

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Frequently Used Abbreviations

**EIS** – Environmental Impact Statement

**CAC** – Community Advisory Council

**POC** – Project Oversight Committee

**EJ** – Environmental Justice

**FEIS** – Final Environmental Impact Statement

**ROD** – Record of Decision

Conceptual mitigation identified in this DRAFT Environmental Justice (EJ) Community Mitigation Plan will be finalized as the project progresses. Additional details and new components may be added through coordination with the City of North Charleston, the Community Advisory Council (CAC) and/or Project Oversight Committee (POC), residents, and other local entities. It is important that the community voices their opinions on this draft plan as this input will be utilized in the decision-making process for the FINAL Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan that will be part of the Final Environmental Impact Statement which is schedule to be completed in December 2021.

## 2.0 FOCUSED OUTREACH

### 2.1 COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

SCDOT will continue to support the Community Advisory Council (CAC), which was established in September 2019. The CAC consists of residents and property-owners from the impacted Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. The CAC is partnering with SCDOT in the development of this DRAFT EJ Community Mitigation Plan by:



- sharing individual knowledge and perspectives with the project team;
- providing input on project-related impacts and proposed mitigation;
- serving as a voice for the EJ neighborhood residents; and,
- distributing project-related information.

SCDOT will continue to support the CAC, through the approval of the FEIS/ROD, by facilitating their regularly scheduled monthly meetings, providing technical assistance, and providing administrative support as needed.

## 2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL TRAINING

SCDOT will provide support to the CAC as they transition to a Project Oversight Committee (POC). This training will also be made available to residents of the impacted EJ communities who are interested in joining the POC, as well as other groups looking to initiate community advocacy.

## 2.3 COMMUNITY OFFICE

SCDOT will maintain a Community Office throughout the project development, final design, and right-of-way phases of the project. The Community Office will continue to be staffed with a full-time Office Manager, Community Liaisons/Outreach Specialists, and part-time Right-of-Way Specialists, who will be available to provide community residents with real-time project and property acquisition information. The Community Office will also be available to serve as meeting space for the CAC and the POC. The Community Office will remain in operation until the completion of the Right-of-Way Acquisition Phase.



# 3.0 RESIDENTIAL DISPLACEMENTS

## 3.1 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SCDOT is partnering with the South Carolina State Housing and Finance and Development Authority to create one hundred (100) affordable multi-family rental housing units within the vicinity of the impacted



EJ communities. Displaced families that qualify for the affordable units will receive priority placement in new units.

Additionally, SCDOT is conducting early acquisition of vacant lots within and in the vicinity of the impacted EJ communities in order to provide affordable single-family or multi-family owner occupied housing options for families displaced by the I-526 LCC-West project. These units would be available for both displaced homeowners and those displaced tenants that desire to move into homeownership as a part of the relocation process. SCDOT

is investigating provisions and partnerships that will enable the replacement housing to remain affordable in the future.

## 3.2 FINANCIAL LITERACY AND FIRST-TIME HOME BUYER COUNSELING

SCDOT will develop partnerships with local organizations to provide financial literacy and first-time home buyer counseling to displaced residents. This counseling could assist them in securing residential loans and transitioning from being renters to homeowners. The counseling will be implemented prior to the completion of the FEIS/ROD.

## 4.0 RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

### 4.1 FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

SCDOT will fund the construction of replacement recreational facilities and associated infrastructures to lessen project impacts and satisfy Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) requirements.

SCDOT will acquire parcels located within the affected neighborhoods and provide funding to the City of North Charleston, who will oversee construction of one large, centrally located modern community center complex and two pocket parks within the impacted EJ neighborhoods. Draft concepts of the potential replacement facilities are included at the end of this handout. Final details of the amenities to be included in the replacement facilities will be included in the FEIS/ROD. Construction of the modern community center and pocket parks will be completed prior to the start of construction of the I-526 LCC-WEST improvements.



### 4.2 PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

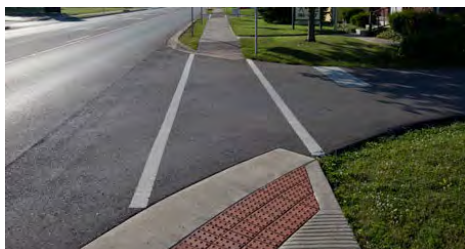
Prior to the approval of the FEIS/ROD, SCDOT and the City of North Charleston will develop an intergovernmental agreement outlining the programs, services, structural components, and arrangements for long-term operation and maintenance of the replacement community center and recreational facilities. The agreement will include language that gives the residents priority in areas such as program enrollment/participation, reserving facility space, use of the recreational centers, and volunteer opportunities.



The City of North Charleston will continue to look for qualified community center job candidates that live in the impacted EJ neighborhoods. The City of North Charleston will post job openings within the EJ neighborhoods and encourage the CAC and neighborhood councils to submit qualified applicants.

Final details related to programs, amenities, and community member employment opportunities at the recreational facilities will be included in the FEIS/ROD.

### 4.3 CONNECTIVITY AND BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN SAFETY



SCDOT will develop a plan to improve bike and pedestrian connectivity, safety, and mobility between the replacement community center and recreation facilities, the surrounding EJ communities, and transit stops along Rivers Avenue. These improvements may include new and upgraded sidewalks, improved lighting, crosswalks/pedestrian signage, traffic calming, and CARTA transit stop improvements.

## 5.0 EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

### 5.1 COLLEGE AID INITIATIVE

SCDOT will provide up to \$50,000 to fund a scholarship program for high school and college students from the impacted EJ communities and neighboring EJ communities that intend to or are currently attending institutions of higher education. EJ neighborhood residents relocated by the proposed project would remain eligible for the scholarship program. SCDOT will partner with an educational institution to implement the scholarship program.

### 5.2 SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROGRAM

SCDOT will develop partnerships with educational institutions to develop school-to-work employment programs with the goal of enhancing employment opportunities within the fields of construction, engineering, and transportation. During the right-of-way acquisition phase, SCDOT will seek to hire up to ten (10) high school or college students from the impacted neighborhoods and neighboring EJ communities to work as summer interns. EJ neighborhood high school/college students relocated by the proposed project would remain eligible for participation in the School-to-Work Program.

### 5.3 PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

This program will be established prior to construction to provide training and job readiness skills to individuals from the impacted EJ communities. SCDOT will determine the number of participants required to complete the program which will be the responsibility of the contractor selected to construct the project. The contractor's program plan and curriculum will be reviewed and approved by SCDOT. Graduates of this program will be considered for participation in the On-The-Job Training (OJT) Program.



## 6.0 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

### 6.1 COMMUNITY HISTORY PRESERVATION STUDY



SCDOT will fund a study to document the cultural history and character of the impacted EJ communities through the support of a qualified historian and photographer. The study efforts will include collecting oral history, archival research, collection of historic photography, and the development of a report that will be available for viewing online and at the community center. The Community History Preservation Study will be completed prior to the end of the right-of-way acquisition phase.

## 6.2 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT PLAN

SCDOT will develop a Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan (CIEP) that will identify improvements to address bicycle and pedestrian safety, visual, stormwater, and speeding concerns identified by the CAC and other EJ neighborhood residents who responded to the Social Needs Assessment and other engagement means. The CIEP will specify and incorporate the Connectivity and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvements identified in Section 4.3 of this DRAFT EJ Community Mitigation Plan. The CIEP will consist of multiple phases that include:

- field investigations and development of preliminary recommendations and concepts;
- community review of preliminary concepts and recommendations;
- local government engagement;
- development of final recommendations, visualizations, and concepts;
- presentation of final recommendations to the EJ neighborhood residents, and
- completion of a technical report summarizing the approved recommendations



The final recommendations from the CIEP will be incorporated into the FEIS/ROD and the FINAL Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan. SCDOT will construct many of the recommended improvements in conjunction with the implementation of other items noted in the DRAFT EJ Community Mitigation Plan prior to the initiation of construction of the I-526 Project Improvements. However, construction of some of the improvements recommended in the CIEP will overlap the construction of the I-526 Project improvements.

## 7.0 MERGE INTO THE CONVERSATION!

### 7.1 TAKE OUR SURVEY

Want to weigh in on what enhancements are made within your community? If you live in Ferndale, Russelldale, Highland Terrace, Liberty Park, East/West Ada or Camps neighborhoods, we encourage you to participate in a survey regarding the DRAFT Environmental Justice Community Mitigation Plan by visiting the project website ([www.526lowcountrycorridor.com](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com)) October 5, 2020 through January 15, 2021. Take our survey and make your voice heard! (Survey available until January 15, 2021).

### 7.2 VISIT OUR COMMUNITY FORUM

Want to openly share your concerns about mitigation plan and bounce ideas off your neighbors? Interact with them on our new online community forum!

Forum Link: [www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/forums/t/community-commitments](http://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/forums/t/community-commitments)

## 7.3 LEAVE A COMMENT

### How can I make a comment?

Meaningful input is our number one priority. Below are the ways to make your voice heard in the official project records.



#### Project Website

[526LowcountryCorridor.com](http://526LowcountryCorridor.com)

Fill out a comment form on the project website.



#### Project Hotline

**843.258.1135 (Call Us)**

Press "2" to leave a verbal comment. Comments will be limited to 2 minutes. Verbal comments left here will be played at the Live Virtual Comment Session. One comment per person.



#### Live, Virtual Comment Session

[526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH](http://526LowcountryCorridor.com/WESTPH)

A live public hearing comment session will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Join online by visiting the web address above and clicking the link or by calling in. Contact us at 843.258.1135 for call-in information or visit the website above.

There will be a short presentation followed by a listening session. Comments received on the hotline will be played after hearing from those who have pre-registered. To provide a 2-minute verbal comment, you must register in advance by visiting the webpage above or by calling the Community Office. No registration is needed to listen.

*All formal comments received during the comment period will be evaluated and included in the project record. Please note, verbal comments will not receive a formal response. All information provided will be published and subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.*

**Official Comment Period**  
**October 30, 2020 - January 15, 2021**

**Make sure to include your name  
& address for the record!**



#### Project Email

[info@526LowcountryCorridor.com](mailto:info@526LowcountryCorridor.com)



#### Mail

Joy Riley, PE, PMP, CPM, DBIA  
SC Department of Transportation  
Post Office Box 191  
955 Park Street, Room 401  
Columbia, SC 29202-0191

**Tuesday, December 15, 2020**

**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

**Registration Required to Comment**

## 7.4 VISIT YOUR COMMUNITY OFFICE

Located at 5627 Rivers Avenue (CARTA Route 10), in the heart of the project study area, the I-526 LCC Community Office is your place to meet one-on-one with the project team and connect with resource specialists such as right-of-way relocation experts. Our goal is to answer your questions about the project and how it may impact your home, business, or daily commute. Our Community Liaisons and Resource Specialists have lived or worked in the Charleston area for most of their lives, acting as dedicated public servants in a variety of roles. They have a vested interest in the impacted communities and the residents they serve.

The community office is now open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. If these hours don't work for you, we also offer custom appointments to meet on your schedule. For those with questions or to make an appointment, the community is encouraged to email [info@526LowcountryCorridor.com](mailto:info@526LowcountryCorridor.com) or call/text the project hotline at 843.258.1135 to speak directly with a team member.

# WHAT IS PROPOSED TO BENEFIT MY COMMUNITY? *And When?*

## PROPOSED SCHEDULE

**PUBLIC HEARING**



*Mitigation Schedule is based on approval of environmental documentation without legal challenge; subject to change*



**Community History Preservation Study**  
A study will document the cultural history and character of the impacted neighboring communities. This study will be available online and at the new, replacement community center.



**Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan**  
A Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan would identify a set of improvements to address bicycle and pedestrian safety, access to community centers, enhanced street aesthetics, project-related stormwater improvements, and traffic calming measures that would be implemented as part of the project.



**Community Centers & Parks**  
A large, centrally located community center complex and 2 smaller parks will be constructed within the affected neighborhoods to replace lost, smaller centers and parks.



**Community Programs & Activities**  
The new modern community center will be equipped to provide enhanced programs and activities, including priority for community residents for programs and facilities.



**Connectivity; Bike & Pedestrian Safety**  
Enhanced bike and pedestrian facilities within the community to provide safe access to new community centers, parks and transit stops.



**Affordable Housing**  
Replacement affordable housing (multi- and single-family) will be constructed near the impacted communities. SCDOT is acquiring vacant lots within the communities early so displaced families will have affordable housing options within their communities.



**Financial Literacy/First-time Home Buyer Counseling**  
Financial literacy and first-time home buyer counseling will be made available to displaced residents to assist in securing residential loans and transitioning from renters to homeowners.



**School-to-Work Program**  
Will partner with educational institutions to develop internship opportunities in the fields of construction, engineering, and transportation.

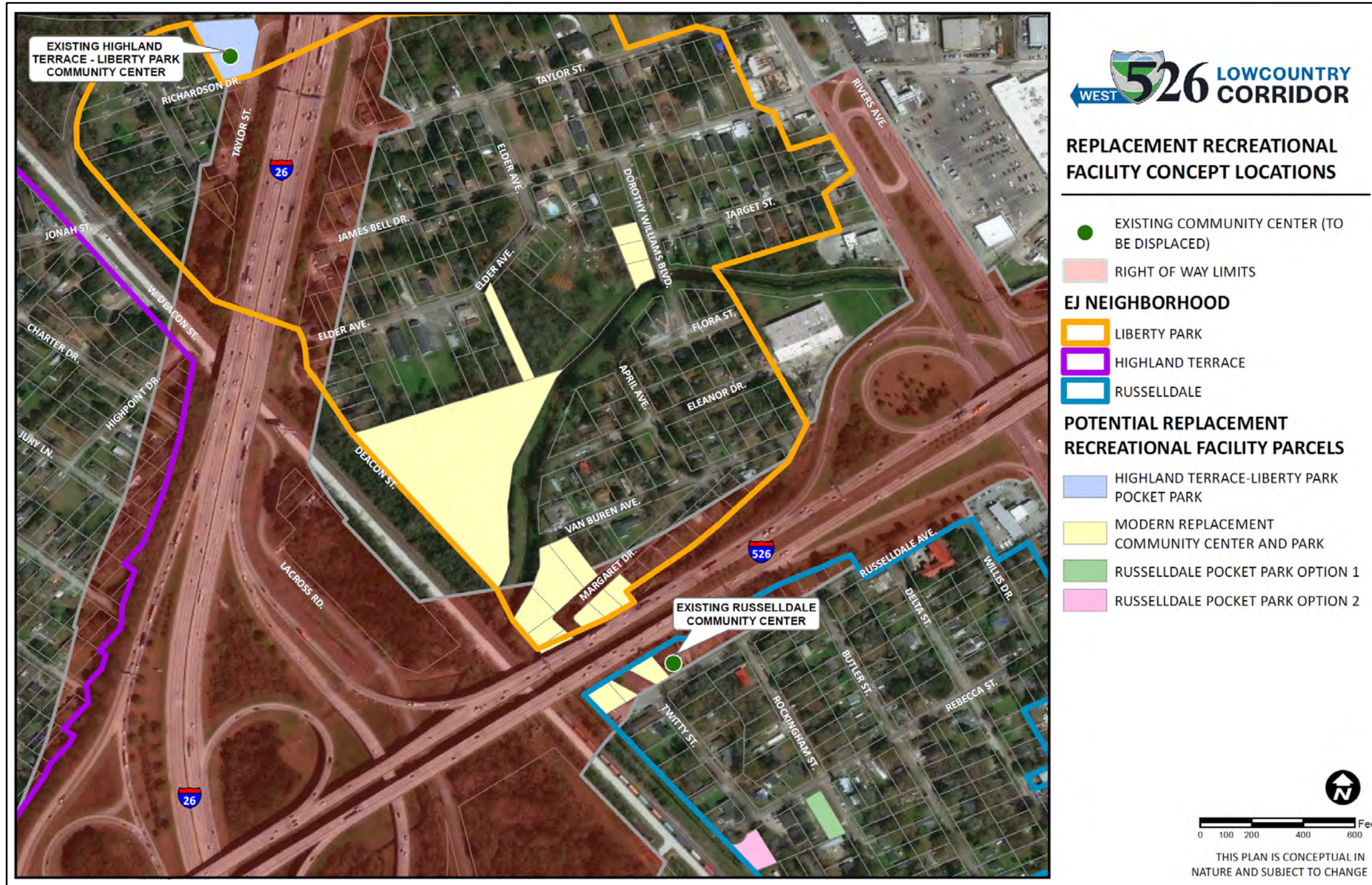


**Pre-Employment Training**  
Job readiness training will be provided to prepare program participants for On-The-Job Training during the project's construction.



**College Scholarships**  
Up to \$50,000 in scholarships will be awarded to students from the impacted communities (up to 10 scholarships of \$5,000 each.)

REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS  
POTENTIAL LOCATION OVERVIEW



REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS

COMMUNITY CENTER



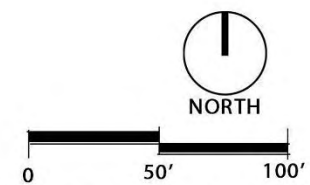
Note: Per discussions with the CAC, the preference is to have the recreational facilities replaced in the original neighborhoods to best mitigate for amenities being lost as a result of the project. The area identified as #10 in the above Community Center concept, "Potential Russelldale Site Swap", will remain an option for the Russelldale Pocket Park if a property cannot be secured in Russelldale.

REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS  
HIGHLAND TERRACE COMMUNITY POCKET PARK



HIGHLAND TERRACE COMMUNITY POCKET PARK

- 1 ON STREET PARKING
- 2 WOOD BENCHES
- 3 FULL COURT BASKETBALL
- 4 HALF COURT BASKETBALL
- 5 25 X25 OPEN AIR PAVILION
- 6 5000SF PLAYGROUND
- 7 SIDEWALK CONNECTION
- 8 IMPROVE CROSS WALKS



THIS PLAN IS CONCEPTUAL IN NATURE  
AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS

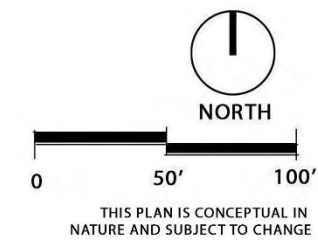
RUSSELDALE COMMUNITY POCKET PARK



**RUSSELDALE**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**POCKET PARK**

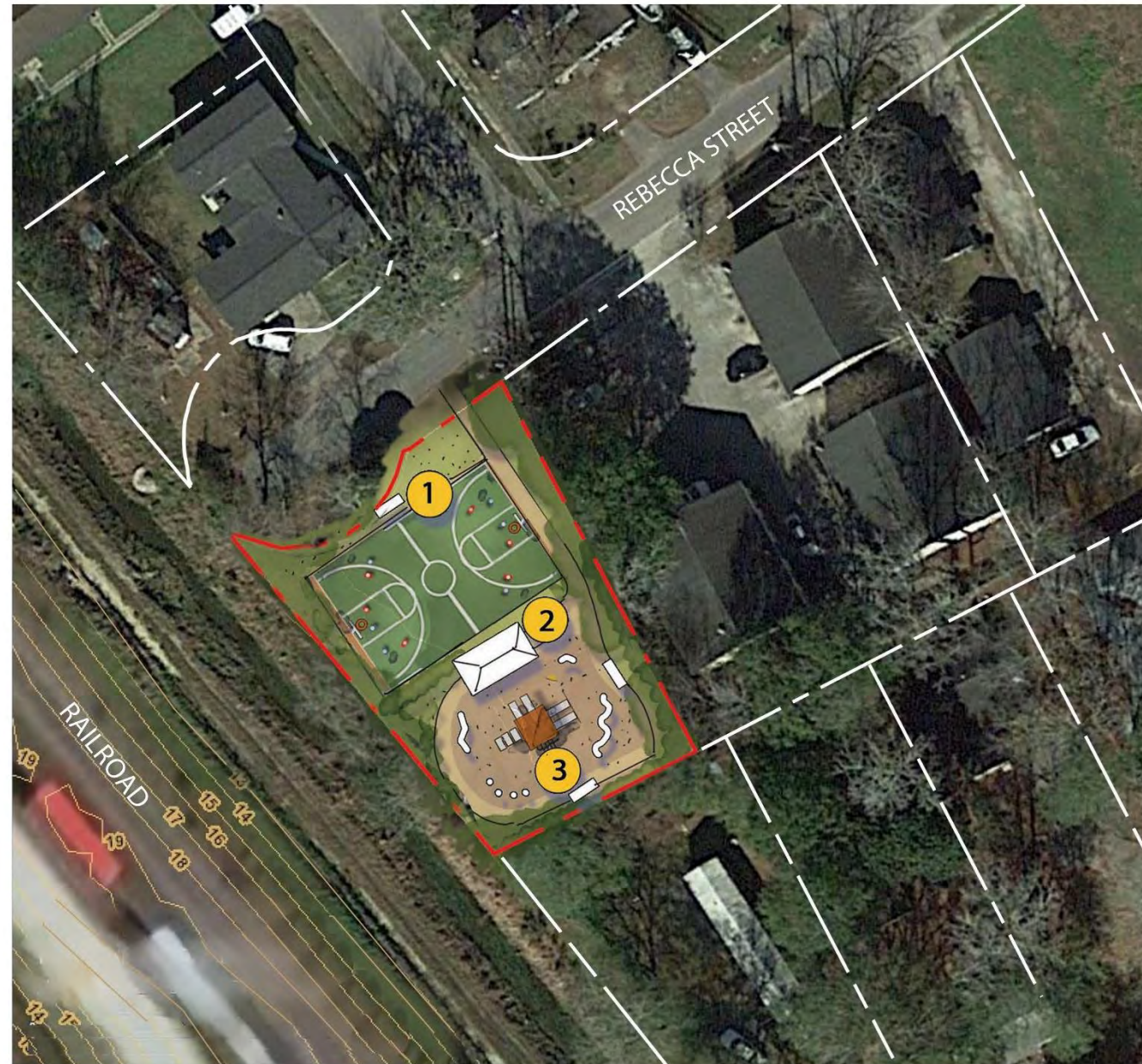
**OPTION 1**

- 1 IMPROVED CROSSWALKS
- 2 FLOWERING SHRUBS AND PARK SIGNAGE
- 3 PRIVACY PLANTING
- 4 BASKETBALL COURT
- 5 TRICYCLE LOOP
- 6 WOOD BENCHES
- 7 15' X 30' OPEN AIR PAVILION
- 8 5000 SF PLAYGROUND
- 9 PUBLIC ART

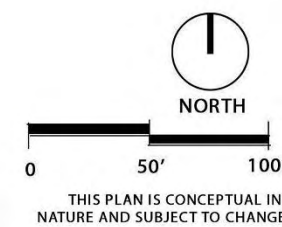


REPLACEMENT RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONCEPTS

RUSSELDALE COMMUNITY POCKET PARK



- WEST 526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR
- RUSSELDALE  
POCKET PARK -  
OPTION 2
- 1 BASKETBALL COURT
  - 2 15 X 30 OPEN  
AIR PAVILION
  - 3 3500 SF PLAYGROUND



THIS PLAN IS CONCEPTUAL IN  
NATURE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE