquisition program has two primary goals. The first is to preserve developable land as open space to be used either actively for recreational purposes or passively as open space retaining the alpine or riparian character of the land. The second goal is to manage the amount of growth that can occur in the Gore Valley. The Master Plans of the two parks meet these goals while providing for the recreational needs of the Town to last far into the next century.

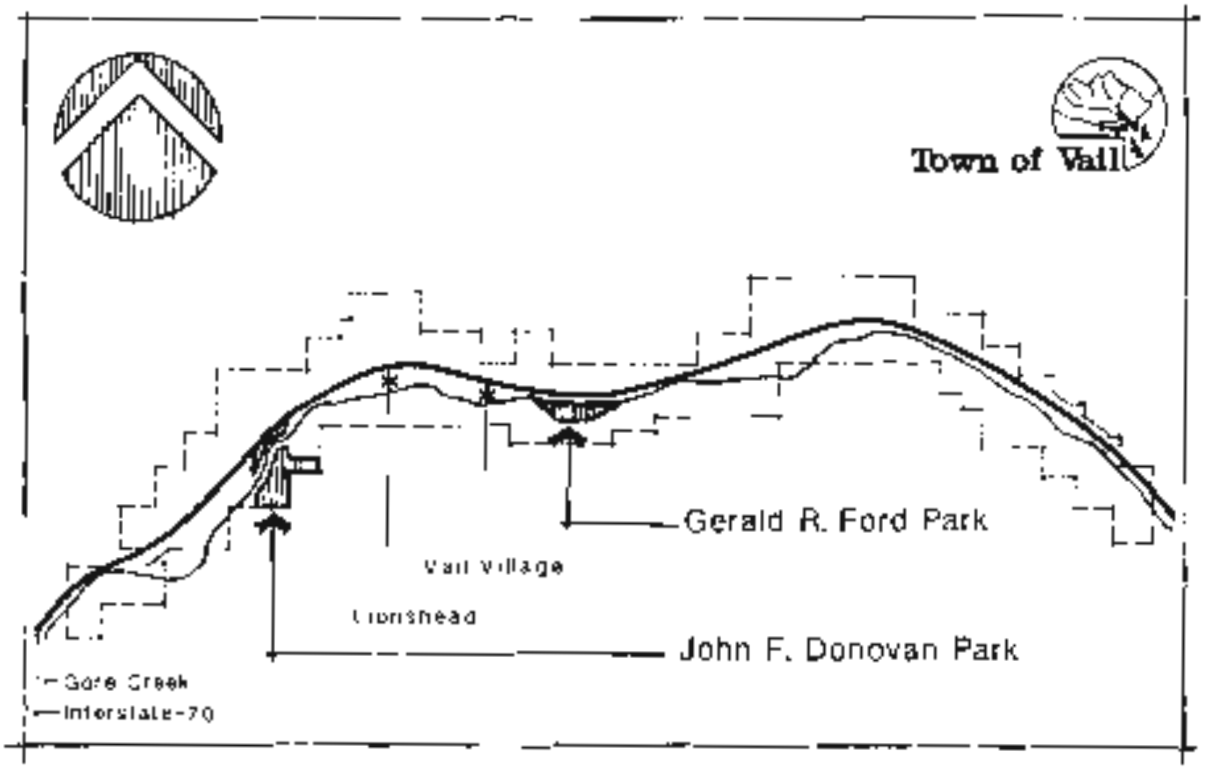
Residents and visitors will notice that these facilities differ intrinsically from the intense activity centered character of other large municipally owned parks. Here, care has been taken to conserve and enhance the natural areas, and to fit the active recreational elements together and away from the site's meadows and creek areas.

This report describes the environment of the sites and their history, the Master Plans for their development, and guidelines for implementation. It outlines the trarsformation of two open space parcels into town parks which will be protected forever from development and will serve to maintain the quality of life for residents and visitors to the Vail area.

Regional Context



Local Context



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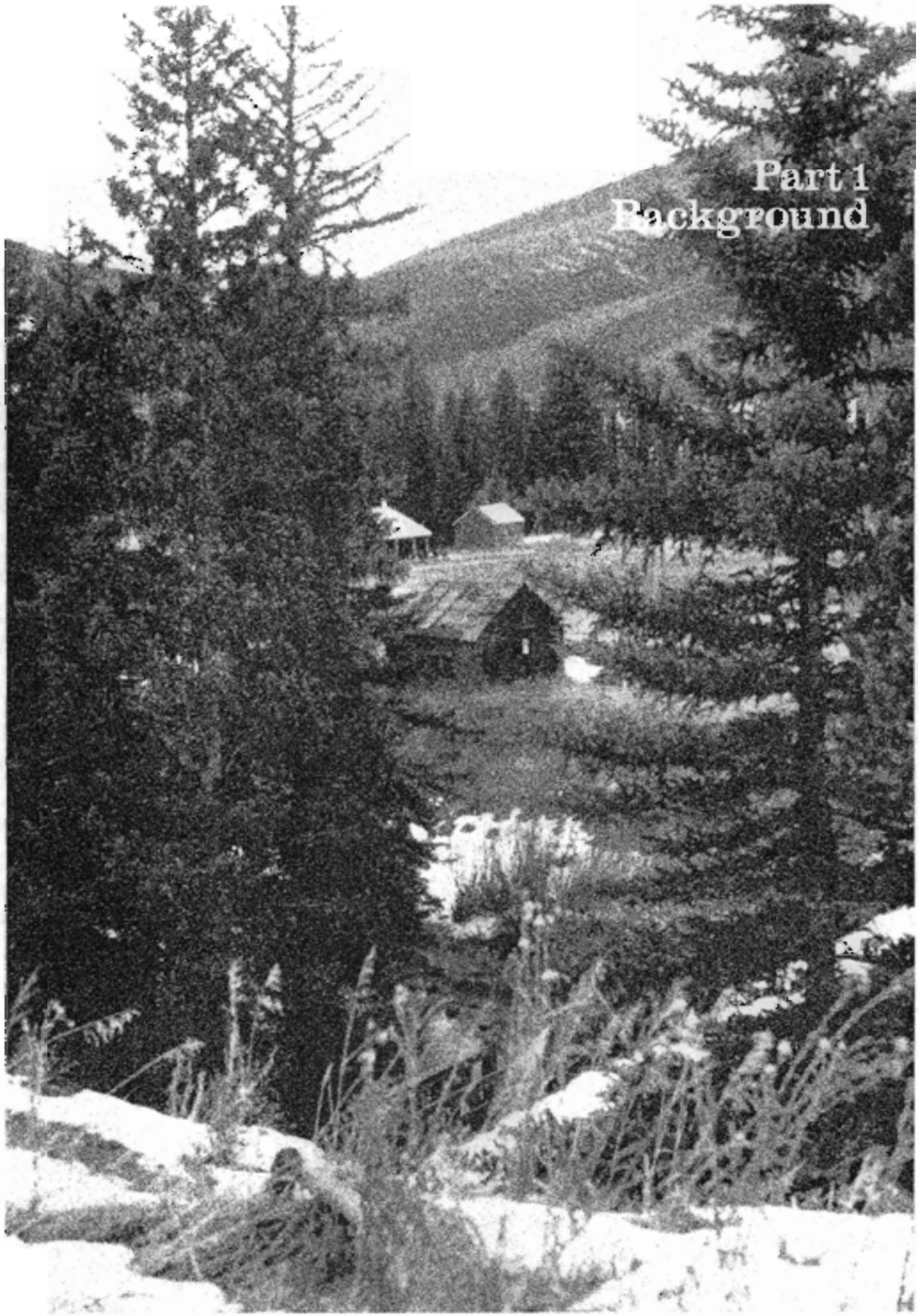


Part 1
Background

Location and History

Tall pine trees and quaking aspen covered the mountain slopes down to the valley floor where the Gore Creek meandered uninterrupted through the Gore Valley. Bighorn sheep could be seen grazing on the lush grasses of the Valley Meadows. This once alpine and pasturage setting began changing in 1962 to today's year-round resort community with a permanent resident population of over 5,000 and part-time population of approximately 25,000 annually.

In an attempt to preserve the quality of life in Vail, the Town residents in 1973 approved the acquisition of its first major open space parcel known as the Antholz Ranch for $3,300,000. On January 18, 1977, the Vail Town Council unanimously passed a resolution designating the Antholz property as Gerald R. Ford Park,

> **"Whereas, President Gerald R. Ford has brought to the Town of Vail his interest and encouragement; has shown through his private life and public life a commitment to recreation, the environment and places set aside therefor; and believes that a statement of the community's appreciation and respect for Gerald R. Ford is appropriate and called for; that the property commonly referred to as the Antholz Ranch is hereby named the Gerald R. Ford Park."**

This unique and highly valuable 39 acre park site represents the last remaining parcel of land central to use by all residents and visitors of the Vail community, and as a result its development has drawn much public debate and controversy over the past few years. The site includes remnants of the early ranch history of the Valley in the form of several old and beautiful wooden structures.

In February of 1980, a 51 acre parcel of land in the Matterhorn area of West Vail was acquired for $3,875,000 and designated by Council Resolution as John F. Donovan Park,

> **"Whereas, John F. Donovan has served on the Town Council for fourteen years; has long been a supporter of a strong recreation program for residents and visitors; the Town Council hereby commends John F. Donovan for his leadership and dedication to insuring the future of the Town of Vail, and designates the recently acquired public park in the Matterhorn area John F. Donovan Park."**

The landscapes of both park sites include native plant communities typical of the Valley, such as sagebrush, yucca, mountain common juniper, creeping mahonia and stands of Quaking Aspen. The Gore Creek which winds through the entire length of both parks from east to west is lined with Colorado spruce and subalpine fir.

At Ford Park, adjoining land uses to the east and south emphasize and contribute to the area's pleasantly wooded character and provides permanent buffering from nearby high density residential development. A condominium complex to the west, overlooks the park and has no natural buffering whatsoever. The frontage road access and east bound lanes of interstate 70 lie immediately to the north of the property and are cause for much of the noise population affecting the upper portion of the site. Fortunately, noise generating activities such as softball and parking areas are located in this area and are not affected by road side noise.

Donovan Park is actually two separate parcels of open space separated by residential land uses to the southeast of the Gore Creek. The two parcels are commonly referred to as the upper bench and lower bench. The lower bench is comprised of approximately 12 acres. Gore Creek located to the south is most predominant as a landscape feature with its natural barrier of spruce and fir. The adjoining land uses to the east and west are

residential in character with very little natural buffering. Matterhorn Circle and a residential area lie to the south of the site and is separated and buffered by Gore Creek. Once again, to the north and adjacent to the park site is the Frontage Road and eastbound lanes of Interstate 70.

The upper bench portion of the site is located further south of the Gore Creek natural corridor and higher up the mountain. This parcel is comprised of approximately 39 acres, much of which is heavily wooded with a steep slope of 25% to 30%. The remaining portion of the site is mountain meadow with a small, unimproved residential access road cutting across it east to west. The upper bench parcel is surrounded on three sides by scattered mixed single family residential, and is totally open to the mountain forest immediately to the south.

Site Analysis and Data Collection

The Environment

Compatability of the park developments within the environment is the most significant aspect of the Master Plans. The existing landscape is an integral part of each plan and not merely a backdrop against which the plans are staged. This is especially necessary with parklands, for there we expect the landscape to be stable, pleasant and above all, functional. Accordingly, the planning and design process was founded on a sound understanding of the features and dynamics of the park site environment.

Just as a tapestry is woven from many threads of different colors, textures and strengths, so the landscape is composed of a variety of components such as slopes, soils, plant communities and aquatic features. Each must be identified and described, but more than that, the role of each must be understood as a dynamic entity so that limitations and opportunities can be properly addressed. This involves the translation of forms, such as slopes and soil type, into processes, such as runoff and soil leeching, and the definition of critical inter-relationships among them.

Ford Park

The basic structure of Ford Park is comprised of two broad terraces, or benches as locally referred to, which step down the north side of the Gore Creek and is typical of mountain, valley and stream physiography. The upper bench area adjacent to the roadways was not formed naturally, but was created by man-made landfill processes as part of the original construction of Vail Pass. Ballfield and tennis court facilities were eventually located here due to the suitability of the terrain and close proximity of the Town. Although this landfilling process could have been implemented in a more aesthetic and functional manner, the upper bench becomes the primary landform affording long views and sweeping vistas of the Gore Valley and Creek.

Surface runoff is moderate over most of the site where the flat benches occur, but heavier on the steeper sloped areas between benches and along the stream. As a result, some erosion of the sensitive native grasses occurs which contributes to the loss of valuable soil and increased risk of mudslides, a real danger in the Valley during spring runoff.

In addition to the surface runoff, groundwater is abundant throughout the site. The depth to groundwater is variable, ranging from near the surface in the lower levels during spring runoff where it provides water for nearby wetlands and ponds, to as much as 100 feet below the surface at higher elevations.

The soils on the site are clayey sand for the most part, underlain by cohesive clay lenses, colluvium deposits of river rock, and underlying bedrock. These soils are ideal for construction and road building but, because of an abundance of surface rock, require some surface fill to support lawns and underground irrigation systems. Certain areas of the site where previous construction has taken place have been badly disturbed and will require a program of soil management in order to restore a suitable level of soil fertility.

Evergreen forest is the predominant plant community which occurs along Gore Creek natural corridor. The green meadow of the lower bench thick with coarse grasses and wild flowers give way to the quiet stands of fir and spruce along the creek bottom; the visitor will find much to delight the eye. The vegetation patterns appear to be as much a response to physiography as anything else. Within the framework provided by the benches, slopes and creek bottom, several major plant associations are apparent. Some, such as fir and spruce forest are prominent and valued and contribute greatly to the formation of beautiful understory plants such as oregrape holly, mountain maple and kinnikinnick.

Existing physical conditions in Ford Park consist of active recreation areas located on the upper bench, and passive recreation remaining on the lower portion. These contrasting uses were created in part by the orientation of the site and landscape, the influence of adjacent land uses, and the influence of man-made improvements upon the site in the form of softball fields, tennis courts, parking, a flat area for use as a winter snow dump site, and several wooden structures including a recently relocated historic schoolhouse.

The upper bench development was implemented without the benefit of preplanning or design efforts and, as a result, appears forced, haphazardly placed, and is a barrier to public access to the lower bench natural areas and the Vail Nature Centre. This problem has been mitigated by the installation of two pedestrian bridge crossings and unifying path system which has greatly increased the use of this unique and beautiful mountain creek environment.

In defense of the park site's current conditions, it must be understood that Vail is largely a recreation supported community in which demands for needed facilities can easily out-distance the time needed for study and planning.

Plant associations and communities are also similar to the Ford Park site, however, the patterns of vegetation on the lower portion of Donovan Park are more interesting and complex, suggesting that many factors have played a role in shaping them. Recent history of this area reveals that human actions related to adjacent development have destroyed some plant communities and introduced others. This is evident when one visually inspects the site from west to east. The higher mountain elevations on the upper portion of the site include transition areas, where open meadows change to understory shrubbery with various overstory plant types such as quaking aspen and lodgepole pine, which alternate dominance depending on the local microclimatic conditions.

There is no existing development on either portions of Donovan Park, which makes recreational development easier to phase and implement without interfering with existing on-site uses. While the upper portion of the site offers the best viewsheds of the valley, it offers the least potential for reasonable development due to its severe site constraints. The lower portion of the park site, while less dynamic in its viewsheds, has the best opportunities for development affording easy access and protection to its developed recreational facilities. Like Ford Park, it also provides Vail residents and visitors with a beautiful backdrop of the Gore Creek, a natural amenity to be enjoyed by all.

Plant Communities

Evergreen Association

Typically, occurring in higher elevations, moist but well drained soils, north facing slopes, along streams and in ever-aged stands throughout the Valley.

Donovan Park

Donovan Park is actually two separate and distinct open space parcels which are separated by a residential area. The upper portion of the park consists of mountain property in which the park is situated on a northwesterly facing slope with splendid views of Gore Creek and the Gore Mountain range towards the east. The site is partially bisected by Matterhorn Circle, an unpaved subdivision access road which greatly disrupts the limited developable area existing on the site.

The lower portion of the site is a smaller 12 acre parcel of land bordered on the north by the Frontage Road and Interstate 70 and on the south by the Gore Creek. Two terraces step down the site toward the Gore Creek, of which, the small upper terrace affords a grand view of the entire site and Creek bottom. Access to the lower portion is limited to the northwestern corner of the site where Matternhorn Circle and the Frontage Road connect. There is no development currently existing on either portion of Donovan Park.

Surface runoff conditions, groundwater and existing soils are very similar to those found in Ford Park, as are other areas of the Valley. However, the upper portion of Donovan Park has two very serious geologic conditions which will greatly affect the long-term development of the Park. A "creep slope" condition exists within a portion of the open meadow, approximately where the very steep slopes begin at contour elevation 8,070, which is immediately southeast of the Matterhorn Circle gravel road. This severely interferes with the potential for development here because of possible disturbance of the bedrock underlying the unstable soil mass. In addition to this problem, a 'debris flow' area exists towards the southwestern quadrant of the site. Any disturbance of the site in this area may cause the debris flow to change direction and endanger adjacent residential properties.

- Colorado Blue Spruce (Picea pungens 'glauca')
- Engelmann Spruce (Picea engelmanni)
- LodgePole Pine (Pinus contorta)
- Subalpine fir (Abies lasiocarpa)
- Mountain Common Juniper (Juniperus communis saxitalis)
- Sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata)
- Creeping Mahonia (Mahonia repens)
- Shrubby Cinquefoil (Potentilla fruitcosa)
- Kinnikinnick (Arctostaphylos uva ursi) 'Bear's grape'

Deciduous Association

Typically occurring with some evergreen communities and at lower elevations such as meadow edges and above wetland areas, often occurs within flood-plain areas which have drier soils.

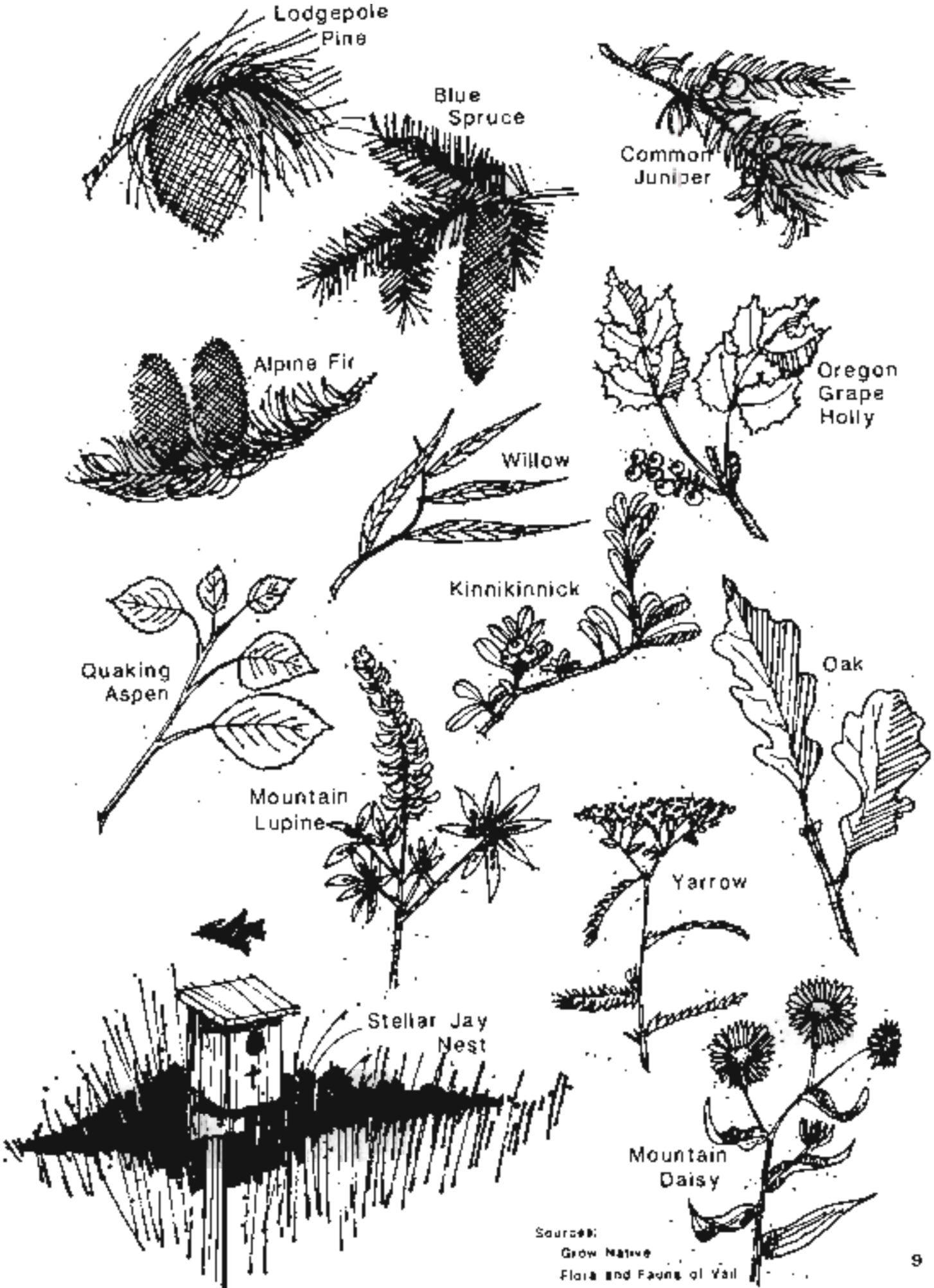
- Quaking Aspen (Populus tremuloides)
- Mountain Ash (Fraxinus lanceolata)
- Gambel Oak (Quercus gambelii)
- Mountain Mahogany (Cercocarpus montanus)
- Western Chokecherry (Prunus virginiana demissa)
- Squawbush (Rhus trilobata)
- Alpine Currant, Gooseberry (Ribes alpinum)

Meadow areas throughout the Valley contain many species of native grassses and wildflowers, providing a richness of spring and summer color.

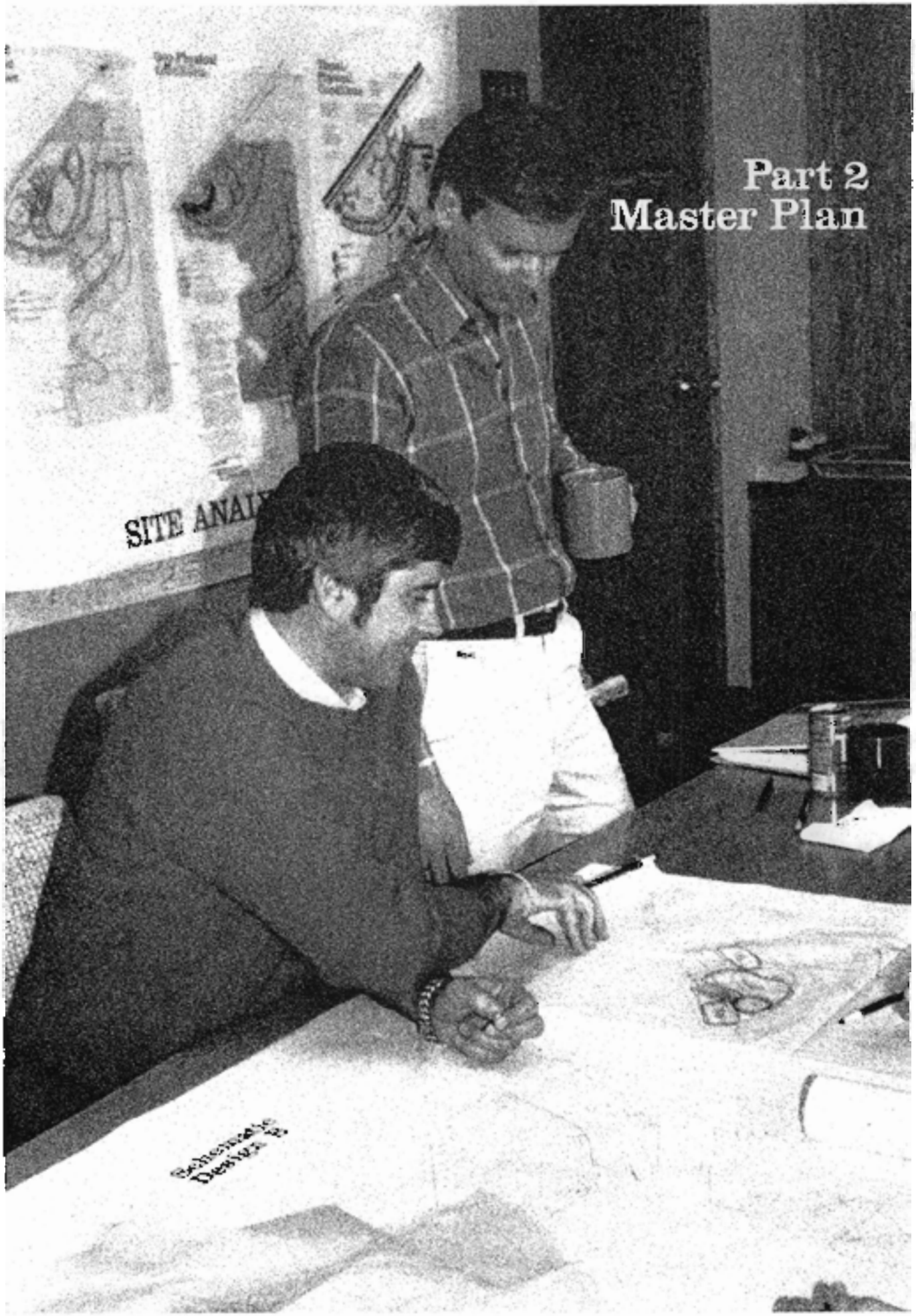
Wetland Association

Typically, occurring along streams, ponds and marsh areas along the Valley floor. These plant communities play an important ecological role within the Gore Valley and project sites, acting as a buffer and sanctuary for wildlife.

- Native Willow (salix)
- Mountain Maple (Acer glabrum)
- Wild Raspberry

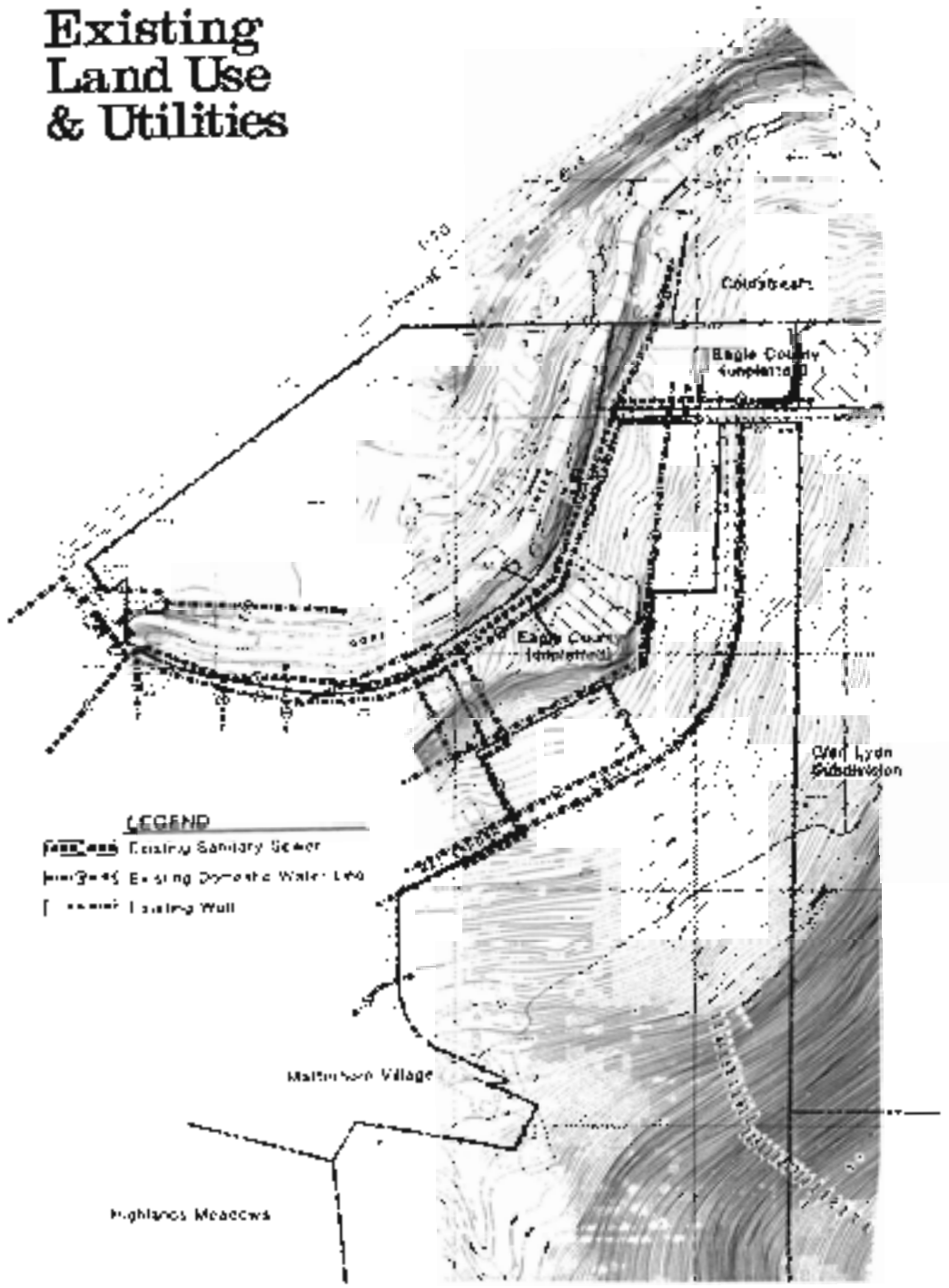


Sources:
Grow Native
Flora and Fauna of Vail

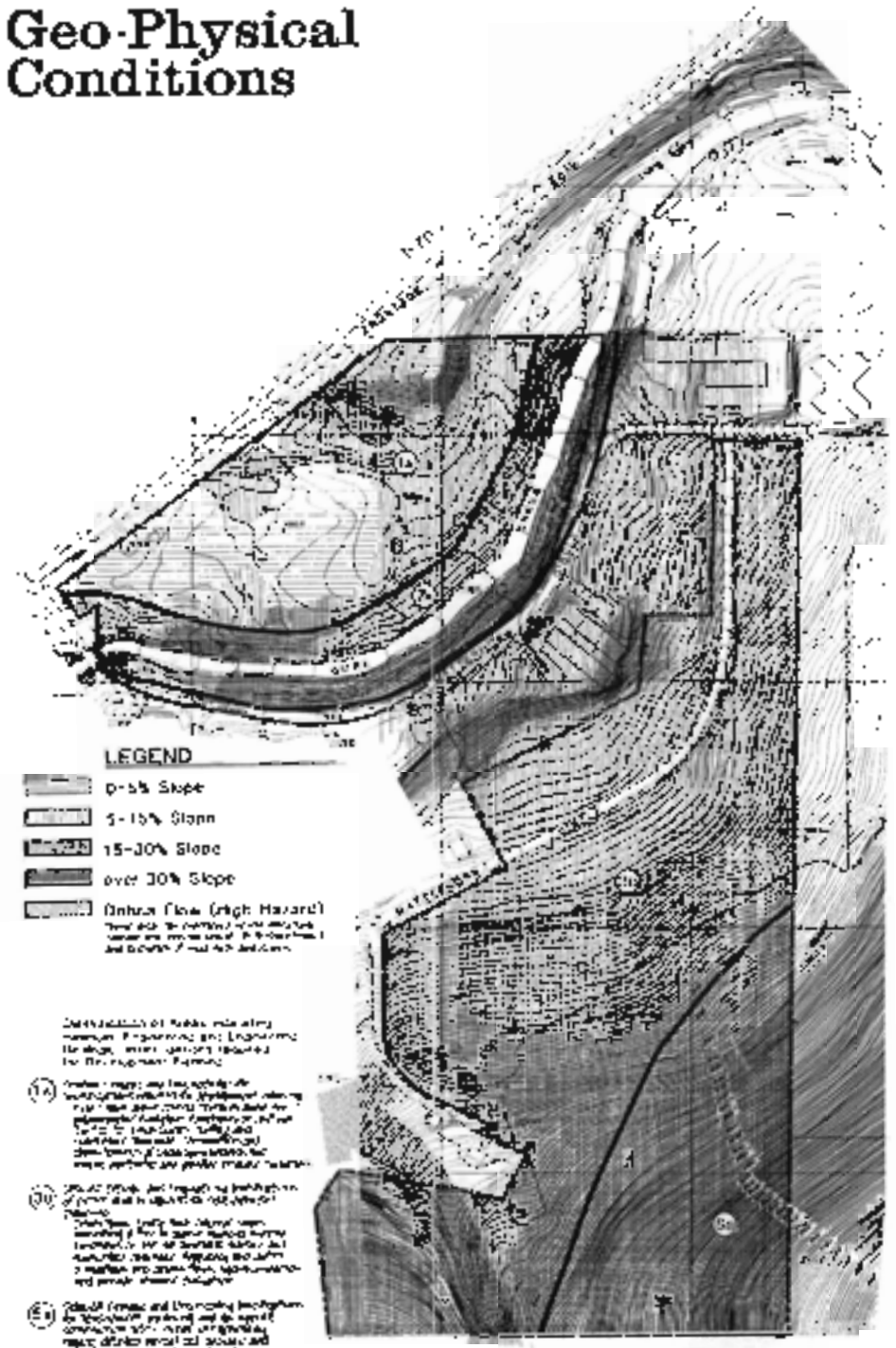


Part 2
Master Plan

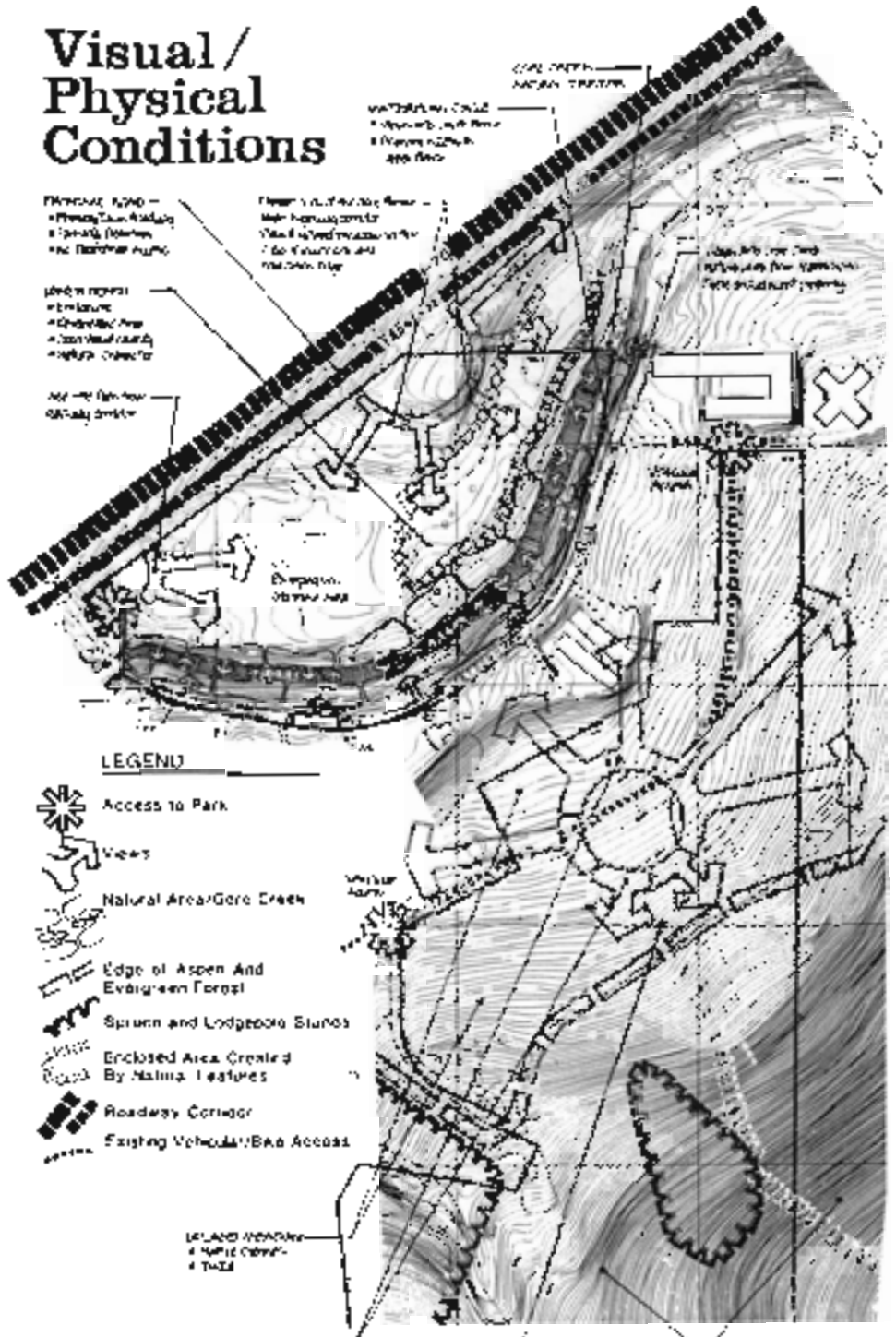
Existing Land Use & Utilities



Geo-Physical Conditions



Visual / Physical Conditions



DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

50 100 200 600
scale

Town of Vail
office of community development

THK associates, inc.

SITE ANALYSIS

The Master Plan concept reflects:

- a blend of recreational activities aimed at satisfying the needs of the community residents, specifically a park for all ages and interests;
- concern for the recreational experience of the park visitor;
- concerns and desires obtained through an intensive citizen participation program;
- respect for the natural resources and beauty of the sites;
- conservation of energy;
- fiscal responsibility.

Program Development

Immediately following the site analysis phase for the two parks and prior to beginning work on program development, it was determined that a more intensive review and response mechanism was needed in order to efficiently address the Town of Vail's concerns and objectives. To achieve this, a Project Steering Committee was formed to provide the Consultant a more "hands-on" review and advisory group. This group consisted of the following:

- Director, Department of Community Development
- Town Planner
- Director, Department of Recreation
- Director, Department of Public Works and Transportation
- Member of the Town Council
- Member of the Planning and Environmental Commission
- Representative, Vail Valley Foundation
- Representative, Vail Associates, Inc.

This committee met with the Consultant team on a weekly or semi-weekly basis to review the progress of the planning work, and to advise on critical issues and next steps.

Previous Planning and Related Studies

As part of the program development phase, an inventory and review of previous planning efforts and related studies was conducted, and important information identified and outlined. The following documents and studies were reviewed during this effort:

-Parks Feasibility Study - Town of Vail Department of Community Development and Recreation Department, July 1984.

-Parks and Recreation Report - Town of Vail Recreation Department, October 1983.

-Inventory of Recreation Facilities - Town of Vail Recreation Department, July 1982.

-Ford Park Amphitheater and Transit Study - A. Gerstenberg Associates, April 1979.

-Vail Plan - Royston, Hanamoto, Beck, and Abey, 1973.

-Vail Summer Research Program, Visitors Survey - Rosall, Remen and Cares, 1984.

-Economic Development Commission Final Report - December, 1984.

-Miscellaneous Town Correspondence related to concerns regarding parks development.

Note: Refer to THK Associates, Inc. Task Report #2 and 3, Ford and Donovan Park Master Plan for detailed information concerning these studies.

Recreational Needs Analysis

A large part of the work performed during the program development was directed toward identifying the recreational needs of the community at large. To accomplish this, the Planning Consultant met on several occasions with the Community Development Staff and the Project Steering Committee to determine the best methods to obtain adequate recreational needs information. From these meetings, it was decided that this information would be obtained from the following sources:

-Meetings with specific special interest groups
-A series of Town meetings
-School district
-Youth Services
-School Survey*
-Adult Survey*

The Consultant provided the survey format, which was then administered by the Department of Community Development. The purpose of the two surveys was to serve as a cross-check for input obtained through the public meetings.

Community Involvement

Two public meetings were held during January 1985 for the purpose of obtaining public opinion on the recreational needs for each Park. The meeting format include a presentation of the site analysis findings for each park, a work session period to identify priorities for recreational facilities/activities and concerns, and a general question and answer period. The meetings were well attended and yielded comprehensive lists of needs and concerns for each Park. A third public meeting was then held to present findings on recreational programming garnered from the two previous public meetings and the survey data. These meetings, in addition to the survey findings, were the basis for the formulation of the Project's design concept and criteria.

*Surveys consisted of an informal handout or mail back format and were not based upon accepted practices of statistical methodology.

A summary of the survey and meetings input is as follows:

School Survey - Needs by priority; all ages:

1. Playground area
2. Free play, kites, frisbee
3. Soccer
4. Picnic area
5. Socialize, relax, lay around
6. Swim
7. Football
8. Baseball
9. Outdoor ice skating pond, fish, ducks.

Adult Survey:

1. What facilities do you feel are needed for children? Playgrounds, open fields and parks, recreation center, trails.

2. What recreational activities do you participate in now?

Alpine skiing	Picnicing
Bicycling	Camping
Cross-country skiing	Physical fitness programs

What activities would you like to see in Ford Park? (ranked by priority)

1. Swimming Pool	2. Bicycle trail
3. Picnic areas	4. Running/jogging trails
5. Running/exercise course	6. Cross-country ski trail
7. Playground area	8. Open turfed areas for informal play
9. Recreation area	
10. Alpine garden	11. Lighted facilities for night play

What activities would you like to see in Donovan Park? (ranked by priority)

1. Swimming Pool
2. Bicycle trail
3. Picnic areas
4. Playground area
5. Running/jogging trails
6. Running/exercise course
7. Open turfed areas for informal play
8. Cross-country ski trail
9. Recreation center
10. Sledding area

Ford Park - Public Meeting Priorities

1. Alpine garden
2. Amphitheater
3. Aquatic center, indoor/outdoor pool
4. Picnicing
5. Softball fields
6. Passive quiet areas/open space

Donovan Park - Public Meeting Priorities

1. Aquatic center
2. Picnic areas
3. Children's playground
4. Bike path/hiking trail, jogging & cross-country trails
5. Natural areas/open space/green area
6. Multi-purpose athletic field

Preliminary Site Development Program

Upon completion of the recreational needs analysis, a preliminary site program was developed for each park using the information obtained from the public meetings and surveys. The preliminary site development programs contained the following recreational activities:

Ford Park

1. Swimming pool
2. Bicycle trail
3. Hiking/jogging trail
4. Cross-country ski trail
5. Picnic areas with shelters
6. Children's playground with small basketball court
7. Open turfed play areas
8. Softball fields
9. Soccer field (practice)
10. Exercise course
11. Nature center
12. Alpine garden
13. Amphitheater
14. Fishing
15. Kayaking/rafting
16. Sledding/tubing
17. Restroom facilities
18. Parking/drop-off

Donovan Park

1. Bicycle trail
2. Picnic areas with shelters
3. Hiking/jogging trails
4. Cross-country ski trail
5. Children's playground with small basketball court
6. Exercise course
7. Open turfed areas for informal play
8. Softball field (informal)
9. Volleyball
10. Fishing
11. Kayaking/rafting
12. Sledding/tubing
13. Archery range
14. Ice rink (outdoor pond)
15. Restroom facilities
16. Parking

A Site Program Suitability Matrix was prepared for each park which was used to compare program elements against a list of physical considerations common to both sites. The objective of the suitability matrix was to determine if any of the program elements were unsuitable for development due to excessive constraints, and if retained, the amount of development required to mitigate the constraints.

The physical considerations used included: adjacent land uses; utilities; slopes over and under 15%; hydrology; floodplains; geology/soils; vegetation; wildlife; views on/off-site; internal/external noise; vehicular/pedestrian access; and available site acreage. Each program element was assigned a suitability weight value based upon its affect on/affect from a particular physical consideration.

Values were weighted as (1) high suitability; (2) moderate suitability; and (3) low suitability. Those elements which were highly suitable for development had a weighting range of between 15-26 points; moderate from 27-37; and low from 38-48. While a few program elements were close to the unsuitable range, none of them were actually considered low suitability (see Matrix in Appendix).

Following this analysis of the program elements, and with some minor modification to the Donovan Park program*, the Final site development program was chosen for both parks and approval given to proceed into the Schematic Design phase of the study.

*The Donovan Park Program was modified during this process at the request of the Town Council to include an evaluation of potential Town of Vail cemetery sites.

The final Site Development Programs for Ford and Donovan Parks are:

Ford Park

Program Element	Weight	Suitability Value
1. Cross-country ski trails	(16)	(High)
1. Kayaking/rafting	(16)	(High)
2. Hiking/jogging trail	(17)	(High)
3. Fishing	(18)	(High)
4. Sledding/tubing	(19)	(High)
5. Nature center	(22)	(High)
6. Exercise course	(23)	(High)
7. Picnic area	(24)	(High)
8. Alpine garden	(25)	(High)
9. Open turfed play areas	(26)	(High)
10. Children's playground	(29)	(Moderate)
10. Softball fields	(29)	(Moderate)
10. Soccer field (practice)	(29)	(Moderate)
11. Restroom facilities	(32)	(Moderate)
12. Amphitheater	(33)	(Moderate)
13. Swimming pool	(34)	(Moderate)
14. Parking drop-off area	(36)	(Moderate)

Donovan Park

Program Element	Weight	Suitability Value
1. Cross-country ski trail	(16)	(High)
1. Kayaking/rafting	(16)	(High)
2. Hiking/jogging trail	(17)	(High)
3. Fishing	(18)	(High)
4. Sledding/tubing	(19)	(High)
4. Bicycle trail	(19)	(High)
5. Exercise course	(23)	(High)
6. Town cemetery	(24)	(High)
7. Picnic areas	(25)	(High)
8. Ice rink (outdoor pond)	(26)	(High)
8. Open turfed play areas	(26)	(High)
9. Volleyball	(27)	(Moderate)
10. Children's playground	(30)	(Moderate)
11. Parking	(35)	(Moderate)
11. Restroom facilities	(35)	(Moderate)

Schematics

Using the recreation program developed for each park, schematic feasibility plans were prepared to study the potential relationships of program elements. This process began with an intensive "hands-on" workshop with members of the Steering Committee. This was an all-day working session where ideas for facility locations were sketched, revised and combined into three schematic plan alternatives for each park. During the development of the schematics, several program elements were changed from original ideas in regard to the facility. These changes included:

1. **Alpine Garden** - The Alpine Garden was originally located in the area by the Vail Nature Centre in Ford Park. This was done to isolate it somewhat from the more intensive, actively used areas of the Park. The garden area was also reduced in size and placed in a number of separate locations throughout this portion of the Park. This concept was changed and the Alpine Garden was subsequently relocated to the area adjacent to the west side of the proposed amphitheater. This was done for the following reasons: 1) it was felt from members of the Alpine Garden Club that a larger area of approximately 1.5 acres was needed to adequately design the Garden; 2) it was suggested that the Garden could serve as a buffer area between the Amphitheater and the rest of the Park; 3) it was felt that the Alpine Garden was more compatible with the Amphitheater in regard to the type of uses; and 4) it was a desire of the Steering Committee that the Vail Nature Centre area remain undisturbed. There were some concerns expressed by members of the Consultant Team and the Steering Committee in regard to a private interest group being responsible for the construction and maintenance of a labor intensive amenity within a public park.

2. **Amphitheater** - Another change was to show one schematic without the amphitheater. This was mentioned by the Steering Committee as funds for such a facility may not become a reality, and it was felt by them that the overall design of the Park would function better without the amphitheater facility. The Consultant's recommendation would be to locate such a facility closer to the center of Town. A study for the best location of such a facility would be desirable. In the other two schemes, the location of the amphitheater was taken to be a given.

3. Swimming Pool Complex - Both the survey data and the public meeting input showed the swimming pool to be the highest priority for a recreational facility. No preference was indicated for the actual pool location. Once again, the Consultant recommends that the best location for the swimming pool would be the center of the village where access, parking and support facilities would be available. Since there is no known available site in the village, Ford Park was chosen for the location of a pool facility.

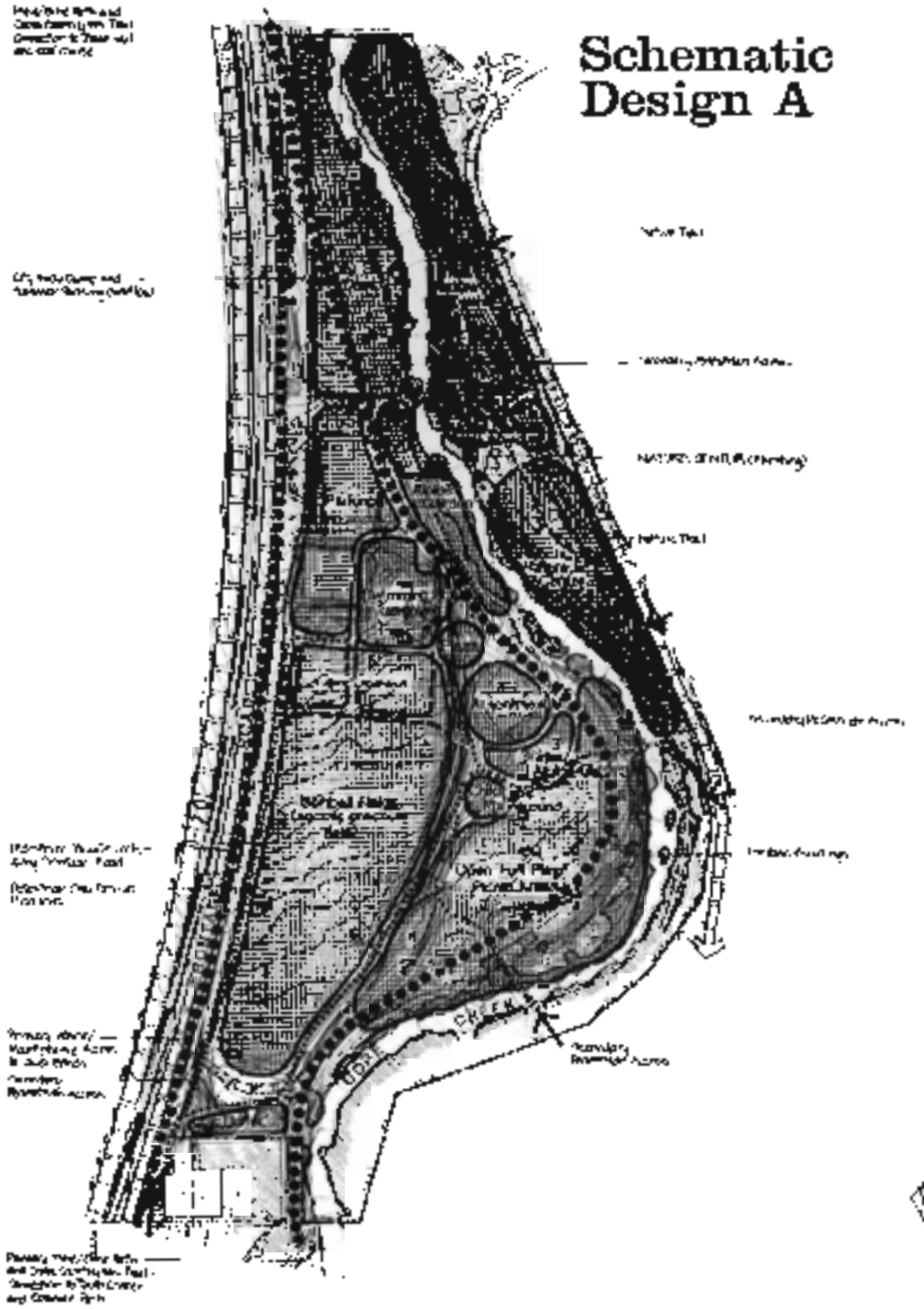
Donovan Park was not found to be a feasible location for the pool because the area available on the lower bench is not adequate for a large pool facility with its associated parking. Access and water table would also present problems at Donovan Park. The Consultants also feel that whatever the pool complex becomes, it should offer more in the way of aquatic recreation than just a lap pool and diving boards. This is not to suggest a wave action pool, but something more imaginative. This would be one sure way of helping the facility pay for itself.

After the schematic alternatives were completed, a work session with the Community Development staff, Steering Committee, Planning and Environmental Commission and Town Council was held. A presentation of the schematic alternatives was followed by a discussion period. The concensus on Ford Park was for Scheme 'A', perhaps with the addition of an outdoor skating pond and a horse sled trail. The feasibility and timing of the pool was brought up numerous times and a request was made to do a design without a pool.

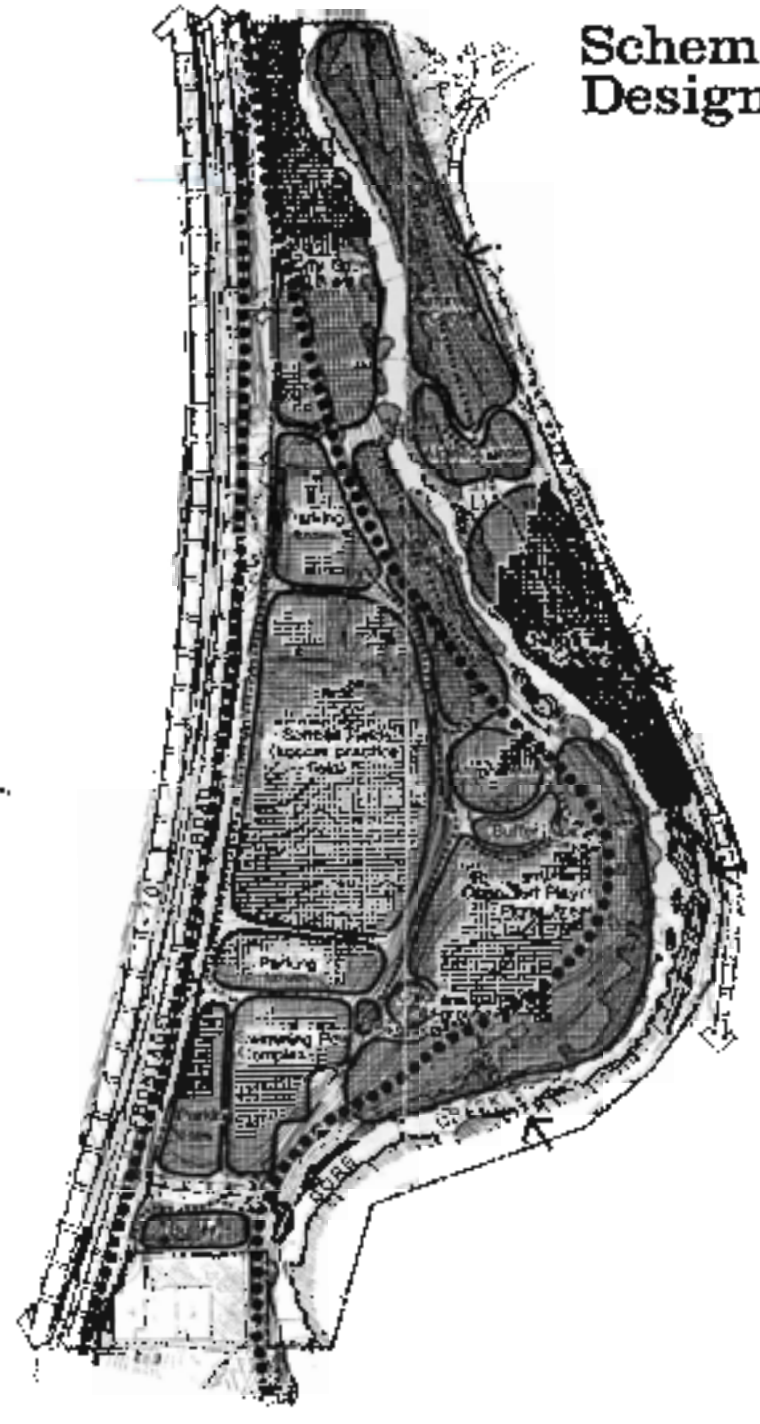
The presentation was then directed to Donovan Park, in which Scheme 'A' was also chosen with the addition of an outdoor skating pond similar to the one in Ford Park.

The schematic plans were refined at the Conceptual Design level in regard to recommended changes or additions. The Schematic Plans are included as attachments to this section of the study.

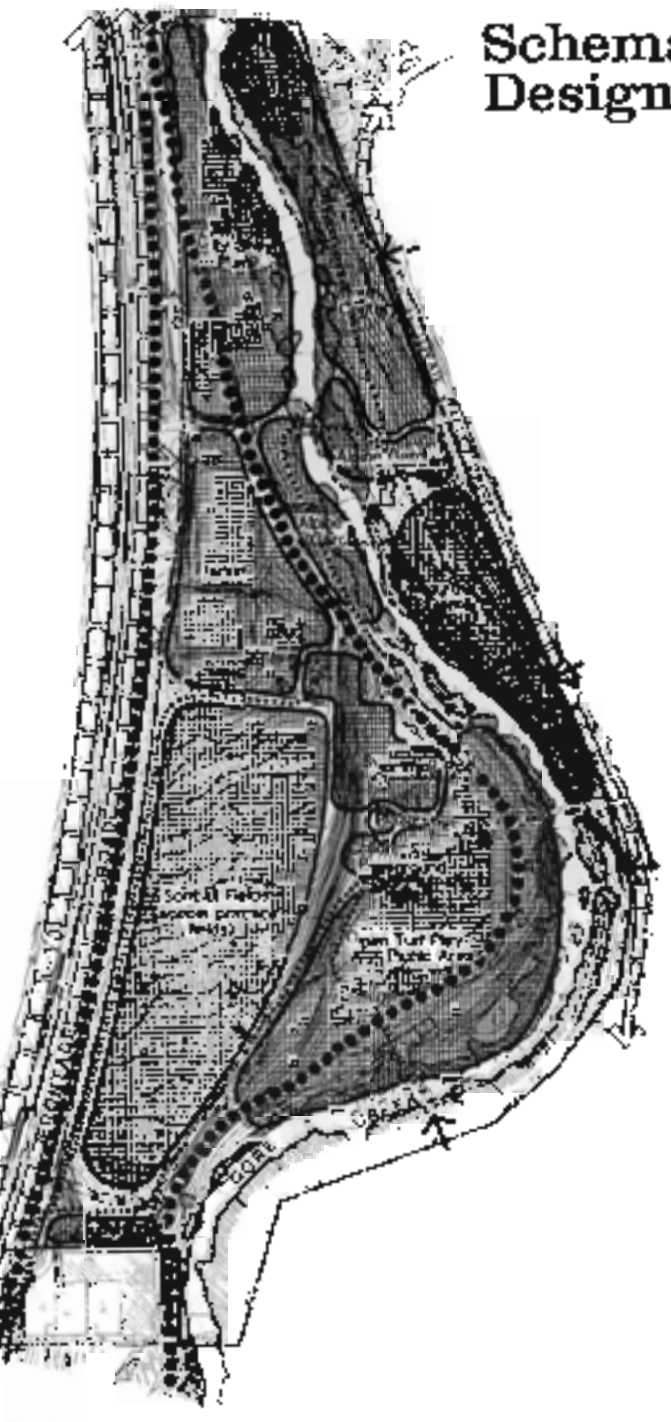
Schematic Design A



Schematic Design B



Schematic Design C



FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

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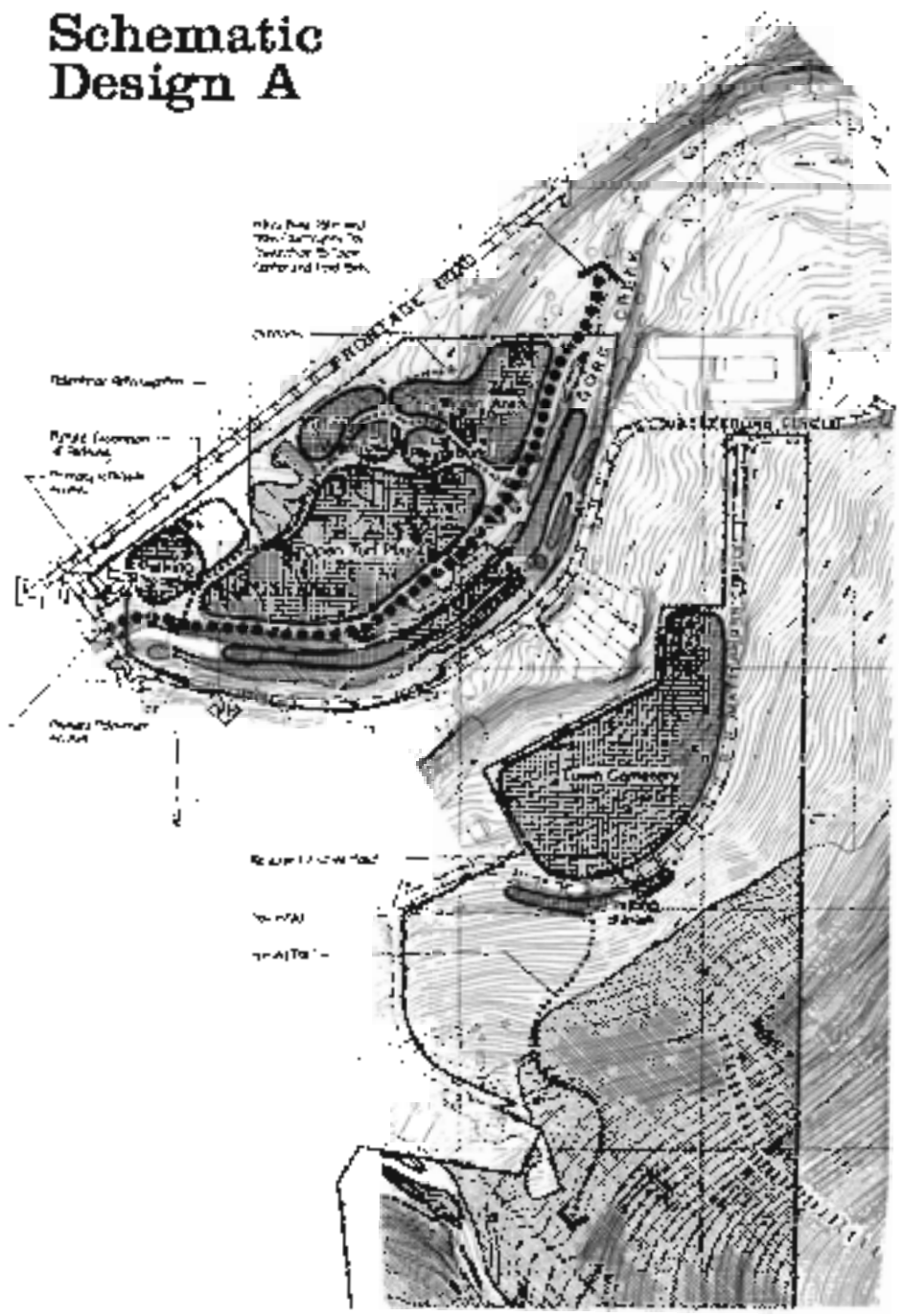
Schematic Design A



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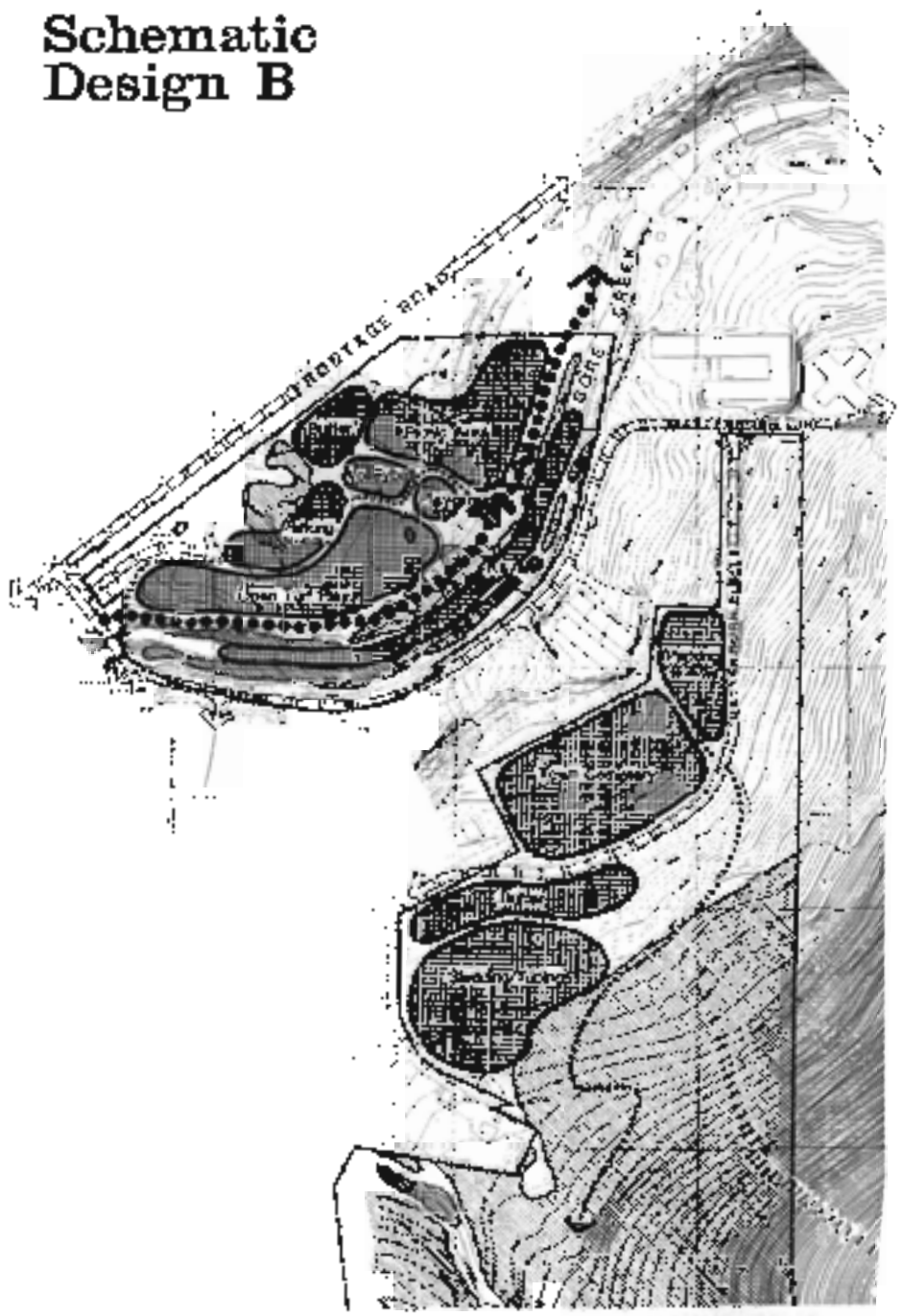

Schematic Design C

DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

50 100 200 400

scale

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Design Concepts

Upon selection of an approved schematic plan for both Park sites, a series of Design Concept studies were prepared in order to carefully evaluate the detailed relationships between activity areas.

The design concepts were prepared in a rough sketch plan format over a topographic base sheet. This allowed the Consultant to evlauate many different alternatives to the Plan, keeping the relationships and ideas which worked well together and were within the accepted schematic framework and discarding those which did not meet the criteria.

The design concepts were prepared as a base Concept Alternative Plan which indicated an acceptable design of the Park site. These plans included graphic sections of different activity areas within the Park, which helped explain how these areas might appear, their relationships to other activities, and how they fit upon the site. In addition to the base plan were several Subarea Plans which presented alternative relationships, locations and configurations of some of the major activity areas.

The major differences of each concept plan are described below:

FORD PARK

Concept Alternative Base Plan

This plan most closely follows the approved schematic relationships of the program elements. It contains a large plaza connecting pool and amphitheater, and indicates the amphitheater architect's service access solution on the far west side of the facility. The alpine garden is split into two segments, one adjacent to the Vail Nature Centre and the other adjacent to the amphitheater. The skating pond is located next to the amphitheater plaza space. The proposed pedestrian bridge was placed east of the Nature Centre and included a more circuitous trail connection. The bike path bypasses the south portion of the Park site and travels along the top of the slope toward the frontage road.

Subarea Plan 'A'

Differs from the base plan in that the skating pond was relocated to the west of the open meadow adjacent to the Recreation Department storage building. Amphitheater service area has been moved to the main entrance of the facility instead of along the steep embankment. A larger outdoor plaza space exists between pool and amphitheater complex. Pool building concept includes a glassed gallery at the drop-off area.

Subarea Plan 'B'

The pool complex changes to include a proposed covered mezzanine deck over the pool tank and a southeasterly solar orientation. The outdoor spaces join together the pool complex and amphitheater and form one large recreation complex. A larger parking area was also realized by making this combination. While this alternative had merit in regard to reduced visual impact of the facility, common outdoor use spaces, and possible shared construction methods, the organizers of the amphitheater project felt that conflicts between the two different users could not be overcome.

Subarea Plan 'C'

A more urban looking design 'sans' pool complex. This design became the basis of a fall back position should the pool complex fail to become a reality. Emphasis was placed on developing the pedestrian space between the skating pond and the amphitheater entrance. This alternative has many positive features, but the urban design elements were felt to be out of place in the mountain environment of the Park.

DONOVAN PARK

Concept Alternative Base Plan

As per the Ford Park plan, this plan follows the approved schematic relationships of the program elements. Parking is adjacent to the access road and is screened from view. The large open turf play area has been placed in the more level and open portion of the site and adjacent to the play areas. The play areas sit on a terraced portion of the site and below a prominent ridge area for protection.

The outdoor skating pond and picnic areas are located in the most sheltered area of the site and away from high activity areas. The bike/pedestrian path follows Gore Creek and is in accordance with the Vail Trails Plan. The potential Town cemetery site is shown on the upper bench portion of Donovan Park, and in the open meadow area. Matterhorn Circle has been realigned to create a larger open space with the old alignment acting as an interior roadway due to existing underground utilities. The upper bench portion of Donovan Park has very low potential for highly developed recreational use due to severely steep and wooded terrain over much of the site, and a 'creep slope' condition south of the subdivision roadway (Matterhorn Circle) at approximately contour elevation 8,070 ft.

Subarea Plan 'A'

Very similar to the base plan except for some size and configuration changes on many of the activity areas.

Subarea Plan 'B'

Again, quite similar to the other plans with the exception of an expanded parking area and circular drop-off.

Subarea Plan 'C'

An alternative for the potential Town cemetery utilizing the existing Matterhorn Circle roadway and placing developed cemetery land on either side. This alternative was favored by the Steering Committee and the Town Council. It was suggested by the consultant that further study of this site and other potential cemetery sites be carried on to determine the best location for a Town cemetery. It also recommended that this portion of Donovan Park remain as part of the Town's open space.

During this phase of the study, the Consultant team and Steering Committee had several three to four-hour working sessions where they reviewed the concepts, and proposed changes or modifications to them based upon outside factors and scenarios which would have an influence on the Park development. Once completed, all changes and modifications were synthesized onto final Conceptual Plans for presentation to Town Council, and the Planning and Environmental Commission.

Significant aspects of the final Conceptual Plans included:

- Location of high use facilities away from those of a more passive nature, i.e., children's play area vs. stream-side picnic.

- Adaptation of major structures to the site topography such as stepping the pool complex into upper bench slope.

- Continuous bike/pedestrian paths through the Parks with additional stream crossing points for increased accessibility.

- Parking areas adjacent to Frontage Road and separated from areas with children.

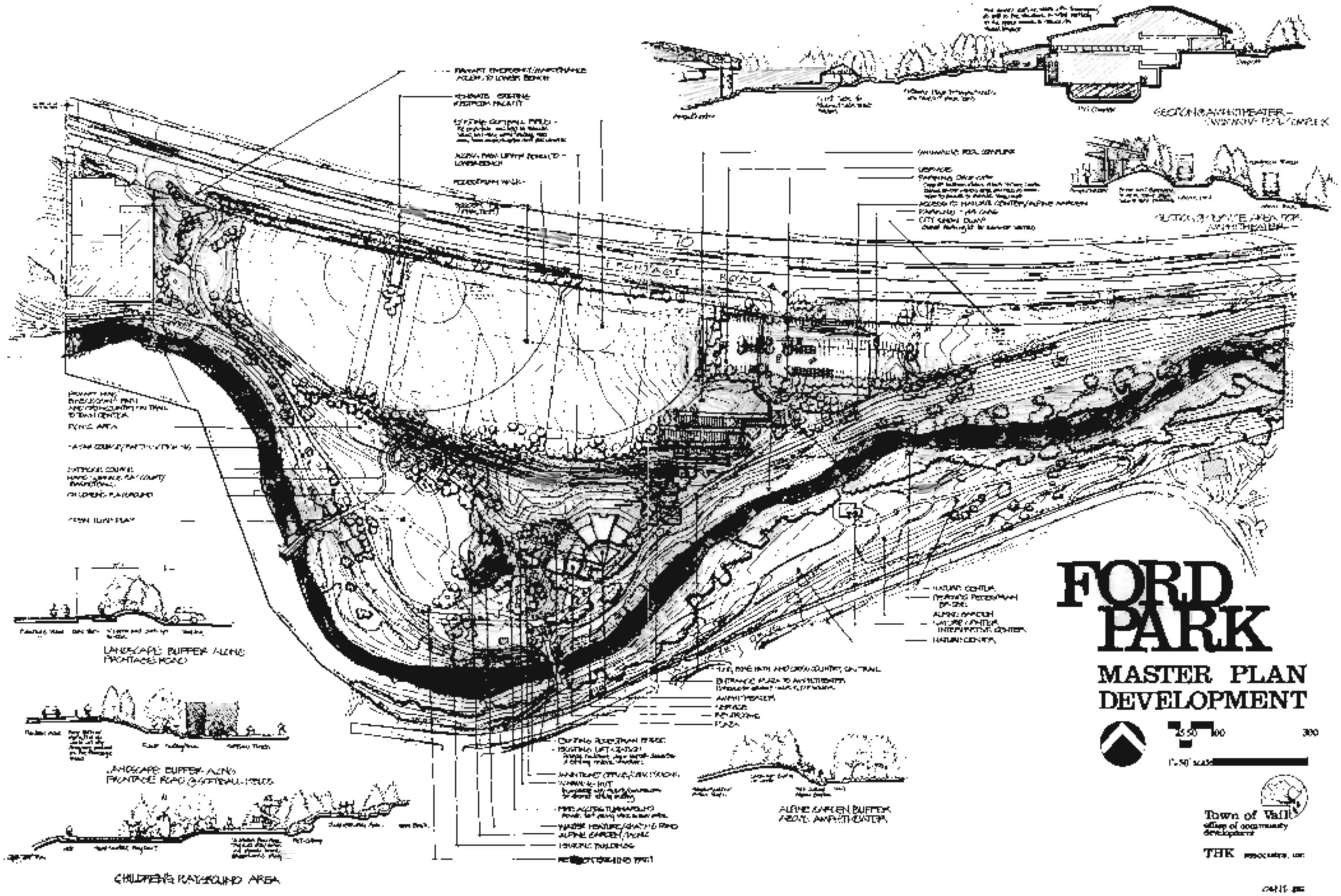
- Berms and landscape buffers are used for protective screening and to create a feeling of privacy in activity spaces.

- Southern orientation of winter use facilities such as the pool complex and parking areas to increase passive solar heating and snow removal.

- Orientation of pond areas to take advantage of water sources and winter shade patterns.

- The identification of a potential site within the upper bench portion of Donovan Park for a proposed Town cemetery. (Note: no final determination has been made in regard to a cemetery location within the Town of Vail as a study for this purpose has not been conducted at this writing, nor is it within the purview of this study to locate potential Cemetery sites.)

The Design Concept plans are included as attachments to this section of the study.



FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

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1"=50' scale

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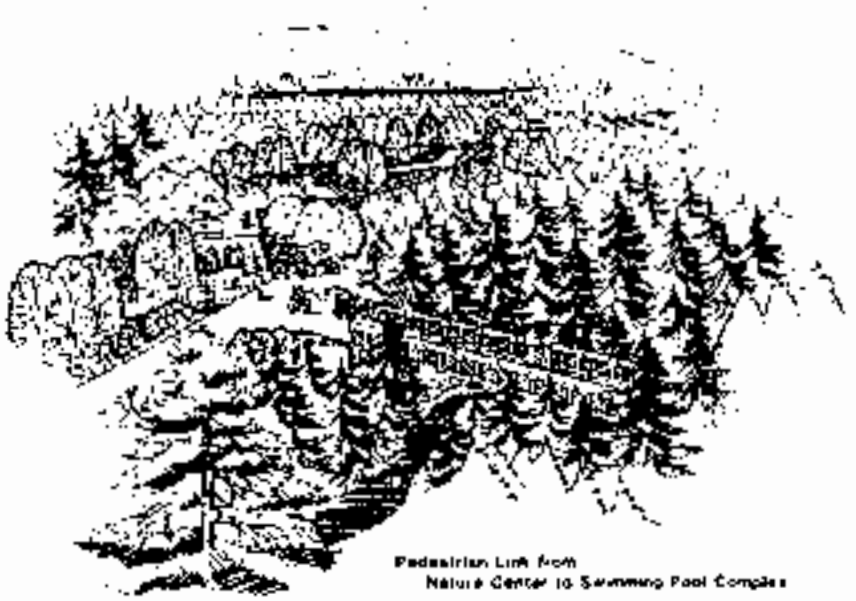
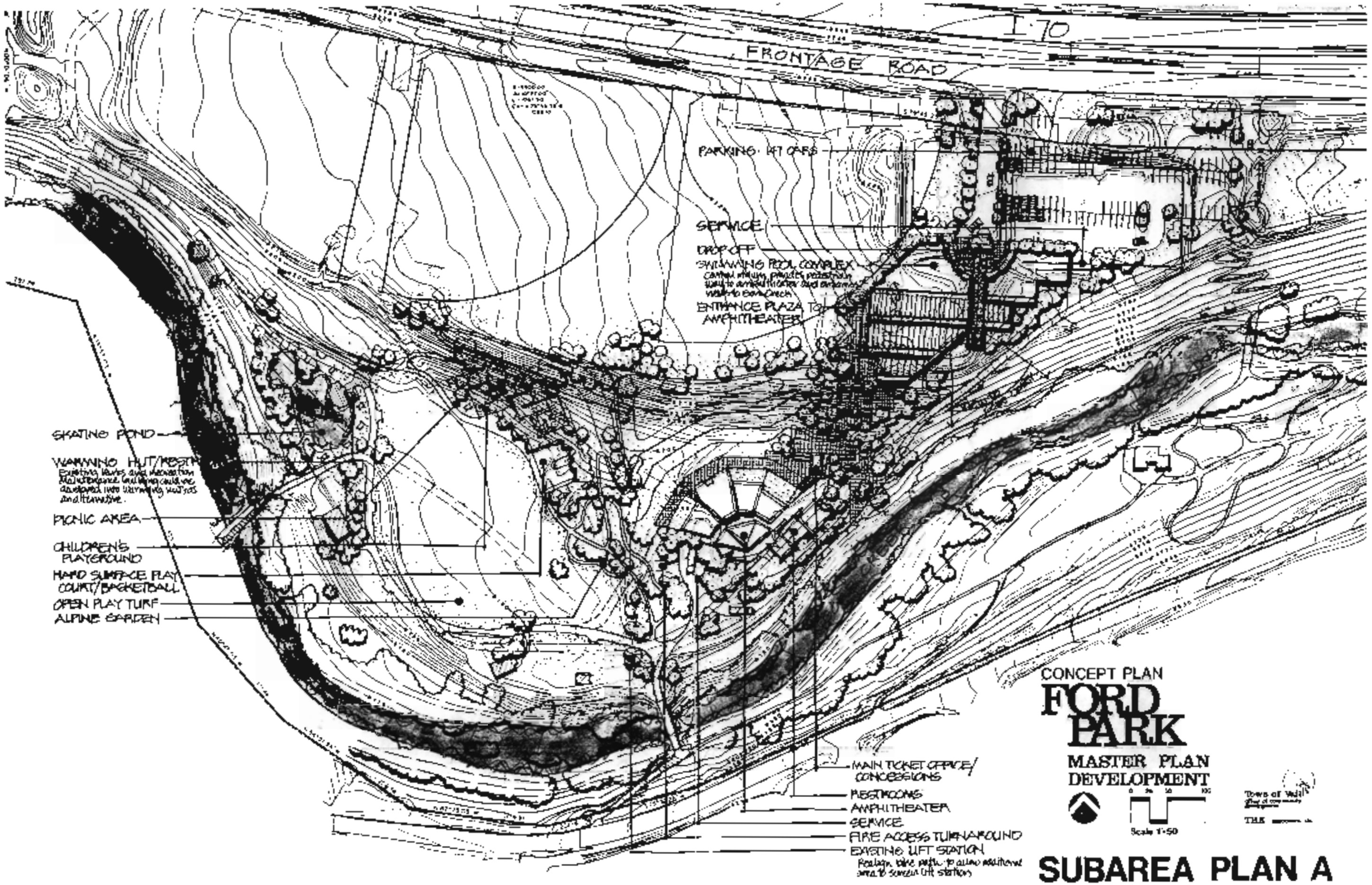
Master Plans

The culmination of the park planning processes of site analysis, citizen participation meetings, program development, schematic design, and conceptual design are the final Master Plans. The Master Plans for Ford and Donovan Parks, along with this document, become the guidelines upon which development will be based for these two important Park sites. In addition, the design guidelines and maintenance recommendations presented in this report are the beginning of those to be developed by the Town of Vail for use in the planning, design and management of future parks, open spaces and pedestrian/bikeway systems.

When the Parks are completed, park visitors will notice that parking areas, buildings and playground areas are fitted closely into the natural terrain where possible to minimize disruption of slopes, vegetation and water resources. Stands of mature evergreen or deciduous trees were integrated into the park designs and will be managed as natural conservation areas.



Pedestrian Link from
Nature Center to Swimming Pool Complex


I 10
FRONTAGE ROAD
PARKING - 147 CARS
SERVICE
DROP OFF
SWIMMING POOL COMPLEX
ENTRANCE PLAZA TO AMPHITHEATER
SKATING POND
WARMING HUT/REST
PICNIC AREA
CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND
HARD SURFACE PLAY COURT/BASKETBALL
OPEN PLAY TURF
ALPINE GARDEN
MAIN TICKET OFFICE/ CONCESSIONS
RESTROOMS
AMPHITHEATER
SERVICE
FIRE ACCESS TURNAROUND
EXISTING LIFT STATION
CONCEPT PLAN
FORD PARK
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Scale 1"=50
SUBAREA PLAN A
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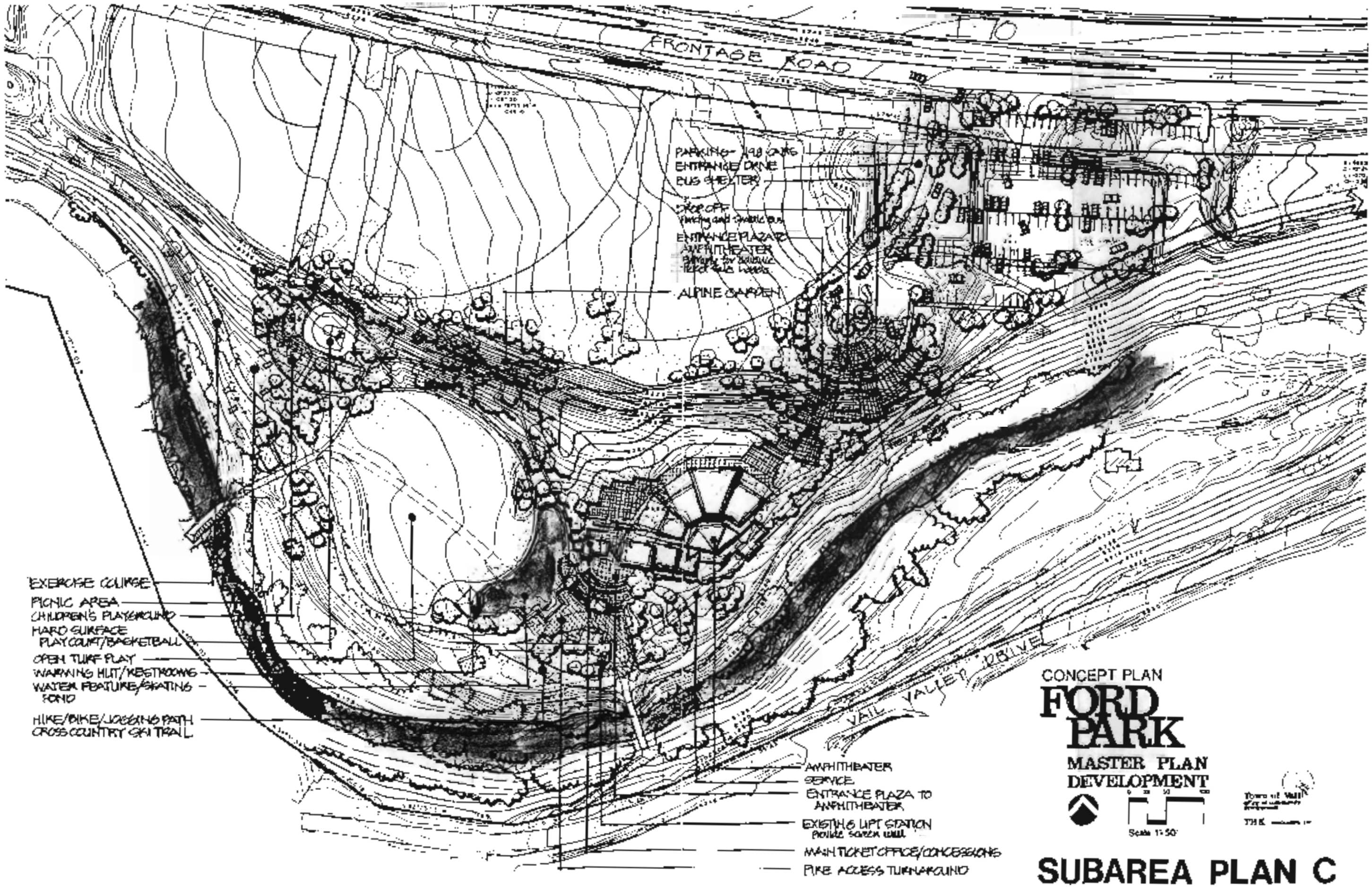


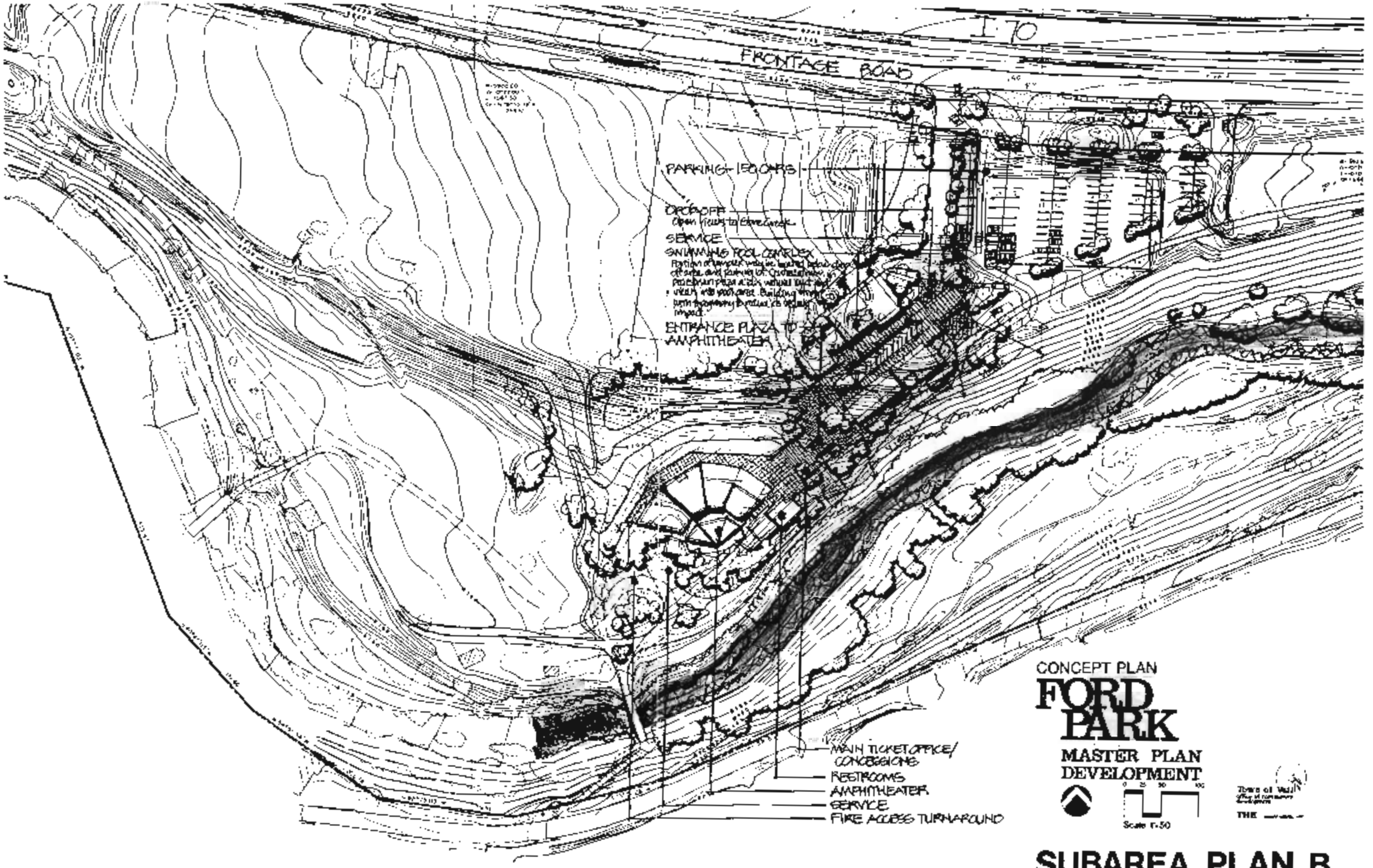
CONCEPT PLAN

FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Scale 1"=50'

SUBAREA PLAN C



CONCEPT PLAN

FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

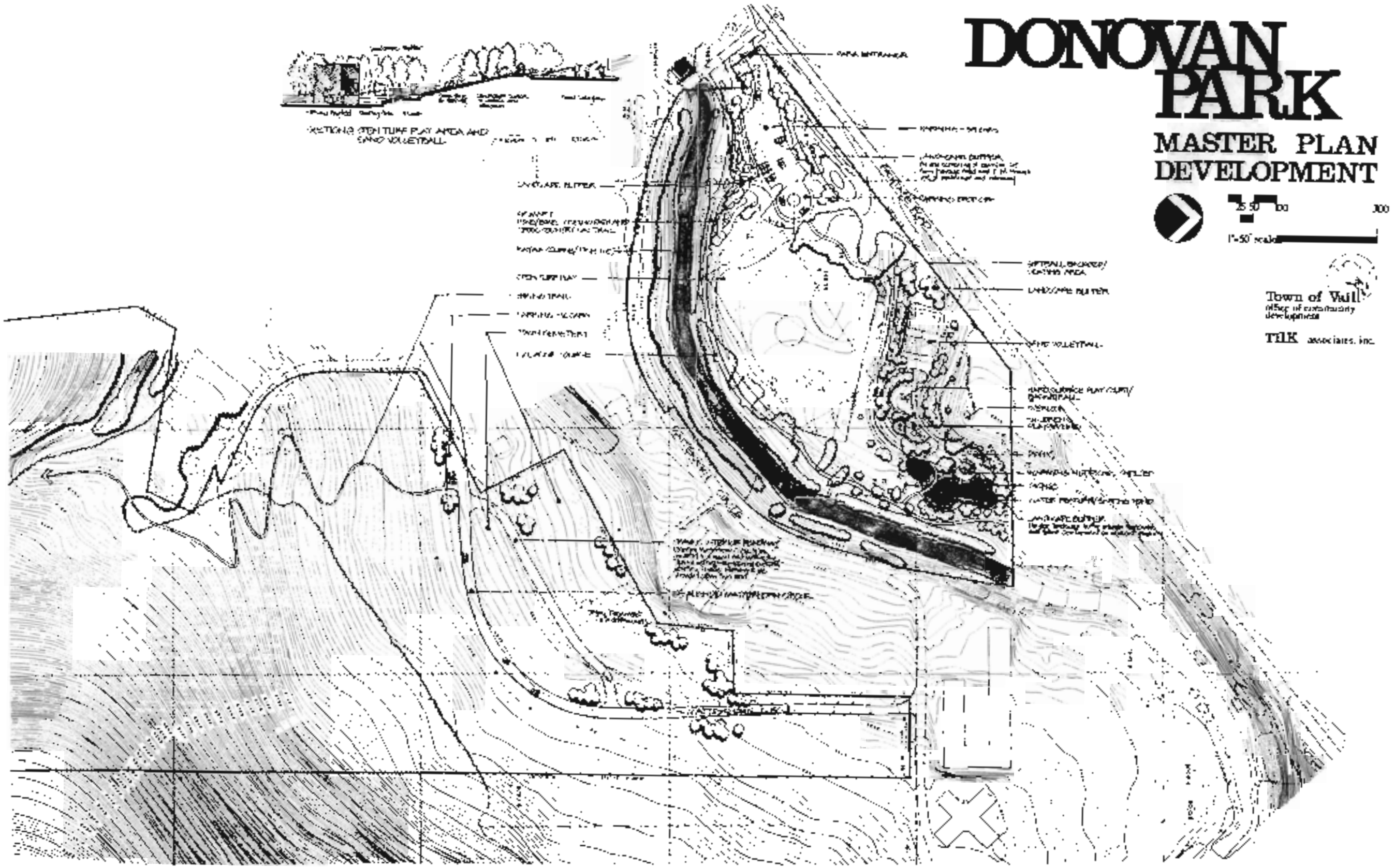
Scale 1"=50'

SUBAREA PLAN B

04-11-85

DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



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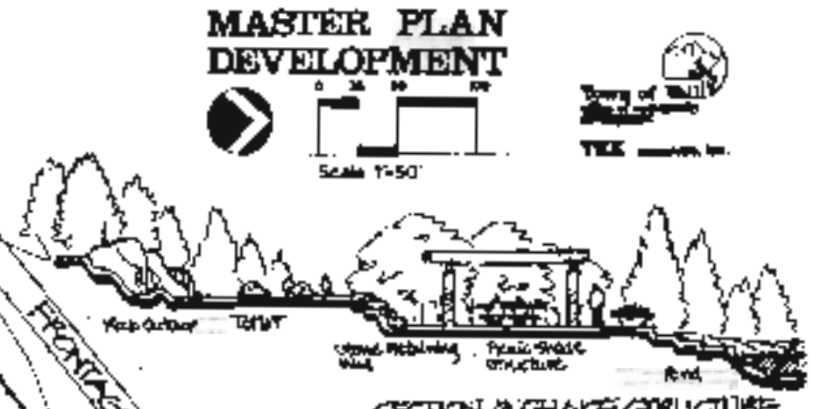
CONCEPT PLAN

DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



SECTION @ SHADE STRUCTURE

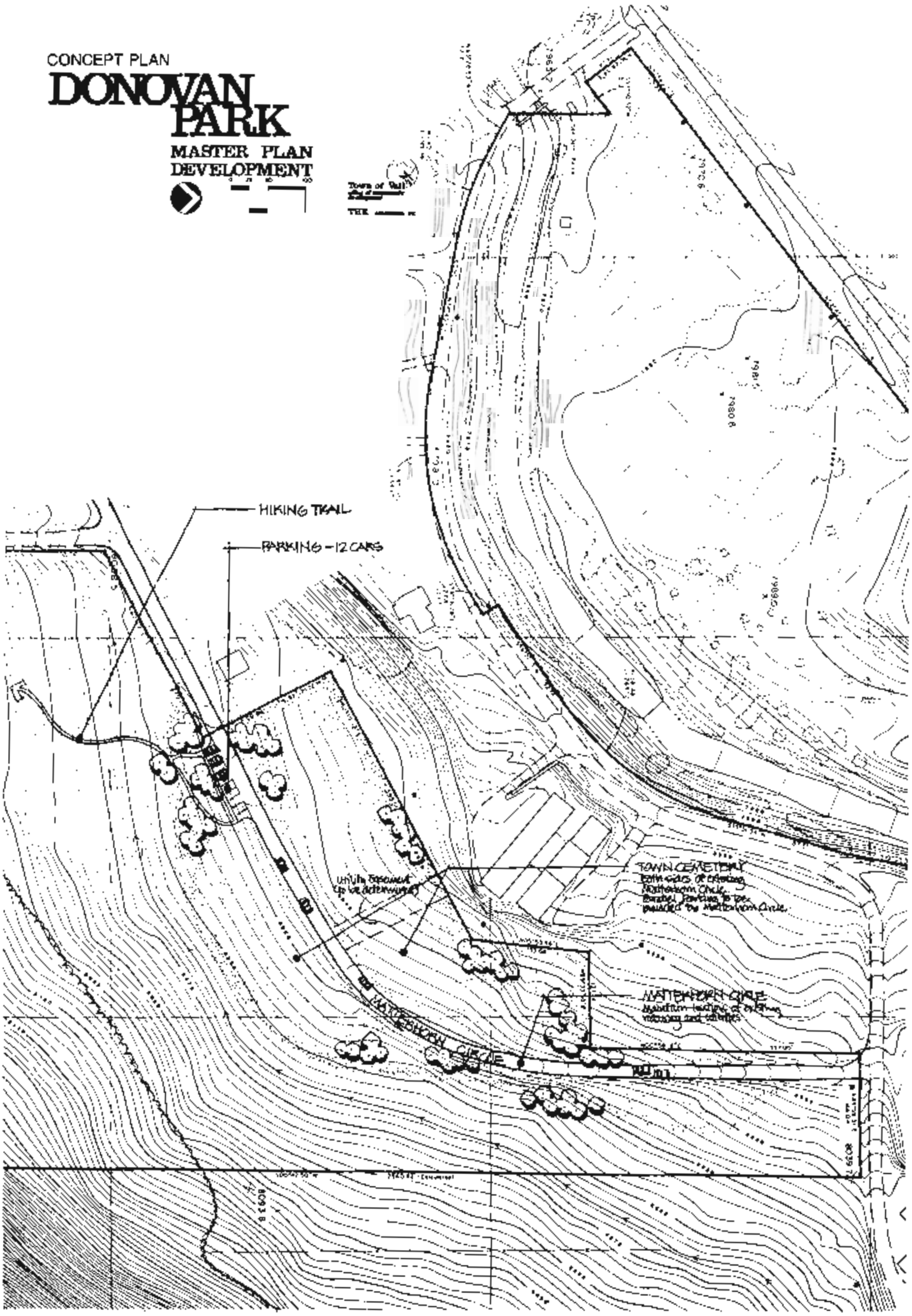
SUBAREA PLAN A

04.10.05

CONCEPT PLAN

DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



SUBAREA PLAN C

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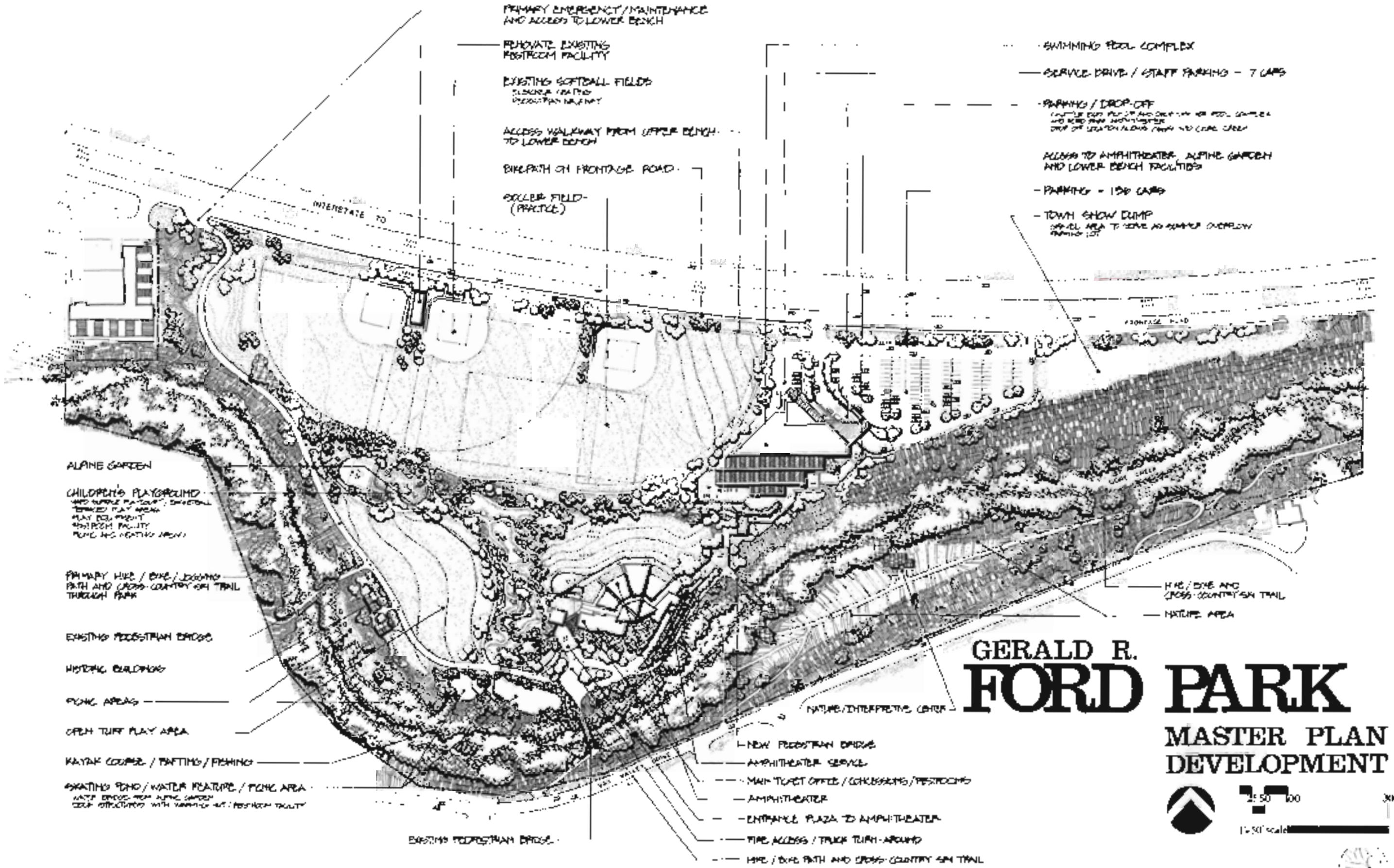

GERALD R. FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

1" = 50' scale

CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Town of Vail
office of community development

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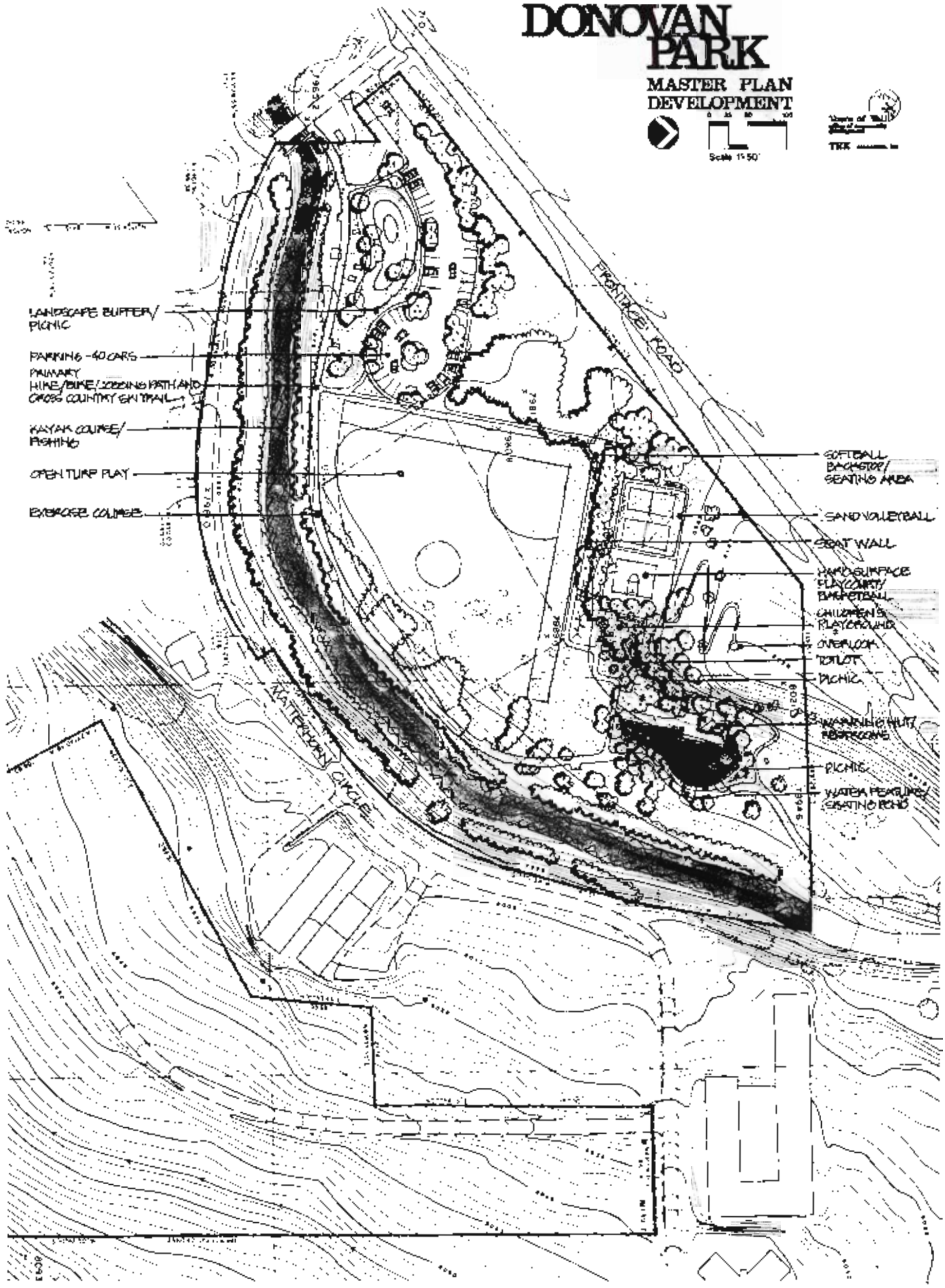
CONCEPT PLAN

DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



SUBAREA PLAN B

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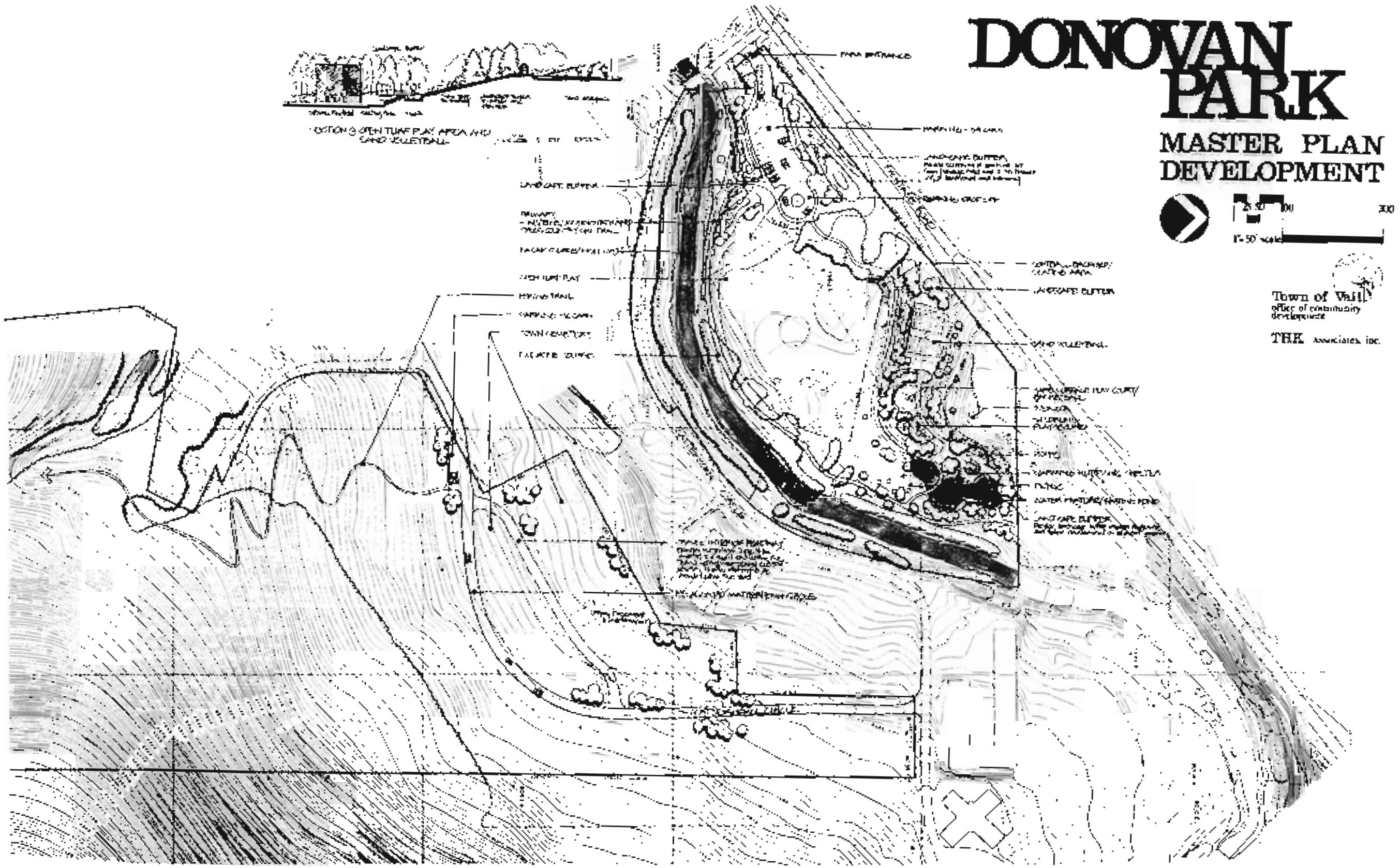
DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



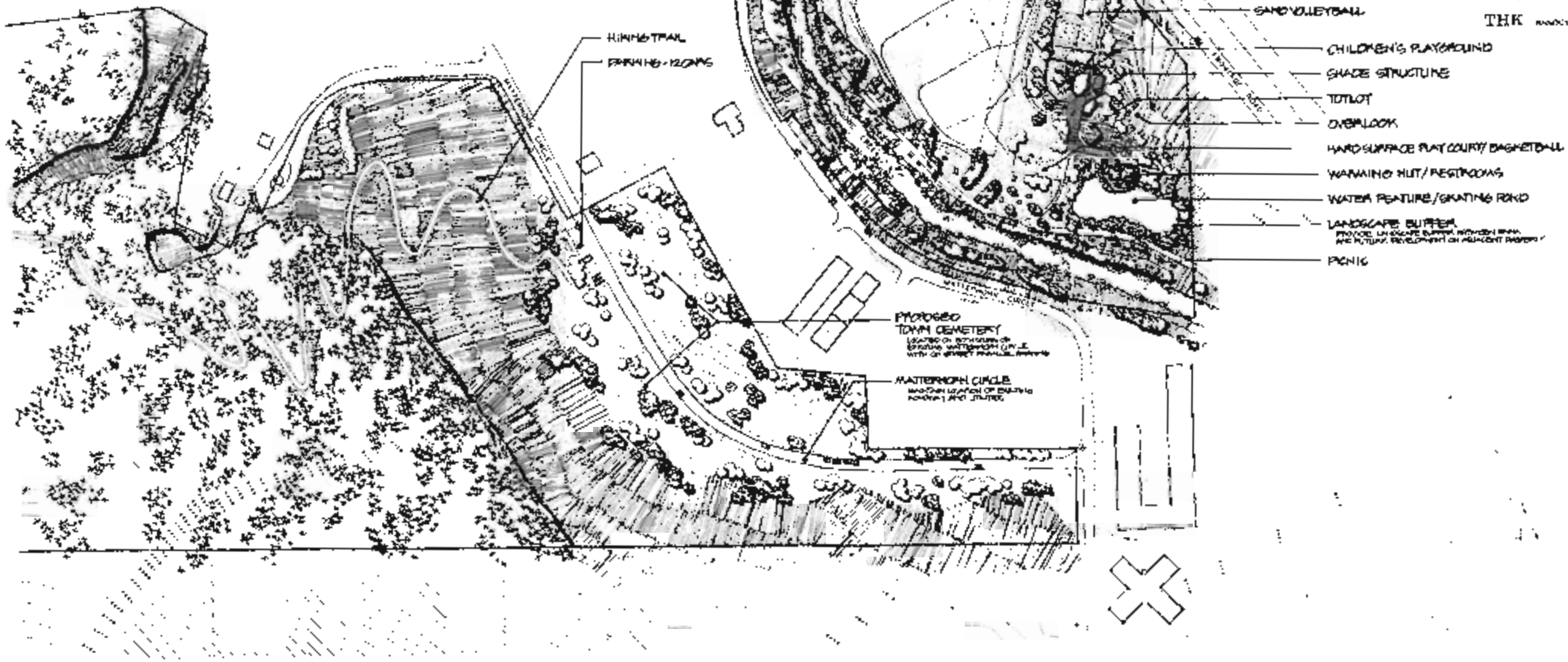
Town of Vail
office of community development

THK Associates, inc.

CONCEPTUAL PLAN

DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



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Plan Features

Numerous features of the Master Plans reflect an awareness of each site's natural resources and a desire to preserve and enhance as much of the natural habitat as possible. Native plantings and buffer areas have been retained around the edges of newly designed recreational facilities and pond developments, and existing plant material clearing was minimized. These actions reflect the intent to create parks that respect and enhance the natural quality of the land, while at the same time providing for the recreational needs of the resident community.

Certain park areas are particularly exciting and attractive by virtue of a unique interplay between the design and the existing physiographic conditions. The design attempts to identify these special feature areas and establish them as focal or destination points. They are distributed throughout each park site and are easily reached from access points by vehicle, pedestrian walks, bicycle paths, or nature trails. Each area offers a different type of recreational experience.

FORD PARK

1. Pool Complex/Entry Area

The Pool Complex and shuttle bus drop-off becomes the front door to the Park and serves as the collecting area for Park visitors arriving by bus or car. The distinctive architecture terraced into the slope will be an important focal element for visitor orientation within the Park. The Pool Complex will be one of the major recreational centers within the Town of Vail.

2. Access Plaza

The Access Plaza is the primary pedestrian link from the parking area to the amphitheater, alpine garden and lower bench facilities. The paved and ramped spaces cascade down the slope along the backside of the pool complex, affording beautiful views of the Park and Gore Creek.

3. Skating Pond/Water Feature Area

The aesthetic qualities of water enrich this setting for passive recreation and meditation. The bike path system allows bicycle and pedestrian circulation past the pond area which acts as an entry portal to the lower bench park area. The bike path bridge allows water to circulate from the upper pond located in the alpine garden area. A warming hut/restroom facility allows for year-round use as the pond is transformed into a winter playground for ice skating and informal hockey games. The pond area is separated by the warming hut and by elevation to allow an area for young children and beginning ice skaters.

4. Picnic Areas

Picnic areas are provided for those visitors who enjoy picnic outings and group cookouts. Picnic tables with grills are located along the creek and at the community shelter adjacent to the covered footbridge, where privacy and visual pleasures are predominant. In addition, picnic areas are also provided adjacent to the children's play area and the softball fields for those who wish to be close to the activities.

5. Historic Buildings and Wooden Structures

Several beautiful wooden structures currently exist on-site which are to be maintained or converted into community picnic shelters. In addition, this area has been designated as the new location for the placement of Historic Buildings and other structures which are to be preserved as part of the Town's awareness of Gore Valley history. An old schoolhouse and storage barn currently occupy sites on the lower bench. These structures are the beginning of this preservation effort.

6. Amphitheater Facility Area

The Amphitheater Facility offers a location for town-wide cultural events such as concerts, plays and various community presentations. Administered by the Vail Valley Foundation, a non-profit organization, the Amphitheater is to be constructed totally through private funding.

7. Alpine Garden Area

In association with the development of the Amphitheater Facility, an Alpine Garden area was set aside for development adjacent to the amphitheater and acting as a buffer between it and the active park areas. This area would be an attractive display of the unique plant communities and associations typical of alpine environments complete with rock outcrops and wetland areas. As with the Amphitheater, this feature would be administrated and implemented through the efforts of a private organization, the Friends of the Alpine Garden.

8. Children's Play Area and Open Turf Play Area

The Children's Play and Open Turf Play Areas complete the major recreational developments on the lower bench. Designed to provide interest and challenge for all ages, the Children's Play Area is comprised of a hard-court play surface, multi-level play area with various pieces of play apparatus, rock outcrops and plant material, and is constructed between the sloping terrain of the upper and lower bench. The Open Turf Play Area is placed upon the flat area of the lower bench adjacent to the Children's Play Area and is provided for informal field games, running, frizbees and kite flying.

9. Ballfield Areas

These existing facilities have been maintained as part of the Master Plan, and have been improved to provide greater use, safety and maintenance efficiency.

10. Vail Nature Centre Area

This area of attractive natural landscape is a strong contrast to the more developed areas of the Park. This area is to remain in a natural state, and thus, minimal exterior improvements are suggested.

11. Pathways and Pedestrian Bridge Crossings

Bicycle and pedestrian paths along with hiking and cross-country ski trails make up the system of non-motorized pathways within Ford Park. The pathways closely follow the Gore Creek natural corridor, and as a result offer some of the most beautiful scenery and viewsheds that the site has to offer. Pedestrian bridge crossings provide for easy access from adjacent residential and developed areas.

DONOVAN PARK

1. Open Turf Play Area

As an informal playfield, this area can be used for a multitude of recreational activities such as softball games, races and for group picnic entertainment. A backstop/seating area is provided along with an adjacent group picnic shelter.

2. Pathways and Pedestrian Bridge Crossing

Similar to Ford Park in design concept including access for the physically handicapped to all areas.

3. Picnic Areas

Picnic areas with tables and grills are provided along the creek and adjacent to play areas and the skating pond. Two large community shelters are provided for group picnics and related activities.

4. Skating Pond/Water Feature Area

Located in the northern most section of the Park, the Skating Pond/Water Feature Area is the final destination point along the pathway system before exiting the Park. Situated among stands of spruce and fir, the Pond area is the most secluded and sheltered area on the site, offering a respite from the nearby play areas and elevated roadways. The pond area includes a warming hut/restroom facility, plaza area, dockside edge, and natural plantings with boulder edge treatment.

5. Children's Play Area

A more expanded array of play activities than at Ford Park, the design provides dual sand volleyball courts, two large separated play areas, full court basket area, and a central connecting plaza space with a shaded seating area. The play areas connect directly with the skating pond, but are screened from the ballfield area and adjacent roadways.

6. Potential Town Cemetery

Potential site of a new Town cemetery of approximately 4.9 acres in the Upper Bench. This area will be one of many others which will be studied in the future to determine the best location for a Town cemetery. In addition to this study, a potential easement location will be studied by the Town Planning Staff to try and provide a connection between the upper and lower benches. The details and legal boundaries of the easement will be worked out with the adjacent landowners.

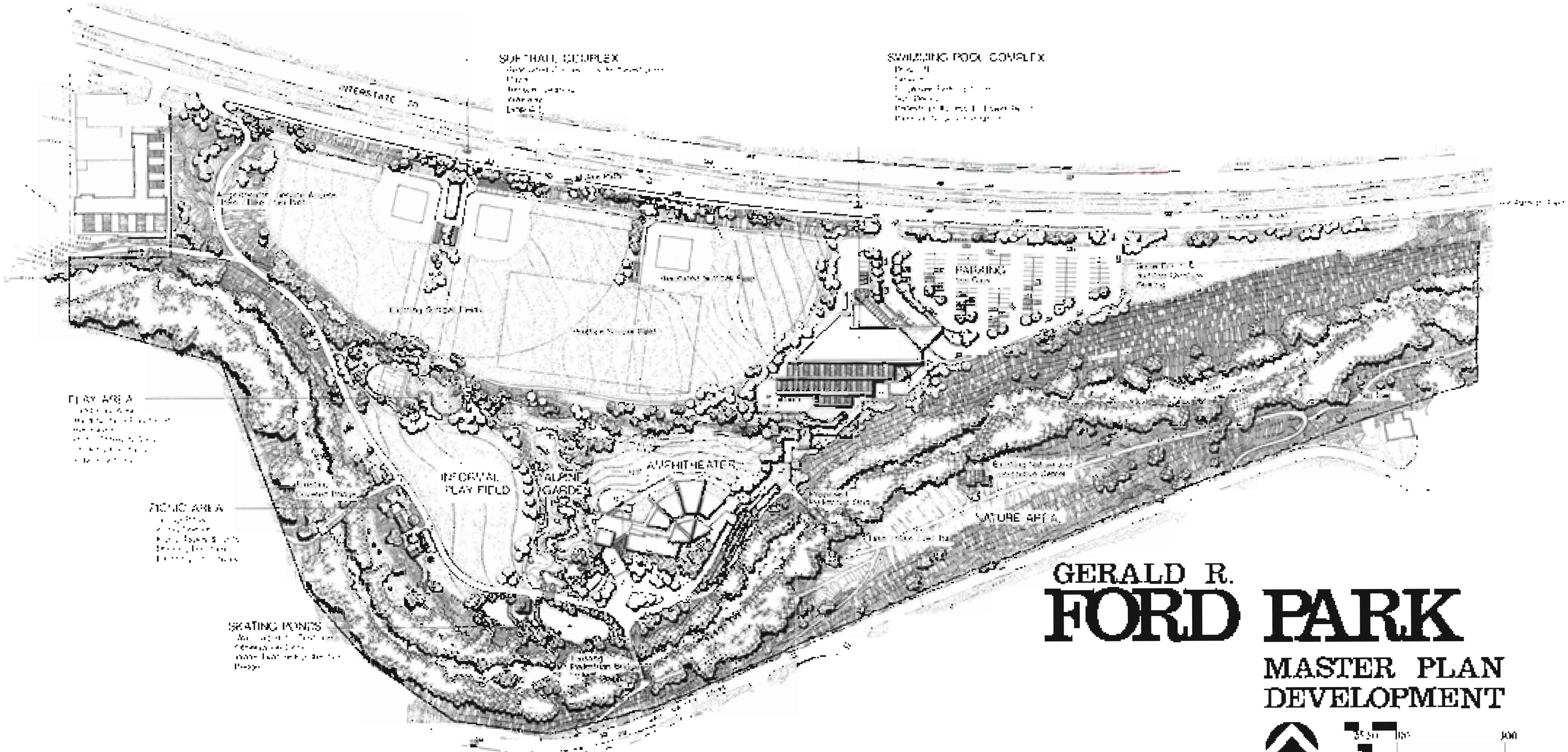
Master Plan Notations

1. Amphitheater, Ford Park: This element has become a major part of the Ford Park Master Plan and steps should should be taken to ensure that its construction is in total agreement and harmony with the Plan, including the selection of construction materials. Support facilities such as the service road/bike path and the parking area should be implemented as soon as possible so that the amphitheater can become a viable facility. In addition, final construction plans submitted by the architect should be thoroughly reviewed to ensure that final grades, locations, plantings and utilities are placed in association with other facilities shown on the Master Plan.

2. Alpine Garden, Ford Park: Since this project is to be implemented by an outside interest group, they should demonstrate the financial and technical ability to complete their project within a reasonable period of time. Also, they should be required to submit to the Town a final design in accordance with the Master Plan including, location/layout plan, grading plan, planting plan, irrigation plan and a construction phasing plan. It may also be reasonable to consider bonding or security to ensure the completion of the project and a garden maintenance plan.

3. Skating Pond/Water Feature, Ford and Donovan Parks: Further research in regard to water rights and other legal requirements should be conducted prior to construction of the ponds and use of water from Gore Creek.

4. **Historic Structures, Ford Park:** Prior to the inclusion or relocation of any structures of historical significance within the Valley, contact should be made with the Gore Valley Preservation Chapter of the Eagle County Historical Society, and coordination concerning such activities should be implemented as necessary.



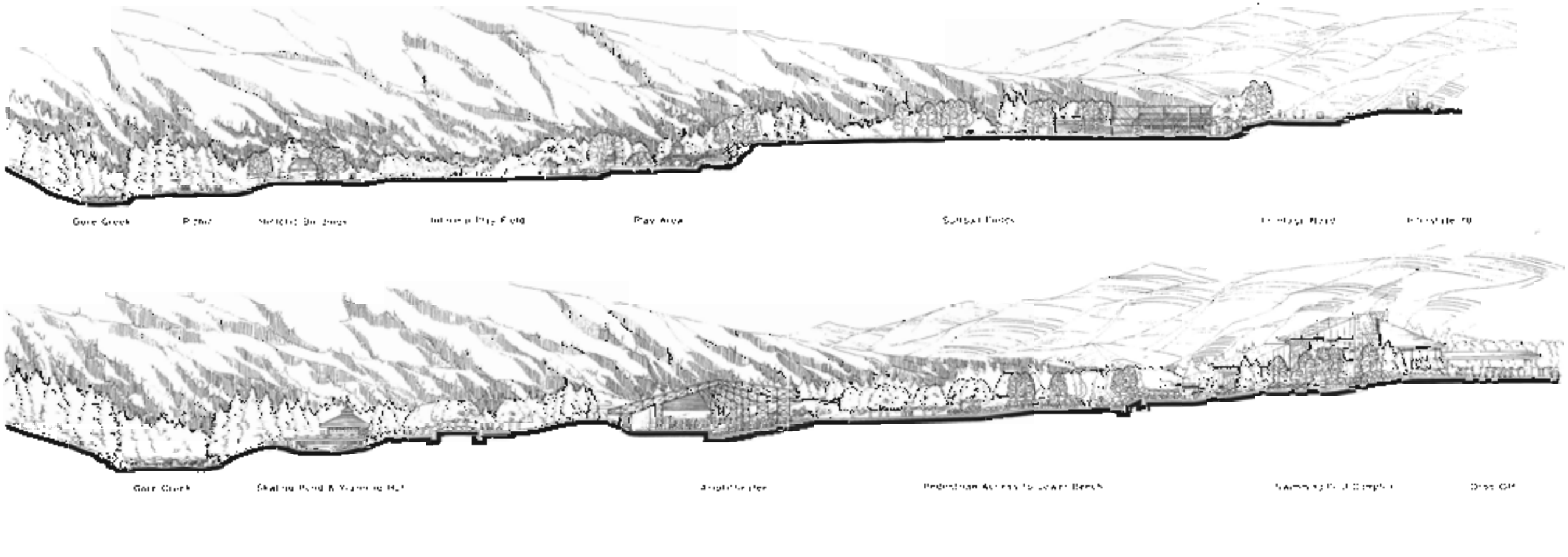
GERALD R. FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Town of Vail
office of community development

THK

MASTER PLAN



Skating Pond and
Yachting Hill Observation Deck

Illustrative Sketches

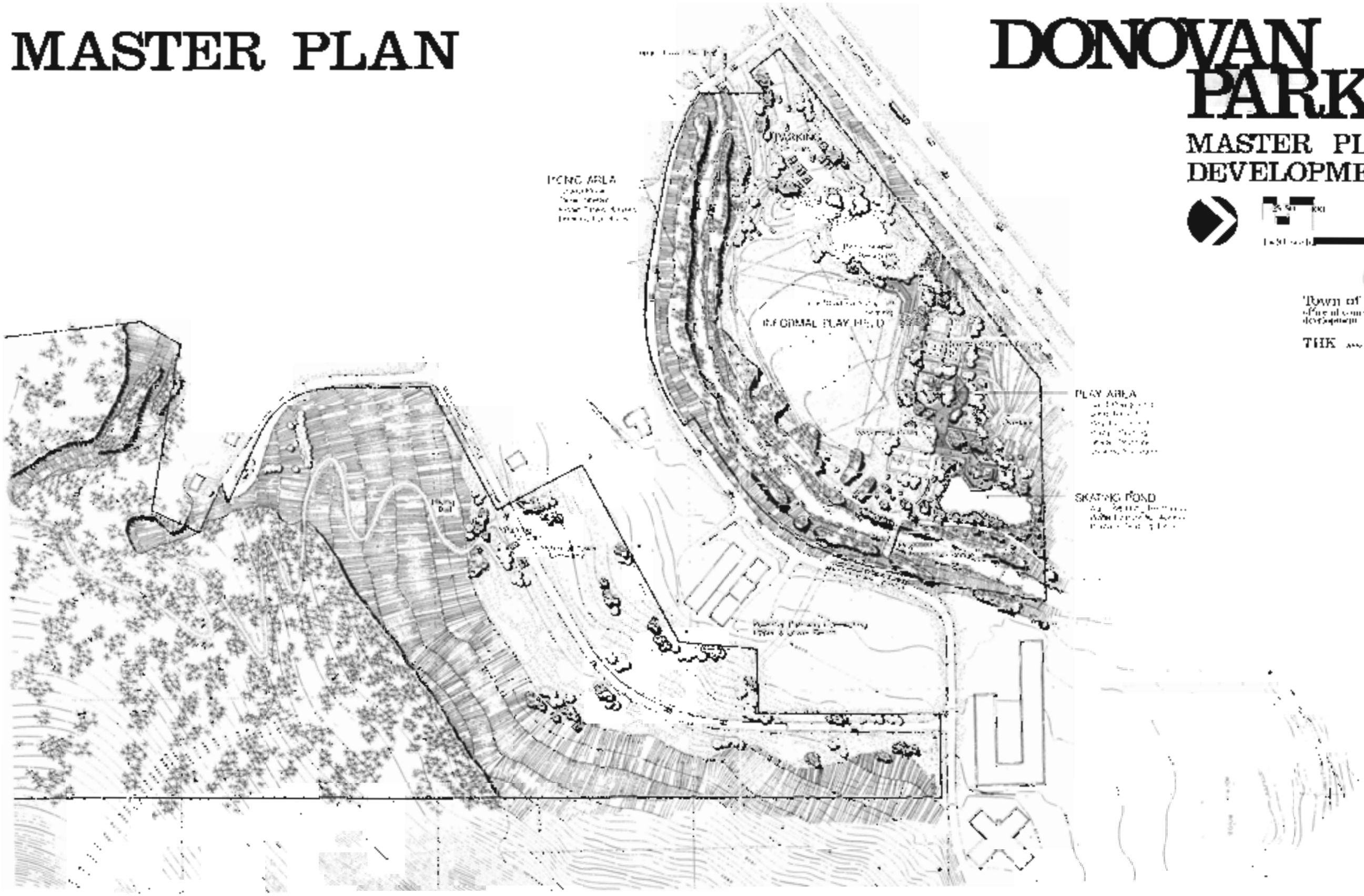
GERALD R. FORD PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Town of Vail
office of community development

THK

MASTER PLAN



DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

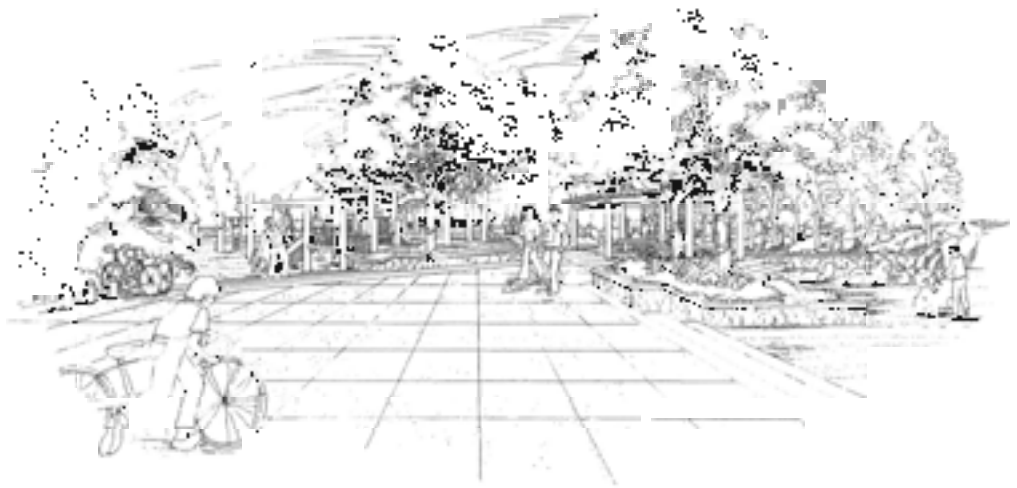
Town of Vail

THK

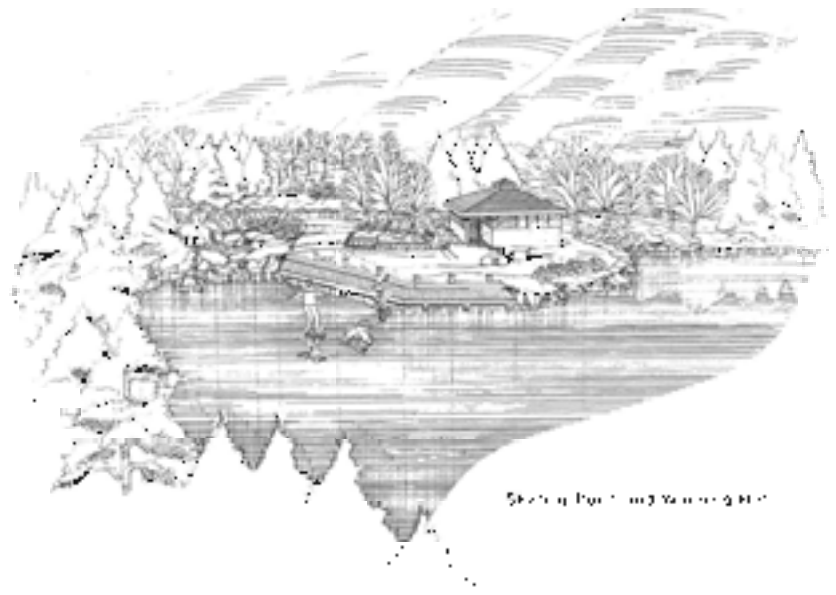
Illustrative Sketches

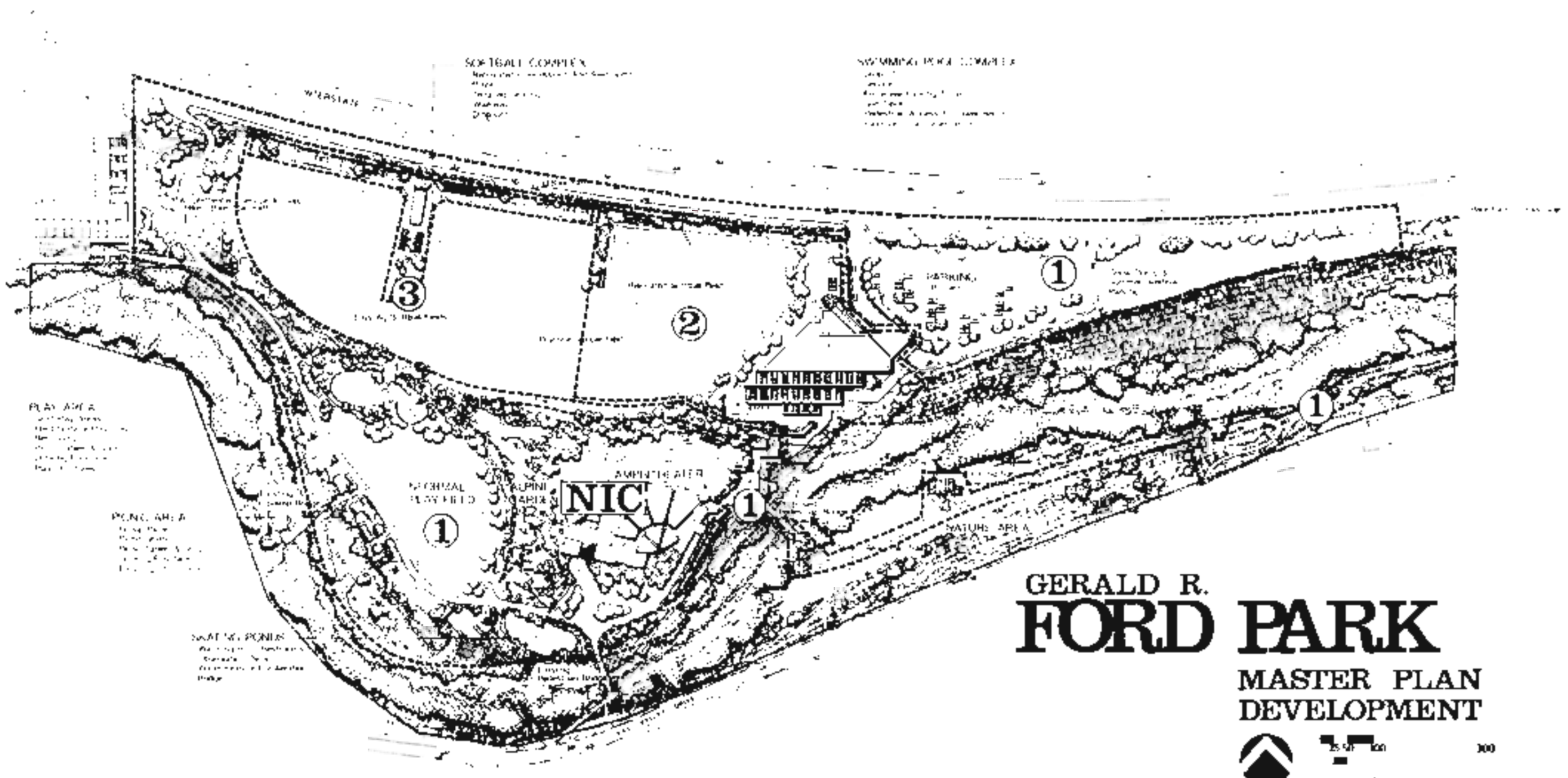
DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



Town of Vail
Village Community Development





GERALD R.
FORD PARK
MASTER PLAN
DEVELOPMENT

0 50 100 200

PHASING PLAN

Town of Vail
office of community development

THE

Costs and Phasing

FORD PARK

Phase One: Lower Bench Improvements/Parking Lot

A.	Mobilization/Demobilization	$ 30,000
B.	Construction Layout	6,000
C.	Demolition & Clearing	18,088
D.	General Site Improvements	387,285
E.	Parking Area	264,863
F.	Play Area	119,796
G.	Skating Pond	165,330
H.	New Pedestrian Bridge & Plaza	90,314
I.	Picnic Area	66,975
Subtotal		$1,148,651
Contingency 8%		91,892
TOTAL		**$1,240,543**

Phase Two: Pool Complex, West Ballfield

A.	Mobilization/Demobilization	$ 45,000
B.	Construction Layout	3,600
C.	Demolition & Clearing	18,170
D.	Ballfield Improvements	124,860
E.	Swimming Pool Complex	4,500,000
Subtotal		$4,691,630
Contingency 8%		375,330
TOTAL		**$5,066,960**

Phase Three: East Ballfield Improvements

A.	Mobilization/Demobilization	$ 6,000
B.	Construction Layout	1,200
C.	Ballfield Improvements	108,817
Subtotal		$ 116,017
Contingency 8%		9,281
TOTAL		**$ 125,298**

SUMMARY

Phase I	$1,240,543
Phase II	5,066,960
Phase III	125,298
GRAND TOTAL	**$6,432,801**

DONOVAN PARK

Phase One: Lower Bench Improvements

A.	Mobilization/Demobilization	$ 18,000
B.	Construction Layout	2,400
C.	General Site Improvements	131,077
D.	Parking Area	131,715
E.	Ballfield	114,015
F.	Play Area (playground, volleyball)	197,975
G.	Skating Pond	208,094
H.	Basketball Court	49,516
Subtotal		$ 852,792
Contingency 8%		68,223
TOTAL		**$ 921,015**

Phase Two: Pedestrian Bridge and Path to Lower Bench

A.	Mobilization/Demobilization	$ 3,250
B.	Construction Layout	600
C.	Pedestrian Bridge	41,000
D.	Grading & Gravel Path	7,718
Subtotal		$ 52,568
Contingency 8%		4,205
TOTAL		**$ 56,773**

Phase Three: Upper Bench Improvements

A.	Mobilization/Demobilization	$ 3,250
B.	Construction Layout	600
C.	Parking Area	24,437
D.	Native Seed Disturbed Areas	1,250
Subtotal		$ 29,537
Contingency 8%		2,362
TOTAL		**$ 31,899**

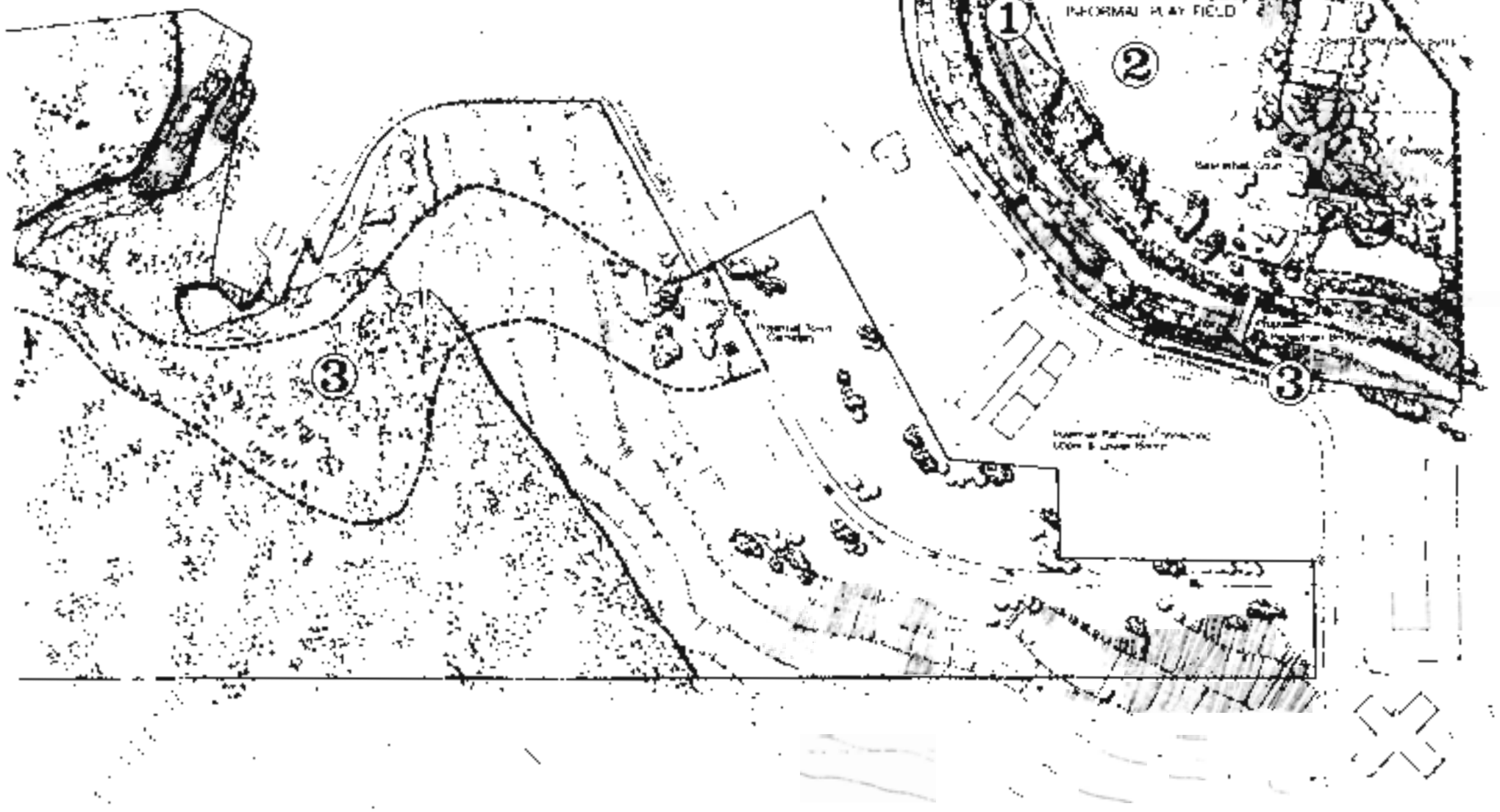
SUMMARY

Phase I	$ 921,015
Phase II	56,773
Phase III	31,899
GRAND TOTAL	**$1,009,687**

PHASING PLAN

DONOVAN PARK

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT



Town of Vail

THK

Park Development and Landscape Character

The planning of Ford and Donovan Parks has carefully considered the preservation and retention of the Gore Creek and its natural character, in contrast to the creation and maintenance of a totally manicured landscape. A careful blend of maintained active recreational areas and natural passive areas has been achieved to accommodate the diverse pleasures and interests of this mountain community.

Park visitors should notice that care has been taken to conserve natural areas, plant communities, slopes and creek edges. Where new construction of trails, buildings, roads and play facilities will disturb natural areas, the creative blending of grades, and the use of trees, shrubs and groundcover native to this area should be used to revegetate the disturbed areas. Dense planting buffers have been designed to insure privacy and protection within the park developments by screening adjacent public roadways and noncompatible land uses.

Planting buffers have also been used to protect and separate adjacent use areas within the parks where potential conflicts are present. Existing slopes and change in grade have been integrated into the master plan to enhance separations between activity areas, minimize the verticality of proposed structures, define spaces, and to provide new viewsheds into the park and surrounding mountains.

A sensitive development program responds to these qualities, seeking to reinforce the overall park character by careful planning and management of construction phases. During the implementation of the amphitheater and alpine garden elements, a monitoring procedure should be developed by the Town which will provide for some measure of control over the private groups responsible for the construction of these facilities. These programs are needed to ensure that all development within the parks is in accordance with the Master Plan and related guidelines.

Design Criteria

Considerations of conservation, maintenance, and park development led to the design criteria discussed in this section.

Site Preservation

The quality of the existing sites in regard to Gore Creek and existing plant communities is reinforced through the removal of creek debris, undesirable man-made elements, scrub undergrowth, diseased and damaged plant specimens. Extending these preservation programs into projected phase development helps to keep future maintenance costs low by preventing undesirable growth and park user practices. In addition, outside interest groups whose projects are included in the Master Plan should be required to maintain a site preservation program during their construction phase.

Revegetation

Natural areas that are cleared or disturbed during construction, and are not subsequently developed, are replanted to encourage plant associations that develop naturally under these specific site conditions.

Activity Transition

Screen plantings soften the edge between developed park areas, natural sectors, and conflicting adjacent land uses. Such plantings unify developed and natural areas as well as provide a protective buffer where the adjacent land uses conflict with recreational activities.

Definition of Activity Spaces

Spaces for different recreational activities are enclosed by land forms, structures or plantings. By defining these spaces and creating mass and contrast, visual landmarks are formed to assist visitors in movement on the site.

View

Plantings and landform manipulation direct views by framing interesting and attractive features such as distant mountain ranges, ponds, or the Gore Creek nature area. Visual screens of plant materials serve to close off undesired views to interstate, frontage roads or neighboring development.

Energy Conservation

Due to the unique wind and sun patterns within the Valley, open spaces, play areas, and buildings are oriented to take advantage of warm winter exposures and buffering from wind. Vegetation is implemented as an energy conservation measure, providing recreational spaces with a protective wind buffer and shade in the summer. Snow accumulation by wind drifts is directed through the use of wind channels formed by planting masses acting as a snowfence.

Accent

In areas of special interest or activity, and in pedestrian areas, plantings provide color, texture, form and scent to highlight and emphasize the special character of these places. Vertical architectural elements such as shade structures and play apparatus are colored to blend harmoniously with the surrounding landscape. Horizontal groundplane textures such as native shrubs, groundcovers, colored pavers, and smooth boulders are also used to compliment the environment. Major architectural structures such as the pool building complex and the amphitheater should be designed and accented to attract visitors without becoming a distracting visual element to the Valley.

Accessibility

Areas with difficult access routes have been improved through the addition of a well planned system of bike paths, bridge crossings and pedestrian trails. Parking areas have been sensitively planned to provide needed parking without impacting the natural or recreational use areas, and are visually screened. Vehicles have been prohibited from park areas except for periodic maintenance and service visits.

Separation/Integration

Landforms and massed plantings are used to separate conflicting recreational/cultural activities. Noise generating and active play areas are integrated together and placed away from passive or natural areas. Needed service facilities, such as restrooms, drinking fountains, etc., are located in or adjacent to activities with a high user demand.

Existing Character of the Site

Open meadows of native grasses and flowers, and prominent stands of evergreen forest are maintained in undeveloped areas of the parks. In the spirit of the Vail Nature Centre located in Ford Park, these natural areas of meadow, woodland and sloping terrain with exposed rock, provide for the wildlife and their habitats and should remain unchanged for all to enjoy.

Site Guidelines

Alternative building materials and construction techniques which would be used to achieve a park-like mountain theme environment were investigated.

The resulting vocabulary of designed elements should be considered a "family" of materials and details which are in harmony with the environment. During the construction phase, materials should be chosen and construction methods used which adhere to the following general guidelines:

Appropriateness

- Materials and detailing fit into the Park's environment and is both inviting and functional.

Compatibility

- Construction materials expressive of natural and native material, not contrasting.

Flexibility

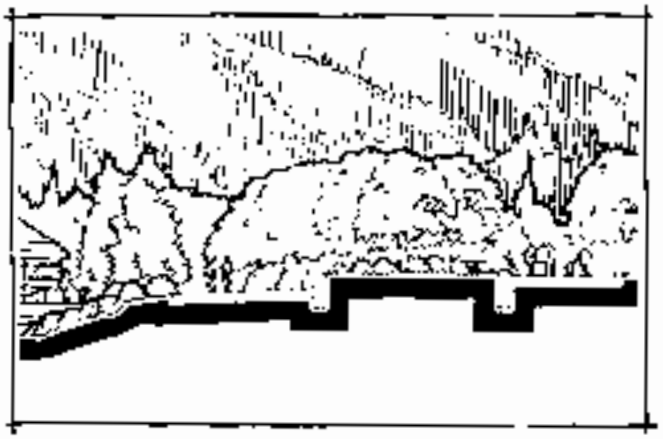
- Material and techniques able to adapt to future expansion needs and programs.

Continuity

- Common materials theme with interrelated forms and color.

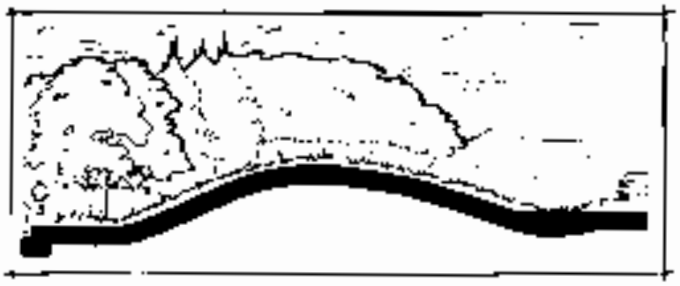
Maintenance

- Reasonable but realistic in cost with ease of accomplishment, and consideration of long-term maintenance expenditures.

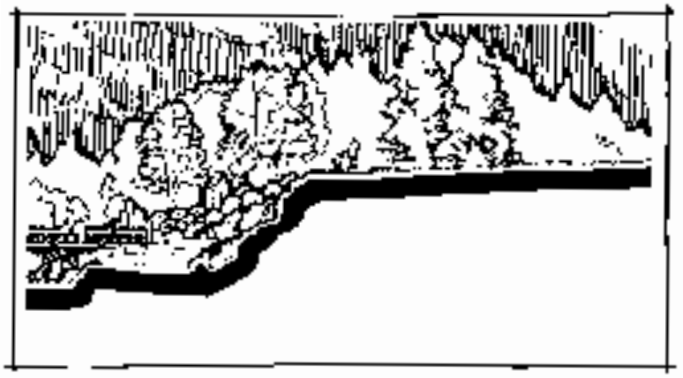


Pedestrian walks and bike paths are provided in the areas of developed facilities and circulation routes. Walks and bike paths are accessible to the physically handicapped and are constructed of concrete or asphalt. Destination points should be identified and highlighted through the use of a unified park signage system.

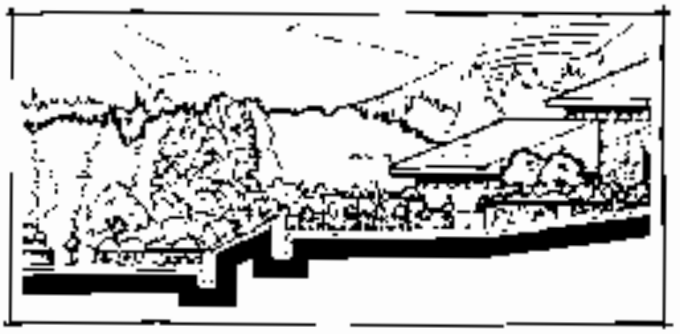
Cross-country ski trails and other pathways through natural areas shall be placed where little grade change is required and shall be constructed of compacted, inexpensive roadbase materials. Other surface materials which provide a hard surface, but appear natural should be considered.



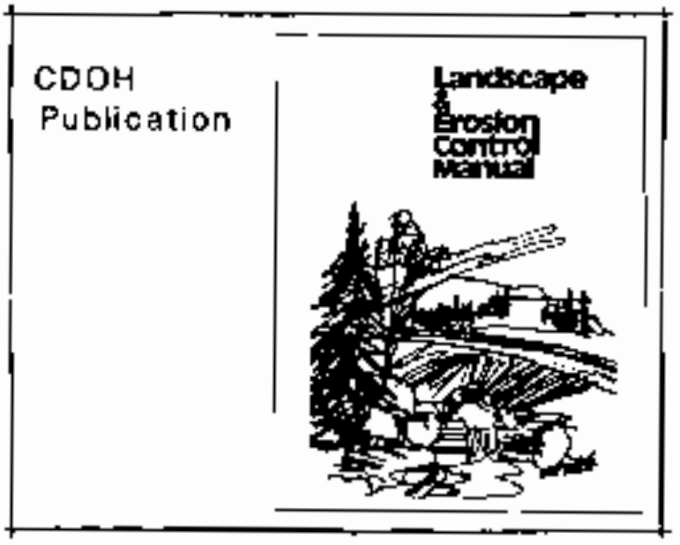
Landsape buffer plantings are provided along public perimeter roads and between parking areas to provide screening of noise and visual pollution.



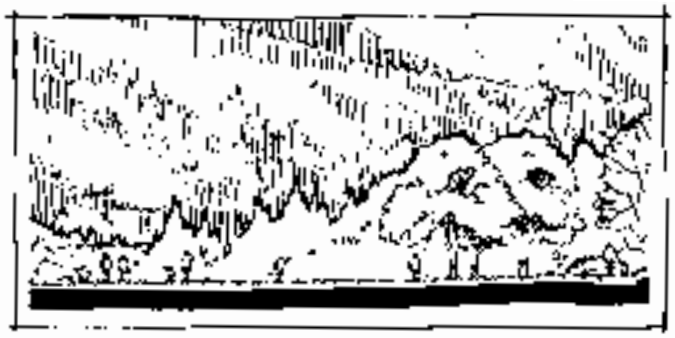
Collected native river rock and boulders are used widely in the Valley. The application shown here indicates exposed boulders for low retaining walls. Other uses are pond edge treatments, slope stabilization and play area accents.



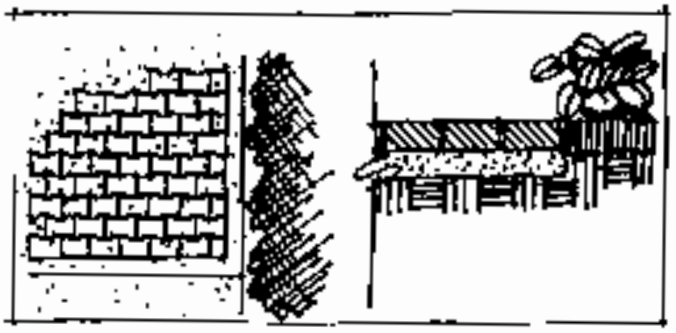
Washed river cobble may be used for architectural features such as exposed building walls and small retaining walls. The sandy-gray and brown color blend in with the natural environment.



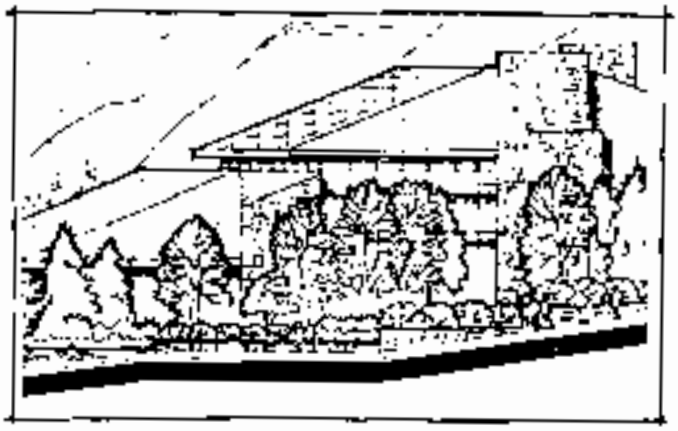
Temporary erosion control measures during construction, and permanent control measures after construction should be established to prevent sediment pollution of the Creek and to stabilize disturbed areas. Straw bales should be used for temporary control measures and jute netting should be used to permanently stabilize slopes.



Gently sloping lawns are desirable for picnic areas and open field play. Irrigated and manicured lawn areas can transition into natural areas through the use of native grasses and shrubs.

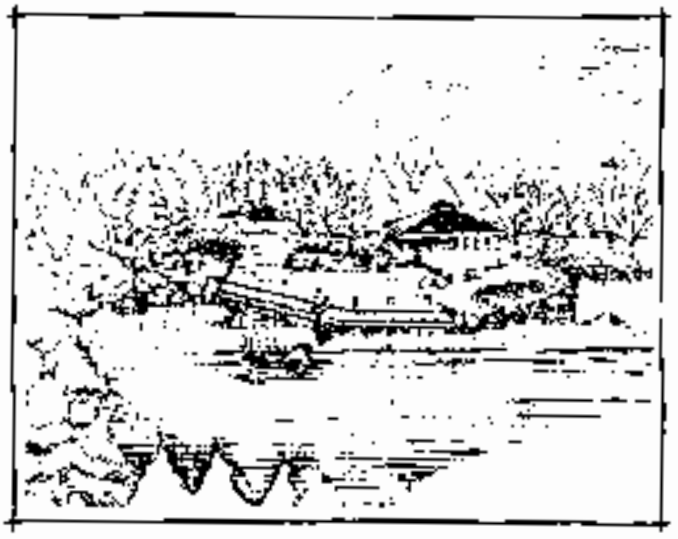


Special interlocking concrete pavers are used in several instances where it is appropriate to emphasize important features or pedestrian areas. The pavers dark grayish-purple color blends in well with wood, stone and plant materials.



Structures, shelters or other site buildings are designed in a low "profile" or are set into slope areas to reduce their vertical dominance upon the site. Construction materials should be harmonious with other matrials being used on the site.

Children's play areas are designed with challenge in mind. Multi-level play structures, tunnels and other climbing apparatus are designed to excite and encourage free expression. Native landscape materials shall be incorporated into the play areas to soften and blend them with the environment. Plant materials shall be provided for enclosure and summer shading.



Inviting skating pond areas have been designed to promote year-round use of the parks. In summer, the ponds would serve as focal elements and destination areas for relaxing and informal picnicing. In winter they would be used for daytime and nighttime family ice skating and informal hockey games. A warming hut/restroom is provided along with seating areas and access docks. Native plantings and rock would be used generously.

Land Management and Parks Maintenance

A land management and parks maintenance plan for the Parks needs to be developed and should reflect a need to conserve energy, Town resources, and have an awareness of the natural resources of the site. Because most of the soils on the sites are limited in their capacity to support turf grasses and other plant materials the most developable land areas require some sort of soil improvement following construction. The bulk of the areas designated for park development requires some clearing of vegetation, and removal of subsurface rock. Folowing clearing, a final evaluation of soil conditions can be made to determine the type and amount of remedial work necessary to prepare the soil for development and landscaping.

Successful land management includes enriching the soil in certain areas with inexpensive, readily available organic, nutrient rich humus in combination with nitrogen-fixing cover crops. These techniques improve the fertility and moisture holding capacity of the native gravelly soils so as to provide water for turf grasses during dry spells.

A parks maintenance program also needs to be developed and should reflect the type and frequency of maintenance tasks required by the park development. During the initial stages of phased construction, a detailed program of planned maintenance tasks should be developed based upon the type of facilities proposed. The seasonal sequence of on-going park care such as watering, mowing, aeration, mulching, weeding and fertilization should be charted out and followed to ensure that the park areas are properly maintained and ready for use.

This "maintenance calendar" should also cover a longer term program of nature area maintenance which would include the selective cutting of diseased or damaged trees and, the replanting with a different species or merely allowing more light in to allow competing trees to florish. Unfortunately, it is not in the purview of this study to prepare detailed maintenance guidelines. In addition, completion time schedules of construction should be required from all outside interest groups who will be constructing a project in the Park, including a maintenance manual on all new facilities or landscaped areas.

Summary

This Master Plan report illustrates a planning and design process which included:

- understanding the plant communities, soils, physiography, hydrology and climatic forces which act upon the site, and making planning and design decisions based on that understanding;

- involving the Town staff, steering committee, governing members, outside interest groups, and foremost, the public in the program development process and in expression of their concerns over development;

- the thorough investigation of design alternatives and concepts, so as to ensure the proper location of facilities to meet the needs of the Town of Vail without violating the desired environmental design criteria.

Gerald R. Ford Park and John F. Donovan Park represent recreational master planning values which respect the natural environment of the sites. Proper development and management provides in perpetuity for the recreational needs and enjoyment of citizens and visitors for generations to come.

Appendix

Credits

Project Steering Committee

Stan Berryman, Director - Department of Public Works and Transportation

Patrick Dodson, Director - Department of Recreation

Diana Donovan, Member - Planning and Environmental Commission

John Horan-Kates - Vail Valley Foundation

Joe Macy - Vail Associates

Kent Rose, Member - Vail Town Council, Mayor Pro Tem

Town of Vail — Department of Community Development

Peter Patten, Director
Kristan Pritz, Town Planner

THK Associates, Inc.

Michael Morelli, ASLA - Project Manager
Larry Mouri, ASLA - Project Designer
Janet O'Toole, ASLA - Project Designer
Leslie Freeman, APA - Project Planner

FORD PARK

Town Meeting #1 · January 17, 1985

Summary of Group Recreation Activities

Group 1

1. Finish amphitheater
2. Alpine garden
3. Passive quiet areas
4. Sledding hill
5. Aquatic Center, indoor-outdoor pool
6. Kayak course on creek
7. Softball fields (lighted)
8. Cover or camouflage existing utility boxes
9. Picnic area with facilities and parking
10. Pedestrian walkways
11. BMX course for teens

Group 2

1. Picnicing
2. Alpine garden
3. Cultural facility (amphitheater)
4. Park atmosphere
5. Bicycling
6. Pathways along river
7. Open green space, nature trails, etc.
8. Tennis, softball
9. Fishing

Nature Center

Group 3

1. Amphitheater
2. Softball fields
3. Alpine garden
4. Nature center
5. Fishing
6. Hiking
7. Art
8. Parking
9. Sledding
10. Nature trail
11. Picnic
12. Concessions
13. Shelter/warming hut

Tennis

Volleyball

Horseshoes

Group 4

1. Bike path
2. Amphitheater
3. Swimming pool
4. Picnic area by stream
5. Indoor athletic physical Education Center
6. Alpine garden
7. Lighted tennis courts
8. Kayak competition
9. Lighted softball fields
10. Restrooms

FORD PARK

Summary of Group Recreation Activities

Group 5

1. Picnic area with passive recreation
2. Alpine garden
3. Lighted softball fields
4. Open natural area
5. Bike and foot paths
6. Parking
7. Buffer at nature center reinforced
8. Stocked pond with wildlife
9. Swimming pool

   Recreation center

   Amphitheater location assumed

Group 6

1. Open space and fields
2. Playground
3. Alpine garden
4. Swimming pool (indoor/outdoor)
5. Softball fields
6. Parking
7. Picnic
8. Amphitheater location
9. Water feature (physical, ponds, stream)
10. Indoor running track (around pool)
11. Soccer

    Volleyball

    Lacrosse

Group 7

1. Nature center and natural preserve
2. Professionally designed Alpine Garden
3. Indoor swimming pool with running track
4. Amphitheater completed
5. Picnic areas
6. Softball areas
7. Parking problem solved
8. Fishing
9. More emphasis on Gore Creek
10. Preserve views (all directions)

    Restrooms

    Tennis courts maintained

    Golf driving range

    Bicycle paths

    Encourage joint use of fields

DONOVAN PARK

Town Meeting #1 · January 24, 1985

Summary of Group Recreation Activities

Group 1

1. Swimming pool/running (Aquatic center)
2. Picnic areas - near stream
3. Children's playground
4. Bike path
5. Hiking trails
6. Recreation Center/Gym, etc.
7. Athletic field, multi-purpose
8. Year-round par course
9. Adequate parking (possibly under-ground)
10. Open space for unstructured use
11. Fishing
12. More softball fields
13. Dirt bike course

Group 2

1. Aquatic center somewhere
2. Keep natural environment, limit building, extra tree planting and shrubbery for private pockets - upper bench
3. Extra playing field - multiple use like soccer
4. Indoor aquatic center and running track (somewhere in town not specifically here)
5. Upper - ski down trail, indoor ice-rink - lower
6. Upper bench - trails
7. Shuffle-board courts with benches, need facilities for elderly people
8. Object to asphalt/cement - affects snow/climate. Taking up green space.

   Multiple use parking lot - other than dump

Group 3

1. Don't move softball field
2. Biker, hiker, exercise trail
3. Aquatic center (swimming pool, indoor and outdoor)
4. Covered picnic area
5. Playground
6. Quiet area (close to creek)
7. Basketball court
8. Communal garden
9. Soccer field
10. Volleyball court

    Cross country ski trail

DONOVAN PARK

Summary of Group Recreation Activities

Group 4

1. Open Space
2. Playground
3. Fishing/Gold Medal Stream
4. Picnic Areas
5. Aquatic Center
6. Volleyball Courts
7. General Sports Field (softball, soccer, gym)
8. Pedestrian ways (trails, bike paths) and bridge connection between land
9. Cross-country ski facility

   Tennis facility

Group 5

1. Bike, cross country and jogging path
2. Swimming pool
3. Childrens alpine tot lot
4. Curling
5. No structures on upper bench
6. Alpine garden and climbing area
7. Alpine zoo
8. Arts and craft facilities
9. Kayak course
10. Picnic facilities

    Basketball courts, outdoor raquetball courts, tennis courts

DONOVAN PARK

Summary of Group Recreation Activities

Group 6

1. Indoor aquatic center and running track
2. Ski jump
3. Expand softball
4. Picnic areas (BBQ)
5. Trails (high bench)
6. Fishing
7. Luge run
8. Sports fields (lacrosse, soccer, rugby)
9. All purpose, indoor-outdoor, recreation center
   Childrens' facility, (playground), year-round parking

Group 7

1. Childrens' playground
2. Sledding
3. Swimming pool, community, 50 meter
4. Open sapce, green area, preserve area
5. Bike trails
6. Hiking trails
7. Softball
8. Cross country trails
9. Indoor running track
10. Fishing
11. Parking
12. Bocci Ball
    Clean area (fall line), volleyball, fishing, YMCA, YWCA, picnic, kayaking, drinking fountain

School Survey Summary • January 31, 1985

8 Years - Under

1. playground area (swing, ropes, climb, caves, etc.)
2. free play, kites, frisbee
3. outdoor iceskating, pond, fish ducks
   picnic area
4. swimming
5. soccer
6. sand area
   football
7. basketball
   sledding/ski
8. baseball
   rollerskate

13-9 years

1. playground area (swings, ropes, climb, caves, etc.)
2. free play, kites, frisbee
3. soccer
4. swim
5. picnic area
6. football
7. baseball
8. socialize, relax, lay around
9. space
10. bikes
11. basketball
    tennis
    volleyball
    trees
12. outdoor iceskating, pond, fish, ducks

18-14 years

1. socialize, relax, lay around
2. soccer
3. picnic area
4. free play, kites, frisbee
5. football
6. baseball
   volleyball
7. swim
8. outdoor iceskating, pond, fish, ducks

Respondent Summary (231 Surveys returned total responses 405)

1. playground area (swings, ropes, climb, caves, etc. (197)
2. freeplay, kites, frisbee (67)
3. soccer (53)
4. picnic area (49)
5. socialize, relax, lay around (41)
6. swim (36)
7. football (35)
8. baseball (22)
9. outdoor iceskating, pond, fish, ducks (19)
10. bikes (19)

(*The 10 highest priority activities were listed.)

Recreation Survey Summary • February 11, 1985

Question #1 - Where do you live?

East Vail	-	37 (39.2%)
West Vail	-	30 (31.8%)
Central Vail	-	27 (28.6%)
Outside Vail	-	11 (11.6%)
Outside Colorado	-	1 (1.06%)

Question #2 - How old are you?

18 years	-	1 (1.06%)
19-30	-	32 (33.9%)
31-45	-	48 (50.8%)
46-64	-	23 (24.3%)
65-over	-	2 (2.1%)

Question #3 - Are you male/female?

Male	-	62 (65.7%)
Female	-	44 (46.6%)

Question #4 - Are you adult member family/single?

Adult member of family	-	71 (75.2%)
Single Individual	-	35 (37.1%)

Question #5 - Are there children in the household?

Yes - 46 (48.7%)

Question #6 - What are the ages of children in your household?*

Under 6 years of age	-	26 (27.5%)
12 through 18 years of age	-	27 (28.6%)

*Note: Printed in error on questionaire, ages 7-11 were omitted.

Question #8 - Which of the following facilities do you feel are needed for the children in your area? (Check more than one if appropriate.)

1. Equipped playgrounds for younger children - 48 (50.8%)
2. Open fields and parks for unsupervised play - 25 (26.5%)
3. More and better facilities for organized sports (ie. pools, tennis courts, ballfields, ice-rinks,etc.) - 24 (25.4%)
4. Natural areas for exploring and nature studies - 17 (18.0%)
5. Trails (hiking, biking, riding) - 17 (18.0%)
6. A recreation center - 17 (18.0%)
7. Supervised sports instruction and recreation programs - 16 (16.9%)
8. Areas for and instruction for crafts and skills - 11 (11.6%)

Question #13 - What recreational activities do you participate in now? (Check more than one if applicable.)

1.	alpine skiing	- 78 (82.6%)
2.	bicycling	- 75 (79.5%)
3.	cross country skiing	- 69 (73.1%)
4.	picnicking	- 62 (65.7%)
5.	camping	- 58 (61.4%)
6.	swimming	- 56 (59.3%)
7.	physical fitness programs	- 56 (59.3%)
8.	jogging/running	- 54 (57.2%)
9.	attending spectator events	- 44 (46.6%)
10.	Golf	- 39 (41.3%)
11.	fishing	- 38 (40.2%)
12.	ice skating	- 33 (34.9%)
13.	racquetball	- 28 (29.6%)
14.	sledding/tubing	- 20 (21.2%)
15.	kayaking/rafting	- 20 (21.2%)
16.	boating	- 18 (19.0%)
17.	arts, crafts, hobbies	- 18 (19.0%)
18.	horseback riding	- 18 (19.0%)
19.	softball/baseball	- 17 (18.0%)
20.	volleyball/badminton	- 17 (18.0%)
21.	water skiing	- 15 (15.9%)
22.	soccer	- 13 (13.7%)
23.	archery	- 10 (10.6%)
24.	hockey	- 9 (9.5%)
25.	basketball	- 8 (8.4%)
26.	pitching horseshoes	- 8 (8.4%)
27.	bowling	- 8 (8.4%)
28.	team sports	- 8 (8.4%)

Question #14 - What activities would you like to see in Ford Park? (Check more than one if appropriate.)

1.	swimming pool	- 60 (63.6%)
2.	bicycle trail	- 49 (51.9%)
3.	picnic areas	- 49 (51.9%)
4.	running/jogging trails	- 48 (50.8%)
5.	cross-country ski trail	- 42 (44.5%)

5.	Running/exercise course	- 42 (44.5%)
7.	playground areas	- 40 (42.4%)
8.	open turfed areas for informal play	- 39 (41.3%)
9.	alpine garden	- 34 (36.0%)
10.	recreation center	- 34 (36.0%)
11.	more lighted facilities for night play	- 28 (29.6%)
12.	ice-rink (outside)	- 26 (27.5%)
13.	tennis courts	- 23 (24.3%)
14.	fishing areas	- 22 (23.3%)
15.	sledding area	- 21 (22.2%)
16.	alpine slide	- 22 (22.2%)
17.	softball/baeball fields	- 21 (22.2%)
18.	soccer field	- 20 (21.2%)
19.	volleyball/badminton areas	- 16 (16.9%)
20.	basketball courts (outside)	- 15 (15.9%)
21.	convention center	- 11 (11.6%)
22.	kayaking course	- 10 (10.6%)
23.	livery stables/equestrian trials	- 10 (10.6%)
24.	archery range	- 5 (5.3%)
25.	golf course	- 4 (4.2%)

Question #16 - What activities would you like to see in Donovan Park? (Check more than one item if appropriate.)

1.	swimming pool	- 48 (50.8%)
2.	bicycle trail	- 47 (49.8%)
3.	picnic areas	- 44 (46.6%)
4.	play ground areas	- 40 (42.4%)
5.	running/jogging trails	- 40 (42.4%)
6.	running/exercise course	- 39 (41.3%)
7.	open turfed areas for informal play	- 39 (41.3%)
8.	Cross-country ski trails	- 32 (33.9%)
9.	sledding area	- 28 (29.6%)
10.	recreation center	- 28 (29.6%)
11.	tennis courts	- 25 (26.5%)
12.	volleyball/badminton areas	- 22 (23.3%)
13.	basketball courts (outside)	- 20 (21.2%)
14.	soccer field	- 16 (16.9%)
15.	softball/baseball fields	- 16 (16.9%)
16.	fishing areas	- 16 (16.9%)
17.	alpine garden	- 16 (16.9%)
18.	ice-rink (outside)	- 15 (15.9%)
19.	alpine slide	- 13 (13.7%)
20.	more lighted facilities for night play	- 13 (13.7%)
21.	archery range	- 13 (13.7%)
22.	kayaking course	- 11 (11.6%)
23.	livery stables/equestrian trails	- 7 (7.4%)
24.	golf range	- 2 (2.1%)
25.	convention center	- 2 (2.1%)

Question #19 - In general, how do you feel about the range of recreational opportunities found in Vail? (Sports, open areas, picnicking, scenic areas, etc.) check one.

Excellent, many interesting and easy to use activities. - 22 (23.3%)

Good, but some important activities and facilities are lacking. - 69 (73.1%)

Fair, probably what we can expect for a town of our size. - 6 (6.3%)

Poor and inadequate. - 9 (9.5%)

Question #20 - Are you aware of the programs and services of the Vail Parks and Recreation Department? (check yes or no)

Organized athletic programs (hockey, Soccer, etc.)	Yes 90.0%	No 10.0%
Nature center	Yes 91.0%	No 9.0%
Equipment rental	Yes 70.0%	No 30.0%
Youth Center	Yes 87.0%	No 13.0%
Putpourri (day care center)	Yes 73.0%	No 27.0%

Question #22 - In providing recreation and open space, which of the following items should be given the highest priority by the town? (Check more than one item if appropriate.)

1. Landscaping and beautification of the town's streets and important open space features. - 49 (51.9%)

2. Preservation and beautification of the town's important natural drainage ways (Gore Creek, Booth, Creek, Bighorn Creek, etc.) - 60 (63.6%)

3. A few centrally located parks and recreation areas for use of the entire community. - 54 (57.2%)

4. Acquisition of strategically located open land to buffer urban development. - 48 (50.8%)

5. Preservation of existing natural areas and important land forms. - 34 (36.0%)

6. Neighborhood playground and picnic areas convenient to most residential areas. - 42 (44.5%)

7. A few centrally located parks and recreation areas particularly attractive to visiting tourists. - 29 (30.7%)

DONOVAN PARK SITE PROGRAM SUITABILITY MATRIX

MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

THK Associates, Inc.
40 Inverness Drive East
Englewood, Colorado
80112 (303) 790-2435

SITE PROGRAM ITEM	PHYSICAL CONDITION: Adjacent Land-use	Utilities	Slope(0–15%)	Slope (15%–over)	Hydrology	Floodplain(Gore Creek)	Geology/Soils	Vegetation	Wildlife	Views(on-site)	Views(off-site)	Noise(internal)	Noise(external)	Vehicular Access	Pedestrian Access	Available Site Acerage	Numerical Weight
1. Bicycle Trail	■	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	◪	■	■	■	■	N/A	■	■	19
2. Picnic Areas	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	◪	■	□	■	□	25
3. Hiking/Jogging Trails	■	■	■	◪	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	N/A	■	■	17
4. X-Country Ski Trail	■	■	■	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	N/A	■	■	16
5. Childrens Playground	◪	■	■	◪	◪	□	■	◪	□	■	■	■	□	□	■	□	30
6. Exercise Course	■	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	◪	■	■	◪	□	N/A	■	◪	23
7. Open Turfed Play Areas	■	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	◪	◪	■	□	26
8. Volleyball	■	■	◪	□	◪	■	■	◪	◪	■	■	□	■	◪	■	□	27
9. Fishing	■	N/A	■	□	N/A	N/A	N/A	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	18
10. Kayaking/Rafting	■	N/A	■	□	N/A	N/A	N/A	■	■	■	■	◪	■	◪	■	■	16
11. Sledding/Tubing	■	N/A	■	■	■	■	■	◪	◪	■	■	◪	■	◪	■	■	19
12. Archery Range	□	N/A	■	◪	■	■	■	◪	□	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	◪	26
13. Ice Rink (outdoor pond)	■	□	◪	□	■	■	◪	■	■	■	■	■	□	◪	■	◪	26
14. Restroom Facilities	◪	□	◪	□	□	□	◪	◪	□	◪	■	■	■	◪	■	◪	35
15. Parking	◪	■	■	□	◪	□	◪	□	□	□	□	◪	■	■	◪	□	35
16. Town Cemetery	■	■	■	□	□	□	◪	■	■	■	■	■	◪	■	■	■	24

SUITABILITY CRITERIA

- ■ 1. High
- ◪ 2. Moderate
- □ 3. Low
- N/A

Suitability composite based upon numerical weight

HIGH	MOD.	LOW
15 — 26	37 — 48	

Suitability Matrix information was developed from the interpretation of the existing Site Analysis Physical Conditions, matched against known minimum site requirements or standards of the listed program items.

FORD PARK
MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

SITE PROGRAM SUITABILITY MATRIX

THK Associates, Inc.
40 Inverness Drive East
Englewood Colorado
80112 (303) 792-0425

SITE PROGRAM ITEM / PHYSICAL CONDITION	Adjacent Land-use	Utilities	Slope(0-15%)	Slope (15%-over)	Hydrology	Floodplain(Gore Creek)	Geology/Soils	Vegetation	Wildlife	Views (on-site)	Views(off-site)	Noise (internal)	Noise (external)	Vehicular Access	Pedestrian Access	Availiable Site Acerage	Numerical Weight
1. Bicycle Trail	■	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	◪	■	■	■	■	N/A	■	■	19
2. Picnic Area	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	◪	■	□	■	◪	24
3. Hiking/Jogging Trail	■	■	■	◪	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	N/A	■	■	17
4. Childrens Playground	◪	■	■	◪	◪	□	■	◪	□	■	■	■	□	□	■	◪	29
5. Swimming Pool	◪	■	◪	□	◪	□	◪	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	□	34
6. X-Country Ski Trail	■	■	■	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	N/A	■	■	16
7. Open Turfed Play Areas	■	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	◪	◪	■	□	26
8. Softball Fields	□	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	29
9. Soccer Field(practice)	□	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	◪	■	■	□	29
10. Exercise Course	■	■	■	□	◪	■	■	■	◪	■	■	◪	□	N/A	■	◪	23
11. Nature Center	◪	◪	■	◪	■	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	◪	◪	■	■	22
12. Alpine Garden	◪	◪	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	◪	■	□	25
13. Amphitheater	□	■	■	◪	□	■	■	□	□	□	◪	◪	□	◪	■	◪	33
14. Fishing	■	N/A	■	□	N/A	N/A	N/A	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	18
15. Kayaking/Rafting	■	N/A	■	□	N/A	N/A	N/A	■	■	■	■	◪	■	◪	■	■	16
16. Historic Buildings	■	■	■	□	□	◪	■	■	◪	■	■	■	■	◪	■	◪	25
17. Sledding/Tubing	■	N/A	■	■	■	■	■	◪	◪	■	■	◪	■	◪	■	■	19
18. Restroom Facilities	◪	■	◪	□	□	□	◪	◪	□	◪	□	■	■	◪	■	■	32
19. Parking Drop-off	□	■	■	□	◪	□	◪	□	□	□	□	◪	■	■	◪	□	36

SUITABILITY CRITERIA

- ■ 1. High
- ◪ 2. Moderate
- □ 3. Low
- N/A

Suitability composite based upon numerical weight

HIGH	MOD.	LOW
15 — 26	26 — 37	37 — 48

Suitability Matrix information was developed from the interpretation of the existing Site Analysis Physical Conditions, matched against known minimum site requirements or standards of the listed program items.

FORD PARK MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT REQUESTED BY VAIL ALPINE GARDEN FOUNDATION

7a. Alpine Garden Education Facility Area

The environmental education building of the Alpine Garden (since 1988 called Betty Ford Alpine Gardens) provides a community facility devoted to fostering understanding of Vail's fragile high altitude environment, the native plants it supports, and man's relationship to them. It also serves to orient visitors to Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. Designed to be passive solar and energy conserving, the building is earth-sheltered and constructed of natural rock and timbers. It lies underneath the fourth phase of the Gardens, the Alpine Rock Garden, and is located adjacent to the existing Gardens on the north side. As with the first three phases of Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, the education facility will be built and administered by a private, nonprofit organization, the Vail Alpine Garden Foundation, for public use.