Part Four: Future

Introduction to Treatment

Chapter 15: Treatment

When significance and integrity are at the fulcrum, with preservation on one end of the balance and an exciting new design on the other, there is plenty of room for design excellence in historic preservation projects.

Sharon C. Park, FAIA
"Design Excellence and Historic Preservation," (2006)

Introduction to Treatment

The National Park Service (NPS) uses the term *treatment* to describe the management plan that results from a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) analysis of a landscape's historical context, site history, existing conditions, significance, and integrity. Treatment is the work carried out to achieve a cultural landscape's long-term preservation and future development goals—in effect, it is an action plan.

Standard Treatment Approaches

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes prescribes four treatment approaches.

> ***Preservation*** requires "retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time."
>
> ***Rehabilitation*** "acknowledges the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape's historic character."
>
> ***Restoration*** allows for "the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods."
>
> ***Reconstruction*** establishes a framework for "recreating a vanished or non-surviving landscape with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.[1]

1 US Department of the Interior, *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1993).

Alongside recommendations that correspond to the Secretary of the Interior's standard approaches for treating cultural landscapes, the Brackenridge Park Treatment Plan includes recommendations developed in collaboration with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (WFC) for improving, protecting, and celebrating the site's ecology through *ecological restoration (eco-restoration)*.

> ***Eco-restoration*** is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.[2] Eco-restoration is typically focused on the goal of repairing the function, or health, of damaged ecosystems but not necessarily on re-creating a historic ecological community.

Often, eco-restoration is achieved through Low Impact Development. While there is no one-to-one correlation between *Eco*-restoration and the four NPS-prescribed cultural landscape treatment approaches, *Eco*-restoration most closely matches the approaches of *reconstruction* and *rehabilitation.*

Determining Appropriate Treatment Approaches

Although the complete contents of a CLR are all factors in determining a landscape's Treatment, the site's significance and its integrity are especially critical in making this decision. Of these, the level of integrity a cultural landscape possesses—"the ability of a property to convey its significance"—is "a primary consideration in determining treatment... of the landscape.... The level of integrity influences treatment decisions regarding what features to preserve, where to accommodate change for contemporary use, and where to reestablish missing features."[3]

The NPS notes that "because of the complexity of many cultural landscapes, a primary treatment often serves as a general treatment for the entire landscape. The primary treatment is defined by the overall level of intervention and change proposed for the landscape."[4] In addition to the primary treatment, other treatment approaches, or elements of other approaches, may also be employed to varying degrees.

Brackenridge Park contains multiple periods of significance. The broad range of its cultural significance is a result of the presence of the upper course of the San Antonio River, the riparian landscape's associated ecology and development, the park's intact prehistoric and historic archaeology representing 12,000 years of occupation, and its 120-year history as a park.

Cultural and historical landscape features and related structures are extant throughout the park, especially those that relate to its history as a park. Rare features that predate the park are also present. Some, such as acequias and dams, are hidden beneath the ground. Others, such as remnants of the Alamo Portland Cement Company, appears today as a monumental intriguing brick chimney. The park setting conveys a landscape that is beautiful, but it does not generally demonstrate the site's early industrial past, including the conditions

2 "What Is Ecological Restoration?" Society for Ecological Restoration, accessed November 22, 2019, ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/.

3 Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Washington, DC, 1998), 101.

4 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 86.

of Indigenous labor and brutality of African enslavement, or the legacy of this past. The physical and visible integrity of culturally and ecologically significant resources varies. Taken as a whole, the significant components of the Brackenridge Park cultural landscape retain a medium to high level of integrity in terms of physical intactness but medium to low levels of integrity in terms of how their significance is visible and understood by the public.

It is important to note the role that interpretation plays in Treatment decision-making and execution. Interpretation involves determining which narratives will communicate the multilayered story of the landscape to the visitor. In many cases, "Landscapes with little integrity require more interpretation to depict their historic character"; moreover, "the interpretation of a site can influence treatment recommendations, such as when nonextant features must be reestablished in order to accurately interpret a site."[5] Ultimately, interpretation—how stories or themes inform treatment approaches and how they are presented on a cultural landscape—is about conveying meaning. "Interpretation and education are the essential aspects of landscape management, providing visitors the opportunity to experience and understand a landscape as it existed historically and as it has evolved to the present."[6]

A Treatment Plan for Brackenridge Park

Chapter 15 begins with a recommendation for the appropriate NPS- and WFC-prescribed treatment approaches for Brackenridge Park. The chapter then lays out six Guiding Principles that underlie numerous recommendations contained in the Treatment Plan. Eight desired Treatment Outcomes are also described in chapter 15. The link between the Guiding Principles that underlie the Treatment Plan and the Treatment Outcomes is effective implementation of the recommendations themselves—contained within the complete Treatment Plan.

The bulk of chapter 15 is made up of the Treatment Plan. Because the plan is comprised of an extensive set of recommendations, critical priorities and related projects are included after the Treatment Plan. The chapter concludes with a set of next steps to enable park leadership to shift into implementation of the priorities.

5 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 114-16.
6 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 114.

Chapter 15. Treatment Plan

Recommended Treatment Approach for Brackenridge Park

Brackenridge Park should be loved and experienced as an *immersive landscape of learning*—a cultural park that is equal parts ecological laboratory, outdoor museum, leisure and recreational park, and revered setting. It should be elevated in the eyes and minds of the local community and widely known outside of San Antonio.

At present, Brackenridge Park is in decline. Its historic and public value have become less and less comprehensible. And a piecemeal approach to improving its current conditions will not serve its long-term viability. Yet the ultimate purpose of preserving this landscape cannot be to freeze it in time, toiling to create a static and outmoded representation of one single period of its existence. This would be wholly impossible. The very act of landscape preservation at Brackenridge Park must utilize a nuanced understanding of its past to chart a new way forward.

Given Brackenridge Park's broad-ranging significance, multiple levels of integrity, ecological importance, and current and future uses, the recommended treatment approach for the park is to employ a balanced mix of ***rehabilitation, preservation***, and ***eco-restoration***.

Rehabilitation accepts that Brackenridge Park has been layered over time and that it is not necessary or desirable to favor one period over another. *Preservation* acknowledges that Brackenridge Park retains many aspects of its historic significance and aims to preserve those features. As they are defined by the Secretary of the Interior's standards, *reconstruction* is recommended minimally, and *restoration* is not recommended for any area of Brackenridge Park.

Brackenridge Park possesses multiple periods of significance rather than one particular time or style that should be revealed or preserved for the public to experience. Therefore, park leadership must look to the essential character or feeling that has resulted from its many periods of significance and attempt to celebrate and preserve that character. One can describe Brackenridge Park's essential character as containing the feeling of being handcrafted, charming, quirky, surprising, patinated, and layered. These qualities, which have arisen from its long history, are the qualities to retain and maintain. In addition, the site contains some difficult histories as part of its layering. The very layering that contributes to the park's unique character also presents challenges. Brackenridge Park's character today is disjointed, but this was not always the case. This means that the Treatment must return a sense of cohesion to the park, while it thoughtfully acknowledges cherished and difficult histories and retains elements of surprise and charm.

Tomorrow's Brackenridge Park

During a one-day Treatment charrette in August 2019, fourteen stakeholders articulated goals and dreams for Brackenridge Park. What rose to the top during this discussion was the desire for the park to "wow" people, "for every inch of it to be a good experience," and for the park "to feel big again," to feel "whole." People also expressed the desire for the park to look healthy, for its ecosystem to be highly functioning, and for it to be well maintained. "People use the park but don't love the park," one person stated, adding, "We need to get people to love the park."

Beyond goals and dreams, the consultant team asked the stakeholders to share what they consider to be sacred at Brackenridge Park and what they consider to be character-defining. Not surprisingly, those items that were named as sacred represent the park's history and ecology—the San Antonio River, the acequias, the quarries, the low-water crossings, and the woodland area. Those items that were named as character-defining represent the park's striking vernacular components—faux bois, the Japanese Tea Garden, the "neat old buildings," the presence of water, and the park's existence as a "shaded refuge in the middle of downtown." People also commented on its historic layering, which was perceived as both essential and problematic—people see the park as "a tapestry of different historic elements," but these layers, both the cherished and the more complicated, are currently difficult for visitors to interpret or understand.

When asked what in the park needs protecting, people identified equitable access, noting, "The people who use this park don't have ranches and beach houses. It is providing an opportunity." People also desired to protect open space from encroachment, the health of the riverbanks, the calming auditory experience, the health of vegetation and canopies, and historical buildings and structures.

Treatment Guiding Principles and Outcomes

Based on the Treatment charrette, the consultant team developed a set of guiding principles. These principles serve to ensure preservation and elevation of the park's cultural significance, integrity, ecological health as it develops in the future. The principles state that Brackenridge Park's Treatment will be grounded in the following actions.

1. Acknowledge and express favorable and difficult histories.
2. Connect people to the river's upper course—San Antonio's origin.
3. Honor and protect its defining vernacular character and spaces.
4. Heal and cultivate an ecology with which humans interact.
5. Foster collaboration and cohesion among the park's cultural institutions.
6. Unite the park with its surrounding community.

The guiding principles—expressed through effective implementation of Treatment recommendations—will further support the park's ability to achieve eight targeted outcomes, listed below.

1. Impactful Interpretation
2. Seamless Inclusivity
3. Effective Circulation
4. Healthy Ecology
5. Multiple Landscape Experiences
6. Local and National Visibility
7. Exceptional Care and Maintenance
8. Dedicated Funding

Together, the Treatment Guiding Principles and Outcomes, along with consideration of the significance and integrity of landscape systems, character zones, and related features (detailed in chapter 14), may be adapted as a basic rubric for assessing the appropriateness and value of proposed future projects over the long term.

Organization of Treatment Plan Recommendations

This Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) calls for an interdisciplinary systems-based approach to the park's preservation and future growth and sets four intentions: (1) to heal Brackenridge Park's ecology, (2) to protect and celebrate its layers of historic significance and cultural diversity, (3) to elevate its identity locally and nationally, and (4) to usher the park into the twenty-first century.

Treatment is intended to enable Brackenridge Park to embody the Guiding Principles, to achieve the set intentions and goals articulated during the charrette, and to achieve the desired Treatment outcomes. The Treatment Plan is comprised of five parts, detailed in the next paragraphs.

Part 1—Landscape Systems. Recommendations in this table focus on improving the larger physical systems present throughout Brackenridge Park to provide visitors with a cohesive experience of the park. These systems include Archaeology, San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor, River Structures, Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology, Entry and Arrival Areas, Circulation, Edges between Cultural Institutions, and the Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art. Diagrams are included to illustrate these critical systems across the park **(figure 15-1)**.

Part 2—Interpretation System. Interpretation is an overarching system that is not currently present in the park. Recommendations in this table focus on ways to begin telling the story of the park's many layers. Interpretation must be developed in conjunction with and as an integral component of recommendations related to the landscape systems. Effective storytelling of the site's history, including its ecology, regional vernacular development, and historic ties to Indigenous people, the enslaved, and the Mexican American community, will ensure that its culturally diverse historical context, including difficult histories, will not be further erased or forgotten. Precedent photographs are included at the end of the Treatment Plan to illustrate examples of effective integration between interpretation and landscape systems **(figures 15-2 and 15-3)**.

Part 3—Character Zones. This set of recommendations is organized according to individual character zones in the park. Each zone includes associated landscape features and the structures or elements that impact or define the specific zone's unique landscape "feeling" and layering. A character zone map, which has also been included in earlier chapters of the CLR, indicates the location of zones **(figure 15-4)**.

Part 4—Management. These recommendations highlight specific areas of management that will serve the park's overall longevity in terms of its funding, care, and maintenance.

Part 5—Treatment Approaches and Project Recommendations. A diagram is included as a reference tool to help park leadership quickly understand and assess where and how the four levels of NPS-prescribed treatment, along with Eco-restoration, should be applied to the site **(figure 15-5)**. Paired with this diagram is an illustrative Treatment Plan that shows the general location of projects related to Treatment priorities **(figure 15-6)**. The Treatment priorities are summarized in this graphic and discussed in detail at the end of the Treatment Plan and in the CLR introduction, part I.

Treatment Plan Recommendations

Part One. Landscape Systems

Every park contains systems that define and impact the landscape in a holistic manner. Some systems are constructed, and some are natural. Brackenridge Park's landscape systems form the park's foundational framework. Eight systems imbue and define Brackenridge Park's continuum through time and collectively contribute to its defining spirit—whimsical, romantic, and uniquely San Antonian. Yet, these systems are currently either in jeopardy or invisible. Because the existing framework is suffering, the culture and ecology of the park are endangered. This CLR calls for these systems be addressed *ahead* of individual projects in Brackenridge Park.

For each recommendation, the appropriate multidisciplinary expertise must be consulted and/or part of a team employed to implement the recommendation. Any and all future plans, projects, initiatives, or opportunities that have the potential to impact these systems must be evaluated against the Treatment Plan, the cultural and historic significance and integrity detailed in Chapter 14, the guiding principles, and the treatment outcomes.

1. ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological resources permeate every area of Brackenridge Park. They are critical to its cultural and historic significance. Due diligence must be performed to preserve and interpret these below-ground resources. Alongside the philosophy, "first do no harm," the park must embrace the philosophy that the best way for a community to feel protective of archaeological sites is to help them become knowledgeable of the presence and significance of those resources, and the best protection against disturbance of these sensitive resources is the local community's eyes. When it is at all possible, preserving, revealing, and interpreting archaeological resources in place should be the goal.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Preservation Past archaeological investigations in Brackenridge Park, including the Zoo, Witte Museum, and Golf Course, have been the result of development and infrastructure projects that were paused after resources were discovered. Future archaeological investigations should be planned for the purpose of research and interpretation, and any planned and future projects should require preliminary archaeological digging. When possible, other forms of archaeological investigation should also be employed, such as LIDAR.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity	High

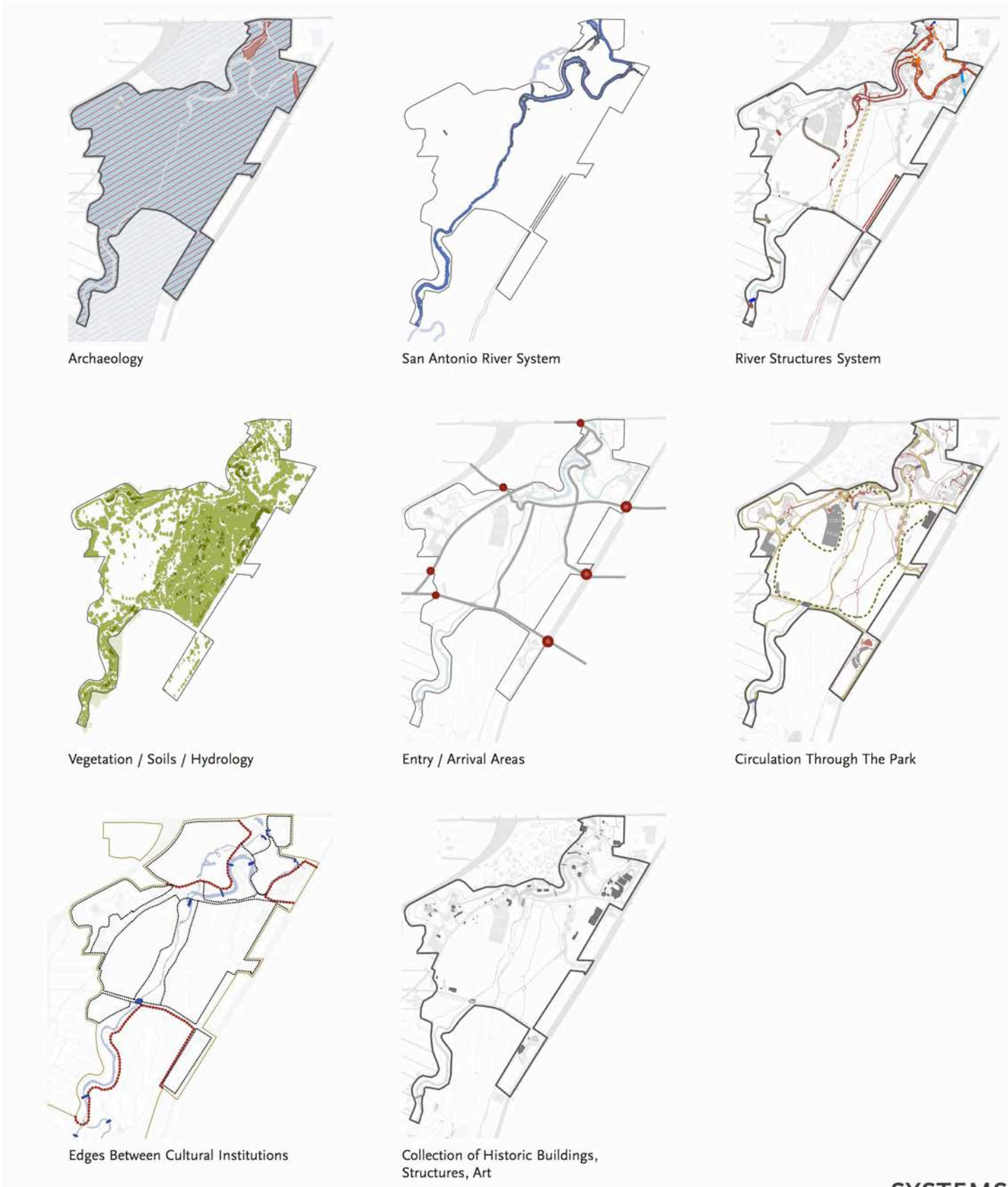


FIGURE 15–1. Brackenridge Park Landscape Systems. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Resources related to hydrology and those areas used by Indigenous people, the enslaved, Mexican Americans, and other ethnic or cultural groups should be prioritized. Areas to be researched first should correspond to Treatment priorities discussed at the end of this Treatment Plan.		
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation Archaeologists and technical experts knowledgeable of local stone and mortar materials should consult with archaeologists outside of Texas who have worked with preserving and revealing sensitive archaeological resources. In conjunction with this, park leadership should examine precedents in public parks and museums in the US that have revealed and interpreted these resources.	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences	High
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation Currently exposed and protected areas of historic acequias and dams should be interpreted to the public to convey the story of water management and a public water system. Known intact portions of historic acequias and dams should be preserved, revealed, and protected in place to the degree possible. Visible remnants of the acequias and dams that contain various layers, including precolonial, Colonial, and Civil War, should be interpreted to convey the changes over time.	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	High
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation Areas of the acequias and dams that have collapsed should be examined by archaeologists and preservation technologists who understand local stone and mortar materials and ways to preserve and possibly rehabilitate these resources.	Impactful Interpretation	High
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation Seasonal programming in conjunction with Witte Museum and Zoo programs should be considered, such as tours and activities led by archaeologists for the purpose of educating and informing the public about the landscape's archaeological resources and related best practices.	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	Medium

2. SAN ANTONIO RIVER SYSTEM

The San Antonio River, with its associated Riparian Corridor, has functioned as the heart of the Brackenridge landscape for millennia. But it is no longer healthy, nor is it safely accessible. Improving the river's health is imperative.

Visitors should be able to access the river directly, but not uniformly. There should be a gradient of access. Areas along the northern-most portion of the river should be designed and managed for varied pedestrian access. Southern portions of the river should be designed and managed for limited pedestrian access and to improve the riparian plant community, water quality, and aquatic animal habitats.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation, Eco-Restoration Address erosion and compaction issues resulting from stormwater runoff, per Wildflower Center (WFC) Ecological Site Assessment (ESA) recommendations: ▪ Establish riparian buffer with integrated access and viewing points. ▪ Establish minimum and average width for the buffer. ▪ Introduction of new plant materials should be weighed in terms of ecological benefits and alignment with historic character. ▪ Coordinate with circulation planning.	Ecological Health Effective Circulation Multiple Landscape Experiences	High
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Identify optimal locations for human access to and/or interaction with the river: ▪ Determine a hierarchy of access types (views to river, direct access, adjacency to river, etc. ▪ Determine and design access points. ▪ Access to river should be planned in coordination with circulation planning. ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted.	Seamless Inclusivity Ecological Health Multiple Landscape Experiences	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Consider management strategies that are fee-based and seasonal or event-based (with periods when access at certain points is permitted and not permitted). These should create excitement and new traditions around accessing the water and provide revenue to care for the resource.	Exceptional Care/Maintenance Local/National Visibility Dedicated Funding	Medium
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Increase in-stream habitat complexity, per ESA recommendations.	Ecological Health	Medium

3. RIVER STRUCTURES SYSTEM

Historic structures associated with the portion of the San Antonio River that flows through Brackenridge Park span different periods and contribute to the site's cultural significance and its ecological wellbeing. The earliest river structures include the dams and acequias, dating as far back as 1719–1924. Pump houses and the raceway were added between the 1780s and 1880s. In the past 199 years, the single-most important character-defining river structure to occur in Brackenridge Park was the WPA-era construction of rock retaining walls. In more recent years, the Catalpa-Pershing drainage canal and Tunnel Inlet have been added. Each of these structures contributes to the distinctive regional vernacular character of this landscape. Collectively, they contain the capacity to convey the story of how humans have attempted to live in harmony with and manage the river, as well as flood and drought events. Therefore, they must be exposed, preserved, and interpreted to increase the public's understanding of the site and to contribute to how these issues will be understood and designed for in the present and future.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Evaluate river retaining walls along the entire corridor, where they exist: ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted. ▪ Develop a unified approach to repairing, where necessary ▪ New materials should complement the historic character of the original rock wall work ▪ Future projects should be evaluated against the significance and integrity of the system and related character zone features	Exceptional Care/Maintenance Impactful Interpretation Local/National Visibility	High

4. VEGETATION/SOILS/HYDROLOGY

The ecology of Brackenridge Park is at risk. Native plant communities are poorly cared for and in decline, and invasive plant species continue to take over.

Healthy vegetation is a tool that serves two vital purposes: (1) healing the damaged ecology of both the land and the river, and (2) strengthening the visitor experience by providing cooling shade and restoring views within the park and along its edges. Additions, subtractions, and on-going management are all required as part of a site recalibration to serve these dual purposes.

Key efforts should include establishing protective buffers of vegetation along the length of the river, repairing damaged plant communities by managing invasive species, establishing a young generation to replace aging canopy and to protect and establish canopy trees to shade park drives, and enhancing overall species diversity. These two efforts will re-anchor the park's dissolving edges.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Establish an aggressive park-wide average annual runoff capture goal. ▪ Establish park-wide system of LID features and ecological restoration areas to achieve runoff capture goal. Integrate these projects with the circulation strategy ▪ Set an upper limit on impervious cover within the park and capture runoff generated from existing and new impervious cover ▪ Establish soil protection zones to reduce the extent and severity of compaction. Integrate with circulation system. Use plantings to strategically direct traffic away from critical root zones and ensure sufficient healthy soil to achieve runoff capture goals	Healthy Ecology Exceptional Care/Maintenance	High
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Eco-Restoration Protect culturally significant vegetation: ▪ Manage the tree canopy in Wilderness area ▪ Manage the tree canopy in the Historic Center and surrounding Softball Fields in north end of park ▪ Create signage and/or interpretation related to the historic canopy and its protection ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology Exceptional Care/Maintenance Impactful Interpretation	High
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Reconstruct ecosystem integrity and overall plant and animal diversity: ▪ Create an invasive plant and animal species management plan ▪ Increase plant community diversity with an emphasis on species that build soil or provide habitat value ▪ Increase plant community structural diversity, i.e. add midstory and herbaceous layers where appropriate ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology Exceptional Care/Maintenance	Medium

5. ENTRY / ARRIVAL AREAS

Currently, entries areas to the park are confusing and inconsistent, indicating that the park's important identity has not been established, has been lost, or is not being communicated to visitors.

A hierarchy of primary and secondary entries must be established. A sequence of arrival needs to be designed and applied in order to make park boundaries clear and consistent. Transitions into the park should signal a clear shift in experience and environment—moving from urban street into an inviting and healthy parkland.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Use entrances and external edges to make the park more visible and connected to its surrounding community and to connect disparate parts of the park (areas intersected by major roads or barriers) ▪ Locate a possible "front door" that announces the park to the public ▪ Identify and design secondary entries into the park ▪ Identify opportunities to stitch disjointed edges of the park (areas where major roads intersect the park) ▪ Entries, both primary and secondary, should feel related, through materials and planting palettes	Visibility Effective Circulation Exceptional Care + Maintenance Impactful Interpretation	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Identify a transect through Brackenridge Park and design the full range of possibilities for stormwater management and riparian improvement. The project should: ▪ Demonstrate that vegetative, soil, and hydrology across the site are interdependent and work together ▪ Be interpreted to the public on site and/or through an education program that traces the changes on the site ▪ Should include an access point to the river ▪ Can be digitally modeled and phased on site for marketing purposes	Visibility Effective Circulation Exceptional Care + Maintenance Impactful Interpretation Dedicated Funding	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Make all external edges of Brackenridge as park-like as possible, in order to enhance the overall image of the park as a holistic design with elements that connect all areas of the park.	Visibility Effective Circulation Exceptional Care + Maintenance	Medium

6. CIRCULATION THROUGH THE PARK

Circulation should unify the park. A common language of materials and layouts should be established for pedestrian and bicycle paths, roads, and parking. Circulation should be tied to how people experience the stories and period layers of the park.

Design of the vehicular and parking system must be inextricably linked to a design for managing and filtering run-off and reducing erosion and compaction. Pedestrian experience should be privileged over the vehicular experience.

In order to alleviate the conflicts between vehicles and vulnerable zones, paved areas—both drives and parking—should be minimized and use efficient designs. A strategy should be established that implements the most efficient/minimal number of parking garages at the edges, preferencing small-scale parking within the park boundaries (for example, less than 10 automobile spaces per area, combined with bicycle parking).

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation Preserve and interpret the original intent of the historic drives as a unifying thread that loops through the park, but meet contemporary needs for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation.	Impactful Interpretation Effective Circulation	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Identify additional opportunities to connect disconnected parts of park through a circulation strategy: ▪ Identify locations for future bridges to create greater connectivity.	Effective Circulation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	Medium
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Evaluate and develop a comprehensive circulation plan that maintains accessibility, respects and enhances the site's ecology, and provides different experiences of the park. The plan should coordinate ▪ With ESA recommendations ▪ Vehicular circulation ▪ Pedestrian circuit (or series of circuits that intersect) ▪ Bicycle circulation ▪ Historic miniature train ▪ Vehicular and bicycle parking ▪ Incorporate stormwater management and riparian health ▪ Provide access to multiple landscape experiences throughout	Effective Circulation Exceptional Care + Maintenance Healthy Ecology Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences Impactful Interpretation	High

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
▪ Respond to existing plans (ex: Broadway Corridor Redevelopment Plans)		
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation Develop a consistent language of material and layout that defines pedestrian pathways and bicycle pathways.	Effective Circulation Local and National Visibility Exceptional Care and Maintenance	High
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation Integrate interpretation of the core stories with park circulation.	Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Healthy Ecology	High
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation Develop a consistent language of material and layout that defines pedestrian pathways and bicycle pathways.	Effective Circulation	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Identify additional opportunities to connect disconnected parts of park through a circulation strategy: ▪ Identify locations for future bridges to create greater connectivity ▪ Consider vernacular character within zones and as part of the system of buildings and structures to determine materials and aesthetic, and whether new styles should be introduced	Effective Circulation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	Medium
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation Partner with the Zoo, Witte, and Incarnate Word to evaluate ▪ Vehicular pressures on the park ▪ Perform an updated traffic study	Seamless Inclusivity	Medium

7. EDGES BETWEEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Just as circulation should unify the park, internal edges should also unify, rather than divide components of the park. A common language of materials, gateways, and layouts for liminal spaces between cultural institutions within the park must be developed and implemented.

A historic relationship exists between the Brackenridge Park Golf Course, Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, Japanese Tea Garden, and Sunken Garden Theater. A pedestrian bridge once connected the Witte Museum to open areas of the park, and a related path continued through to the Zoo. A pathway and bridge also once connected the Japanese Tea Garden to the Zoo.

Today, visitors experience these components each as separate entities with adjacency, rather than as components of one municipal park. In some cases, cultural institutions seem to turn their back to the park, when the feel should be that of a handshake.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Initiate partnerships with the Zoo, Witte Museum, and Golf Course to develop an approach for these institutions to better connect with the park's interior. Work with San Antonio Parks & Recreation to evaluate the relationships between Davis Park, Brackenridge Park, Inlet Tunnel Park, and Miraflores Garden. Davis Park shares adjacency with Brackenridge Park. Inlet Tunnel Park is formally part of Brackenridge Park, and Miraforese "shake hands" in a clearer way, though they may attract different volumes of users and have different programming.	Effective Circulation Strategy Seamless Inclusivity	Medium
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Evaluate internal edges between character zones and restore visual connection with a unified approach through vegetation, materials, landscape management, etc. Transitions in the park should feel related to one another in order to make the park more legible as a unified setting. ESA recommendations should be consulted.	Seamless Inclusivity Healthy Ecology	Medium

8. COLLECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND ART

A varied collection of historic buildings, structures, sculptures, and other built features is located throughout Brackenridge Park. Examples include the cement works smokestack, small houses of the Mexican Village, the Japanese Tea Garden pagoda, which mimics a Japanese pagoda's general shape, but is constructed of native limestone stacked in a distinctly regional vernacular manner, faux bois entry gates at the Japanese Tea Garden, the Joske Pavilion, WPA-era projects, and much more are a dense presence in the park. This collection contributes to the landscape's significance and provides unexpected texture, a hand-crafted feeling, and an overall sense of playfulness and whimsy.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Preservation The existing structures maintain a relatively high level of integrity at this time. They should continue to be cared for in a way that preserves their historic character.	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	High
Treatment Approach: Preservation An architectural historian with knowledge of local building materials and methods should be engaged to perform a thorough Historic Structures Report (HSR) on all built components on the site: The HSR be completed according to National Park Service guidelines and with the expertise of an architectural historian as well as local experts knowledgeable of vernacular building methods and local plant materials. This report should not only document the buildings and structures but should also document their materials, analyze integrity according to NPS standards, and their relationship to the landscape and surrounding plant materials.	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	Medium

Part Two. Interpretation System

Interpretation involves determining which narratives will communicate the multi-layered story of the landscape to the visitor. In many cases, "Landscapes with little integrity require more interpretation to depict their historic character."[1] In Brackenridge Park, the level of cultural significance is extremely high, but the level of integrity—the "ability of the landscape to convey its significance..."[2] in terms of its level of intactness and visibility and ability to be understood by the public, hovers at a medium level. Some areas of the park have high cultural integrity, but most have a medium level of integrity, and some have a low level of integrity. Therefore, interpretation is an important need for Brackenridge Park.

Ultimately, interpretation—how stories or themes inform treatment approaches and how they are presented on a cultural landscape—is about conveying meaning. "Interpretation and education are the essential aspects of landscape management, providing visitors the opportunity to experience and understand a landscape as it existed historically and as it has evolved to the present."[3] Effectively designed interpretation can be difficult to grasp or envision. Images of sites that demonstrate interpretation that has been developed in conjunction with the physical design of spaces are included at the end of the Treatment Plan recommendations.

INTERPRETATION

Park interpretation must be inextricable from the park's landscape systems. As the systems are improved and/or developed, interpretation must also be developed. Interpretation should intentionally and cohesively convey to the public the park's core narratives, helping to define its identity to the public: Links to the Past, Humans and Hydrology/Ecology, Regional Vernacular Character, and Diverse Cultural Imprints.

Recommendations	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Working with interpretation specialists, develop a comprehensive interpretation strategy. ▪ The strategy should work in conjunction with the design and implementation of an overall circulation strategy and with an overall vegetation and hydrology strategy.	Impactful Interpretation Inclusivity Effective Circulation	High

[1] Page, Robert, Cathy A. Gilbert, Susan A. Dolan. *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*. U.S. Department of the Interior. National Park Service. Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships. Washington D.C. 1998. p. 114-16.

[2] Page, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports.* 71.

[3] Page, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports.* 114.

Recommendations (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
The strategy should employ: ▪ Designed features ▪ Wayfinding and signage Educational exhibits ▪ Hands-on/interactive experiences ▪ Specialized tours Programming in conjunction with the Witte and Zoo	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences	
Treatment Approach: Preservation As interpretation is planned for, archival documents should be collected.	Impactful Interpretation	Medium
Treatment Approach: Preservation An accessible digital repository of historic maps, photographs, postcards, news articles, reports, and plans associated with the park should be created.	Impactful Interpretation	Medium
Treatment Approach: Preservation The Visitors Center should house park archives, and an archivist should be part of the BPC staff.	Impactful Interpretation	Low

1. LINKS TO THE PAST: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES, HISTORIC ECOLOGY		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Implementation Priority**
Treatment Approach: Preservation Working with archaeologists and an interpretation specialist, identify strategies for conveying known historic and prehistoric archaeological results and their meaning to the public. ▪ If specific sites cannot be identified for legal and preservation purposes, educational exhibits and site tours focused on the site's archaeological history may be considered. ▪ Interpretation at existing US archaeological park sites should be examined to consider precedents for interpreting archaeological information to the public. ▪ Evidence of Indigenous rituals or connections should be included in the interpretation. Archaeological discoveries of historic hydrological structures (acequias, dams, retention ponds, etc.) should be celebrated and interpreted, including photographic exhibits or signage, and where possible, site-specific interpretation.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Seasonal programming in conjunction with relevant Witte Museum and Zoo programs can be considered: ▪ Activities for educating and informing the public on archaeology and best practices should be explored at other US sites and considered for Brackenridge.	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences	Low

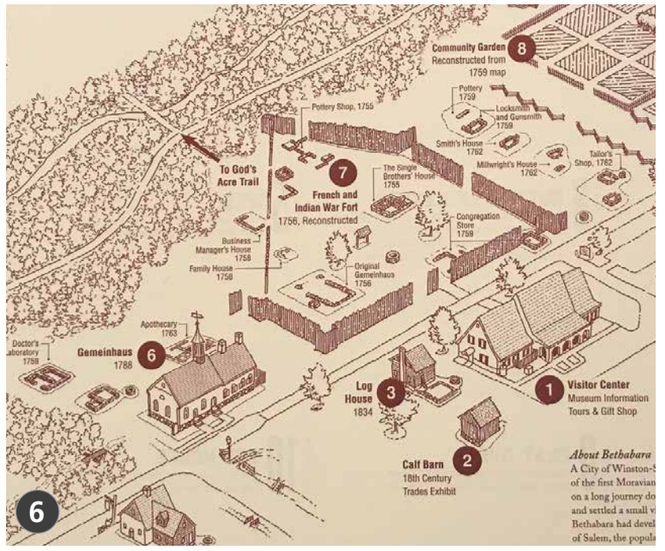
Immersing Visitors in Ecological Experiences

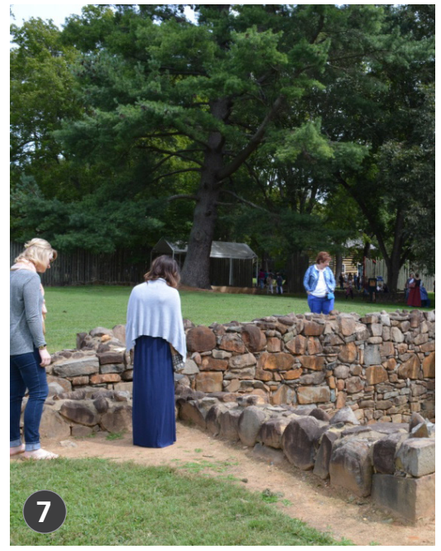
The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Luci and Ian Family Garden, in Austin, Texas, is a 4.5-acre interactive learning environment and unstructured play area. Through the design of various landscape experiences, the garden tells the complex story of the region's native plants, hydrology, geography, and local materials, and it employs and teaches principles of sustainability.

1. Dinosaur Creek illustrates the region's deep history and offers an exploratory exhibit. Dinosaur footprints were found 13 miles from the Wildflower Center and these were cast into the creek bed. Source: Photo by Commander Ben, commanderben.com/

2. The Giant Birds Nest is made of native grape vines and provides a hands-on opportunity to observe the structure of a birds nest at a human scale. Source: Photo by Jessica Pages, sustainablesites.org

3. Giant tree stumps offer a place for kids to climb and balance on repurposed native materials. Source: Photo by Jessica Pages, sustainablesites.org





Preserving In Place and Revealing Archaeological Ruins

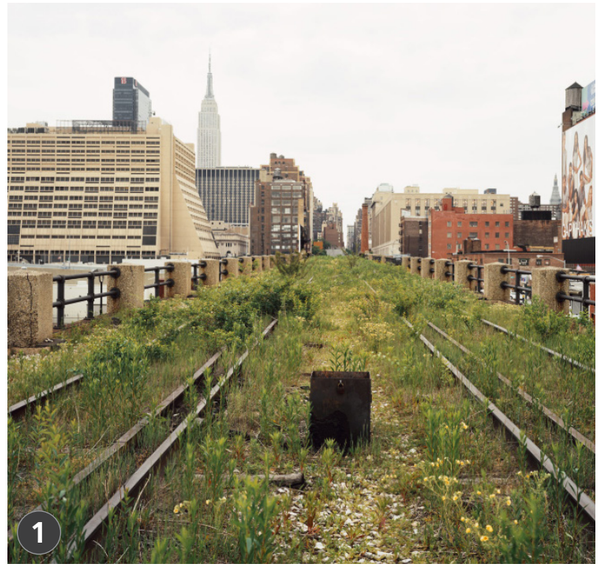
4. Smyrna Beach Archaeological ruins are preserved in place, revealed, and made accessible at Old Fort Park in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, where ruins of a British colony are located. Pictured are a c. 1770 foundation of limestone shell and the arched ruins of a c. 1830 sugar mill on property that is part of a prehistoric Indian midden dating from 500 AD to 1565 AD. The mill was destroyed by the end of 1835 and was not rebuilt. Source: myfloridahistory.org/frontiers/article/134

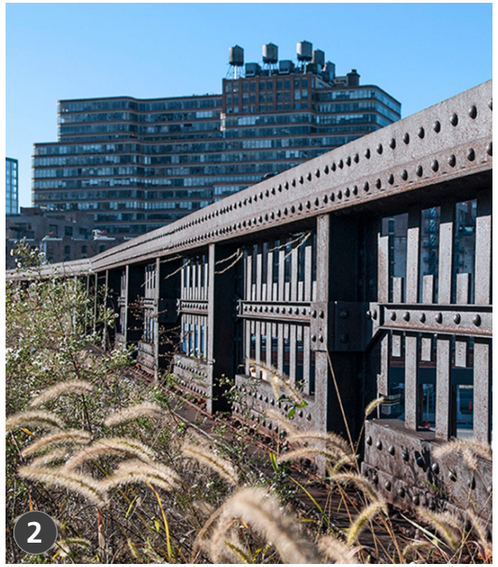
5.

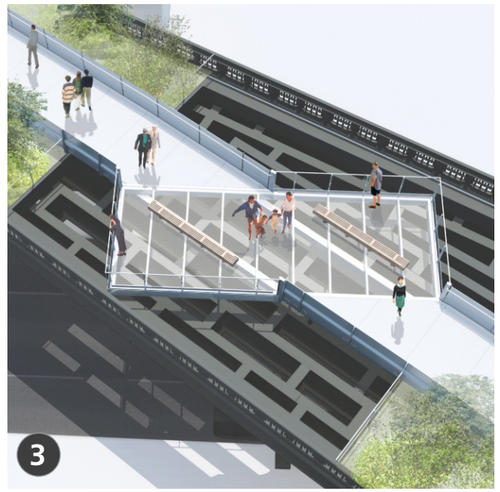
6. Bethabara Park Archaeological investigations in Historic Bethabara Park, outside of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, began in the 1960s, under then North Carolina State Archaeologist Stanley South. Excavations continued through the 1980s and picked up again in the early 2000s. In the park, the public can view findings dating to the 1780s. The map shows archaeological sites found in the park, dating to the 1750s. Some sites are preserved ruins, while some sites have been reconstructed. Sources historicbethabara.org/archaeology/; findingfrasersridge.com.

7.

FIGURE 15–2. Interpretation Precedents.
Source: Suzanne Turner Associates







Immersing Pedestrians in Industrial and Ecological Histories

1. New York City's High Line interprets a decommissioned 1930s elevated railroad as a pedestrian parkway grounded in the site's urban and ecological history. Photo of the decommissioned High Line railway, May 2001, prior to the park's design and development. Source: Photo by Joel Sternfeld,. thehighline.org

2. Art deco railing along the High Line, with a pattern that would be interpreted in the future design by Diller Scofidio + Renfro and James Corner Field Operations. Source: Photo by Timothy Schenck., highline.org

3. Early rendering of a section of the High Line. Ecological restoration contributes to the pedestrian experience, while a portion of the site reveals the historic framework of the rail line. Garden designer Piet Oudolf designed the gardens, which are inspired by the landscape that existed on the site before it was developed. Source: highline.org

4. Aerial view of a section of the High Line. Portions of the decommissioned railroad can be seen mixed with plantings. Pedestrian pathways intersect the historic rail line and ecologically restorative plantings. Source: highline.org

Revealing Difficult and Hidden Histories

5. Shadowcatcher memorializes the remains of the Foster family homestead and cemetery. The property, sited on
6. what is now the University of Virginia's South Lawn, belonged to an African American family. The steel and mesh structure replicates the Foster Homestead site and casts the shadow that projects the house boundary onto the ground.

   Designed by Walter Hood, the memorial is a recent example an interpreted landscape that is rooted in a more hidden and difficult history. It is an experiential and reflective setting. In 2016, UVA commissioned a second interpretive design (not pictured) honoring the lives of enslaved laborers who built the campus.

7. Walls and depressions in the lawn suggest graves and mark the remains of the cemetery site. This powerful and moving site is functions as a teaching facility, a public park, and a commemorative landscape.

8. Archaeological research was completed and these resources were left exposed to reveal the stone pathways and a portion of the porch.
   Source: Photos by Benjamin Ford, hooddesignstudio.com/shadowcatcher

FIGURE 15–3. Interpretation Precedents.
Source: Suzanne Turner Associates

2. HUMANS AND HYDROLOGY/ECOLOGY		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Implementation Priority**
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Interpretation should include: ▪ Prehistoric presence of the SA River, Indigenous peoples' interactions with the river and the site—conveying various uses from practical survival to spiritual. ▪ Evolution of water management in the park, beginning with the story of the first acequias, and conveying the story of continued evolving water management practices related to agriculture, access to potable water, stormwater management and flood control. Part of the interpretation should focus on the people who built the river rock walls and the vernacular expression of those river walls. Educating and informing the public about natural systems in the park and the relationship between the various landscape experiences to stormwater management.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	High

3. VERNACULAR CHARACTER AND DEVELOPMENT		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Implementation Priority**
Treatment Approaches: Preservation The character of the park is derived largely from its vernacular components. Working with architectural historians and an interpretation specialist, a cohesive interpretation of the site's buildings, structures, and features, such as faux bois, bridges, and sculptures should be interpreted. Interpretation should: ▪ Incorporate consultation with individuals knowledgeable in Texas vernacular architecture, architectural preservation, sources and uses of native limestone in San Antonio architecture ▪ Trace the relationship between non-native architectural styles and their adaptation in San Antonio ▪ Focus on the origins of faux bois and its use in San Antonio ▪ Focus on other artwork in the park and its creators	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	Medium

4. DIVERSE CULTURAL IMPRINTS		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Implementation Priority**
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation Develop clear management guidelines that balance protection of the park's natural resources with protection of the culturally and ethnographically significant Easter celebration.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Healthy Ecology	High
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation Embrace the Easter celebration as a defining component of the park's ethnography and vernacular. ▪ Formally document its origin and evolution and provide seasonal interpretation. ▪ Develop volunteer and education opportunities for Easter Park patrons. One example is a program similar to the NPS Junior Park Ranger program.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	High
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation Additional research should be conducted to document and interpret cultural activities at the park such as African American churches holding baptisms in the park, Indigenous American rituals, and Mexican American rituals. For example, Church of Our Lady of Sorrows has associations with the park.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	High
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation Interpretation should acknowledge and address difficult histories in a meaningful way that elevates public knowledge of Indigenous, Mexican, and African American contributions to the site's physical creation, both prior to it being a park and after. For example, it can acknowledge that there is always "contested" space that every community must determine has highest and best use. This story can be conveyed by interpreting the squatter community that existed in the quarry area until the city evicted its residents.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	Medium

Part Three. Character Zones

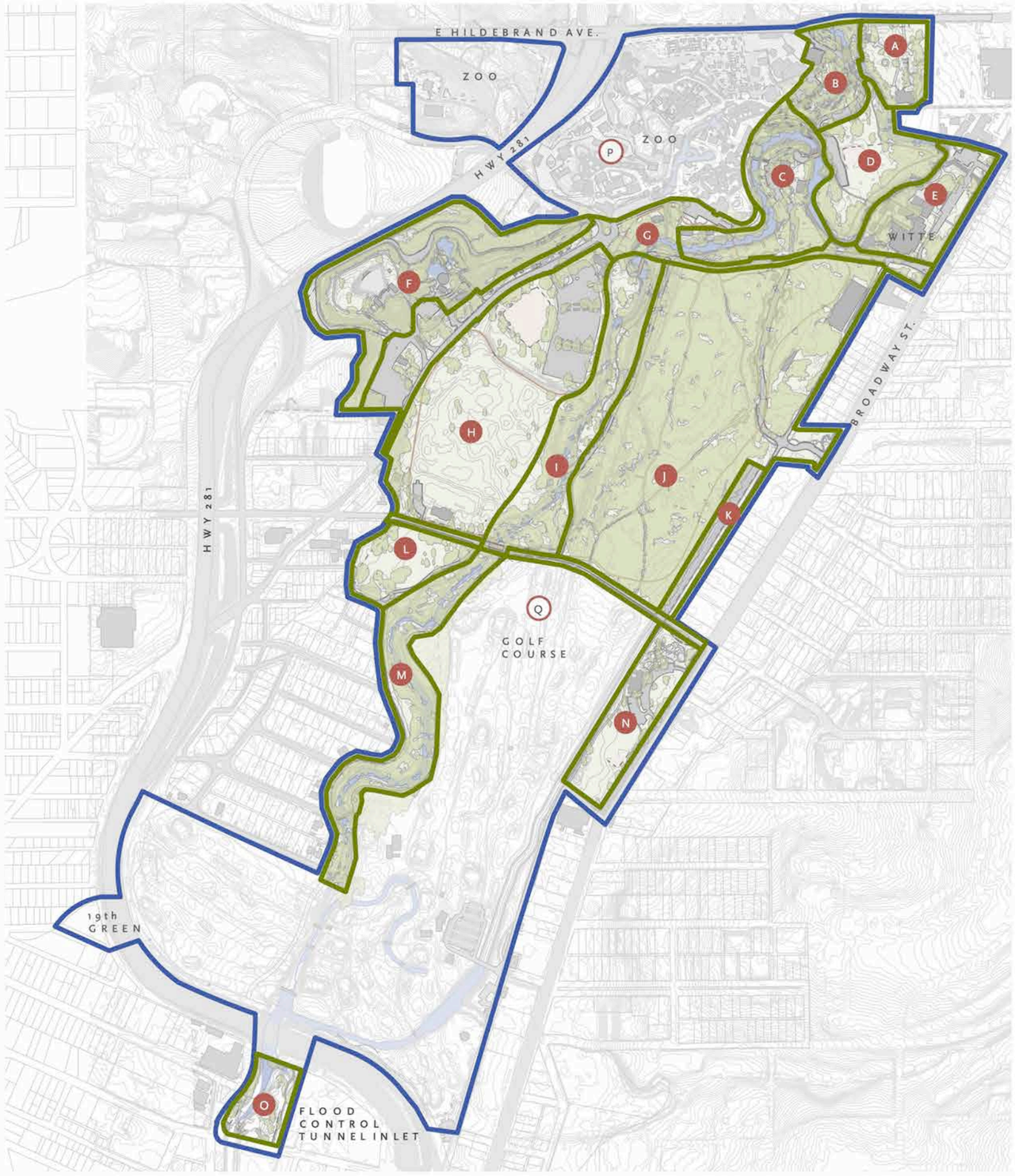
In addition to addressing the landscape systems that create the framework for Brackenridge park, the landscape has been divided into character zones. These fifteen zones each share a geography but contain many dissimilar features. Considering the park according to these zones helps to better understand the time-layered effect that exists across Brackenridge Park.

In the past, projects have occurred in the park in isolated areas and related to isolated funding. This CLR makes recommendations that are zone-specific, but it does not advocate for continuing the trend of piecemeal project investments that impact individual areas of the park. The following recommendations are to be considered *after* the systems-based recommendations, or at a minimum, in conjunction to the systems-based recommendations.

For each recommendation, the appropriate multidisciplinary expertise must be consulted and/or part of a team employed to implement the recommendation. Any and all future plans, projects, initiatives, or opportunities that have the potential to impact these systems must be evaluated against the Treatment Plan, the cultural and historic significance and integrity detailed in Chapter 14, the guiding principles, and the treatment outcomes.

A. MIRAFLORES		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approaches: Reconstruction; Preservation; Rehabilitation Miraflores has the quality of an ethereal ruin, unlike any other area in Brackenridge Park. It is defined by perimeter trees that enclose the area, connections to water, sculpture remnants, and tiled garden ornamentation ruins that are influenced by a Mexican precedent and its Mexican American creator. In order to honor its distinctive character, existing sculpture and structural remnants should be preserved under the guidance of an architectural historian. The historic layout of the gardens should be researched under an archaeologist and landscape architecture historian.	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences	Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art Interpretation

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Miraflores is currently inaccessible. As part of the circulation plan: ▪ The edge of Miraflores that is adjacent to Hildebrand Avenue should be evaluated, with attention to how or if views to the site from the community edge should be provided. ▪ The connection between Miraflores and the area of the park it is adjacent to should be evaluated and a plan developed to make Miraflores accessible from Brackenridge Park. ▪ Historic foot bridges and pathways should be evaluated and, if possible, made accessible.	Effective Circulation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care/Maintenance	Entry/Arrival Areas Edges Between Cultural Institutions Circulation River Structures Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art Interpretation
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Preservation Develop and implement an interpretation strategy that ▪ Celebrates the vision of Miraflores's creator, Dr. Urrutia ▪ Draws a connection to the site's precedent in Xochimilco, Mexico and to the site as an ethnographic imprint on Brackenridge Park and the melding of cultures in San Antonio ▪ Clearly communicates the layers of hydrology and water management during the history of this site, including the springs	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Interpretation
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration; Rehabilitation Historic plant materials should be researched and weighed in conjunction with the preservation of the unusual ethereal character of the site and the need to expand the riparian buffer to 40' by establishing a mowing set-back. ESA recommendations should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Manage invasive species within the buffer and Miraflores, including Japanese privet, Chinaberry, Chinese tallow, Johnsongrass, guineagrass, Brittons wild petunia, umbrella sedge, giant cane, catclaw vine, raintree, white mulberry, loquat. ESA recommendations should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor
Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration Incorporate native plantings into Miraflores design, with consideration for preserving the desired character of the site.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology



Limit of Brackenridge Park

Character Zones within Area of Study

Character Zone

- A Miraflores
- B Lily Pond, Bridges, Acequia
- C Historic center and Live Oaks
- D Picnic/Softball at Bend
- E Witte and edge at Broadway
- F Quarry village
- G Transitional zone
- H Sport fields
- I Central Riparian
- J Vegetated Grove
- K Catalpa Pershing
- L Davis Park
- M Southern Riparian
- N Lions Field
- O Tunnel Park
- P Zoo
- Q Golf Course

OVERALL SITE PLAN

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 15–4. Brackenridge Overall Site Plan. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

B. LILY POND, BRIDGES, ACEQUIA		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration; Preservation Zone B includes the remains of 250 years of hydrological modifications consisting of remnant modified landforms, historic stone structures, and associated archaeological deposits. The area is critical for telling the story of humans and hydrology over time on the site. It includes multigenerational layers of materials, remnant landforms, and remnant stone structures. An overall plan is necessary to address the coming together of: ▪ Circulation ▪ Parking ▪ Location of dumpsters Ecological health, with the goal of expanding the riparian buffer as far as feasible and establishing a mowing set-back.	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Effective Circulation Healthy Ecology	Archaeology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Circulation Edges Between Cultural Institutions Interpretation Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration An interpretation plan should address ▪ Humans and hydrology ▪ The people behind the structures and features, the labor that contributed to making the historic structures and features.	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Seamless Inclusivity	Interpretation River Structures Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration ▪ Manage invasive species, including Japanese privet, Chinaberry, Chinese tallow, Johnsongrass, guineagrass, Brittons wild petunia, umbrella sedge, giant cane, Catclaw vine, raintree, white mulberry, loquat.	Healthy Ecology Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor

C. HISTORIC CENTER AND LIVE OAKS		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration The Historic Center currently conveys visual chaos; some areas, such as the picnic area under the tree canopy, feel relaxing; other areas feel cluttered, and the circulation is not clearly delineated. A site plan should be developed that addresses: ▪ Circulation ▪ Parking ▪ Materials ▪ Interface between the zoo service area/"back of house" and numerous adjacent historical features ▪ Ecological health, with the goal of expanding the riparian buffer as far as feasible and establishing a mowing set-back ▪ Reconsideration of the playground area, which is historically significant but lacks integrity. Interactive, nature-based playgrounds should be considered	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Seamless Inclusivity Healthy Ecology	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology Edges Between Cultural Institutions Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art Interpretation
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation An interpretation plan should highlight: ▪ George Brackenridge's vision for the park, along with other visionaries ▪ The 1920s "boom" of the park's development ▪ Humans and hydrology The people behind the structures and features, the labor that contributed to making historic structures and features	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences Seamless Inclusivity	Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art Edges Between Cultural Institutions Interpretation
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Per ESA, ecological and wildlife interventions should include: ▪ Establishing riparian buffer a minimum of 20' wide with reinforced access points. Park-type maintenance ▪ Increasing woody diversity and install young individuals ▪ In order to return a more ecologically balanced mix, reduce the rookery habitat value: ▪ Disrupt nests prior to egg production Adjust woody canopy to make it less attractive for colony	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology

D. PICNIC/SOFTBALL AT BEND		
▪ Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Explore opportunities to create clearer connections between the Park and the Witte Museum in this area.	Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	Circulation Edges Between Cultural Institutions
Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Preservation; Eco-Restoration ▪ To protect the cultural resources: Manage the expansive live oak canopy at the river's edge Maintain the restored WPA picnic area (tables and benches).	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Ecological interventions in this area should be implemented in accordance with the ESA: ▪ Establish riparian buffer/pollinator habitat a minimum of 20' wide with reinforced access points. Park-type maintenance. ▪ Establish filter strip adjacent to parking lot ▪ Riverbank adjacent to AT&T parking lot is eroding significantly. Open conversation with AT&T regarding runoff management. Increase woody diversity, install young individuals, add flowering and berry-producing shrubs	Healthy Ecology Exceptional Care and Maintenance Seamless Inclusivity	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology
E. WITTE MUSEUM AND EDGE AT BROADWAY		
▪ Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation The Witte Museum provides educational programming both at the museum and in areas of the park, but the relationship at the back edge of the museum its adjacency to the park read as a boundary rather than as a connection. ▪ BPC and the Witte should engage in a collaborative exercise to envision a stronger connection between the back of the Witte and the park ▪ The circulation strategy should evaluate the location of the nonextant bridge that once connected this area and determine whether replacing a bridge in the same location or elsewhere at this edge is appropriate	Multiple Landscape Experiences Seamless Inclusivity Impactful Interpretation	Edges Between Cultural Institutions Circulation

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Preservation The WPA low walls and sidewalk entrances should be maintained as is.	Impactful Interpretation	Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation The presence of a portion of the Acequia Madre de Valero and proximity to the river provide an opportunity to interpret the evolution of water management on the site.	Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	Archaeology River Structures Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art
F. QUARRY VILLAGE		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Reconstructed In the early years of the park, all of the quarry zones would have exhibited a similar appearance. The zoo and the Japanese Tea Garden have probably been altered more than the quarry wall at the back of the Sunken Garden Theater. ▪ Quarry areas that have been less altered should be preserved ▪ Quarry areas that have been altered more significantly should be reconstructed ▪ Coordination between the preservation of quarries in the park and zoo areas should be addressed	Multiple Landscape Experiences Seamless Inclusivity Local and National Visibility	Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art Edges Between Cultural Institutions
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation As part of the systemic approach to making internal transitions between park components stronger and clearer, overall transitions between the Mexican Village, Sunken Garden Theater, Japanese Tea Garden, and the remaining structures of the Cement Works should be addressed. The circulation strategy, along with clear interpretation, may also address the disjointed experience between these components that currently exists.	Multiple Landscape Experiences Seamless Inclusivity Effective Circulation	Edges Between Cultural Institutions Circulation
Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation Archaeology should be conducted to reveal difficult histories and cultural components related to the quarries, Confederate tannery, Mexican Village, and squatter community.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences	Archaeology Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art Interpretation

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Discoveries should be preserved and revealed in place, if possible. Interpretation of this areas should include focus on: ▪ Vernacular craftsmanship and adaptation: turning limestone into garden settings Acknowledging and revealing difficult histories and cultural complexities (Civil War era uses and the enslaved population; Japanese American presence and impacts of WWII; Mexican American labor and the commodification of Mexican heritage)	Local and National Visibility	
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Manage invasive buffelgrass population along Alpine drive.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration The overall circulation strategy should evaluate the parking in this area and the feasibility of reducing parking and using planting strategies to capture run-off.	Effective Circulation Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Circulation Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Alpine Drive, located in this zone, is one of the only areas in the park that contains a desert-like arid landscape, and it is one of the few places where the historic ecology is somewhat intact. In addition, it is one of the only areas that provides a significant change in elevation and a vista—an opportunity for people to observe some of the park's most important elements from a different vantage point (quarries, Japanese Tea Garden, Mexican village, etc.). It is also an important edge condition in the park, visibly abutting Highway 281. Historically, a tram ride enabled people to experience these areas from above. As the circulation and edge systems are planned for cohesion, Alpine Drive and its edge should be addressed in a way that calls greater attention to its entry, improves its accessibility, and interprets its ecology and the cultural features it looks out on.	Multiple Landscape Experience Impactful Interpretation Effective Circulation	Entry/Arrival Areas Circulation Edges Between Cultural Institutions

G. TRANSITION ZONES		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Within the park, this transitional zone has become a utilitarian passageway through the site. The area should be evaluated as part of the larger circulation and edge condition strategies. ▪ Attention should be given to creating intentional views and focal points from this area to other areas of the park, and generally to making it feel, in character, like an inherent part of the park experience, rather than a direct path through or in and out of the park.	Multiple Landscape Experiences Effective Circulation Edges Between Cultural Institutions	Entry/Arrival Areas Circulation
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation This zone includes the "front door" to the Zoo, but it is not experienced as a part of Brackenridge Park.	Effective Circulation Edges Between Cultural Institutions	Entry/Arrival Areas Circulation
Treatment Approach: Preservation; Rehabilitation Numerous historic buildings, structures, and artworks are part of this zone. They should be preserved, interpreted, and rehabilitated, as needed.	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Impactful Interpretation	Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art Interpretation
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration; REhabilitation Create mid-grass/flowering shrub filter strip along St Mary's St. to help capture roadway contaminants and signal entrance into the park. Consult ESA.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
H. SPORTS FIELDS		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation ▪ This area is limited exclusively to recreational usage. Its highest and best use should be evaluated, especially in conjunction with significance and integrity, potential archaeological resources, ecological impacts, and consideration of contemporary uses and their value to the public.	**Multiple Landscape Experiences**	Archaeology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation As part of the circulation strategy and river interventions, opportunities to provide park users with access to this large space and to engage with the river in this area. Parking should be reconsidered in this area as part of the circulation strategy.	Effective Circulation Multiple Landscape Experiences	Archaeology Circulation San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Due diligence related to archaeology should be performed first.		
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Ecological interventions, further detailed in the ESA, include: ▪ Redesign parking lot to incorporate internal bioretention and supplement with downslope retention areas and filter strips. ▪ Create a system of raingardens. ▪ Incorporate diversity plantings into the driving range in out-of-play areas. Connect the raingarden system to a system of transition zone planting.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Greater understanding of the current maintenance of First Tee and the Ball field should be acquired in order to develop a filtration strategy to reduce the impact of fertilizers to the river ecology. This understanding should also be gained related to the Golf Course.	Healthy Ecology	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor
I. CENTRAL RIPARIAN		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Maintain and potentially increase access to the river in this area. Consult ESA for Low Impact Development recommendations. ▪ Determine where plant barriers are necessary and where access points, potential views, and focal points through river plantings may be provided. The circulation strategy should consider pathway and river accessibility in this area.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Create riparian buffer, averaging 45', with incorporated viewing and access points. Buffer will be narrower in high use areas and wider in lower use areas. Create mowing setbacks to encourage natural regeneration. Incorporate herbaceous stabilizer species and increase woody diversity. In some areas with severe downcutting, bank re-grading may be needed. ESA should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Manage invasive species, particularly Japanese privet. ESA should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Incorporate greater diversity of bottomland hardwood species into picnic areas. ESA should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration The bottomland ecological site extends across Red Oak Rd. partially into zone 10 (See ESA). Managing this area as a more open gallery forest will allow the herbaceous layer to develop more fully, enhancing water capture capacity. This modification will also allow better visibility into the vegetated grove from Red Oak Road. ESA should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Determine interpretation opportunities related to humans and hydrology.	Multiple Landscape Experiences Healthy Ecology	Interpretation
J. VEGETATED GROVE		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Wilderness area retains a wooded character that was documented during the park's origins. It should be protected and interpreted to the public. ▪ Ecological strategies in conjunction with circulation considerations are essential to improving this area. Consult ESA.	Healthy Ecology Effective Circulation Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology Circulation
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Create a woodland management plan focused on creating healthy age structure, managing invasive species, reducing the risk of a stand-replacing fire, enhancing overall woodland, and enhancing visibility for safety and experiential reasons. Consult ESA.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology Multiple Landscape Experiences
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Manage invasive species according to ESA recommendations. Japanese privet, Chinaberry, bamboo and catclaw are priorities.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Restore oak savanna at the eastern edge of this unit along Avenue B to enhance water capture capacity, increase visibility into the park, reintroduce a lost historic plant community, and enhance the sense of entering the park. Consult ESA.	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences Exceptional Care and Maintenance	Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
K. CATALPA-PERSHING		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration The Catalpa Pershing channel is a unique feature, in that it provides a glimpse of more recent water management strategies in the long arc of the park's history, but it also creates a barrier between the neighboring community and the park. Connection can be achieved with a minimal and well interpreted solution: ▪ Establish a bridge access across the current barrier. ▪ The existing concrete channel (or portions of it) can be retained and interpreted within the larger interpretation of humans and hydrology and the evolution of water management on the site.	Impactful Interpretation Effective Circulation	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Interpretation Circulation
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Incorporate natural channel design, allowing the channel to expand and meander to the west, where possible and based on consultation with archaeologists. Engineered slopes on the east side of the channel can be maintained. ESA recommendations should be used in conjunction with this approach.	Healthy Ecology	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Manage invasive species along the west bank. ESA should be consulted.	Healthy Ecology	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology

L. DAVIS PARK		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Currently, Davis Park does not read as transition to Brackenridge Park. Davis Park needs to become legible as a transition to Brackenridge Park. When evaluating the circulation, overall exterior edges, and the internal connections between park components, Davis Park should be evaluated for several possibilities: ▪ Making it a more prominent secondary point of entry into lower Brackenridge Park. ▪ Creating a safe and prominent pedestrian connection across Mulberry to the First Tee area ▪ Rerouting River Road to the western edge, where a social trail currently exists ▪ Converting the current River Road route adjacent to Davis Park to a trail	Effective Circulation Multiple Landscape Experiences Seamless Inclusivity	Entry/Arrival Areas Circulation Edges Between Cultural Institutions
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Ecological improvements should include: ▪ Enhancing the herbaceous community with densely rooted perennial grasses and pollinator supporting species to enhance infiltration capacity. ▪ Reducing mowing frequency of the interior. ▪ Repairing gully erosion forming at the southeastern portion of the park.	Healthy Ecology Exceptional Care and Maintenance	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology
M. SOUTHERN RIPARIAN		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Related System (s)**
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Currently, this zone is shaded and quiet, but very eroded. Golf fencing creates a barrier, and its connection to park is unclear. The larger strategy to address connections within the park should consider this area and how to integrate it with the park.	Effective Circulation Seamless Inclusivity	Edges Between Cultural Institutions Circulation
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration The area presents the opportunity to address erosion through riparian planting. Several interventions should be considered: ▪ Expand riparian buffer to 45-60' with landings for fishing and river viewing. Repair riparian community with invasive	Healthy Ecology Exceptional Care and Maintenance	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
▪ removal, installing herbaceous and woody stabilizer plantings. ▪ Narrow golf-course side road to allow for expansion of riparian area. Reduce mowed area on west side of river to allow for riparian buffer expansion.		
Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration The low-water crossing is no longer in use and has medium integrity but high significance as a National Youth Administration project. The feature should be evaluated more carefully to determine if it should be replaced with a structure that allows through-flow, while allowing people to walk and cycle across the river. This would enable the park to increase complexity of in-stream habitat.	San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Multiple Landscape Experiences	Effective Circulation Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences

N. LIONS FIELD

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Because of its location on Broadway and at the center of the entire park, Lions Field is an important edge condition. Its historic integrity is relatively low, so it also poses opportunities: ▪ Consider the site's current utilization and history as a pasture for animals and as a property of the San Antonio Water Supply Company ▪ Evaluate its highest and best use ▪ Consider this location as the potential Front Door to Brackenridge Park	Local and National Visibility Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Effective Circulation	Entry/Arrival Areas Edges Between Cultural Institutions Interpretation

O. INLET TUNNEL PARK

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation This zone contains a vast lawn, ramps, and an impressive but intimidating hydrology management structure. Its connection with the rest of Brackenridge Park is unclear, and its purpose as a structure is unclear. To make this site more legible as part of the park and as part of the city's larger stormwater management infrastructure update the interpretation of this area: ▪ Greater focus should be included on the importance of the two major tunnels to a decrease in flooding and increase in safety for downtown San Antonio ▪ The site's design should be reconsidered—its importance is related to water, but its appearance emphasizes lawn ▪ BPC should consider including this site on a humans and hydrology tour	Multiple Landscape Experiences Impactful Interpretation Local and National Visibility	Edges Between Cultural Institutions Entry/Arrival Areas San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor River Structures Interpretation

Part Four. Management

Formal stewardship of municipal parks arose in 1985 with the creation of the Central Park Conservancy and its document "Rebuilding Central Park: A Management and Restoration Plan." This set the bar for preservation work in American parks over the next decades, and it resulted in a highly successful capital campaign. Each cultural landscape is different and requires an approach that responds to the special qualities and situations of the particular landscape. Brackenridge Park is no exception, but the Central Park Conservancy provides one model for financial sustainability, viable management practices, and long-term stewardship. There is a strong need and opportunity for Brackenridge Park Conservancy to examine management models that will strengthen its ability to be a steward of the park.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS		
Recommendation	**Corresponding Outcomes(s)**	**Implementation Priority**
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Hire a historian to draft updates to the National Register Nomination according to recommendations found in Ch. 14 of this CLR. The historian should consult a landscape architectural historian in order to put the appropriate emphasis on the landscape components vs. built.	Local and National Visibility Exceptional Care and Maintenance	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Working with the appropriate local partners, begin the process of working toward National Heritage Area designation (see CLR Ch. 2). This process should include working with the appropriate local cultural institutions, and it should include working with SA Parks & Recreation on a designed connected Emerald Necklace-inspired component.	Local and National Visibility Exceptional Care and Maintenance Dedicated Funding	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Consult with Central Park Conservancy leadership and/or other park conservancies that have improved cohesion and collaboration between park institutions. Financial structures, capital campaigns, and other subjects should also be discussed to gain greater knowledge of precedent activities and approaches. Other conservancies to consider include, but are not limited to, Balboa Park Conservancy (San Diego), Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy (Raleigh, NC), Memorial Park Conservancy (Houston, TX), Hermann Park Conservancy (Houston, TX),	Seamless Inclusivity Exceptional Care and Maintenance Dedicated Funding Local and National Visibility	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Park leadership should work with an outside economic analyst experienced with historic parks to identify funding opportunities and/or to plan for a capital campaign.	Dedicated Funding	High

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Identify revenue streams and funding opportunities: ▪ A revenue sharing program with park institutions (Witte, Zoo, Golf course, First Tee) ▪ Revenue-generating programming to create dedicated funds to the ecological maintenance and ongoing preservation of historic features ▪ Revenue generating plans and programming should be implemented in careful consideration of equity and accessibility to the park and avoiding disruption to the character of the park	Dedicated Funding	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Develop and implement a Site Maintenance Plan that addresses the landscape and buildings and structures	Exceptional Care and Maintenance	High
Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration Develop and implement a Stormwater Management Plan	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	High
Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration Develop and implement an Invasive Species Management Plan	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration Develop and implement an Events Management Plan that protects the landscape during recurring high impact events/heavy usage of the park	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	High
Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration Develop and implement a Forestry Management Plan	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	Medium
Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration Develop and implement a Fire Risk Plan	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	Medium

Summary of Treatment Priorities

A New Framework

Every park contains a foundational framework of systems that define and impact the landscape in a holistic manner. Some systems are constructed, and some are natural. Brackenridge Park's eight defining landscape systems include the Archaeology (hidden bones), San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor (heart), River Structures, Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology, Entry and Arrival Areas (face), Circulation through the Park (connective tissue), Edges between Cultural Institutions, and the Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art. These landscape systems form the park's foundational framework. Because the existing framework is currently suffering, the culture and ecology of the park are endangered.

This CLR's findings conclude that Brackenridge Park's leadership must create a new framework by which each system is addressed comprehensively. Interpretation is a strategy that is critical to the health and longevity of any cultural park, and it is integral to the success of a new framework. Development of a new interpreted framework will holistically examine and design solutions for the park's systems. The framework will respect preservation treatment guidelines outlined in this CLR and the planning goals defined in the Master Plan.

A Systems Approach: Summary of Treatment Priorities

Brackenridge Park's leadership must invest first and foremost in a new framework, focusing initially on five of its eight systems—its river and riparian corridor, its entry and arrival areas, its circulation, its archaeology, and its interpretation, which can be thought of as the park's soul. A new framework would set a future vision for the whole park while guiding key projects and growth over time and seeing site-wide goals realized.

This systems-based approach is not only vital but also possible. Designs and plans to restore the health of each system should be approached with the mind-set that implementation will occur in phases. Likewise, a piecemeal approach to funding and isolated development within Brackenridge Park must be rejected. The needs of site systems cannot be addressed one corner or parcel at a time. That approach has only added to the site's fragmentation over time; larger site needs and more complicated fixes have been passed over as this beloved park struggles to keep up with the needs of its diverse community. This piecemeal approach has served neither the park's cultural and historic significance nor its level of integrity thus far.

The following section summarizes Treatment Plan recommendation projects that rise to the highest level of action. These projects can be embarked on with the goal of healing the five priority systems. It is essential that these projects must be thought of as part of larger systems-related design efforts. The projects concern restoring a greater level of health to the park's ecology, preserving and maintaining its distinctive "homegrown" regional vernacular character, making ecological systems and prehistory and history—the difficult *and* the endearing histories—more evident and understandable, and creating a unified and exceptional municipal park and cultural landscape—an *immersive landscape of learning* that lives up to Brackenridge Park's astonishing heritage.

Priority System: The River and Riparian Corridor (the Heart)

The San Antonio River, with its associated riparian corridor, has functioned as the heart of the Brackenridge landscape for millennia. But it is no longer healthy or safely accessible. Improving the river's health is imperative. Related projects align with the key recommendations found in the Ecological Site Assessment for Brackenridge Park.

1. **Riparian Buffer Design:** Establish a riparian buffer[1] along the San Antonio River to reduce and eliminate erosion and to address compaction issues resulting from stormwater runoff. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, this design should

    a. Set minimum and preferred buffer widths along the entire river.
    b. Integrate viewing and access points to the river.
    c. Set goals for and achieve measurable ecological improvements.
    d. Interpret the buffer to the public to promote riparian education and stewardship.

2. **Park-Wide Ecological Restoration:** Design a park-wide system of ecological management areas and Low Impact Development features.[2] With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, this system design should

    a. Establish a park-wide goal for average annual runoff capture.
    b. Be tightly integrated with the circulation system.
    c. Include strategies to manage runoff from existing and new impervious cover and set an upper limit on impervious cover within the park.
    d. Establish soil protection zones to reduce extent and severity of compaction.
    e. Utilize plantings and mowing strategies to direct traffic away from critical root zones.
    f. Include an invasive plant species management plan.

    This project should be phased with an initial fundraising component that includes an Ecological Transect Design.

    a. Design a transect through the park that demonstrates the full range of possibilities for stormwater management and riparian improvement.
    b. Model the impacts through an initial computer-generated model created by ecologists with an interpretive specialist.
    c. The demonstration transect can show that the health of vegetation, soils, and hydrology across the site are interdependent.
    d. Interpret the transect to the public on-site and through an education program that traces the gradual ecological impacts on the site.

1 Michelle Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment* (San Antonio: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 2019), 25.

2 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*, 25.

Priority System: Entry and Arrival Areas (The Public Face)

The park currently has no public face or physically defined presence in the community. The need exists to define the park's edge in connection with the community that surrounds it and to establish a hierarchy of park entrances. Newly defined park entry points and community-facing edges should appear to be related and should honor the park's regional vernacular character.

3. **Park Entrances Plan and Design:** Entry points should be assessed around the entire site. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, develop a design that identifies optimal entry points.

    a. A "front door," "side doors," and "back door" should be located, and poorly situated entries should be decommissioned and eliminated.
    b. Entries should be designed and improved to relate to each other, to be visible to the public, and to honor the park's regional vernacular character. Materials and aesthetics should be guided by historic and regional vernacular precedents.
    c. The main entry to the park should respond to that area's historical significance and integrity.
    d. External or public edges between the entries should be designed to clearly define the park's entire boundaries. The design should imply and function as a connection—drawing one's eye to the park and inviting people in—rather than as a border.

4. **The Front Door Project, Phase A:** Convert Lions Field into Brackenridge Park's "front door" and main entry, capitalizing on its highly visible location on Broadway, high historic significance, and relatively low historic integrity, which justifies a major investment. Lions Field falls between Hildebrand Avenue and Inlet Tunnel Park and is the geographic center point of the entire park. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, the design for this area contains many possibilities.

    a. Design a first-rate visitors center that conveys the entire history of the site, orienting people to its core narratives.
    b. Park leadership should work with the existing tenants of this space toward an acceptable relocation plan.
    c. Interpretation within the visitors center might include interactive computer displays, a graphic timeline, and a display of archaeological discoveries. An interactive map might orient users to the park's history, trail systems, and cultural institutions, including the zoo and the Witte Museum.
    d. The visitors center should house the Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC), which is currently housed in a former park storage room and functioning restroom facility.

e. The site design may call for a sustainable and interpreted meadow or pastureland, drawing on early park history as pasture for animals (the pasture did not get developed until 1923).
f. Lions Field was originally a property of George Brackenridge's San Antonio Water Works Company, so the story of San Antonio's public water system may be interpreted in this area.
g. Phases A and Phase B must be strategically conceived of together before determining which to phase in first.

5. **The Front Door Project, Phase B**: Expand the Lions Field front door across East Mulberry Avenue to create a magnificent central "double door" entry experience for the public. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, park leadership should
    a. Work with existing business owners on a relocation and/or land integration strategy.
    b. Acquire land between Broadway and Avenue B and adjacent to Lions Field.
    c. Design Catalpa-Pershing as a phase of this comprehensive Front Door Project. Design considerations for Catalpa-Pershing include the following:
        i. Building on the park's original vocabulary of bridges
        ii. Leaving portions of the concrete ditch revealed to interpret a more recent component of the park's lengthy history with water management and flood control
        iii. Naturalizing portions of the ditch, interpreting this site as part of the physical evolution of water management on the site and in connection to Eco-restoration.

    Phases A and B must be strategically conceived of together before determining which to phase in first.

Priority System: Circulation through the Park (Connective Tissue)

Circulation is a critical landscape system, and the park's ability to be experienced and conceived of as a cohesive park is heavily dependent on a comprehensive circulation plan. Today, circulation in Brackenridge Park is disjointed. It does not adequately provide for multiple modes of transportation. Historically, the park developed as a driving park, enabling people to use what was then the newest form of transportation in order to have multiple landscape experiences. This history is not understood on the site today.

6. **Comprehensive Circulation Plan and Design:** With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, design a comprehensive pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation plan to move people through the interior of the park.

    a. The plan should draw on the park's history as a driving park and on its historical circuits.
    b. The plan should also be integrated with care for the park's natural plant communities and with the need to repair damaged hydrology, including subtractive measures, such as eliminating invasive plant species.
    c. Circulation should ensure that visitors can be immersed in a variety of landscape experiences as they move through the park.

    d. Incorporate wayfinding and interpretation that is minimally intrusive, respectful of the regional vernacular, and effective in guiding people through the park, regardless of which landscape experiences they would like to encounter (arid desert vegetation, riparian landscape, woodlands, and so on) and regardless of the stories they seek to experience (Eco-restoration, archaeological layers, cultural identity in the park, and so on).

Priority System: Archaeology (Hidden Bones)

Prehistoric and historic archaeological remnants exist throughout Brackenridge Park. The extent of potentially sensitive ground is therefore pervasive. It is increasingly common for cultural landscapes to take the approach of uncovering archaeological resources, preserving them in place, and interpreting them to the public. Advocating for a more public approach to archaeological resources, Dr. Matthew Reeves, the director of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration at James Madison's Montpelier, states that "one of the best ways to have a community feel protective of sites is to know about them and become knowledgeable regarding their significance. And the best protection for sites against looting/disturbance is a local community's eyes!"[3]

1. **Acequia Investigation**: Due to the high significance of the Acequia Madre de Valero and the Upper Labor Acequia, it is recommended that archaeology be conducted to locate as much of the original two acequias as possible. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners:

    a. Remaining intact portions should be preserved and protected in place, under the guiding philosophy "first do no harm."
    b. Areas that have collapsed should be examined by archeologists and preservation technologists who understand local stone and mortar materials and ways to preserve and possibly rehabilitate these resources.
    c. The exposed and protected areas should be interpreted to the public to convey the story of water management and a public water system.
    d. If there are areas that contain various layers, including precolonial, colonial, and Civil War, these remnants should be interpreted to convey the changes over time.

3 Matthew Reeves, director of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration at James Madison's Montpelier, "Archaeology and Site Interpretation," email correspondence, October 1, 2019.

Interpretation Strategy (The Soul)

The four critical narratives noted throughout this CLR must be integrated into the pilot projects and any future projects. This requires specialized research. These narratives should be fully developed into interpretive plans that permeate the park. The narratives are

1. Stories of humans and hydrology, including the park's ecological transformation over time and interpretation of future projects that aim to restore the river's health
2. Prehistoric and historic life, including hidden and difficult cultural histories
3. Regional vernacular character, including the river as the park's form-defining element, early vehicular circulation in the park, cultural access to the river, and regional art and craftsmanship
4. Cultural layering that has contributed to the park's physical and ritual development, with intentional focus on historic ties to San Antonio's Indigenous people, the enslaved and their descendants, and the Mexican American community

Interpretation can and should be interdisciplinary and should span time. It should reveal the site's history and ecology, but the public must also understand how the past is relevant in the present and how it impacts the future. To this end, interpretation will need to convey the role that Brackenridge Park is actively playing in improving the present conditions and experience, whether the interpretation is related to Eco-restoration, circulation, or archaeological discovery.

Whether park leadership moves forward with a project related to one priority system or combines more than one system into a single project, interdisciplinary interpretation must drive the design approaches. Interpretation cannot be an afterthought. It will need to go beyond wayfinding and visitor center exhibits. By design, it must incorporate ways for park users to be immersed in the stories of the landscape's past and future; it should permeate the site.

Next Steps

The CLR is a technical document that contains a vast amount of information. It will be used by park leadership as the primary management tool for Brackenridge Park. Therefore, the document must be read and digested by leadership from the BPC, San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, and San Antonio River Authority. Next steps toward implementation of the CLR Treatment follow.

1. Representation from these leadership groups must develop a shared understanding of the document and how to best use it to evaluate proposed projects and to guide new projects in Brackenridge Park.
2. When park leadership has developed a shared understanding of the CLR, fund-raising will be crucial to management and to adopting a systems approach. For more sustainable management practices, park leadership should look to other large municipal park conservancy models for guidance. This should facilitate conversation both about funding models and about greater interface between Brackenridge Park and its cultural institutions.
3. Updates to the National Register Nomination can be made based on the content included in the analysis chapter of this CLR. This will begin the process of formally elevating Brackenridge Park to the national level of significance. It will also begin the process of laying further groundwork for a National Heritage Area designation.
4. One or more of the five priority systems should also be identified as a starting point for investment. Funds will be necessary to hire interdisciplinary teams to design for each system. It is critical that projects, such as those suggested in the Treatment Summary, should be conceived of as part of a holistic design—Boston's Emerald Necklace, discussed in the CLR introduction, is an example of systems-based planning and design. Once a system has been planned and/or designed, implementation can and should occur in phases.
5. Using the systems framework as a guide, all existing and future projects, smaller projects, and isolated efforts should be evaluated against the Treatment Plan Guiding Principles, Treatment Outcomes, and Treatment Recommendations and especially against the prioritized systems. Such projects should be implemented only if they act as phases or segments of an established large-vision strategy. Again, to the degree possible, the three leadership entities should evaluate these projects together in order to assess projects with a shared understanding of the CLR and its Treatment Plan.

If implemented successfully, this action plan will create cohesion for the park, providing clear direction to visitors and a consistency against which the layered, handcrafted elements of the site can be viewed and registered; it will remedy the currently deteriorating river banks and shade canopy, ensuring that these significant spatial experiences are protected for future visitors; and it will develop a strategy for telling the site's stories, ensuring that awareness of the site's history is integrated seamlessly.

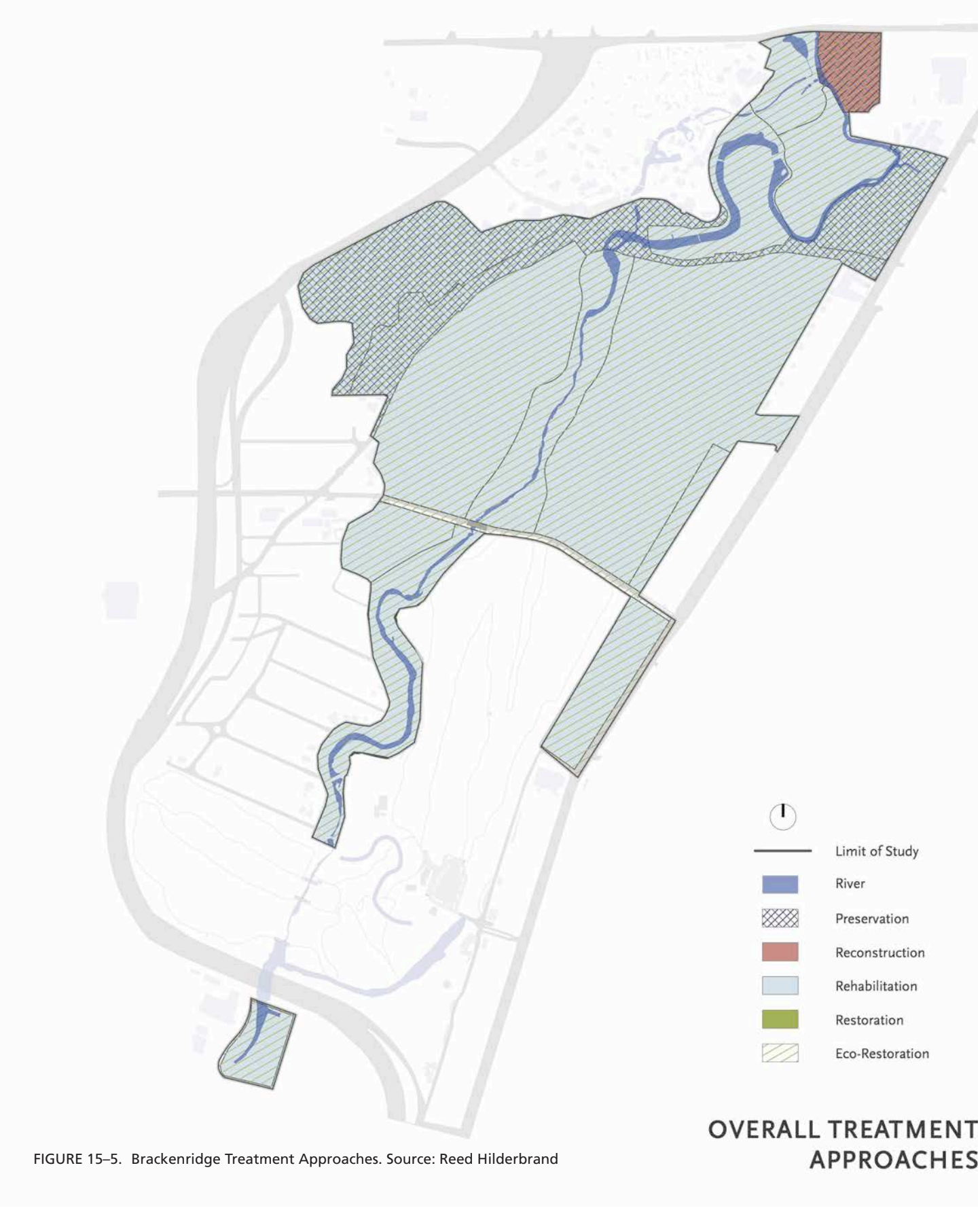


FIGURE 15–5. Brackenridge Treatment Approaches. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

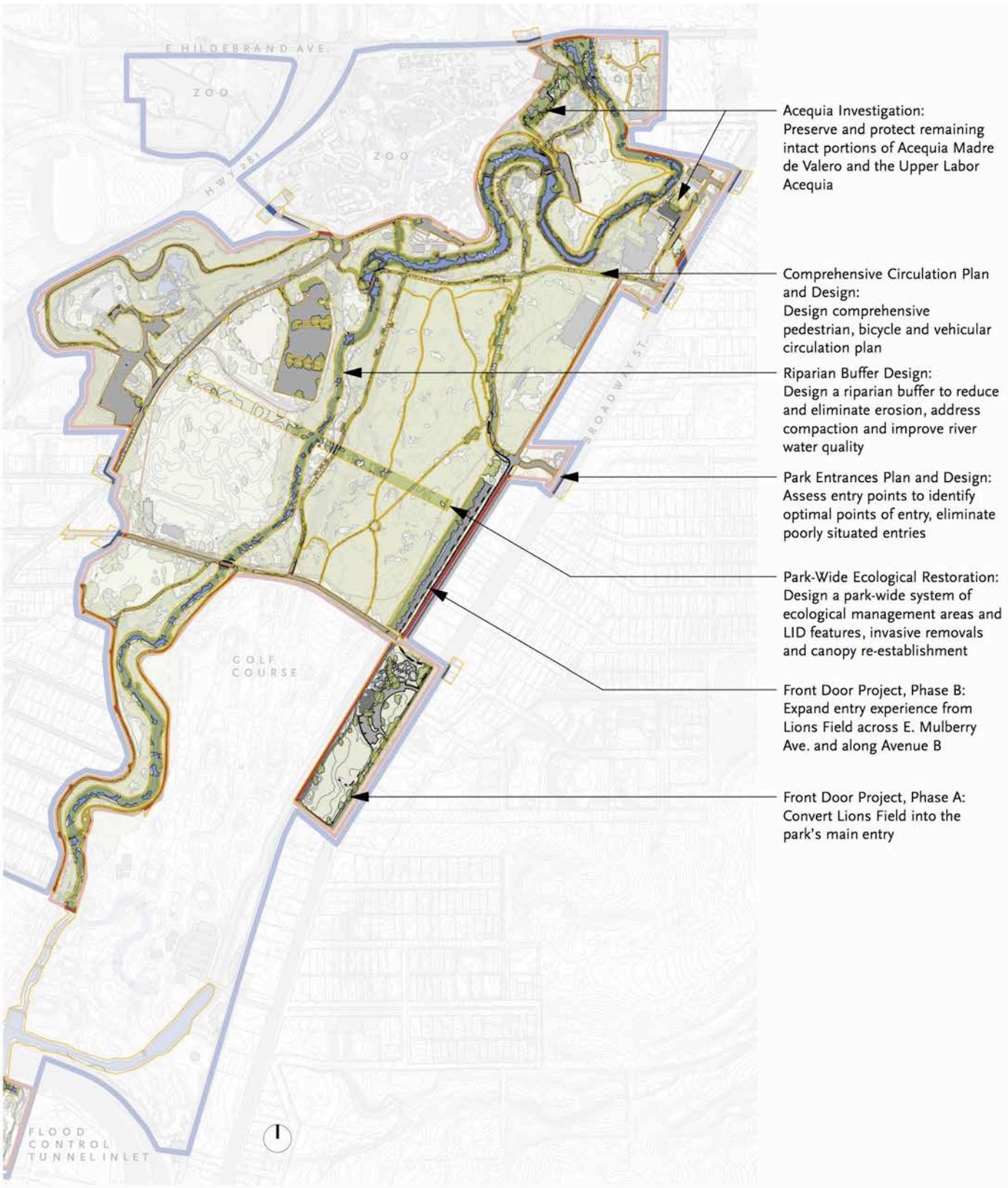


FIGURE 15–6. Brackenridge Project Recommendations. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS