

# TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

## Murray Street Park Master Plan



Adopted February 2018

## **Background**

Located in West Hillsborough at 225 Murray Street, Murray Street Park is a 0.5-acre neighborhood park owned and maintained by the Town of Hillsborough. Prior to being developed as a park, the parcel which was owned by the Town of Hillsborough included a pump station. In 1992, the pump station was closed and removed from the property. At that time, West Hillsborough residents formed the Murray Street Pocket Garden Committee and requested that the parcel be developed as greenspace for the neighborhood. The group developed a concept plan which emphasized stream protection, landscaping improvements, a walking path and sitting areas. Soon after, the town instituted a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and developed the first Master Parks and Recreation Plan. The new advisory board worked with West Hillsborough community members to further plans for the Murray Street property. Neighbors volunteered time and materials to build wooden steps and a retaining wall on the west property line of the park. Local parks and recreation advocate Wendy Olson, who was also instrumental in the early planning for Riverwalk, canvassed the neighborhood to discuss park planning and receive feedback. Wendy's notes reveal that she talked to 12 households and that all supported the concept plan. Neighbors requested play equipment for young children and suggested swings and climbing equipment. Residents also asked for places to gather and picnic. Several neighbors volunteered to prune invasive landscaping around the stream. Wendy also noted that there were concerns raised about flooding and an adjacent neighbor reported that the low area of the park stays wet for a large portion of the year.

In 1999, the town contracted Eric Jordan of Jordan Consultants in Winston Salem to develop a site plan for development of the park. The consultant worked with the Parks and Recreation Board over several months to complete a plan and construction document package detailing amenities and landscape improvements for the site.

## **Development of the Park**

In early 2000, the town worked with North Carolina Division of Water Quality to adjust the Murray Street Park site plan according to the Neuse Riparian Buffer Rules and received an approved permit for construction. Revisions to the plan included relocating features 30 feet from the stream and planting native vegetation along the stream corridor to prevent mowing near the stream bank. Erosion control measures were added to protect the stream during construction operations. The first phase of construction included building a walkway, pedestrian bridge, several benches, and a sand-filled play area which included a climber and swings. Landscaping and mulch was also included in the project.

In 2008, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board worked with the Town's Safety Inspector to make additional improvements to the park. The wooden timbers were replaced with plastic interlocking barriers around the play area and the sand was replaced with engineered wood fiber for safety surfacing. A single free standing slide was also added to the playground at this time.

Over the years the Hillsborough Tree Board has added several native trees to the park. Park signage was added in 2013.

The following pages include the early plans for Murray Street park and newspaper articles about the park's development.

# Hillsborough neighbors plan garden

By **LINDA FOX** *Raleigh N.O.*  
Staff writer *2-28-91*

**HILLSBOROUGH** — A group of West Hillsborough residents hope to nurture a sense of community as well as plants in a public garden they have planned for a town lot near their homes.

The idea took shape last fall when brothers Patrick J.B. Shannon and William C. Shannon asked Mayor Horace H. Johnson for permission to beautify the lot at the corner of Murray Avenue and Barracks Road. After presenting budget and design plans earlier this month, the group got the thumbs up to proceed.

"To me, it's just the good old-fashioned American spirit where people will do something in their neighborhood," Mr. Johnson said. "You just don't see that every day."

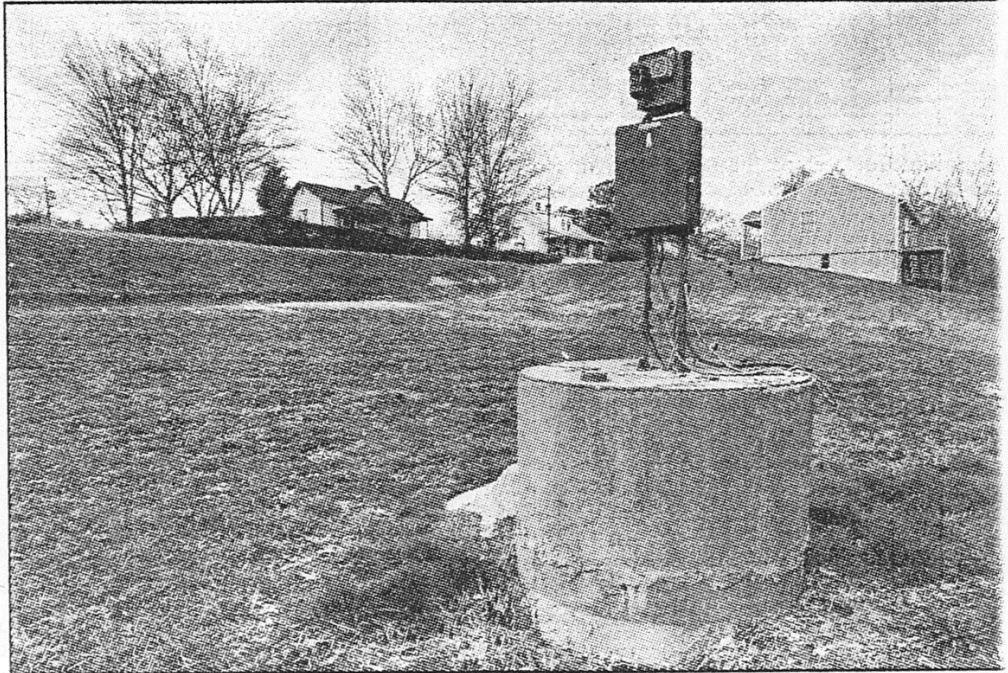
The Murray Street Pocket Garden Committee has big plans for the half-acre space.

For one, the group wants to protect the small creek that traverses the land, which is located adjacent to a plot the town donated last June to Habitat for Humanity. They also want to replace overgrown briars and weeds with a lawn, flower beds, shrubs and trees, including a willow tree by the creek.

"It's not a really pleasant place to be at this point," town planner Janet V. Rigsbee said. "It was very overgrown. We've cleaned out the lot at this point, but it still isn't quite walkable or conducive enough to have a park there."

Organizers envision the area as a quiet spot for kids to play or residents to wait and enjoy the outdoors.

"It's nice to have one spot that's just community," said Patrick



Staff photo by

**Hillsborough plans to replace this old sewer pumping station with a gravity sewer line on a neighborhood group wants to build the Murray Street Pocket Garden**

Shannon, who is chairman of the pocket garden committee.

When it is developed, the garden will be the only parklike area within walking distance of the West Hillsborough community, which lies in the southwestern corner of the city limits between the town's historic district and the Cone Mill area.

"As far as an easy stroll down the street, this is the only thing," said Francis "Frank" J. Chandler, an artist who put together preliminary design plans for the garden.

But they're not in any rush.

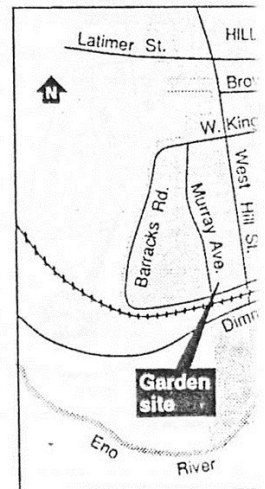
The town plans to replace an old sewer pumping station on the site with a gravity sewer line some-

time this summer, but first it must secure an easement for the project. After that, the land will be graded.

Residents will do most of the planning and planting. In going door-to-door to collect signatures of support, organizers have been recruiting volunteers to help maintain the area.

The town will pay for improvements and help with maintenance such as mowing the lawn. Town officials said it was a good trade.

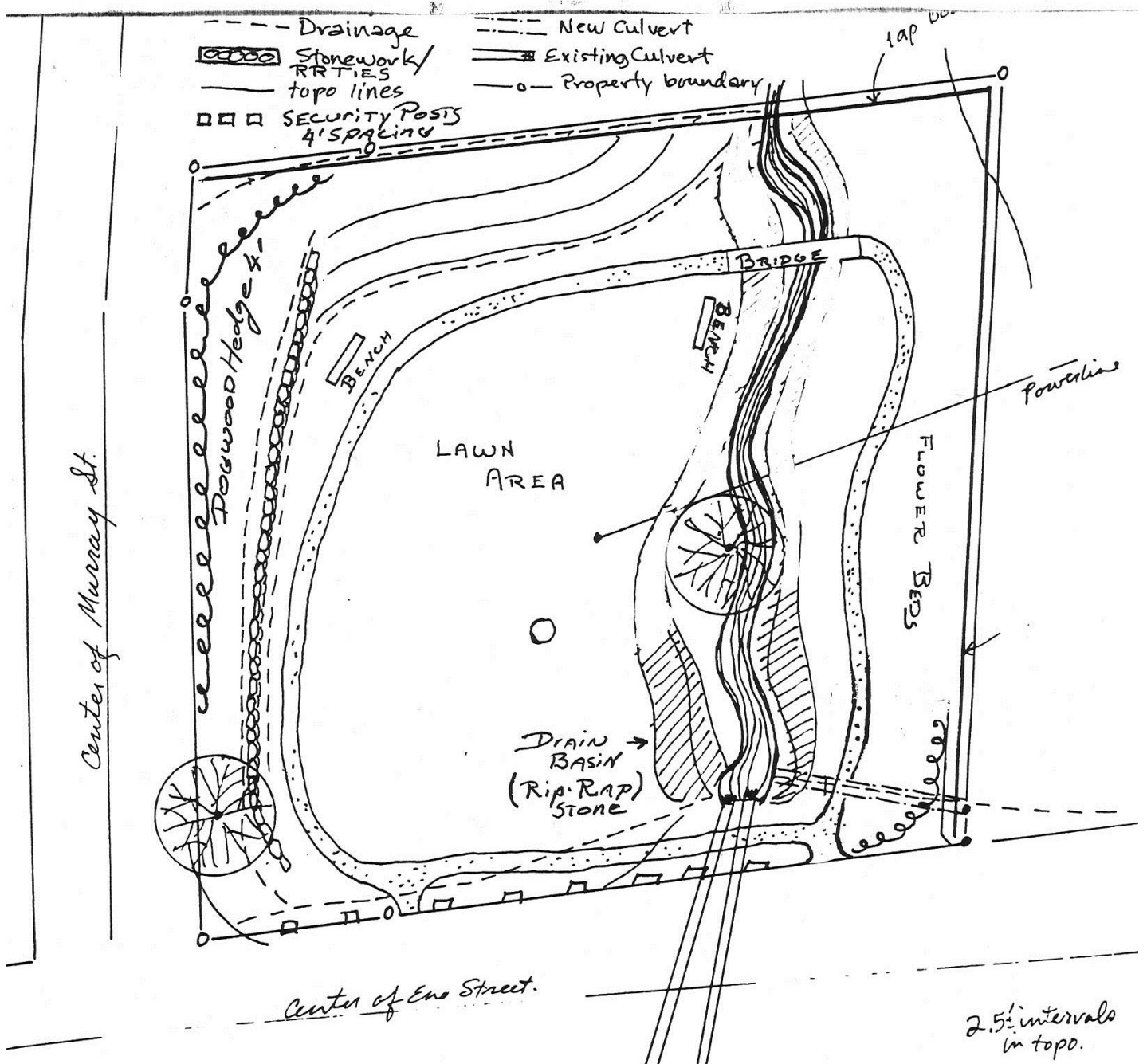
"To get this volunteer help to improve the land is really quite a boon to the town," Ms. Rigsbee said. "If this succeeds, we'd like to see this happen in other parts of town."

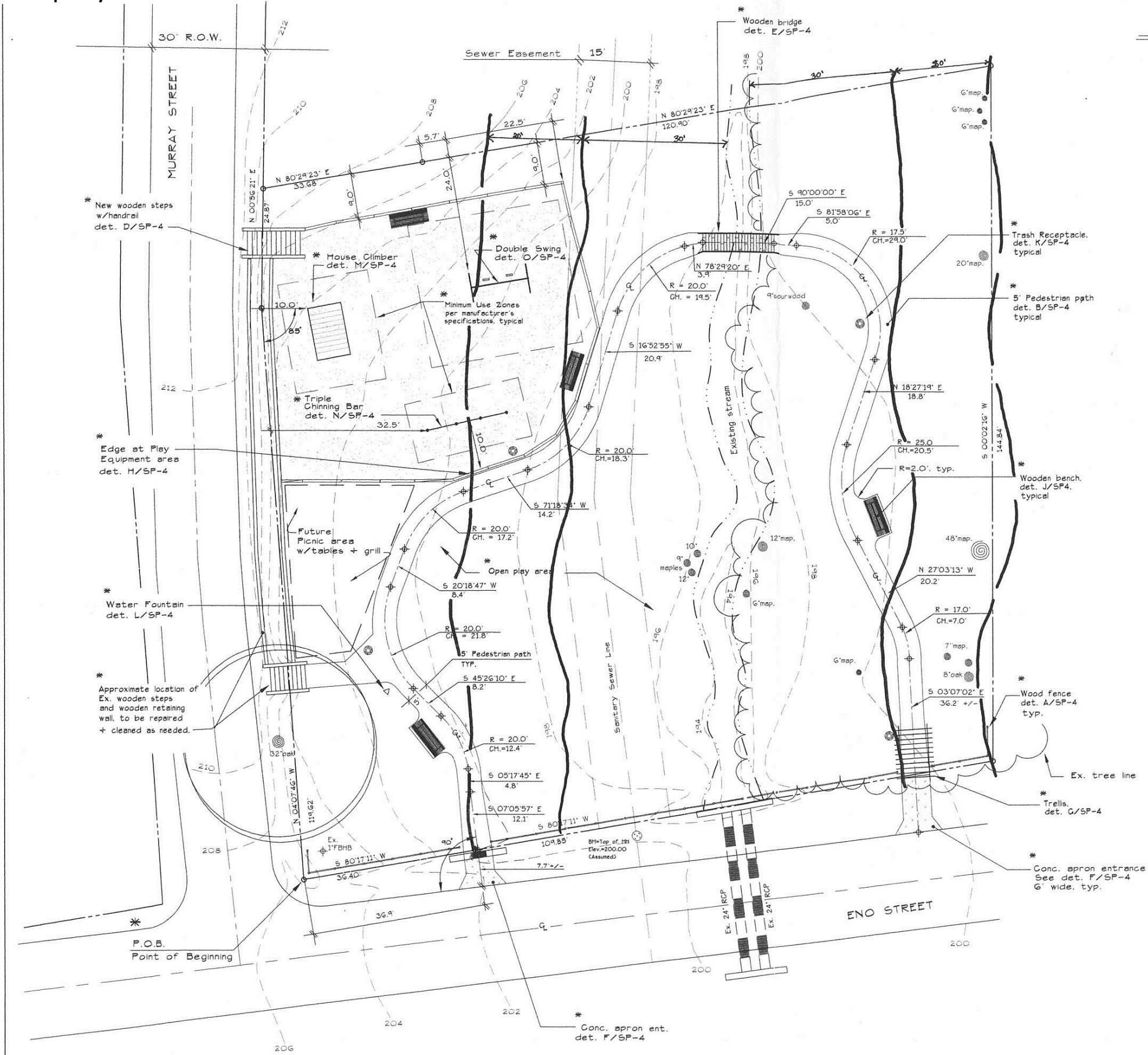


The Ne



Original Concept Plan Developed by Murray Street Pocket Garden Committee





LAYOUT NOTES:

1. CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS + LOCATIONS PRIOR TO ANY CONSTRUCTION.
2. ALL ANGLES ARE 90° UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
3. ALL DISTANCES ARE MEASURED TO THE OUTSIDE EDGE OF ITEMS UNLESS NOTED.
4. SEE DETAIL SHEET SP-4 FOR ALL MEASUREMENTS AND DIMENSIONS ON ITEMS DETAILED ON THIS PLAN.
5. WALKWAY IS 5' WIDE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
6. SEE GRADING PLAN FOR NOTES CONCERNING VERTICAL SPOT ELEVATIONS AND BENCHMARKS.
7. POINT OF BEGINNING SHALL BE THE SOUTH PROPERTY LINE WITH BEARINGS READING S 80°17'-11"W. 36.40'
8. LOCATION OF ALL SITE FIXTURES (BENCHES, WATER FOUNTAIN + TRASH RECEPTACLES) SHALL BE SITED BY EYE PER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND/OR TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE, WITH RESPECT TO THE LOCATION SHOWN ON THIS PLAN.

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Project Name:  
**MURRAY STREET PARK**  
for:  
The TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH, NC

Sheet Title:  
**Layout Plan**

Issue Date:  
**February 15, 2000**

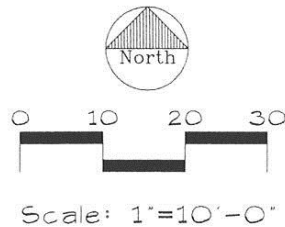
Revision No:  
1. 3-9-00 per T. of Hb. comm. on 3-3-00  
2. 4-16-00 by M.H. to show Neuse River Buffers

Project Number:

Sheet Number:

**SP. 2**

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## Existing Conditions

Murray Street Park is owned and maintained by the Town of Hillsborough. It is primarily used by neighborhood children and families. The parks and Recreation Board hosted a public meeting to discuss the conditions of the park and develop recommendations for the master Plan. Several West Hillsborough residents attended. Comments from the discussion included the following:

- Landscaping on the eastern side of the park is overgrown and nobody uses that side of the park
- Dead and diseased tree should be removed
- There is nowhere to sit or congregate
- The stream is subject to flood and the banks are overgrown with invasive species
- There is no accessible entrance
- The park is mostly designed for small children
- The play equipment is dated

Below are a few pictures of existing conditions at Murray Street Park.



**Entrance steps from Murray Street**



**Footbridge over stream**



**Play area looking north**



**East side of the property**

## **Master Plan Priorities**

In early 2018, the Parks and Recreation Board and Hillsborough Tree Board, in coordination with the town public space and stormwater divisions, developed a list of recommended improvements for Murray Street Park. The recommendations are detailed in this master plan and are intended to guide future spending decisions. It is advised that these plans are updated every three to five years.

## **Recommendations**

- Maintain the existing playground equipment and park amenities in safe and working order
- Establish accessible entrance from Eno Street
- Reestablish a trail system
- Add handrails to steps for safety
- Remove deteriorating steps
- Preserve an open view into the park
- Remove dead and diseased plant material
- Limb up existing trees for safety and sight lines
- Plant edible landscaping (Ex: Fig trees and Paw Paw trees)
- Establish a 10 foot wide stream buffer along the stream except where controlled access is provided
- Maintain access to the stream near the footbridge
- Remove invasive plants along stream and plant native trees, woody shrubs and perennials
- Cease mowing operations on the steep bank near Murray Street and plant bank with native grasses
- Provide a picnic table
- Provide several benches in the approved style (Butler Bench by Urbanscape)
- Provide interactive and natural play features (Example: weeping redbud tents, Little Library, stage)
- Install a bird park with feeders, bird houses, and bird baths
- Add baby swings to play area
- Reduce play surfacing area by redesigning park layout
- Add trash and recycling containers
- Add a low fence between park and adjacent property

Recommendations are noted on the Murray Street Master Plan Rendering on the following page.



Murray Street Park Master Plan Rendering 2018

