BERGMANN
ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS PLANNERS

City of Rochester

Vacuum Oil BOA River Trail

Meeting with PLEX Neighborhood Association
August 16, 2022 – Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees

Dorothy Hall - PLEX
Dorian Hall - PLEX
Donna Hodgins - PLEX
Gwendolyn Kelly - PLEX
Kevin Lester - PLEX
Millena Latimer - PLEX
Regina Geames - PLEX
Kari Talbott – Legal Assistance of Western, NY
Carolyn Delvecchio Hoffman – Monroe County Legislature
Jeff Mroczek – City of Rochester
Robin Schutte – City of Rochester
Tyler Burke – City of Rochester
Zak Steele – Sue Steele Landscape Architecture
Ted Liddell - Bergmann

Presentation

Dorian Hall (PLEX) began the meeting by having participants do a round of introductions followed by a recap of past plans and discussions regarding PLEX Park:

- Stantec worked with the neighborhood to develop a master plan for the park with a grant provided by the Community Design Center Rochester (CDCR) in 2015.
- The plan provided a 3 phased approach for the incorporation of walking trails, multi-use space, playgrounds, and a splash pad.
- There was discussion in the past about Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funds being used for the park but that did not come into fruition.

Jeff Mroczek (City of Rochester) continued the conversation by providing background on the current project:

- Mark Gregor (formerly of the City of Rochester) applied for a DASNY (Dorm Authority of the State Of New York) grant to implement improvements recommended in the Vacuum Oil BOA Master Plan. The City of Rochester was awarded the grant approximately 4 or 5 years ago.
- The scope included in the grant was broad and was retooled to focus on PLEX Park and the trail connection between South Plymouth Avenue and Exchange Blvd.
- Bergmann along with Sue Steele Landscape Architecture (SSLA) were hired as the consultants for the project based on past experience with the Vacuum Oil BOA Master Plan and various other projects in the area included West River Wall Segment 1 (Corn Hill) and Segment 2 (Vacuum Oil Area).

Ted Liddell (Bergmann) and Zak Steele (Sue Steele Landscape Architecture) presented the goals of the project, walked through existing conditions photos of the site, and presented (2) concept plans for the trail alignment through PLEX Park (see attached PDF).

Goals of the Project

- To provide an ADA accessible pedestrian pathway through PLEX Park between South Plymouth Avenue and Exchange Blvd.
- Create a safe and welcoming environment for the PLEX neighborhood to enjoy.
- Implement Phase 1 of the community driven PLEX Community Park Master Plan completed in 2015, which highlighted improvements to pedestrian walkways.
- Set the stage for future improvements to fulfill the community's vision for PLEX Park.

Existing Conditions Photos

- Sight lines into the park are blocked from South Plymouth Avenue and Exchange Blvd by existing vegetation.
- There are areas of scrubby growth along the perimeter fence lines that collect garbage and debris.
- Large patches of Poison Ivy exist on the site immediately adjacent to the trail.
- There are a series of Norway Maples, an invasive species, that should be considered for removal to open sight lines.
- The existing topography in the park varies greatly. There are portions of the existing pathways that are steeper than what is allowed in the ADA guidelines and are not accessible to those with limited abilities or with wheelchairs.
- Two cobra head style light poles exist. They have recently been upgraded with LED fixtures.
- There are drainage issues in the area adjacent to the plastics plant. Roof leaders from the building direct water across turf areas causing dirt and debris to collect on the pathways.
- Existing drainage structures appear to be plugged and water gathers in low areas and slowly dissipates.

- There is evidence of people cutting through the plastics plant parking lot and through the park, creating worn pathways in the grass.
- There is a Green Ash tree near South Plymouth Ave that has a unique look to it and is thriving. The tree should be protected.
- There are several exposed tree root flairs in the park that could be saved to provide a unique sculptural feature.
- There are remnants of a former railroad siding and old utility pole in the park.

Trail Alignment Concept Plans

Two trail alignment concept plans were presented to the group. The main difference between the plans was the Exchange Street entrance. Concept A shows the entrance approximately in it's existing location, Concept B shows the entrance located further to the south, aligning better with the future trail connection to the waterfront to be completed as part of West River Wall Segment 2. Both concept plans achieve the following:

- Provide and ADA accessible path (5% slope or less) between Exchange Street and South Plymouth Ave.
- Save trees where possible while achieving an ADA accessible path.
- Clean up existing scrub vegetation and replace with native species.
- Collect stormwater from the plastics plant roof leaders and direct it to a stormwater collection area and eventually the storm sewer.
- Preserve flat areas in the park for future programming and park elements.
- Locates trees and shrubs along the edge of the park to provide screening and define the park.
- Provide opportunities for future trail connections on the former fire house property.
- Will provide a direct connection from South Plymouth Avenue to the Genesee Riverway Trail when improvements proposed for West River Wall Segment 2 are constructed.

Comments

Throughout the presentation, meeting participants shared their thoughts and concerns. Discussion topics are summarized below:

- Dorian Hall shared that the PLEX Tinker Fair was recently held in PLEX Park. There is no parking in the park and that became and issue during the event. There is not clear entry into the park or view through the park. Fair attendees were directed to the Exchange Street Side of the Park but could not see the activity happening on the South Plymouth side.
- Could the firehouse property be explored for parking or are there other opportunities to provide parking on nearby city owned vacant lots?
- Gwendolyn Kelly raised concerns about the existing trees and vegetation. She does not want to see any trees or vegetation cut down in the park, it provides a natural feel to the space. She also stated plants that attract monarch butterflies and pollinators should be considered in the park.

- The project team asked the group if direct pedestrian access should be provided between the park and the back yards of the housing on Edith Street. This question should be posed to the larger community to see if they would like this connection or not.
- There is no park signage for PLEX Park. Makes it hard to identify the park and let people know it is there.
- Kevin Lester asked if lighting will be considered for the project. He stated it will be important for safety on the site. He asked if solar lighting could be a potential be considered. Carolyn Delvecchio Hoffman and Regina Geames also reiterated the importance of lighting and that it can not be underestimated for safety and people feeling comfortable using the space. The project team stated that lighting is being considered if the budget allows. An RGE grant exists that could help with lighting. The estimates are still be worked out to determine what improvements the project can afford.
- Dorian commented that the view to the Memorial AME Zion Church should be preserved from the park when thinking about new plantings.
- Dorian asked if changing the name of the park is an option. Jeff stated he would bring the subject up to the appropriate people at City Hall to see if this is an option.

Next Steps

- City of Rochester to send the materials shared at the meeting to PLEX and provide a description of the project and the current funding available to aid in their discussions with potential funding sources.
- City will provide the current cost estimate for the trail improvements to PLEX Park.
- A larger public meeting will be planned in the near future. Carlson Commons was offered as a potential location for that meeting.
- Project team to evaluate 2015 PLEX Community Park cost estimate done by Stantec and provide update for today's dollars.

Vacuum Oil BOA River Trail

Goals of the Project

1. To provide an **ADA accessible pedestrian pathway** through PLEX Park between Exchange Blvd and S. Plymouth Ave
2. Create a **safe and welcoming environment** for the PLEX neighborhood to enjoy
3. Implement Phase 1 of the **community driven** PLEX Community Park Master Plan completed in 2015
4. Set the stage for future improvements to **fulfill the community's vision** for PLEX Park

Phase 1 of the PLEX Community Park Master Plan identified improvements to the pedestrian pathways in 2015

Existing Site

Scale: 1" = 60"

0' 60'

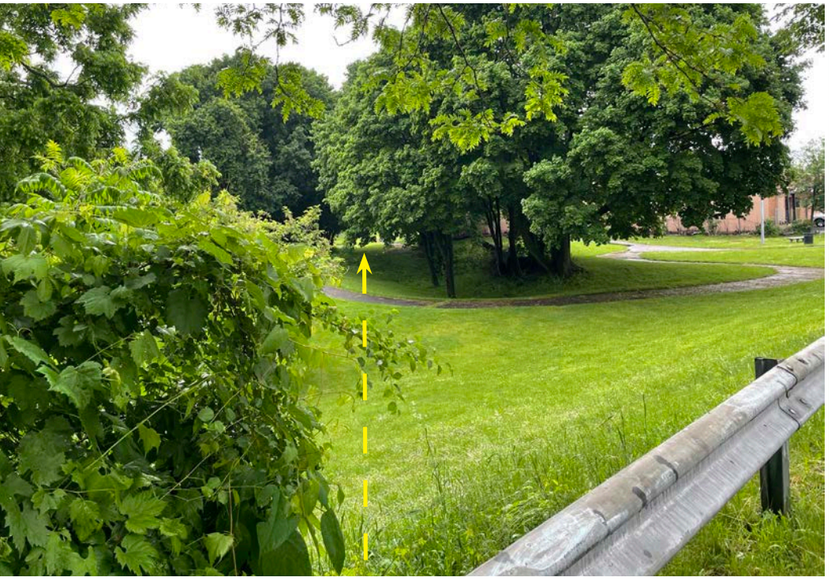
NORTH

Exchange-Plymouth Sight Lines

open up a wide central sight line to Plymouth

open up a wide central sight line to Exchange

n. maples blocking view from Exchange sidewalk



open up a wide central sight line to Plymouth

open up a wide central sight line to Exchange

low branching oaks blocking view from Plymouth

Existing Photos - Exchange Area

"flat" area near Exchange, (former) playground location

n. maples along railroad siding wall

Exchange Street and sloped area

brush and maples along east edge

extensive poison ivy along railroad siding wall

extensive poison ivy along pathway

Existing Photos - Middle Area

drainage issue area, looking towards Plymouth

drainage issue area along path and (plugged?) inlet

drainage issue area and adjacent property retaining wall

drainage issue & debris, looking towards Exchange

ponding in low area after rain

adj. property / wall view between english and red oak

Existing Photos - Plymouth Area

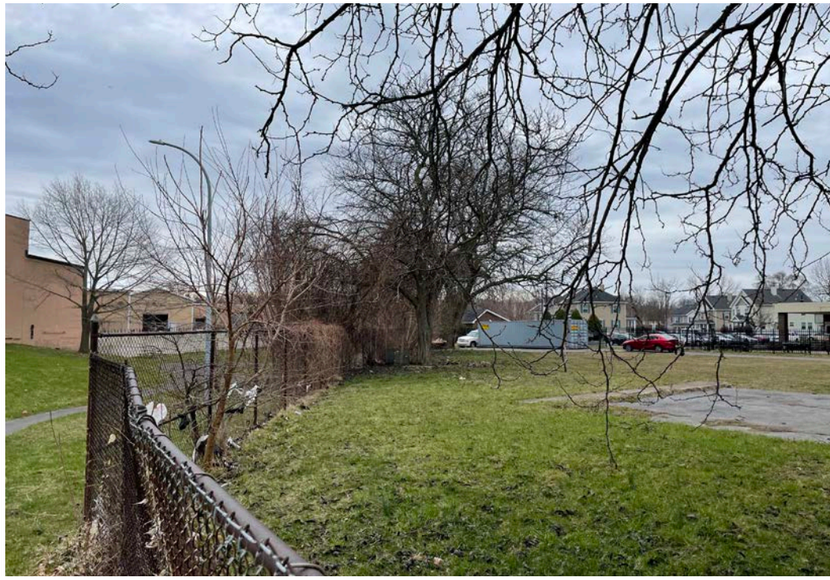
pavement area with unknown circle feature

view from Plymouth, "goat pathing" line in foreground

looking south on Plymouth sidewalk

view from Plymouth sidewalk to site and adj. building

green ash near Plymouth, looking towards street



former fire station property with fencing, wall, etc.

Existing Photos - Site Features / Misc.

one of several interesting and sculptural root flairs (n. maple)

unknown surface and subgrade railroad siding infrastructure

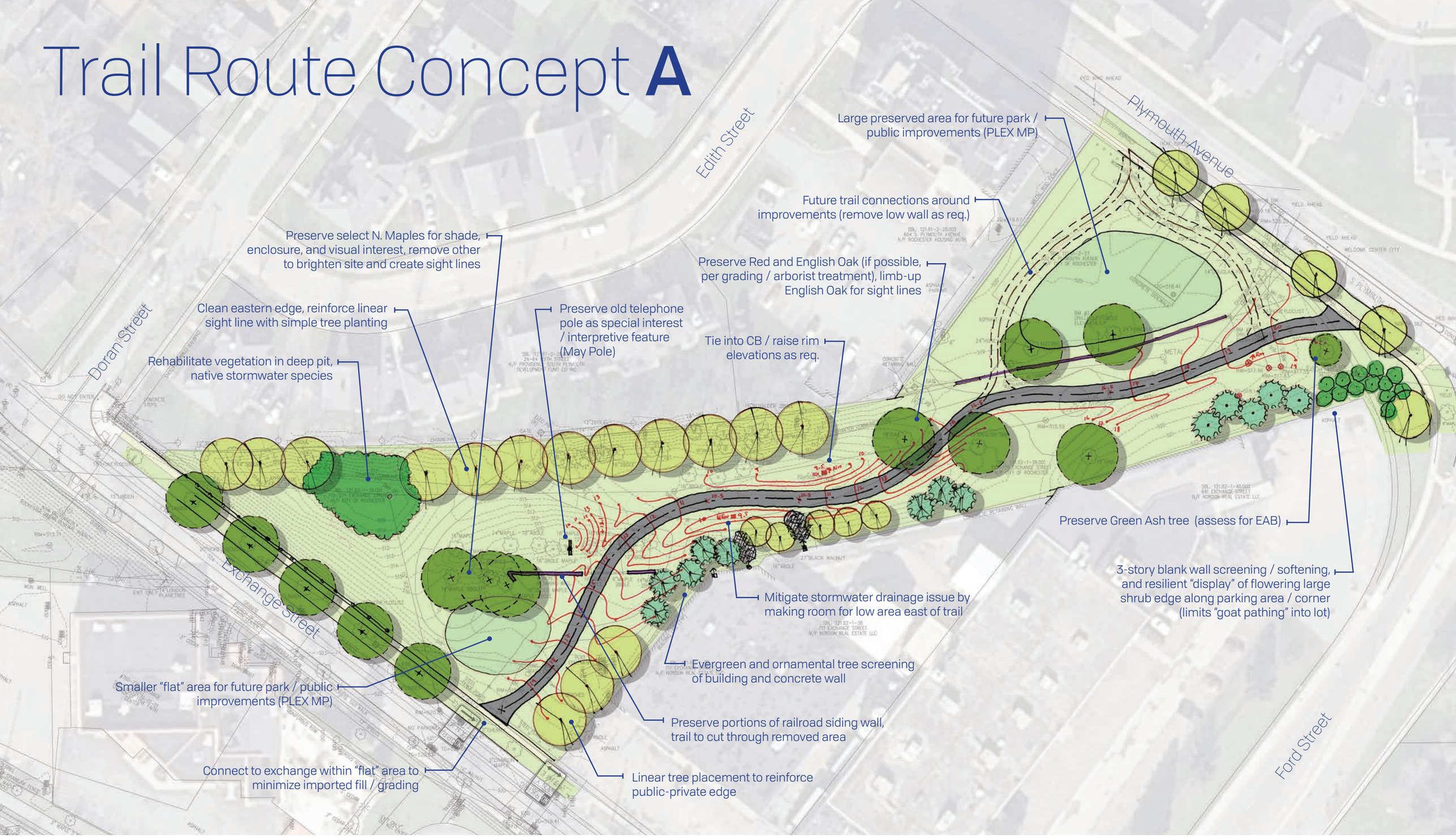
parking lot and cut through "goat pathing" (Plymouth to Ford St.)

wall drain hole (1 of dozens) with undercut

building drainage into site (roof?)

trash collection within eastern brush line (also along adj. prop. wall)

Trail Route Concept **A**

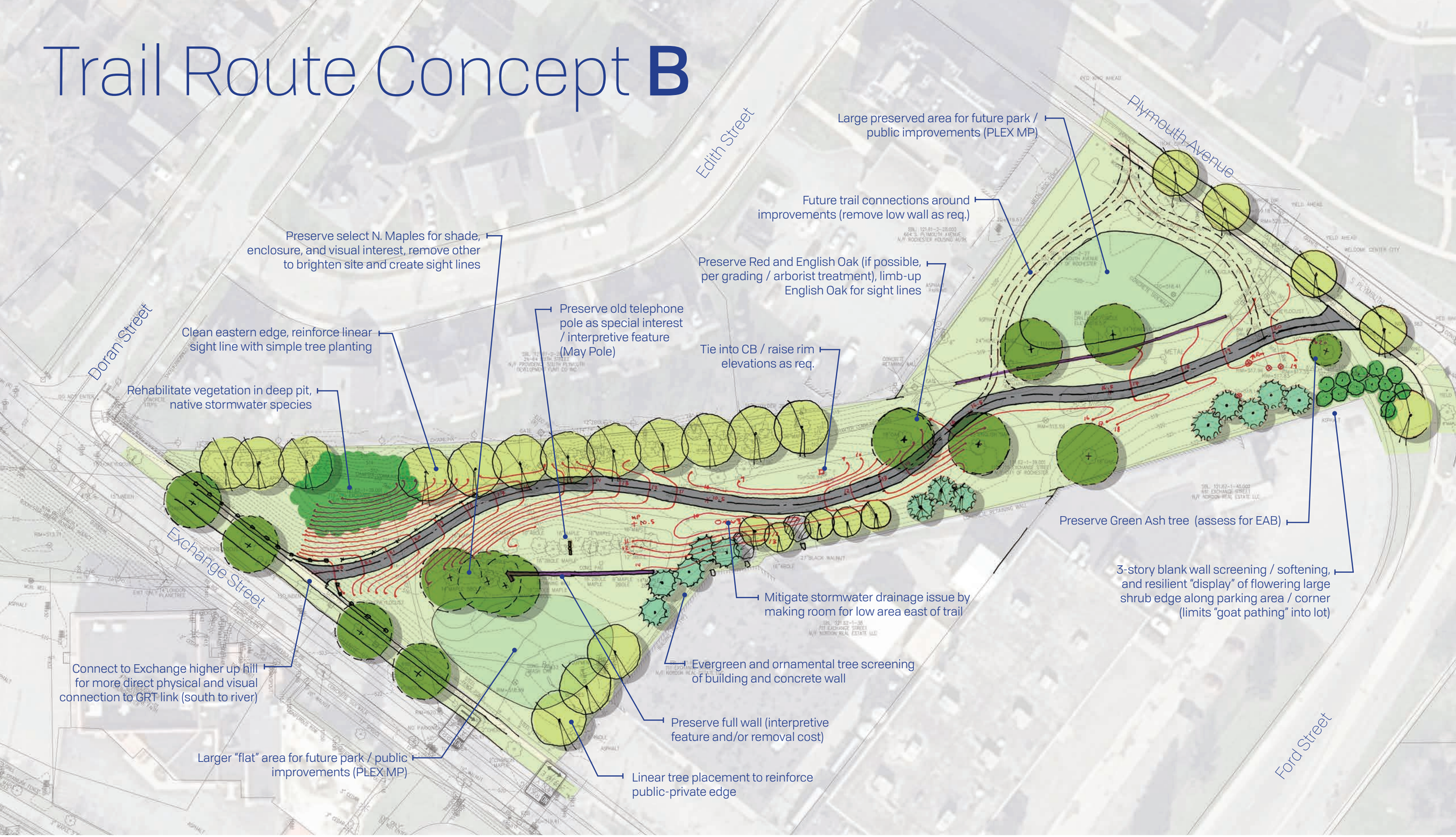


Scale: 1" = 60"

0' 60'

NORTH

Trail Route Concept **B**



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