



5-Year Improvement Plan

STEVENS PARK ESTATES
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

(SPENA)



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History and Description



Overview of SPENA

The Stevens Park Estates Neighborhood Association (SPENA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has served as a model for neighborhood associations across the city. SPENA's mission is to enhance the neighborhood by maintaining and beautifying public spaces, while fostering a strong sense of community through inclusive social and civic events. Learn more at www.stevenspark.org.

An informal group of neighbors was active in Stevens Park through the 1980s and 1990s. SPENA was officially founded in 1999. It became a registered nonprofit with an all-volunteer board in 2001. According to its bylaws, board members are nominated and elected each January.

In 2011, the neighborhood established a Conservation District to help preserve the unique homes and greenspaces of Stevens Park Estates, including Annie L. Stevens Park.

Over the years, SPENA has regularly applied for and secured funding for neighborhood improvements. These have included sidewalk repairs, tree plantings along parkways, enhancements to the triangle at Oak Cliff Boulevard and Plymouth Road, the installation of neighborhood sign toppers, playground upgrades, and most recently, the painting and restoration of historic streetlights.

SPENA also maintains an online neighborhood directory, publishes a biweekly e-newsletter, and organizes monthly social gatherings and an annual block party — efforts that continue to build connection, engagement, and pride among neighbors.

Annual funds are primarily from household memberships, fundraisers, and matching grants (this year from Heritage Oak Cliff, previously the Old Oak Cliff Conservation League)

History and Description



Park History

Annie L. Stevens Park is a historic public greenspace located in the Stevens Park Estates neighborhood of North Oak Cliff, Dallas. The neighborhood was established in 1923 by siblings Annie and Walter Stevens, whose vision included architecturally distinctive homes and generous green space. In a lasting legacy to their parents and the community, the Stevens family donated 40 acres of land to the City of Dallas for what would become the Stevens Park Golf Course. A portion of that donation was designated as Annie L. Stevens Park, which has been part of the City of Dallas Parks system since 1928.

Today, the park remains a cherished neighborhood amenity. In the early 2000s, SPENA partnered with the City of Dallas to redesign the park's playground and install new equipment. For more than 20 years, the site has been affectionately known as “the toddler park” due to the age-appropriate structures that serve young children from across North Oak Cliff.

In 2024, the playground was awarded funding in the City of Dallas Bond Program. Planning and design are expected to begin later this year. The upcoming renovation is anticipated to significantly increase visitation—especially from nearby neighborhoods and users of the adjacent Coombs Creek Trail—by revitalizing this well-loved but aging space.

The playground comprises just a portion of the 6-acre park, which lies adjacent to key recreational infrastructure. The Coombs Creek Trail, completed in 2015, runs along the park's southern edge. This 2.5-mile paved trail has transformed outdoor activity patterns in the area, encouraging walking, biking, and running. North Oak Cliff Greenspace has contributed to ongoing enhancements, including the addition of workout stations—one of which is located in Annie L. Stevens Park.

Assessment of Today's Park



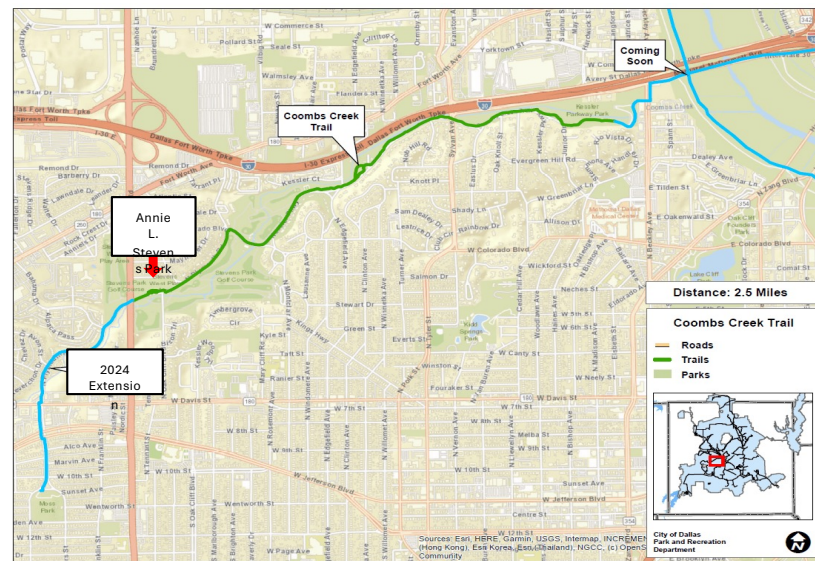
Current Use and Condition

The park has served families from Stevens Park Estates and the broader North Oak Cliff community for many years, spanning several generations, with families hosting birthday parties and an occasional wedding.

This year SPENA hosted the 13th annual Easter Egg Hunt and the 14th annual Block party at the park. The Block Party has always been a favorite neighborhood event and features musicians (either Stevens Park neighbors or performers from Booker T. Washington Arts Magnet), a visit with the local fire truck, children's activities and plenty of food. RECEPTA (Rosemont Early Childhood PTA) holds a playgroup get together at the Park every month.

Limited maintenance, however, has left much of this aging public greenspace overgrown with invasive vegetation, restricting access to large portions of the park. The overgrowth also makes the park less visible and less inviting to those using nearby amenities of the Coombs Creek Trail and the Stevens Park Golf Course.

Ongoing investment in Annie L. Stevens Park will help address long-term maintenance issues, improve accessibility, and build on recent momentum to create a more inclusive, functional, and welcoming public space for a growing and diverse community.



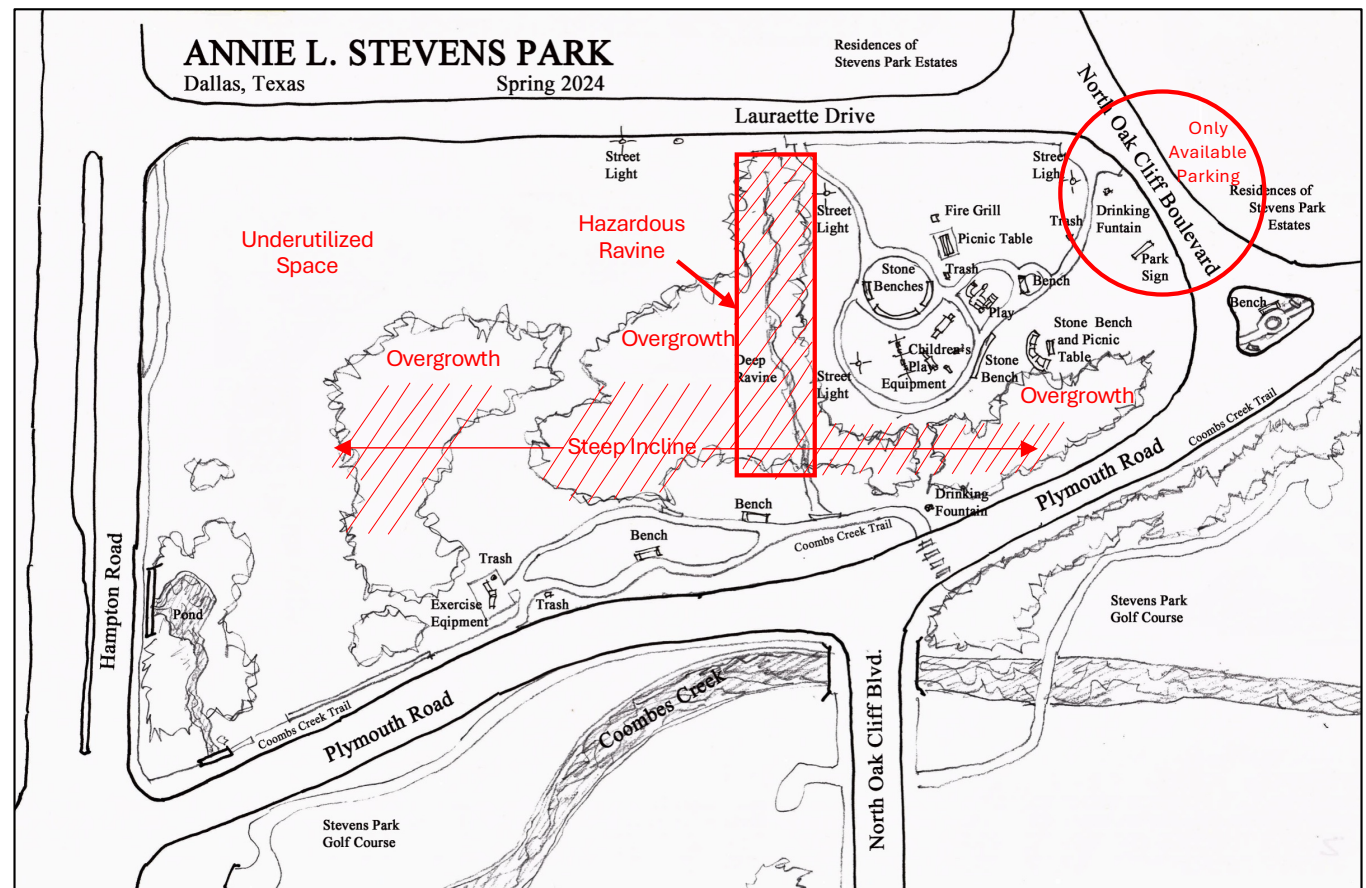
Assessment of Today's Park



As illustrated in the map below, over half the park is currently inaccessible due to a combination of dense invasive overgrowth, uneven or hazardous terrain, and lack of nearby parking. Nearly all existing amenities are clustered in the smaller, more accessible area near the intersection of Lauraette Drive and Oak Cliff Boulevard. This limited footprint significantly reduces the park's overall usability and hinders its ability to serve the diverse needs of the surrounding community.

Available Amenities

- Play equipment (various)
- Picnic tables (1)
- Historic stone table (1)
- Historic stone benches (4)
- Other benches (4)
- Fire grill (1)
- Drinking fountains (2)
- Outdoor fitness station (1)
- Trash receptacles (3)
- Pet waste bag dispensers (1)
- Historic lampposts (3)



Mission and 5-Year Goals



Mission Statement

The Stevens Park Estates Neighborhood Association (SPENA) is committed to transforming Annie L. Stevens Park into a more welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant community resource. We believe that public parks should offer opportunities for activity, connection, and contemplation. Our mission is to ensure that all visitors — regardless of age or ability — can access safe, engaging, and restorative outdoor spaces that support health, community-building, and environmental stewardship.

Five-Year Goals

Through this plan, SPENA aims to:

1. Improve Community Access

Enhance pathways, entrances, and signage to ensure the park is easy to find, enter, and navigate for all users.

2. Promote Inclusivity with Accessible Amenities and Playground Equipment

Upgrade park features to meet ADA standards and create inclusive play and rest areas that serve children and adults of all abilities.

3. Encourage Healthy Lifestyles

Expand opportunities for physical activity by maintaining open green space, integrating fitness features, and improving trail connectivity.

4. Provide Event and Entertainment Amenities

Design flexible spaces that can support small and large gatherings, performances, and community celebrations.

5. Offer Clean, Safe Communal Spaces

Ensure the park remains a clean, well-lit, and secure environment through ongoing maintenance, stewardship, and partnerships.

6. Encourage Environmental Awareness

Promote native plantings, responsible landscaping, and interpretive signage to engage visitors in the preservation and appreciation of local ecology.

7. Establish and Maintain Effective Community Outreach and Partnerships

Build awareness and support for the park by effective outreach to both neighbors and the larger North Oak Cliff community via newsletters, event announcements, press releases and requests for input.

Mission and 5-Year Goals



Goal #1: Improve Community Access

Enhance pathways, entrances, and signage to ensure the park is easy to find, enter, and navigate for all users, including toddlers and seniors.

Objective 1.1: Create access from Plymouth Rd to the playground.

Create a pathway from the western edge of the playground to Plymouth. There is no sidewalk access to Annie Stevens Park from the Coombs Creek Trail.

A staircase would provide access from Plymouth Ave., North Oak Cliff Blvd and the Golf Course up to the playground area.

Objective 2.2: Allow parking on the south side of Lauraette.

This will expand the number of available parking spaces for those who access the park via automobile and reduce congestion at the corner of Oak Cliff Blvd and Lauraette and the corner of Oak Cliff Blvd and Plymouth.

Mission and 5-Year Goals



Goal #2: Promote Inclusivity with Accessible Amenities and Playground Equipment

Upgrade park features to meet ADA standards and create inclusive play and rest areas that serve children and adults of all abilities.

Objective 2.1: Upgrade existing play structures to meet the latest safety standards and ADA accessibility requirements.

Convene a neighborhood committee to advise the City of Dallas on the desired equipment.

Objective 2.3: Add inclusive play equipment to accommodate children of all abilities.

Convene a neighborhood committee to advise the City of Dallas on the desired equipment.

Objective 2.4: Ensure that benches, tables, and other park amenities are accessible for use by seniors.

Mission and 5-Year Goals



Goal #3: Encourage Healthy Lifestyles

Expand opportunities for physical activity by maintaining open green space, integrating fitness features, and improving trail connectivity.

Objective 3.1: Install a sidewalk around the entire park.

This will make the park accessible and inclusive to families and walkers by establishing a perimeter sidewalk that would link to the Coombs Creek Trail. Proposed walk area would be 1/3 of a mile. This greenspace is frequently used by families and dog walkers.

This sidewalk and the staircase to Plymouth proposed in Goal #1 will improve awareness of and access to the currently underused workout equipment on Plymouth.

Mission and 5-Year Goals



Goal #4: Provide Event and Entertainment Amenities

Design flexible spaces that can support small and large gatherings, performances, and community celebrations.

Objective 4.1: Expand seating opportunities in and around the playground.

Add another park bench next to the playground that is accessible to older adults and seniors by adding armrests and raising the seating areas, so it becomes easier to sit down and get up again.

Objective 4.2: Expand the number of multi-use spaces for family picnics, outdoor learning, and community gatherings.

Add another picnic table next to the playground.

Design and create a small performance venue for neighborhood gatherings and events.

Mission and 5-Year Goals



Goal #5: Offer Clean, Safe Communal Spaces

Ensure the park remains a clean, well-lit, and secure environment through ongoing maintenance, stewardship, and partnerships.

Objective 5.1: Install soft, impact-absorbing surfacing in the playground area to reduce injury risks.

Work with the City of Dallas in the plan for the installation of new playground equipment to identify the best/most affordable surfacing.

Secure additional funding sources, if needed.

Objective 5.2: Add safety bollards and chain between playground, park green space and drainage ditch.

This would likely require series of bollards and a simple single chain barrier that warn playground users to avoid the 20-foot-deep ravine.

Erosion control within the ravine must be addressed by the City of Dallas in the future. (See 'deep ravine' in the map drawing)

Objective 5.3: Mitigate the dense undercover created by privet and other invasive plants.

The privet has created dense areas of growth which encourages persistent homeless encampments. Removal will improve visibility and safety for park users.

Objective 5.4: Disallow parking on either side of Oak Cliff Blvd from Laurette to Plymouth, if parking can be expanded on one side of Lauraette.

Work with adjacent neighbors and the City of Dallas to eliminate the current risk to both automobiles and pedestrians navigating this narrow, heavy traffic area.

Objective 5.5: Establish a long-term maintenance plan for playground and greenspace upkeep with the City of Dallas.

Mission and 5-Year Goals



Goal #6: Encourage Environmental Awareness

Promote native plantings, responsible landscaping, and interpretive signage to engage visitors in the preservation and appreciation of local ecology.

Objective 6.1: Introduce native plants and pollinator-friendly landscaping to support local wildlife.

Objective 6.2: Create educational signage and programs to promote environmental awareness and outdoor learning.

Mission and 5-Year Goals



Goal #7: Establish and Maintain Effective Community Outreach and Partnerships

Build awareness and support for the park by effective outreach to both neighbors and the larger North Oak Cliff community via newsletters, event announcements, press releases and requests for input.

Objective 7.1: Create an email list of relevant press contacts, government officials, and local business and community organization leaders.

Publicize the 5-year plan seeking input and support.

Objective 7.2: Explore partnerships with adjacent neighborhood associations and other community organizations for the support and funding of the 5-year improvement plan.

Action Plan/Timeline



Year 1 - 2025	Year 2 - 2026	Year 3 - 2027	Year 4 - 2028	Year 5 - 2029
<u>Objective 2.2:</u> Allow parking on the south side of Lauraette.	<u>Objective 2.1:</u> Upgrade existing play structures to meet the latest safety standards and ADA accessibility requirements.	<u>Objective 1.1:</u> Create access from Plymouth Rd to the playground.	<u>Objective 3.1:</u> Install a sidewalk around the entire park. PHASE 1	<u>Objective 3.1:</u> Install a sidewalk around the entire park. PHASE 2
<u>Objective 5.3:</u> Mitigate the dense undercover created by privet and other invasive plants.	<u>Objective 2.3:</u> Add inclusive play equipment to accommodate children of all abilities.	<u>Objective 5.2:</u> Add safety bollards and chain between playground, park green space and drainage ditch.	<u>Objective 5.3:</u> Mitigate the dense undercover created by privet and other invasive plants.	<u>Objective 5.3:</u> Mitigate the dense undercover created by privet and other invasive plants.
<u>Objective 5.4:</u> Disallow parking on either side of Oak Cliff Blvd from Laurette to Plymouth, if parking can be expanded on one side of Lauraette.	<u>Objective 4.1:</u> Expand seating opportunities in and around the playground. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add another park bench next to the playground that is accessible to older adults and seniors. 	<u>Objective 5.3:</u> Mitigate the dense undercover created by privet and other invasive plants.	<u>Objective 6.1:</u> Introduce native plants and pollinator-friendly landscaping to support local wildlife.	<u>Objective 6.1:</u> Introduce native plants and pollinator-friendly landscaping to support local wildlife.
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	<u>Objective 5.3:</u> Mitigate the dense undercover created by privet and other invasive plants.			

Funding Need and Sources



Funding Need

Funding needs will be developed over the course of the 5-plan consistent with the annual goals.

Funding Sources

The Board intends to seek funding from various public and private organizations, including The Dallas Foundation, Methodist Systems, North Oak Cliff Greenspace, Heritage Oak Cliff, local businesses and other partners.

Appendices



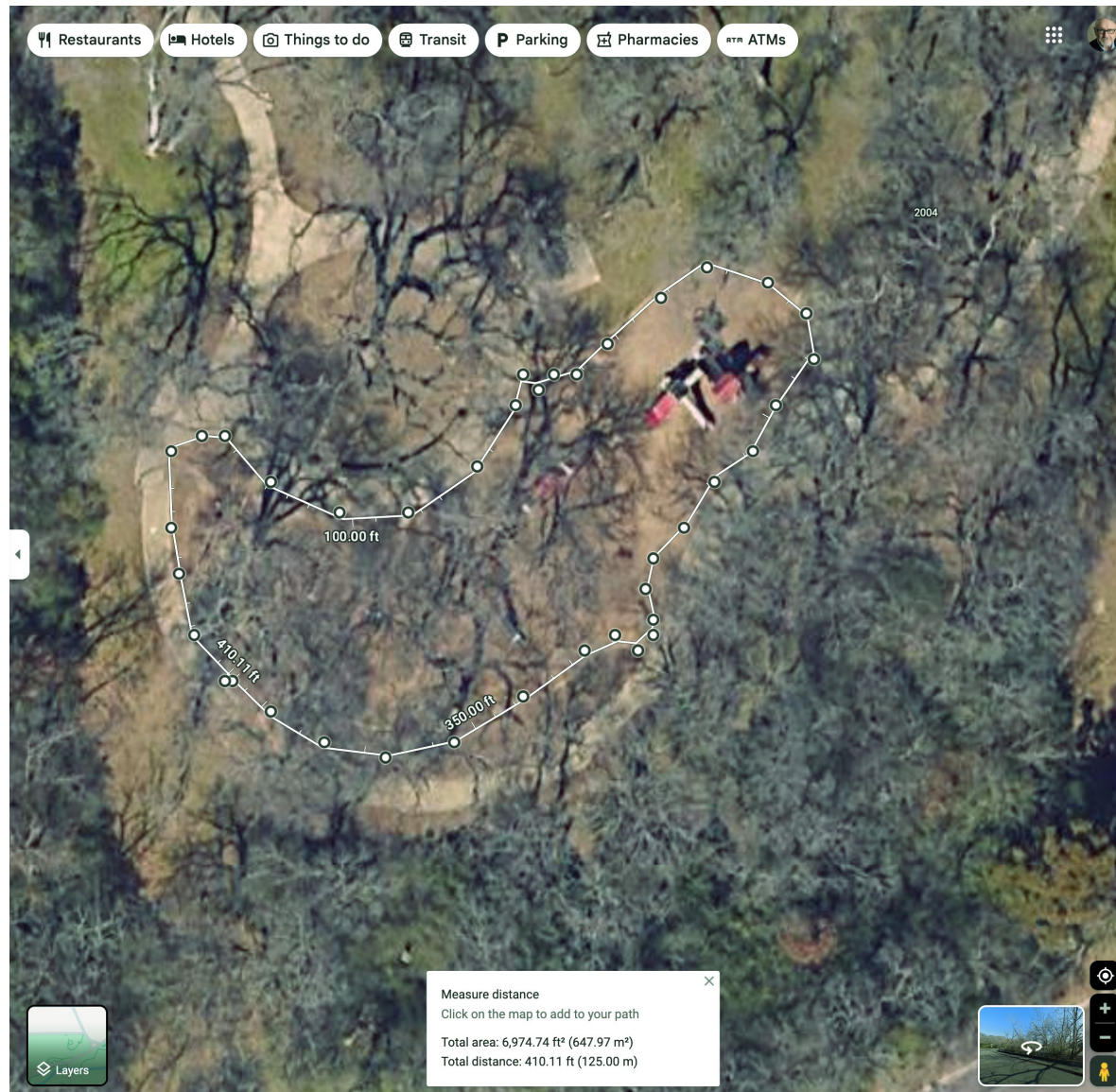
Annie L. Stevens Park Boundaries



Appendices



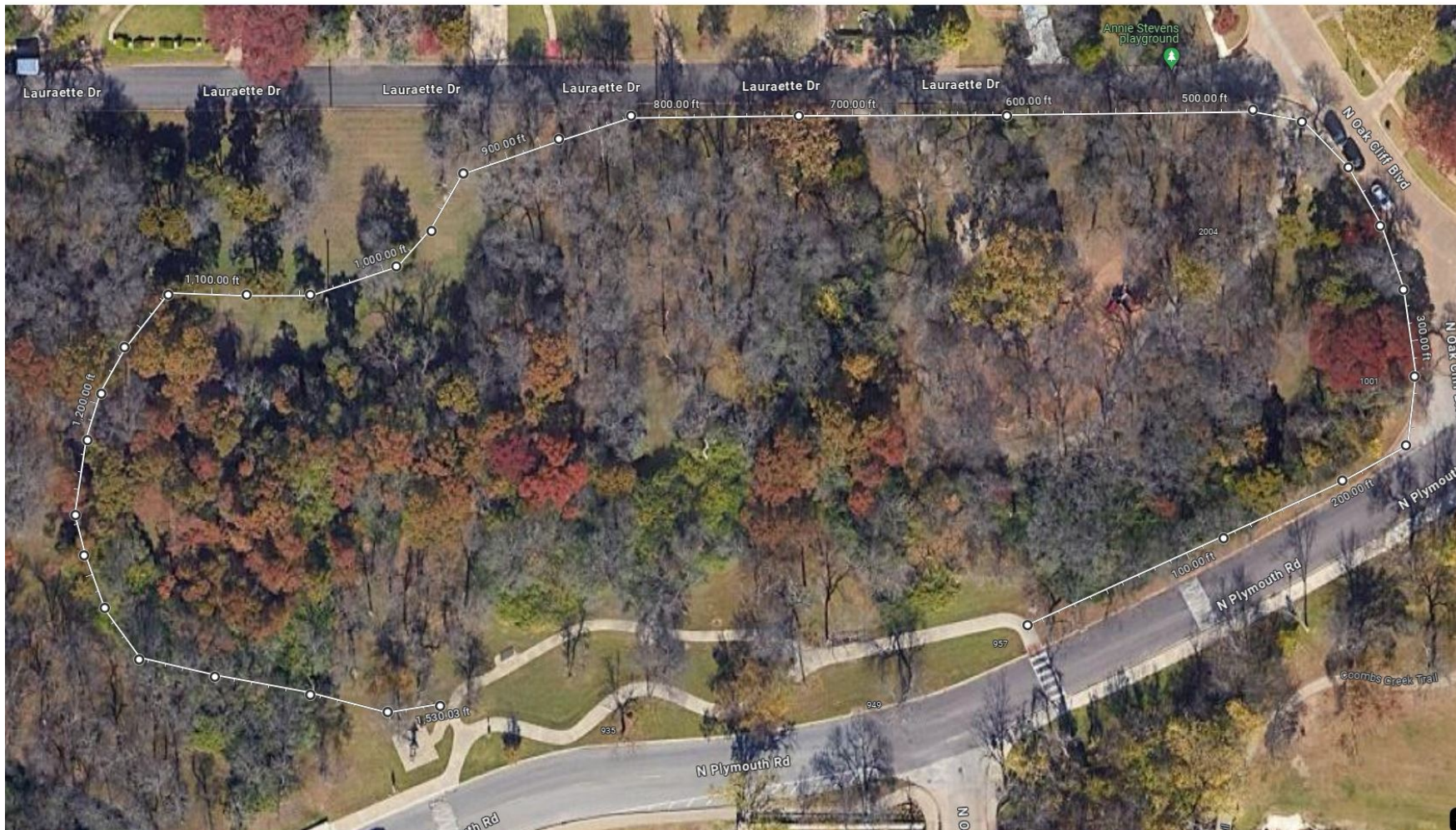
Annie L. Stevens Playground Surface Area



Appendices



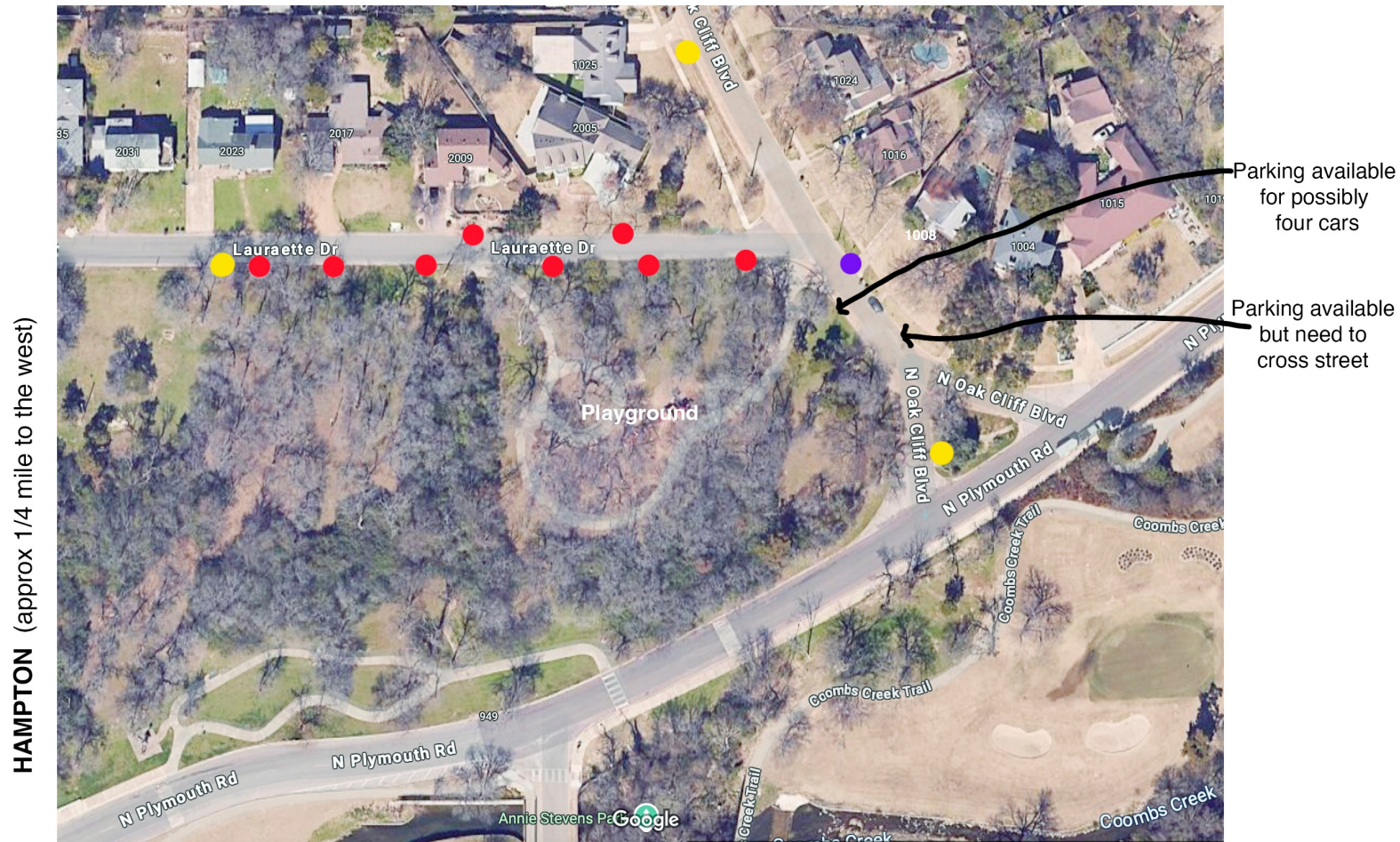
Annie L. Stevens Park Proposed Perimeter Path



Appendices



Annie L. Stevens Park Parking Issues



● 'New' 30 mph Parking sign ● No parking signs ● 20 mph Playground signs