

CHAPTER 5.2: ACHIEVING TOMORROW... FOR THE SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT

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The previous chapter (Chapter 4) outlines six integrated goals and related objectives that all partners participating in the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan agreed are either directly or indirectly important to each one's vision for the future. This chapter is customized to address the goals, objectives and related strategies that are directly applicable to the Seneca County Park District, who is the primary entity responsible for carrying out the recommendations. This chapter includes maps and illustrations, as applicable, to explain the strategies. Most strategies for the Park District are ongoing. Many of the plan's recommendations will require additional study and the development of more detailed action steps that go beyond the scope of this project. The vision directly applicable to Seneca County Park District is:

Vision for the Seneca County Park District

To be a recognized leader and desired partner in providing life-enhancing and lifelong, nature-based outdoor experiences for all; and to build a legacy of good environmental stewardship for future generations.

This chapter focuses on the relevant strategies for the Park District to achieve the goals and objectives described in detail in Chapter 4. The numbering of Goals and Objectives is consistent with the numbering scheme in Chapter 4; therefore, wherever the Objectives are not numbered sequentially, it indicates that the missing objective is not applicable to the Park District.



SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT GOALS

•Ensure we are prepared to and successfully capitalize on opportunities in the local, regional, national and global economy, with an emphasis on jobs and tax revenue.

1. Prosperous and Resilient Economy

•Ensure we have sustainable quality places for living and socializing, with a sense of place that embraces our cultural heritage.

2. Attractive, Desirable, & Livable Places (Built Environment)

•Create/foster a strong sense of community & ensure social needs are met with equitable programs & access to a wide range of community and public facilities and services.

3. Quality Community Facilities and Services

•Be good stewards of our natural resources as they contribute to human and economic well-being, provide recreation and educational opportunities for locals and tourists, and significantly enhance the character of our community.

4. Environmental Stewardship – Valued Natural Resources

•Provide modern, well-maintained infrastructure and utilities (roads, water, sewer, telecommunication, etc.) to serve current and future residents and businesses.

5. Enhanced Mobility, Accessibility, & Public Utilities

•Enhance and strengthen our community character and brand to: establish a reputation as a great place to live, work, study and visit; to instill community pride; and attract new residents, businesses and visitors.

6. Strong Community Character and Image



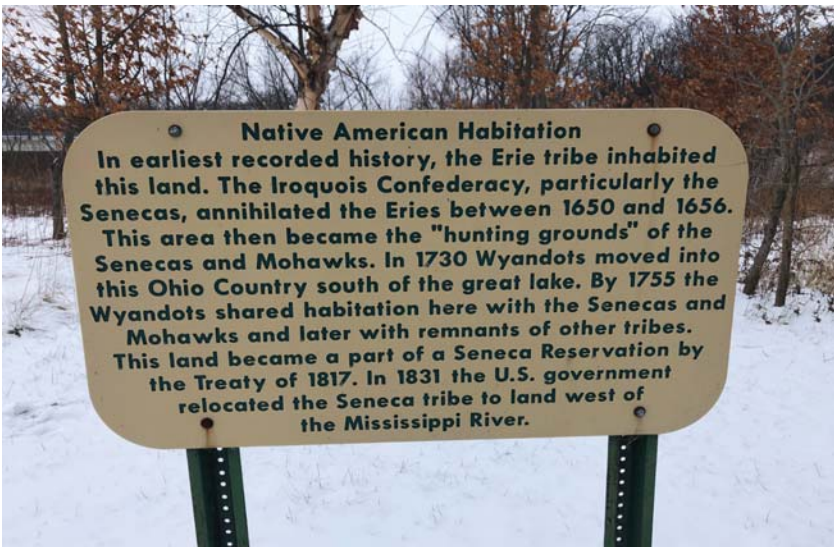
GOAL 2. ATTRACTIVE, DESIRABLE & LIVABLE PLACES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

Objective 2.3 Celebrate our UNIQUE PLACES

2.3.1 Rural Identity - Preserve riparian corridors, floodplains, and other ecologically sensitive areas as important parts of Seneca County's rural identity.

2.3.2 Partnerships - Consider additional programming, and possible partnerships with organizations like the local OSU Extension Office/4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters, and other similar organizations to educate Seneca County youth about the land's rich history, its current state, and future potential.

2.3.3 Historic Properties - Celebrate local history by preserving the places that are central to the local identity, both in the built and natural environments. Inventory historically significant places, within and outside the Parks, and work with other organizations to maintain them.



Objective 2.5 SUSTAINABLE LAND USE.

2.5.1 Prevent Insensitive Sprawl - Work with area officials and planning professionals to minimize the intrusion of sporadic residential development into rural areas. In areas where sensitive ecological areas are adjacent to existing communities, work with village and city officials to find mutually beneficial solutions to growth.

2.5.2 Locations - Evaluate current Park locations for service coverage across the county.



GOAL 3. QUALITY COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Objective 3.1 Foster INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

3.1.1 Accessibility – To the extent possible, make Park facilities accessible to people with physical and cognitive disabilities. Where it is not physically possible, consider video or other alternative methods for people whose challenges prevent them from experiencing the Parks first-hand.



3.1.2 Affordability – Economic constraints also can be a barrier that keeps people from enjoying the parks. Consider opportunities to partner with other organizations to provide transportation for those who have no way to reach the Parks, or bring programs into more urbanized areas so that more people can easily access the Parks.

Objective 3.2 EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

3.2.1 Programming – As funds and capacity permit, expand both existing and new programs for the general public throughout the Park District. Maintain and develop a variety of cultural and entertainment opportunities for residents, students and visitors.



3.2.2 Partnerships – Seek out opportunities to partner with local schools and universities on ecological program offerings. Partner with local health institutions and organizations to support personal fitness initiatives.

3.2.3 Meeting space – Maintain and expand community meeting spaces in appropriate Park facilities for use both as educational classes or workshops and social gatherings and events.

3.2.4 Partnerships – Build strong inter-agency partnerships with villages, cities, townships, universities, K-12 schools, homeschoolers, and other community organizations to provide diverse programs and facilities that collectively meet the needs of all Park visitors.

3.2.5 Headquarters/Nature Center – Identify and establish location for a Nature Center and park headquarters.





Objective 3.3 ACTIVE LIVING

3.3.1 Marketing - Continue and expand marketing efforts so that residents know where Parks are located and programming opportunities are available.

3.3.2 Maps - Whether digital or hard copy, make maps of each Park available on-site so visitors can fully enjoy the resource.

3.3.3 Maintenance - As funds permit, continue to make improvements to existing trails to make them more user-friendly and improve the experience for visitors.

3.3.4 Expand Trail Networks - As natural resource capacity permits, plan and strategically place new environmentally responsible trails for public enjoyment.

3.3.5 Variety - Consider a wide variety of trail types to reach an expanding circle of Park users (ex: single track trails, blue/water trails, motorized/ATV trails).

3.3.6 Amenities - Develop quality amenities for guest comfort, accessibility, and satisfaction. Refer to the Concept Development Plans for the following Park District Nature Preserves: Bowen, Garlo, Steyer and Zimmerman.

3.3.7 Facilities - Expand Park amenities. Consider overnight facilities such as cabins, yurts, or camp sites.

Objective 3.4 Promote HEALTH AND WELLNESS

3.4.1 Connecting Bike Paths - To the extent possible, support trail initiatives to connect existing recreational resources with residential and commercial areas.

3.4.2 Partnerships - Pursue partnerships with local healthcare organizations and professionals to offer nature-based options to help residents improve overall health and well-being. These kinds of partnerships have been endorsed by national organizations such as the American Lung Association, American Heart Association and American Diabetes Association. Work with local chapters to help lend legitimacy and publicity as these partnerships are launched within Seneca County.



GOAL 4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP - VALUED NATURAL RESOURCES

Objective 4.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION

4.1.1 Cleanups - Engage in river cleanups and invasive species removal campaigns.

4.1.2 Site Design - Ensure designs for all Park improvements and site designs developed for future Parks protect the natural terrain and groundwater, preserve or restore significant vegetation and scenic views, and incorporate native vegetation into landscape plans.



4.1.3 Runoff Reduction - Encourage the use of modern technology to reduce storm water runoff and pollutants, both urban and rural, from entering into bodies of water.

4.1.4 Acquisition - Work with other agencies to assist with prioritizing riparian corridors, woodlands, wetlands for acquisition using programs such as OPWC Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation, linking greenways to provide corridors of open space, rather than isolated pockets.

4.1.5 Easements - Work with appropriate private land trusts and private property owners to protect environmentally sensitive areas either through direct acquisition or protective easements.

4.1.6 Tree Preservation/Restoration - Make concerted efforts to plant and protect trees to maintain current and increase canopy coverage.

Objective 4.2 ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

4.2.1 Park District Nature Preserves - Consider future nature preserves to protect endangered and threatened species, and to protect the rural "feel" that is key to Seneca County's identity. Be prepared to act (or respond) if, and when, opportunities for acquisition present themselves.

4.2.2 Ecotourism - Utilize appropriate natural resources for tourism. Work with other agencies to leverage the Sandusky River as a tourist attraction. Promote links between the river and bicycle/pedestrian facilities in adjacent parks, townships, cities, and villages.

4.2.3 Hunting - Increase signage and safety for public hunting. Consider opportunities for new hunting sites.



Objective 4.3 Promote BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

4.3.1 Planning - Continue to collaborate with Ohio EPA and other federal, state and local partners on planning for the watershed.

4.3.2 Permeable Surfaces - Advocate for incorporating best practices and up-to-date technology to promote permeable surface use to reduce polluted run-off and help reduce or eliminate flooding.



4.3.3 Light & Sound Pollution - Work with local partners such as the cities and villages, townships, universities, and civic and social organizations to educate the public about the negative effects of light and sound pollution, including ways to reduce these now and in the future.

Objective 4.4 RIVER LIFE

4.4.1 Habitats - Work collaboratively with other organizations to help identify and document existing conditions of wildlife habitats and places of ecological significance in the riparian corridors associated with the Sandusky River. Prioritize areas that are most in need of protection or restoration, then identify funding sources and create a work plan to protect the resource(s).

4.4.2 Erosion - Work collaboratively with other organizations to help identify vulnerable/erosion-prone areas to minimize erosion.

4.4.3 Upstream maintenance - Work together with neighboring counties to the south to ensure the continued health of the River.



4.4.4 Sandusky River Cleanups – Work collaboratively with other organizations to help engage in regular clean-ups and removal of invasive species.

Objective 4.5 Ensure CLEAN AIR & WATER

4.5.1 Green Infrastructure – Be an example for the County in embracing sustainable building practices in every possible situation when planning County Park improvements and in designing future County Parks.

4.5.2 Stream Restoration – Work collaboratively with other organizations to promote natural streams, riparian corridors, and adjacent floodplains to function naturally and retain water longer to reduce flooding impacts. Encourage the elimination of obstructions such as pipes, gates, filters, or other blockages from existing streams, whenever feasible, to allow riparian corridors and adjacent floodplains to function naturally.

4.5.3 Bioswales – Include bioretention areas in all places possible, at both existing facilities and in design for new facilities, and as an educational demonstration.

4.5.4 Stormwater Harvesting – Consider the possibility of including green roofs and rainwater collection systems on buildings planned for future construction.

Objective 4.6 Promote GREEN DEVELOPMENT

4.6.1 Alternative Energy – Encourage development of environmentally friendly alternative energy resources for use at park facilities as well as locations in the county. Alternative energy sources should be reviewed and developed to avoid the risk of detrimentally affecting wildlife and scenic views.

4.6.2 Sustainable and Inclusive Growth – Work with other agencies to include green stormwater infrastructure in new development.

4.6.3 LEED (Leader in Energy and Environmental Design) – Work with other agencies to encourage the use of LEED standards for facility rehabilitation and development.

Objective 4.7 Promote SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.7.1 Trash & Recycling – Assess the need for canisters at each facility and deploy (and maintain) receptacles accordingly.



GOAL 5. ENHANCED MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PUBLIC UTILITIES

Objective 5.3 ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

5.3.1 Active Transportation - Continue to be involved in the development of an active transportation plan and support trails that are established throughout the county, especially those located near County Park locations or that create connections to or between County Park locations. Cooperative efforts for long-term management of these trails are anticipated.

Objective 5.5 SMART TECHNOLOGY

5.5.1 Smart Technology - Continue to work toward development and keeping up with current technological advancements for interfacing with park visitors. Consider educational components and highlight special features in each park.



GOAL 6. STRONG COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

Objective 6.1 CELEBRATE SENECA COUNTY

6.1.1 Local Historic Resources - Work collaboratively with other agencies that encourage protection and rehabilitation of areas with unique historic worth.

Objective 6.2 Engage in BRANDING AND PROMOTION

6.2.1 Marketing - Increase community exposure by using a broad range of assets, such as social media, website, print, radio, television, and in-person appearances at local events.

6.2.2 Signage - Develop better wayfinding and location signage. Establish a brand identity to graphically unify all signage.

Objective 6.3 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

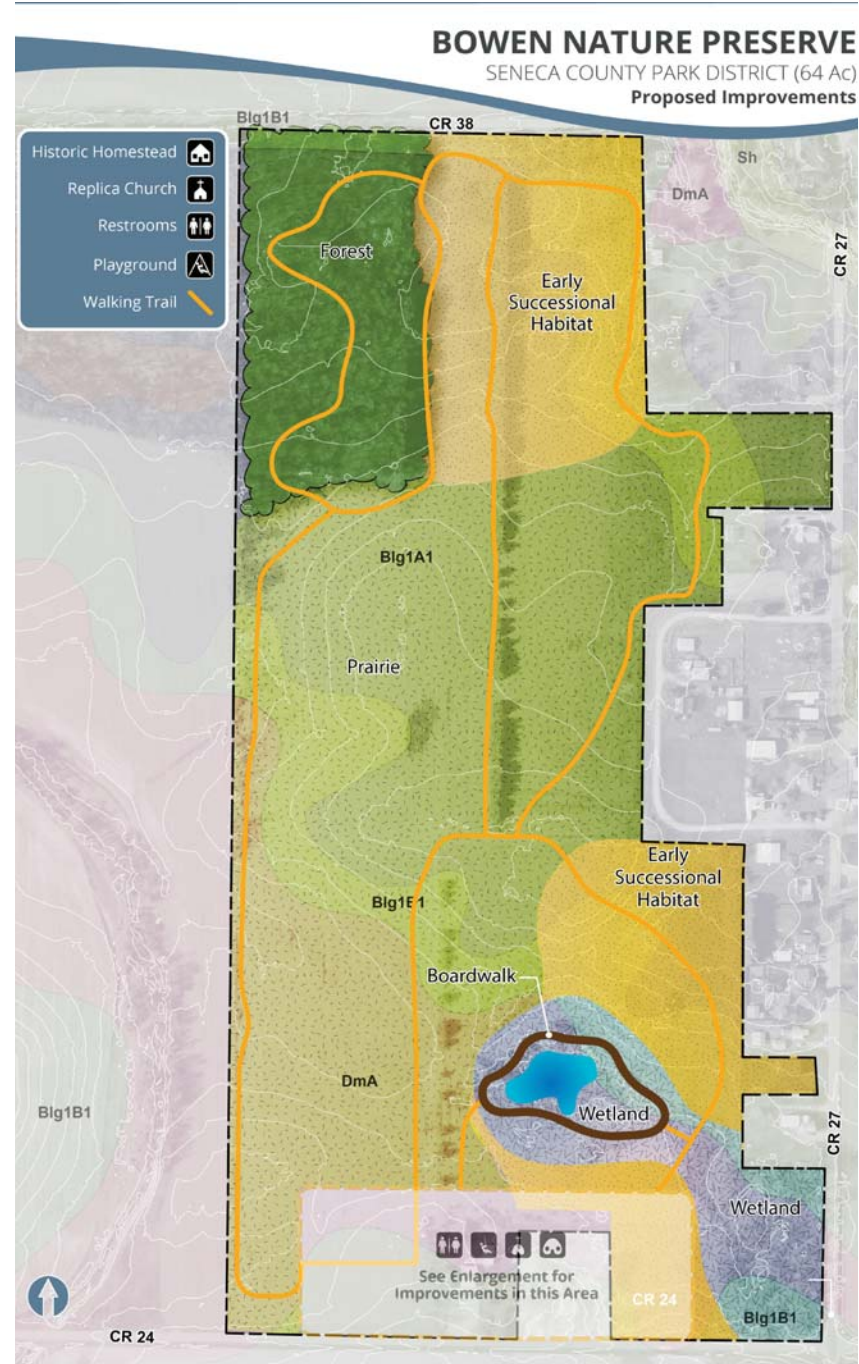
6.3.1 Water Trails - Work collaboratively with other agencies to designate the Sandusky River as a State Water Trail, creating a water trail partnership, securing assistance from ODNR Division of Watercraft, and inventorying existing access and hazard points as well as natural, cultural, and historical features and points of interest. Negotiate dock space and plan for access and amenities at those sites.

6.3.2 Cross-Promotion - Coordinate with agencies and organizations to cross promote events, facilities, and services.

Conceptual Plans for Select Parks

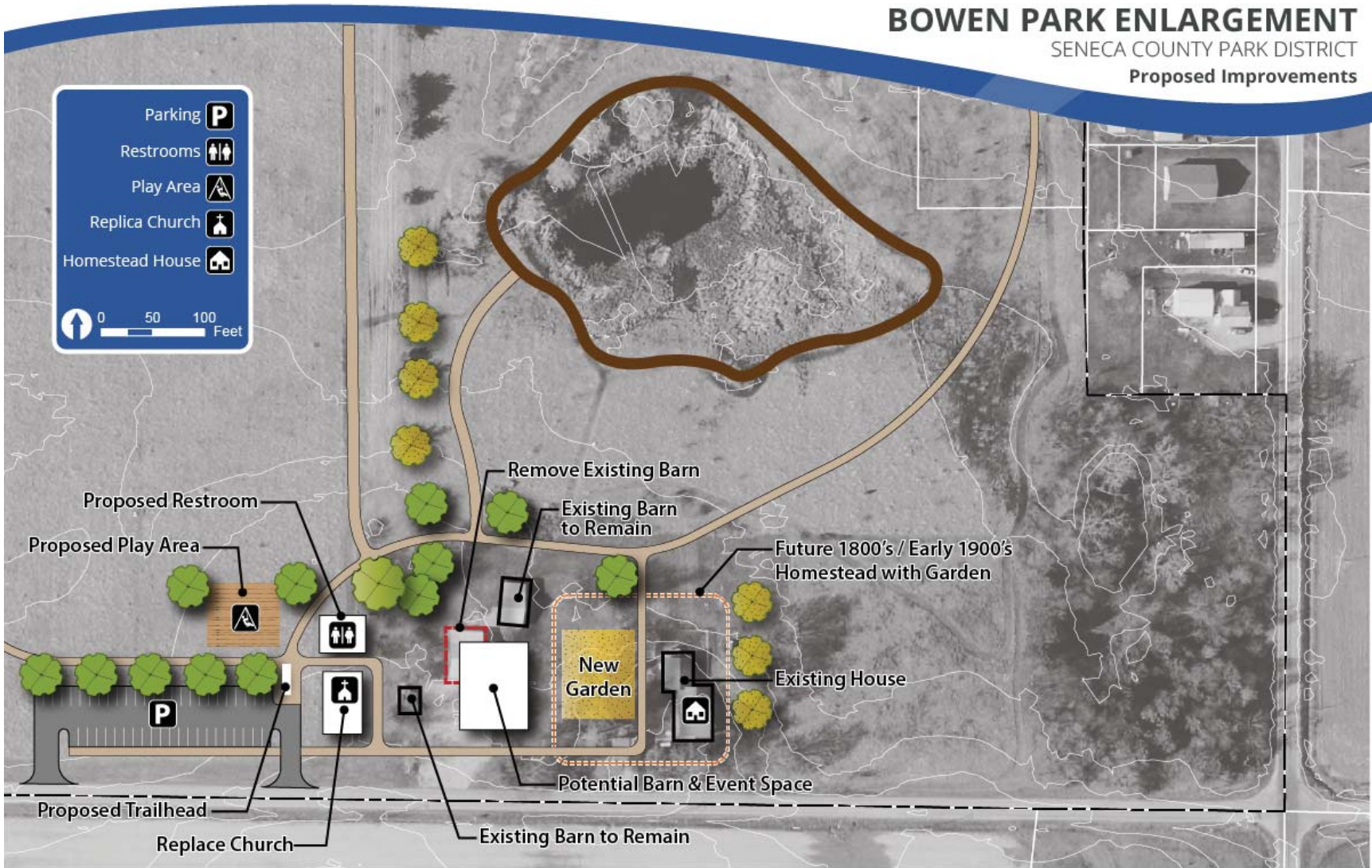
Concept Plans for the following Park District Nature Preserves: Bowen, Garlo, Steyer and Zimmerman illustrate how various improvements can be made to improve amenities for guest comfort (e.g. restrooms), accessibility and recreation.





BOWEN PARK ENLARGEMENT

SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT
Proposed Improvements





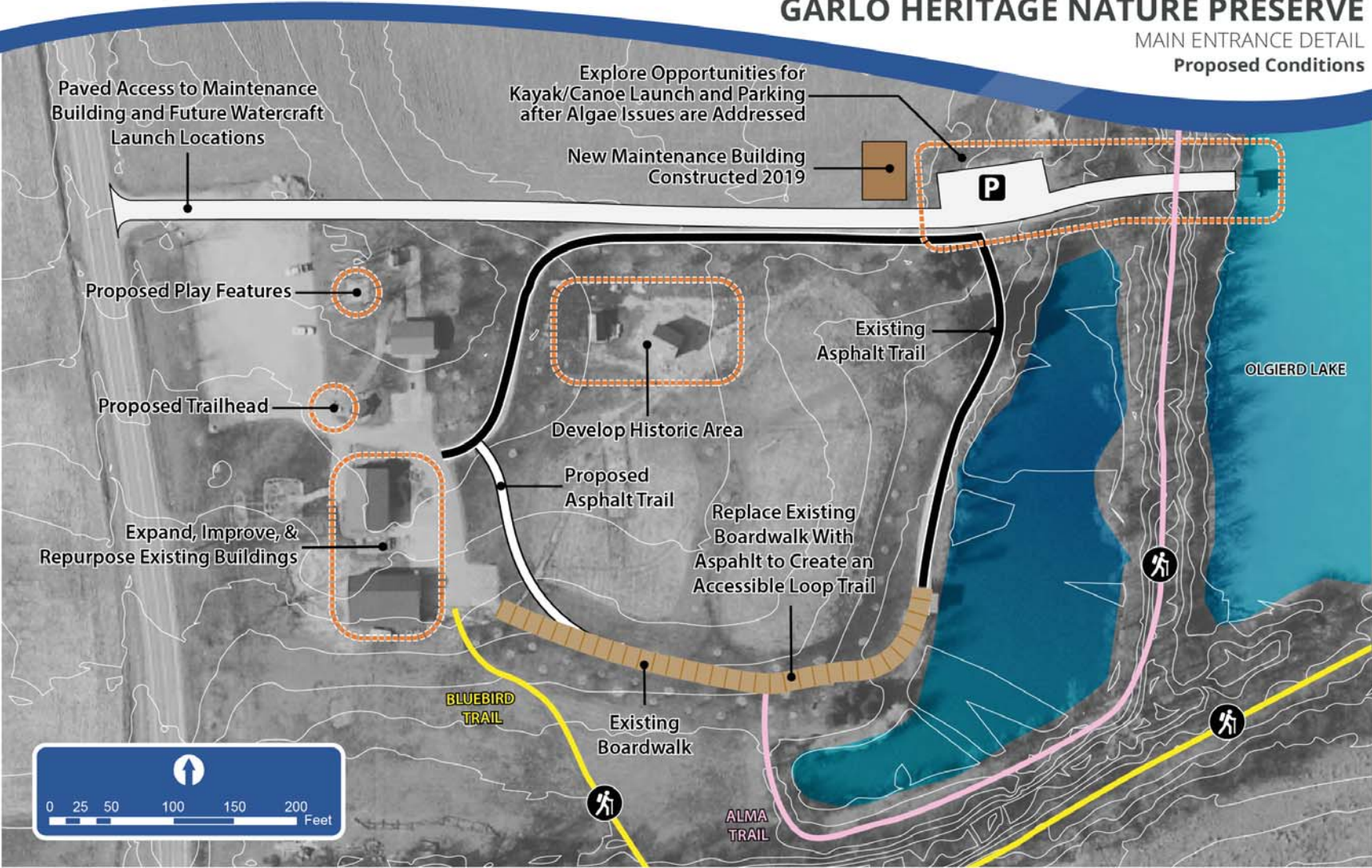
GARLO HERITAGE NATURE PRESERVE

SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (292 Ac)
Proposed Conditions



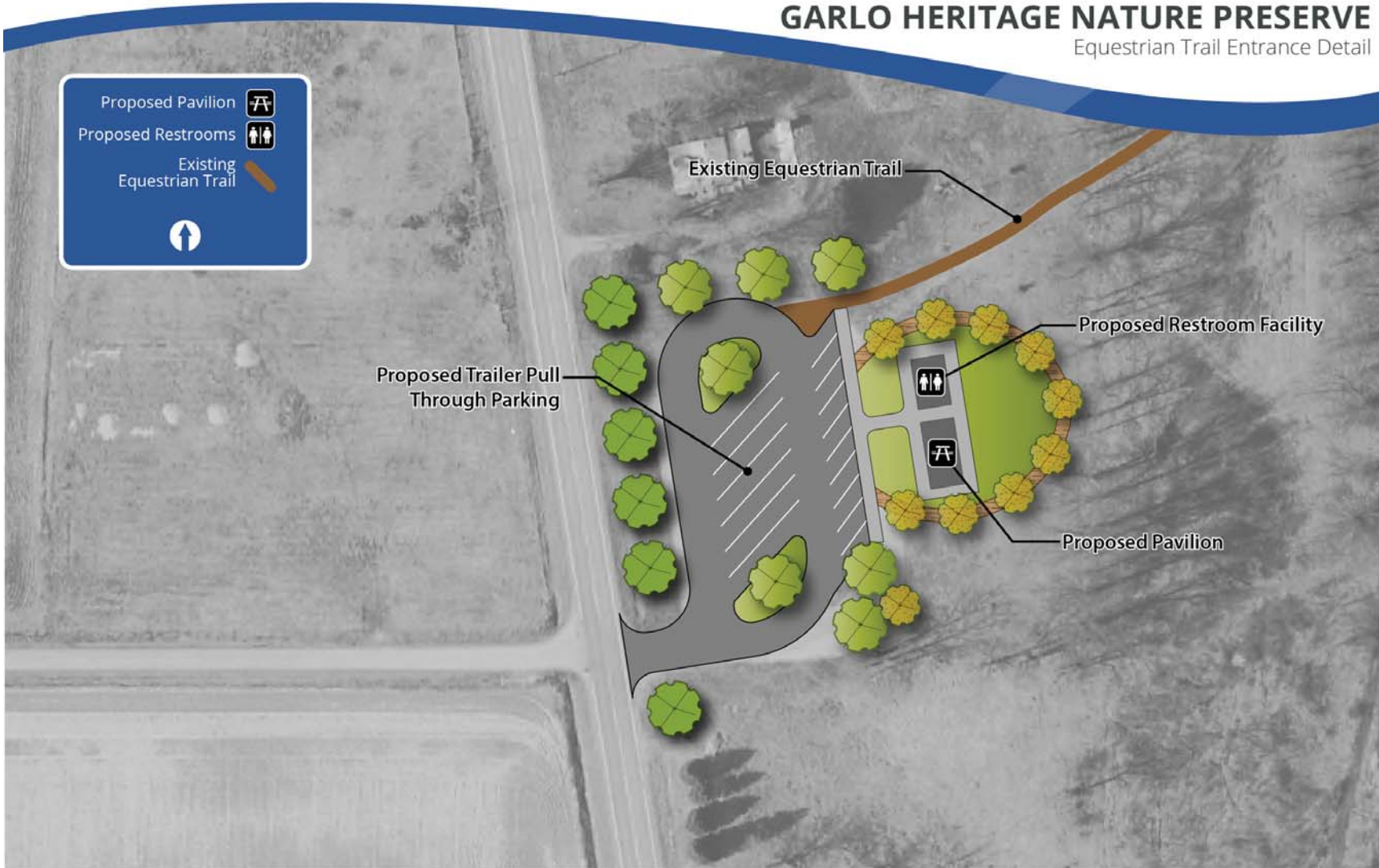
GARLO HERITAGE NATURE PRESERVE

MAIN ENTRANCE DETAIL
Proposed Conditions



GARLO HERITAGE NATURE PRESERVE

Equestrian Trail Entrance Detail

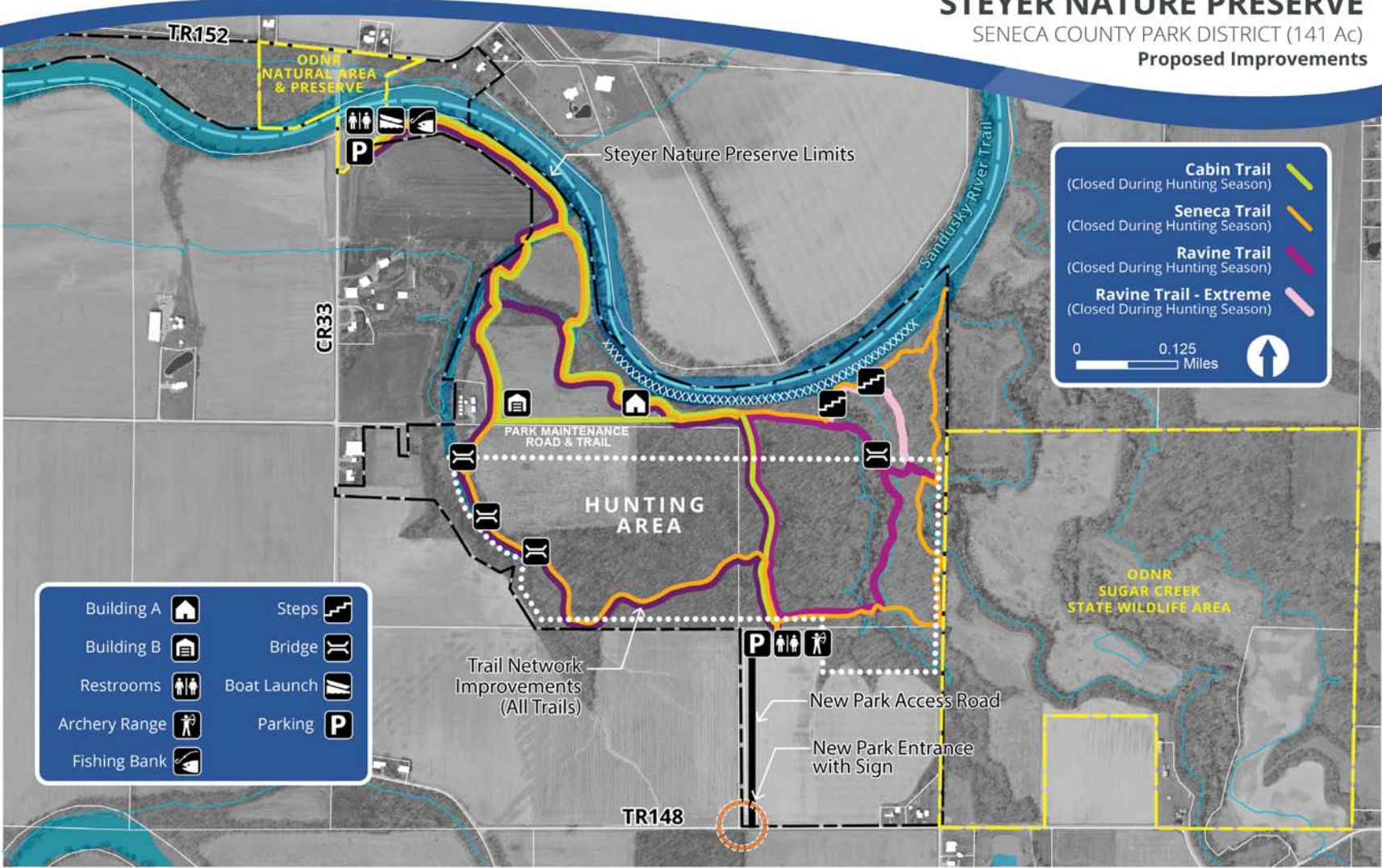




STEYER NATURE PRESERVE

SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (141 Ac)

Proposed Improvements



ZIMMERMAN NATURE PRESERVE

SENECA COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (5.5 Ac)

Proposed Improvements

