

III. SITE INFORMATION & ANALYSIS

LAND DESCRIPTION

Shields Farm Park spans about 145 acres of a mix of wooded areas and former farmland, offering a blend of natural beauty and recreational space. There's a historic log cabin at its core, surrounded by nature trails that wind along the property's perimeter. Open meadows provide spaces for sports fields, festivals like the Apple 'n Arts, and casual exploration.

PARCEL 57-13-00-0-019 - DEED: DB 2357 PG 411

- Purchased June 21, 1980 with a matching state grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (formerly Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs) and a donation equal to half of the $288,000 purchase price from the Shields family descendants.
- Purchase was a collaboration between Delmont Borough/ Salem Crossroads Historical Society and Shields Family.
- The acquisition was funded in part through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program.
- The Deed is dated June 3, 1980, and was recorded with Westmoreland County on June 4, 1980.

KNOWN EASEMENTS

- Dominion Transmission Right-of-Way Agreement (2008, 2010, Modification 2010, and Modification 2013)
- Lease of Surface for Gas Storage Purposes (1998)
- West Penn Power Right-of-Way Agreement (2012, 2018)
- Sewer Line Easement, Royal Window and Door Profiles Plant 13, INC. (2013)
- Future park improvements must respect the boundaries of recorded easements, and design work should include coordination with utility providers and legal counsel to ensure compliance.

PARCEL 57-13-00-0-147 - DEED: DB 2837 PG 363

- Land containing the historical Log Cabin.
- Purchase was a collaboration between Salem Crossroads Historical Restoration Society, Inc. (Grantor) and Delmont Borough.
- The Deed is dated October 1, 1988, and was recorded with Westmoreland County on October 21, 1988.



ENTRANCES

The Fairview Street entrance is a small, neighborhood-scale access point. At present, it has no designated parking and is primarily used by pedestrians walking in from the surrounding residential area. The entrance provides direct access into the park but is limited in terms of vehicle access or capacity for larger groups.

The East Pittsburgh Street entrance serves as the main access point to Shields Farm Park, particularly during large-scale events. It currently consists of gravel drives and open grass areas used for event parking. While it accommodates more vehicles than Fairview Street, traffic can be challenging during peak event times, as this entrance is heavily relied upon for major festivals and community gatherings.



SURFACE FEATURES

Shields Farm Park consists primarily of gently rolling open fields with areas of maintained grass, scattered mature trees, and unpaved walking paths. The landscape includes a gravel parking area, ballfields, composting area, open event lawns, and a mix of cleared and naturally vegetated areas, reflecting its historic use as farmland. There are no significant slopes or bodies of water, and much of the land remains unimproved, maintaining a rural and flexible character suitable for festivals, sports, and passive recreation.

A Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) search was conducted for the project location. The resulting Conservation Explorer report indicated no known impacts to threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitats, or significant ecological areas within the project area.

HISTORIC FEATURES

Shields Farm Park features several historic elements tied to Delmont's early settlement, including the original 1800s Shields log cabin, currently used in the annual Christmas Pilgrimage. The site also once housed the R.J. Shields tannery, and the open fields reflect its agricultural heritage, now home to events like the Apple 'n Arts Festival. The landscape retains elements of its historic farm layout, with mature trees, open meadows, and seasonal displays of antique farm equipment.



Photo:
Parick Varne -
Tribune-Review

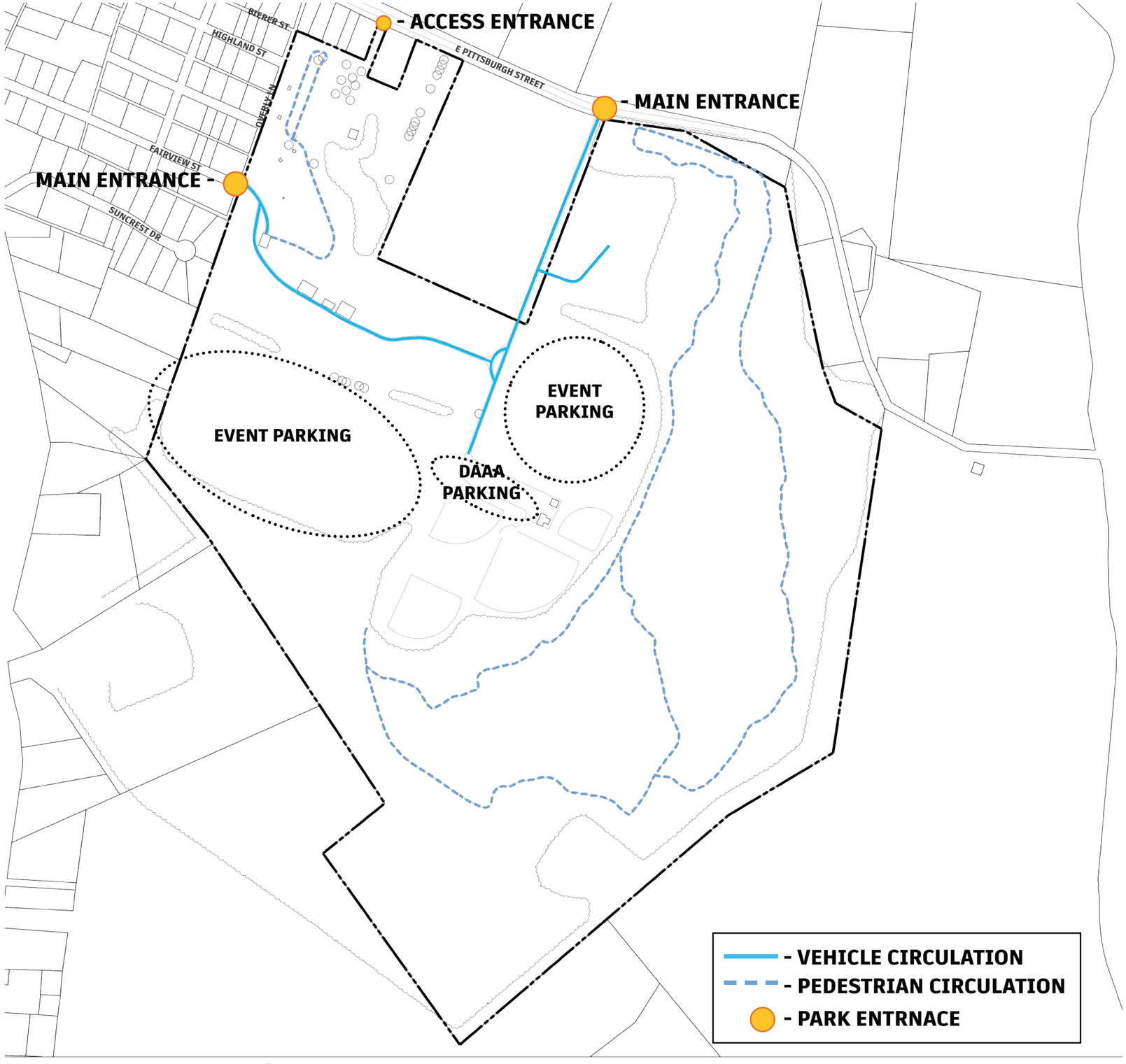


ACCESS & CIRCULATION

The map to the right shows the (2) main entrances to the park along with an additional access point which isn't typically used as an entrance, but is available if needed. The map also shows the gravel roads used for vehicular access, and the pedestrian only pathways and hiking trails (dashed). Residents complain that the current pedestrian path is crumbling and uneven. Also shown is the gravel parking area for the DAAA Ballfields and the areas used for event parking.







FLOOD PLAIN

Shields Farm Park is not located within a federally designated flood zone, and most of Delmont Borough is considered to have relatively low flood risk overall. While there is a Zone A flood area near Beaver Run in neighboring Salem Township, just beyond the gas company property, it does not directly affect Shields Farm Park.

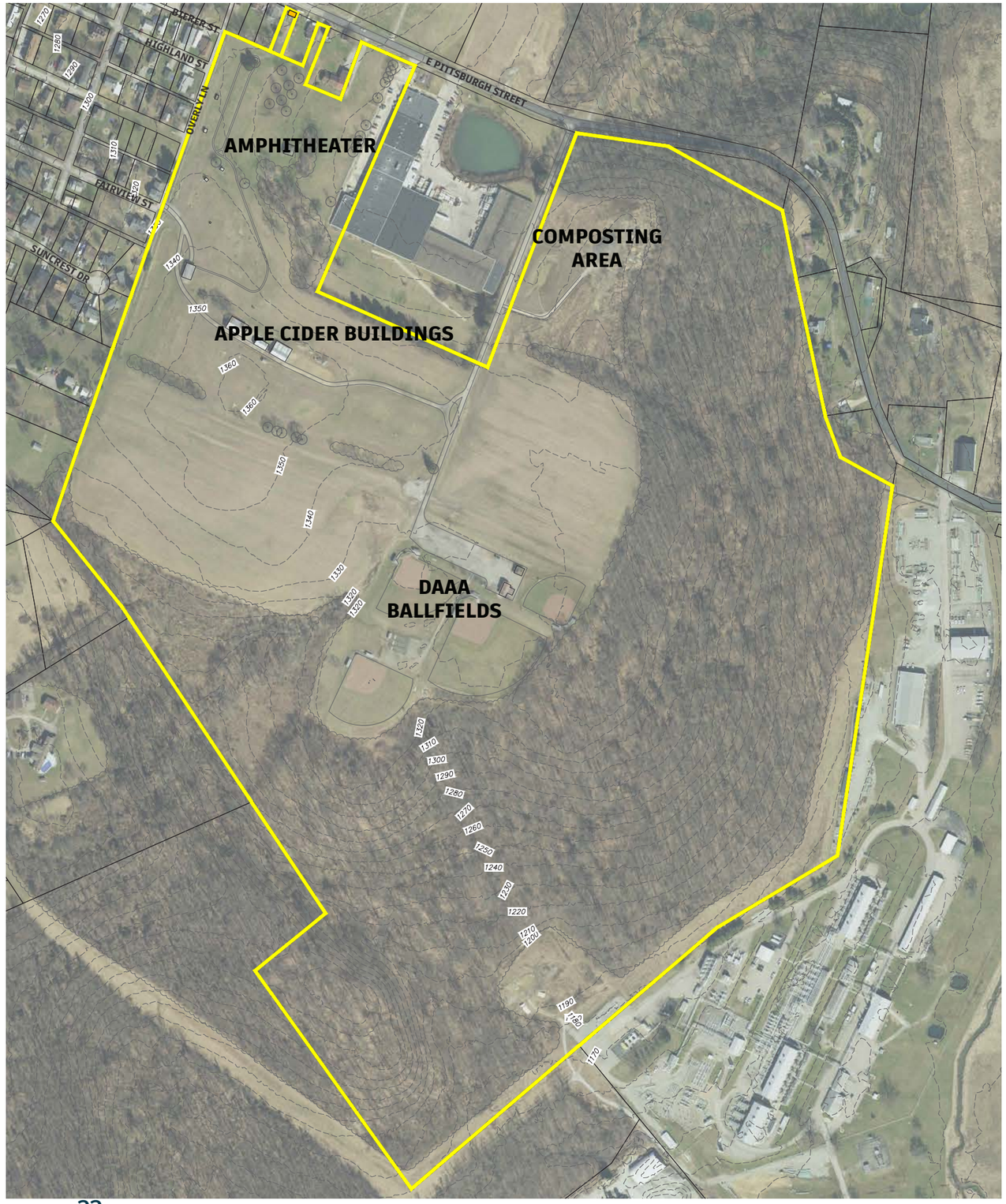


TOPOGRAPHY

The main area of the park sits atop a hill, with the land gently sloping down toward the surrounding wooded areas. According to local residents and steering committee members, water tends to collect in low-lying areas near the amphitheater and within the event parking area north of the DAAA ballfields.

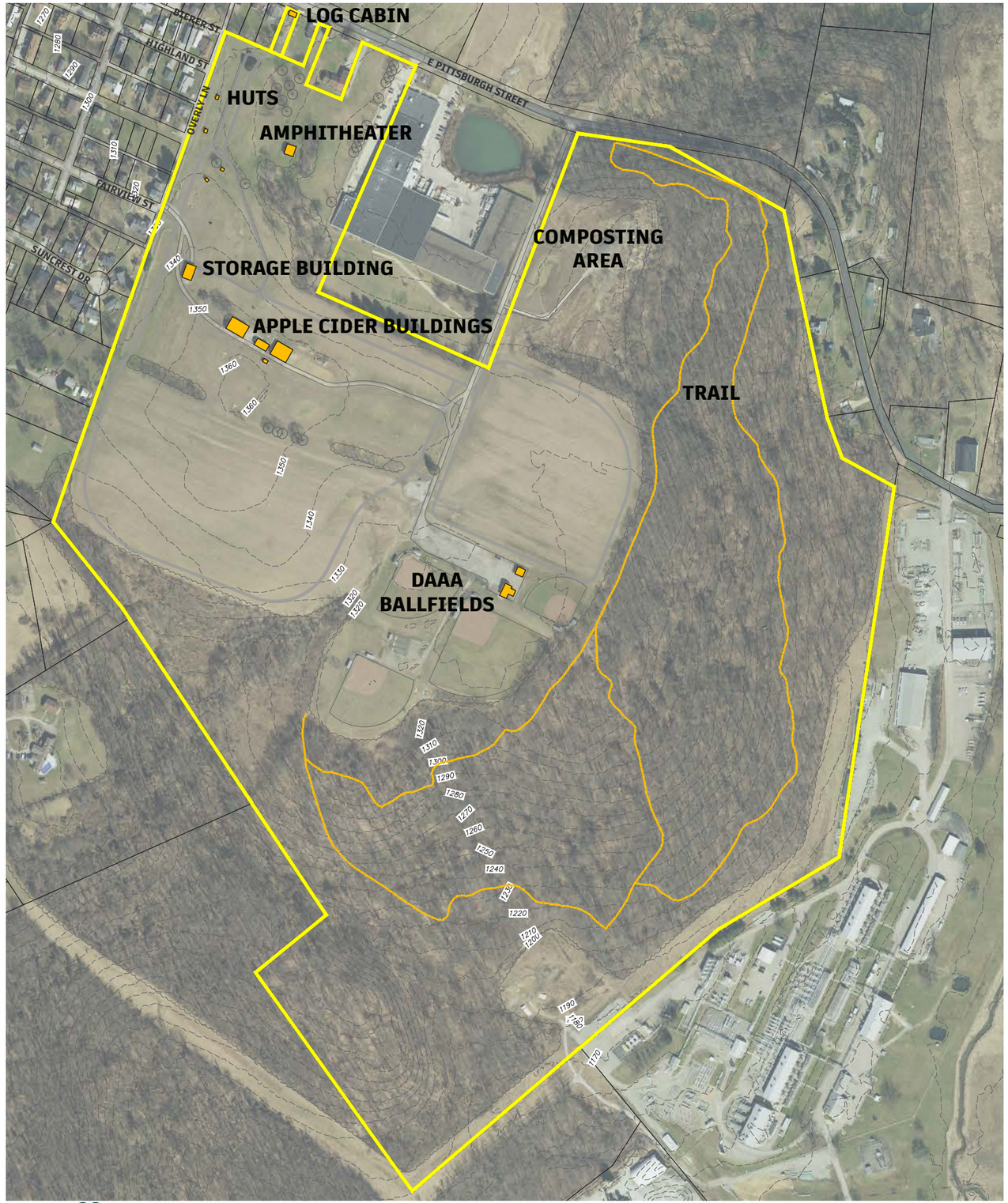
SURROUNDING LAND USE

Surrounding land use, based on the Delmont Borough Zoning Map, is primarily residential, with pockets of commercial development located near the park. Future improvements to Shields Farm Park should take into account the proximity of these nearby residential areas to ensure compatibility and minimize potential impacts. (See the Appendix for the Delmont Borough Zoning Map - Exhibit B)



OWNED BUILDINGS ON THE PROPERTY

Although Delmont Borough technically owns all of the buildings and facilities at Shields Farm Park, agreements are in place with several organizations that allow them to use and maintain certain structures. The Borough directly maintains the log cabin, amphitheater, and storage garage, as well as the huts along the walking path, which are actively used by the Pilgrimage Committee during the annual Christmas Pilgrimage. The Fort Allen Antique Farm Equipment Association is responsible for maintaining the old barns/Apple Cider buildings, which they use for storage and for hosting events such as the Apple 'n Arts Festival. The Delmont Area Athletic Association (DAAA) utilizes and maintains the buildings (concession/storage/restrooms) directly adjacent to the ballfields as part of their operations. In addition to these facilities, the park also features a wooded trail system originally developed by the Boy Scouts, which remains an important recreational asset for walking and hiking. This shared arrangement balances Borough ownership with organizational use and ensures that each group plays a role in maintaining the spaces and structures they rely on.



DEVELOPMENT LIMITATIONS

Based on community feedback, site conditions, and surrounding context, several key factors may present limitations or considerations for future development at Shields Farm Park.

- Preservation of Natural Character - Residents want to preserve the park's open, natural setting and avoid making it resemble more developed parks nearby. They prefer minimal, low-impact features that support passive use and events. Several also stressed that any new structures should match the local architectural style and fit the surrounding landscape.
- Infrastructure & Maintenance Constraints - Several respondents raised concerns about the borough's capacity to maintain new facilities, such as restrooms, trails, or expanded landscaping.
- Access and Traffic Management - Feedback noted congestion during major events, particularly near the amphitheater and DAAA ballfields. Improvements must account for limited road capacity, the need for better traffic flow, and possibly expanded or reconfigured parking—without negatively impacting nearby residential areas.
- Minor Drainage & Water Retention Issues - Some areas, such as around the amphitheater and event parking, experience water pooling after rain. Development in these locations may require grading, drainage improvements, or stormwater management to prevent site usability issues.
- Adjacent Land Uses - The park is bordered bya residential neighborhood with nearby commercial uses, meaning any development must be sensitive to noise, lighting, and traffic impacts.

While there is room for thoughtful enhancements, development at Shields Farm Park should remain context-sensitive, low-impact, and maintainable, preserving the park's natural and historic identity while responding to community needs.







IV. ACTIVITIES & FACILITIES

INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

The following section includes an inventory and analysis of existing recreational facilities and amenities at Shields Farm Park, along with proposed improvements, programming, and connections. The accompanying map highlights key areas and features within the park. This evaluation identifies the types of recreation offered—both active and passive—and how proposed changes could expand the park's ability to serve a broader range of community needs.

APPLE 'N ARTS FESTIVAL

The Apple 'n Arts Festival is a long-standing annual event held at Shields Farm Park, typically on the first weekend of October. Established in 1982, the festival has become one of the borough's most popular traditions, drawing thousands of visitors each year.

The event features over 100 craft and food vendors, showcasing handmade goods, seasonal treats, and local specialties. A major highlight is the operation of a 1907 antique apple press, which celebrates the region's agricultural roots and gives the festival its name. The festival also includes live entertainment, tractor displays, children's activities, and community fundraising efforts that benefit local organizations such as the library, fire department, and food pantry.

CHRISTMAS PILGRIMAGE

The Delmont Christmas Pilgrimage is an annual holiday event held at Shields Farm Park, featuring live nativity scenes, costumed reenactments, and community displays that tell the story of Christmas.



Proposed walking path
Existing vehicular circulation
Existing pedestrian circulation

EXISTING PASSIVE & ACTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

At Shields Farm Park, users engage in both active and passive recreation, offering a flexible mix of experiences for a variety of visitors. Active recreation involves activities that require physical effort, such as sports or fitness, while passive recreation includes more relaxed uses that require little exertion, like walking or enjoying nature.

Active recreation at Shields Farm Park includes the DAAA baseball fields, where organized games and practices take place, as well as the amphitheater, which supports live performances and community events. The park's large open green spaces are also used for informal active recreation, such as flying kites, running, or playing with dogs.

Passive recreation opportunities at the park include walking, enjoying the open scenery, and visiting areas like the community composting site, which promotes sustainability and quiet, educational interaction with the land. The open fields also support event parking and flexible community use during festivals and gatherings, adapting to seasonal needs.

FACILITY CONDITIONS

The following is additional information for selected existing facilities at the Park. Information on their condition and recreation type is also included.

Log Cabin

- **Facility: The cabin isn't currently used for everyday programming, but it serves as a focal point during seasonal events like the Christmas Pilgrimage. Steering Committee members mentioned needing additional ADA parking/access to the rear of the building. Property is maintained by Delmont Borough.**
- **Condition: Good with proper maintenance. Since it's a historical building, there is wear-and-tear that reflects its age, but is still in good condition.**
- **Recreation Type: Passive**

Apple Cider Buildings

- **Facility: The apple cider buildings at the Park are currently used seasonally during the Apple 'n Arts Festival, primarily as event backdrops and limited storage. They are not in active, regular use and remain closed to the public outside of festival operations. Buildings and surrounding areas are maintained by Fort Allen.**
- **Condition: The buildings show signs of aging, with reported issues. While still standing, they are in poor to fair condition and may require repairs to remain usable and safe.**
- **Recreation Type: Passive**

DAAA Ballfields

- **Facility: Youth baseball fields located on the eastern side of the park. Well-maintained grass playing surfaces, basic dugouts, backstops, restrooms, and surrounding fencing. Adjacent to the fields are gravel parking areas, which are shared with other park users and event attendees. Buildings and surrounding areas are maintained by the Delmont Area Athletic Association.**
- **Condition: Good and well-maintained. Could use additional parking.**
- **Recreation Type: Active**

Amphitheater

- **Facility: The amphitheater at Shields Farm Park is a modest, open-air performance area used for community events, concerts, and festival programming. It features a simple raised stage structure and is surrounded by grassy lawn seating, allowing for flexible, informal gatherings. Building is maintained by Delmont Borough.**
- **Condition: The amphitheater at Shields Farm Park is in functional but basic condition. While it remains usable for events, it shows signs of weathering and wear, and may benefit from future upgrades to improve accessibility, durability, and aesthetics.**
- **Recreation Type: Passive**

FACILITY CONDITIONS ...CONT.

The following is additional information for selected existing facilities at the Park. Information on their condition and recreation type is also included.

Small Pilgrimage Buildings

- Facility: These smaller buildings located along the walking path are used to support the Christmas Pilgrimage. These buildings are maintained by the Pilgrimage. The walking loop adjacent to these buildings are in need of major repairs as they are crumbling.
- Condition: Good
- Recreation Type: Passive

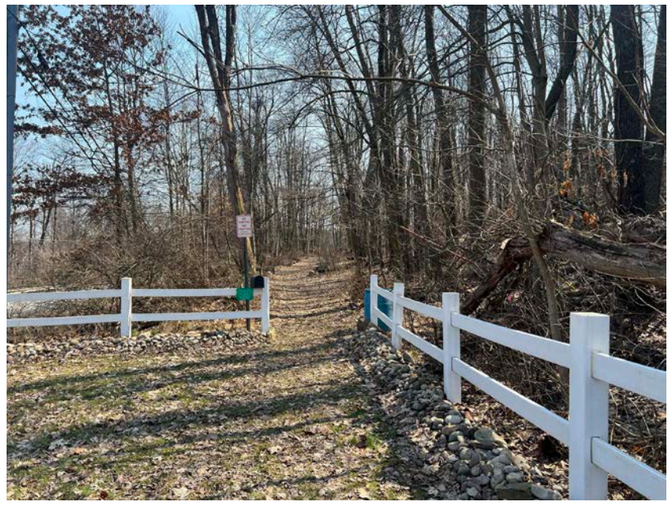
Trails

- Facility: The wooded trails at Shields Farm Park wind through the tree-covered areas along the park's perimeter, offering a more shaded and natural walking experience. These narrow, unpaved paths provide opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking, nature walks, and quiet exploration. The trails are maintained by the local Boy Scouts.
- Condition: Usable and well-loved by visitors, some sections show minor erosion, uneven ground, and vegetation overgrowth, requiring periodic upkeep to maintain safe and easy access.
- Recreation Type: Passive/Active

Storage Building

- Facility: The storage building/garage at Shields Farm Park is a simple, functional structure located near the center of the property. It is primarily used for equipment and storage throughout the year but also serves a seasonal role as the stable in the live nativity scene during the annual Delmont Christmas Pilgrimage.
- Condition: Good and well-maintained.
- Recreation Type: Passive







BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

The map shown on the right showcases the locations of the buildings and the facilites described on the previous pages





V. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

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CONSIDERATIONS

Design considerations for Shields Farm Park should balance functionality, accessibility, and preservation. New features should use durable, low-maintenance materials, meet ADA standards, and complement the park's natural and historic character. Careful attention should be given to site drainage, pedestrian circulation, and maintaining open views while integrating improvements that enhance both active and passive recreation.

ADA Accessibility

- Ensure all new trails, restrooms, playgrounds, and gathering spaces meet ADA standards.
- Incorporate accessible parking, smooth trail surfaces, and inclusive playground equipment for users of all abilities.

Playground Design

- Select age-appropriate, inclusive equipment that supports active play while blending with the park's natural setting.
- Consider placing play areas near high-use spaces like the ballfields or pavilions for convenience and visibility.
- Consider adding lighting to the space to deter after-hour usage.

Material Selection

- Use durable, low-maintenance materials (e.g., stone, wood, recycled composite) that can withstand heavy use and seasonal weather.
- Choose finishes and colors that match the local architectural style and complement the park's historic character.

Vegetation & Landscaping

- Incorporate native plants and trees to support biodiversity, reduce maintenance, and enhance the park's natural beauty.
- Use vegetation to provide shade, define pathways, and support stormwater management.

Historic Preservation

- Protect and integrate historic features like the log cabin, cider buildings, and original farm layout into any new improvements.
- Avoid new construction that visually competes with or overshadows these historic elements.

Land Development & Circulation

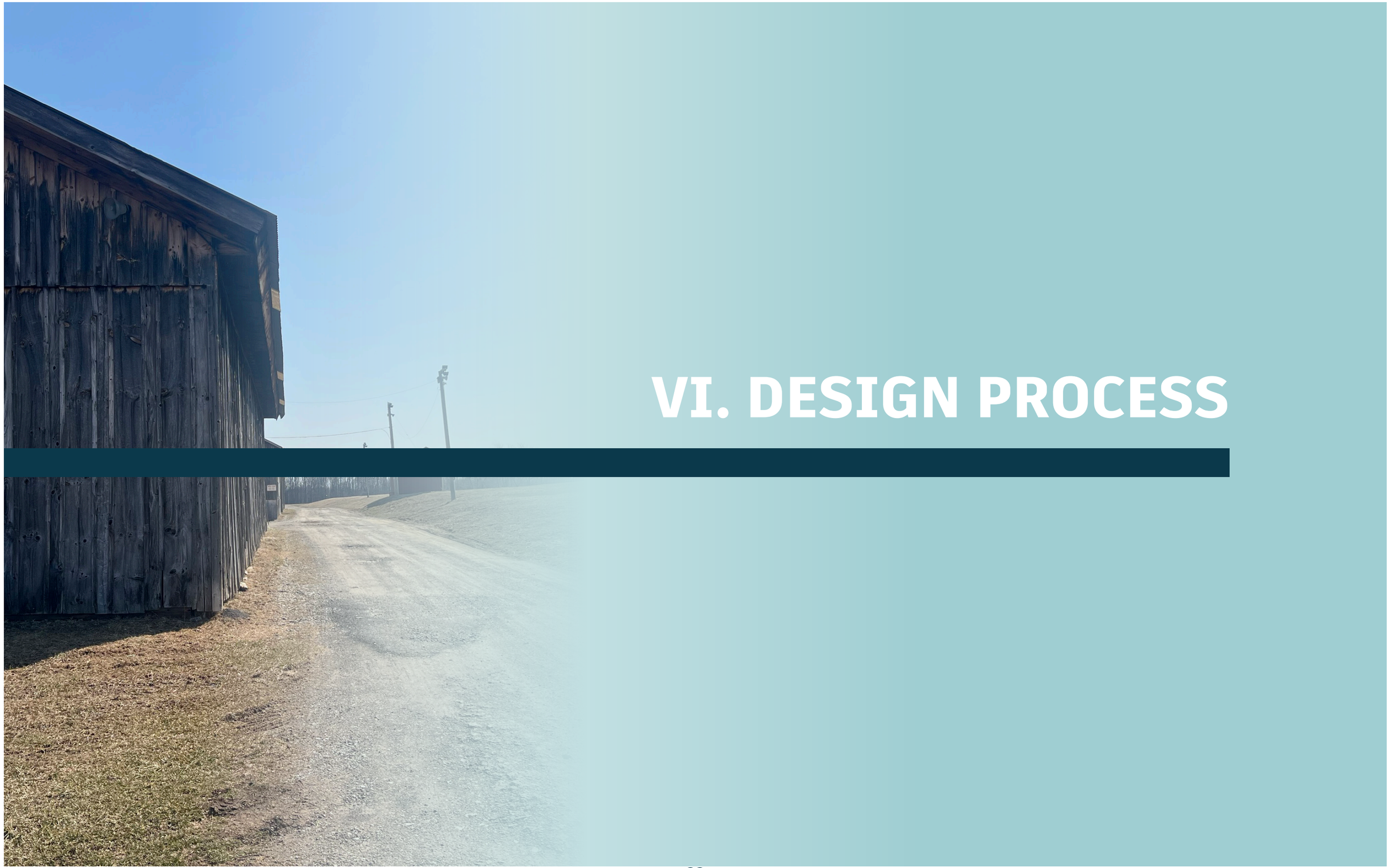
- Design for efficient traffic flow and safe pedestrian access, especially during large events.
- Plan for event parking, service access, and maintenance routes that minimize impact on the landscape.

Drainage & Site Conditions

- Address known water retention areas, especially near the amphitheater and event parking, through grading or green infrastructure.
- Use permeable materials where appropriate to reduce runoff.

Disk Golf

- Ensure safe buffer zones and consider course flow and how that integrates with the natural landscape.



VI. DESIGN PROCESS

DESIGN PROCESS

INITIAL PARK IMPROVEMENT IDEAS

In March 2025, a site visit was conducted with steering committee members Jeffery and Andrew to walk Shields Farm Park and discuss early improvement ideas. Their insights were informed by firsthand experience with the site and guidance from the borough's comprehensive parks plan. The visit helped identify key opportunities to improve circulation, amenities, and recreational offerings. The following ideas emerged from that discussion:

Proposed Facilities & Amenities

- **Two pavilions and a restroom** located near the center of the park
- **One pavilion with an attached restroom** near the amphitheater
- **New playground** near the new gathering areas at the center of the park, but separate from those facilities
- **Disc golf course** tucked into areas of the park that won't interfere with daily activities or events.

Proposed Parking

- **Trail entrance parking** near E. Pittsburgh Street
- **Bus parking** near DAAA ballfields
- **Amphitheater parking** with ADA access
- **Fairview Street entrance parking**
- **Parking near the new central pavilions and restrooms**
- **ADA-Accessible parking** at the Log Cabin
- **Event parking** for the festivals

Trails & Circulation

- **8' Perimeter Walking/Biking Path**
- **Complete trail connections** throughout the park



DESIGN PROCESS

Following the initial park improvement ideas, we met with the steering committee twice—once in person and once virtually—to review and refine the concepts shared by Jeff and Andy. With the committee's guidance, these ideas were evaluated and evolved throughout the planning process. Their feedback was instrumental in shaping a more detailed and functional vision for the park.

Based on these discussions, we developed a draft master plan that incorporated additional ideas and adjustments. For example, the playground was relocated closer to the two central pavilions, and parking was added near the first hole of the disc golf course, which also connects to the perimeter walking and biking trail. We also discussed increasing the trail width from 8 feet to 10 feet to better accommodate shared use.

The proposed improvements are organized into the following (3) three categories:

FOCUS AREAS

Recreational Amenitites

Gathering/Event Facilities

Parking & Access

Recreational Amenities

PROJECT	COMMENTS	RECREATION TYPES	SUPPORT FACILITIES
Perimeter Walking & Biking Trail	There was a lot of support for a perimeter walking/biking trail, along with updating the existing walking loop.	Active	• Parking and access points • Benches, bike racks, repair stations, water stations, pet waste stations • Signage • Landscaping
Complete trail connections	Connect the existing wooded trail back into the park. Make connections near the ball fields and at the E Pittsburgh Street entrance to the new parking.	Active	• Parking and access points • Signage
Disc Golf	There's a demand for more active recreation and disc golf is popular and low impact	Active	• Parking at Tee 1 • Signage
Playground	Residents expressed a need for youth play equipment. People suggested that it's near the proposed central pavilions	Active	• ADA Access

Gathering & Event Facilities

PROJECT	COMMENTS	RECREATION TYPES	SUPPORT FACILITIES
Two pavilions with a restroom at the center of the park	Residents expressed support in having a central pavilion area. They also wanted to make sure that the architecture reflects the existing historical elements.	Passive	• Parking • Emergency Access • ADA pathways/parking • Seating • Trash receptacles
One smaller pavilion with an attached restroom near amphitheater	There's interest in having an additional pavilion to use during events at the amphitheater.	Passive	• Parking • ADA pathways/parking • Seating • Trash receptacles
Emergency Access	Residents expressed that the emergency access should remain in it's current position. It's important to design the central pavilion area to reflect that.	Passive	

Parking & Access

PROJECT	COMMENTS	RECREATION TYPES	SUPPORT FACILITIES
Trailhead parking at East Pittsburgh Street entrance	There is currently no parking for the main trail entrance	Passive	• Create a path connecting the trail to the parking area
Amphitheater parking	There's a need for parking near the amphitheater	Passive	• Stormwater management • ADA parking & access • Connection to Log Cabin/Fairview Street
Parking at Fairview Street Entrance	Parking is needed at the entrance closest to the residential area.	Passive	• ADA parking & access • Connection to Log Cabin • Walking/Biking Path Access
ADA Parking at Log Cabin	There's a need for parking near the amphitheater	Passive	• ADA parking & access
Event access at Bierer Street	There is a need for vendor only access adjacent to Bierer Street	Passive	• Temporary access • Connects to Log Cabin and Fairview Street Entrance
Bus Parking near DAAA Ball Fields	Gravel area needed adjacent to the existing ball field parking	Passive	• Tournament parking
Central Pavilion Parking	ADA parking and access is needed adjacent to the new pavilions, restroom, and playground area.	Passive	• ADA Access • Event Parking
Disc Golf Parking	Parking is needed at the start of the Disc Golf Course	Passive	• Disc Golf and Walking/Biking Path Access