



# 195 District Park Strategic Plan

November 2025



## 195 District



# AGENDA



## Process

Existing conditions analysis  
Engagement  
Work sessions



## Goals and strategies

Capital improvements  
Programming  
Events  
Engagement  
Financial



## Implementation

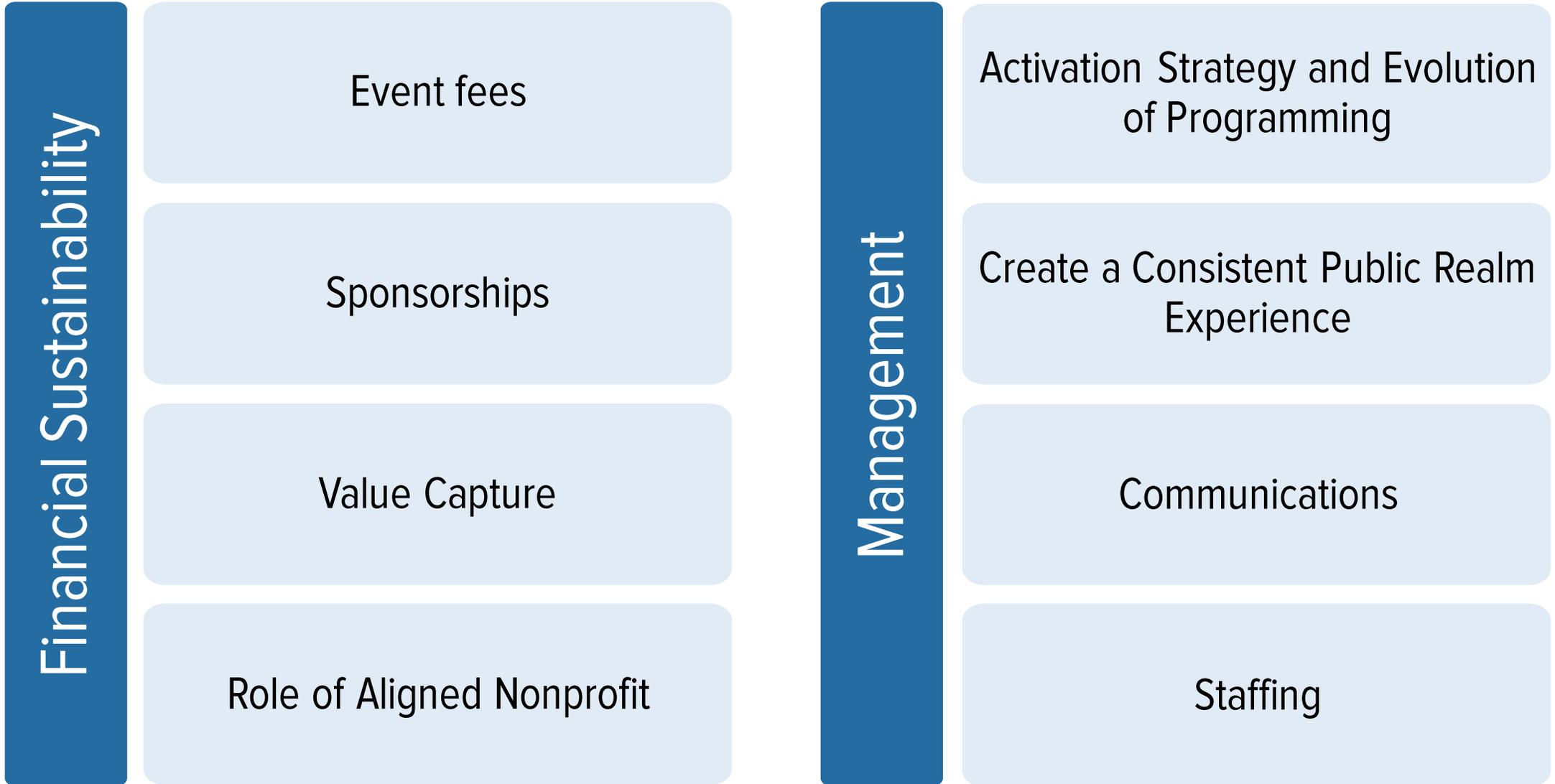
Key partnerships  
Overcoming anticipated obstacles  
Staffing and contracting  
Revenues  
Projected expenses



# PROCESS

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS  
ENGAGEMENT

# PRIORITIES FOR THE PARK'S STRATEGIC PLAN



# EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Subject Area	Findings
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Landscaping is adequate but there are areas for improvement</li><li>• Improvements for user comfort should be a high priority (shade and seating, primarily)</li><li>• Signage is improving and should continue to expand</li></ul>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New, revised rules are clearly stated and address all currently pertinent issues, though there is no enforcement mechanism for cycling and skating rules</li><li>• A small number of large-scale events have greater impact on the park</li></ul>
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• District Park has become associated with the arts and has an opportunity to dramatically expand arts programming</li><li>• Programming currently focuses much more on residents than workers in the District</li><li>• There is unmet demand that can be met by lengthening the programming season and increasing the frequency and volume during peak months, but the District will need to focus on smaller-scale programs and park amenities to make it sustainable</li></ul>
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Park generates about \$300K* in earned income (concessions, sponsorships, events) annually</li><li>• Property owners contribute about \$325K* annually</li><li>• 195 District contributes about \$350K* to park operations annually</li></ul>
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of adjacent parcels will bring more residents; Parcel 42 will create physical constraints</li><li>• DPPN wayfinding initiatives may increase interest in and visits to the Riverwalk</li><li>• Life at Night Taskforce examining how to support nightlife and cultural events while increasing safety</li></ul>

\* FY 2025 numbers

# ENGAGEMENT

3 commissioner interviews

13 stakeholder interviews

17 programming partners in a workshop

9 event producers in a focus group

194 online survey responses





# PROPOSED GOALS AND STRATEGIES

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

PROGRAMMING

EVENTS

ENGAGEMENT

FINANCIAL

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS: ATTRACTING DIVERSE AUDIENCES



## Dog Park

- True dog “park” with intentional design and furnishings – not a dog “run”
- Location criteria: near residents, in underutilized areas near park edges. Potable water is a plus.
- Materials: artificial turf, non-porous crushed gravel or stone, cleaned weekly
- Integrated with shade and seating
- 3000 – 8000+ sq ft
- Estimated \$225,000 - \$550,000

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS: ATTRACTING DIVERSE AUDIENCES

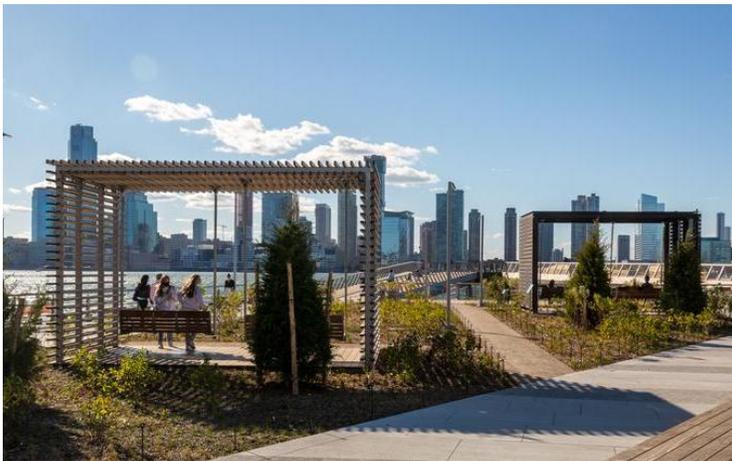


## Sculptural “Play” Elements

- Unique structure that is desirable or pleasant for all ages and abilities, possibly doubling as public art or an eye-catching landmark
  - Sculptural object or animal to climb
  - Earthwork / natural materials such as boulders, logs for climbing/scrambling
  - Stepping stones, stumps, other small objects as lower-cost option
- Location criteria: near residential areas or clustered with family-friendly programs
- Estimated \$300,000 - \$425,000



# IMPROVE COMFORT FOR PARK VISITORS



Variety of seating \$ 120,000 - \$ 150,000

Shade \$ 125,000 - \$ 600,000

Water \$ 4,000 - \$ 10,000



# IMPROVE PARK ENTRANCES AND VISIBILITY

1

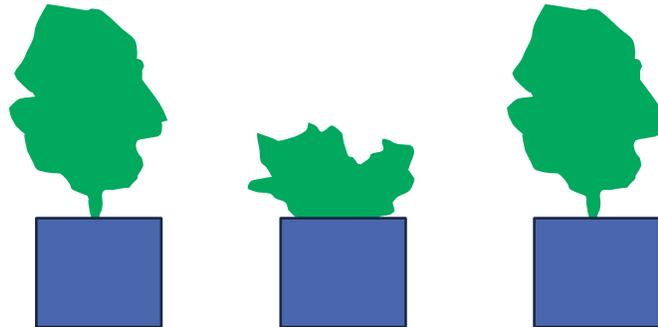
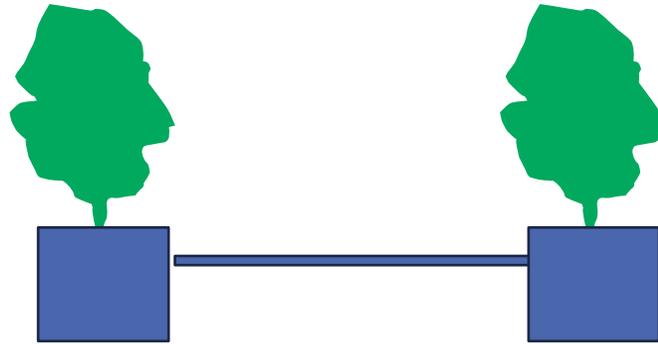
Sculptural elements/pylons + locking gate-like mechanism



Estimate: \$500,000

2

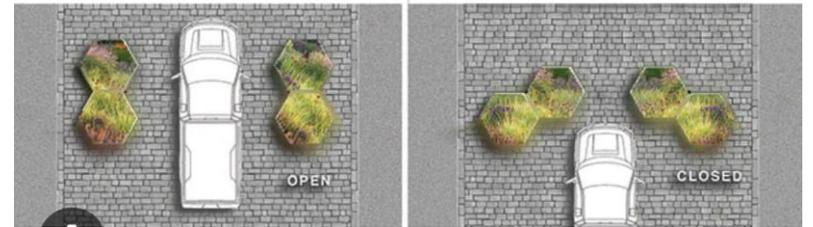
Planters (could be small trees) + simple locking or movable gate/barrier or other planter



Estimate: \$30,000

3

Planters/elements alone – movable and potentially lockable



Estimate: \$20,000

# PROGRAMMING: EXTEND THE SEASON AND ACTIVATE WINTER



Expand shoulder season programming incrementally each year



Expand active fitness programming



Develop winter attractions to complement other winter activations and events



# PROGRAMMING: ENSURE USE BY ALL DEMOGRAPHICS



Intentional scheduling: concentrate family-oriented programming at certain times and programs for adults at others



Engage City's senior services to evaluate feasibility of partnership



Explore teen-oriented programs



Develop new “programming hubs” to raise baseline activity levels



# PROGRAMMING: PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH



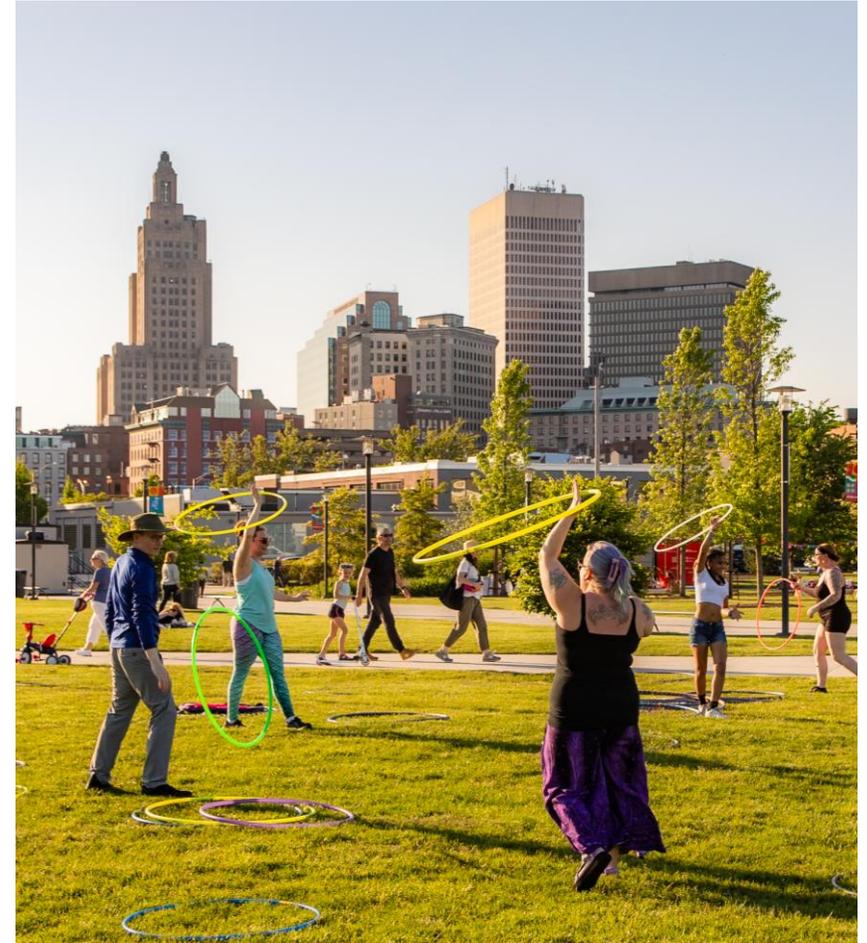
Grow active and passive fitness offerings



Develop a cart-based fitness programming hub



Explore nutrition and mental health programming



# PROGRAMMING: CREATE MORE INNOVATION DISTRICT-ALIGNED PROGRAMMING



Engage District tenants to involve workers in programming development



Work toward a "plug and play" lunch-and-learn or speaker/networking series to highlight research and development



Explore furniture and shade conceptual exhibitions and contests



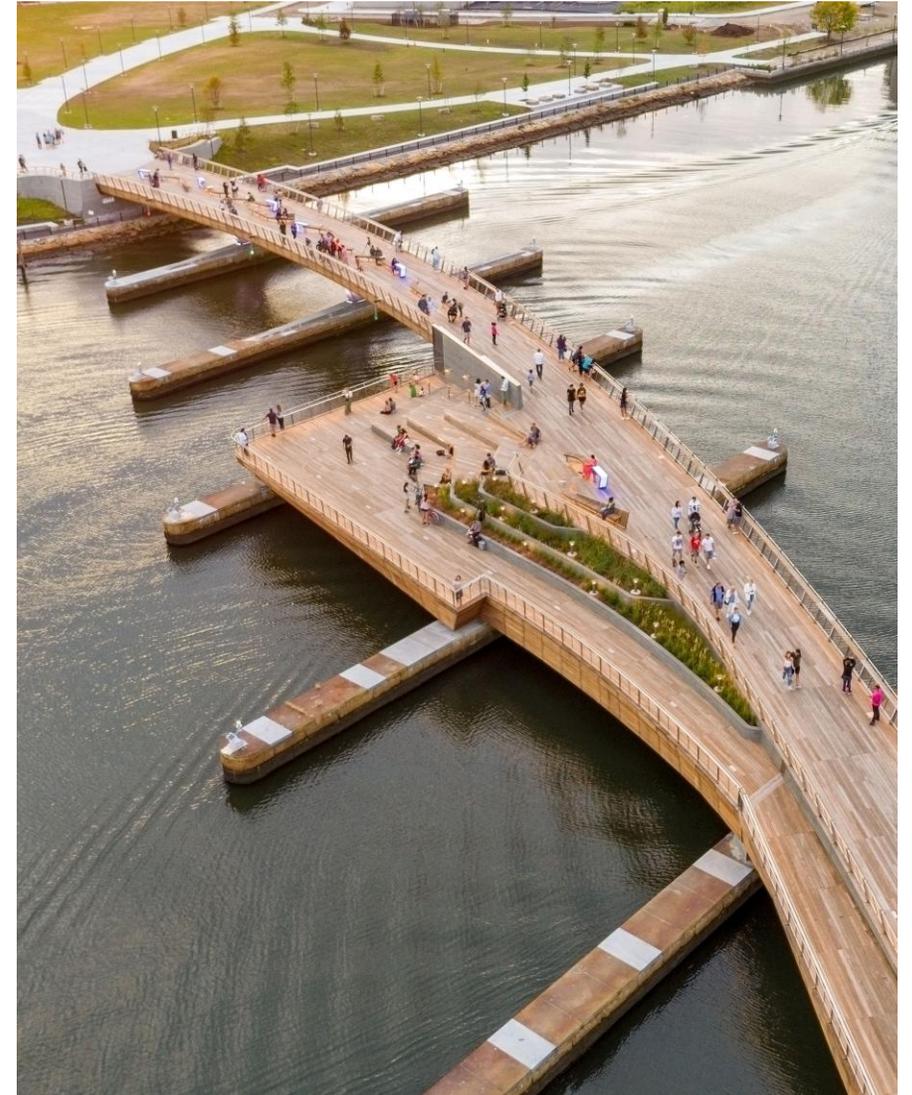
Employ storytelling from F&B tenants and other partners for engaging programs on entrepreneurship



# PROGRAMMING: INTEGRATE THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE



Enter into an agreement with the City of Providence related to programming and daily janitorial duties of the pedestrian bridge



# PROGRAMMING: MEET DEMAND FOR LIVE MUSIC



Focus on frequent, small performances, soloists, and DJs instead of larger bands for cost efficiency



Highlight niche musical genres to create a distinct identity (don't build a music program around generic cover bands)



Work with promoters dedicated to building up and coming, local artists



Explore future funding commitments from The Guild



# EVENTS: IMPROVE THE PERMITTING PROCESS

- **Continue to develop stronger info-sharing relationships and processes with other public agencies**
  - Take the lead in creating a special event-related communication and info sharing system between City & State agencies
- **Become more involved in the pre-production process with event producers**
  - Event producers will welcome specific direction and regulation on event operations and logistics
  - District can familiarize existing and new producers with new and adjusted policies
- **Develop a more robust venue guide**
  - Physical information
  - Technical and logistical information and requirements
  - Policies related to event planning and permitting
  - Guidelines around event management, including load-in and load-out
  - Rules on noise, curfews, and other restrictions can be emphasized and highlighted repeatedly for event producers
  - A polished venue guide **would also serve as a valuable marketing tool**, highlighting the space and the types of events best suited for the venue



# EVENTS: INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS



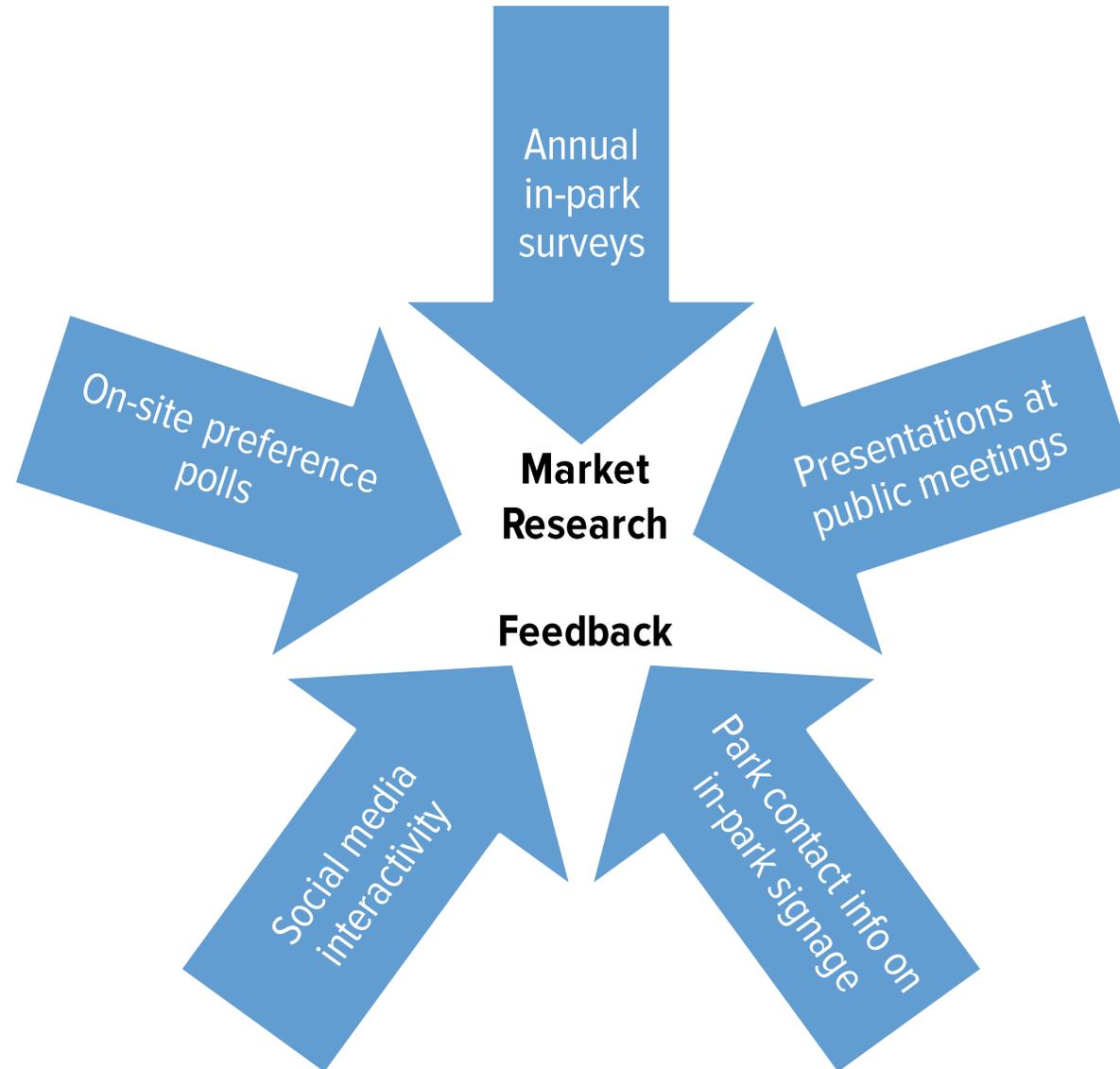
- Create a **consistent process** for engaging The Guild in large event planning
- Create an **opt-in email notification system** for the biggest public events when dates are reserved
- Act as the intermediary between event producers and The Guild to ensure safety and operations are fully coordinated,

# EVENTS: ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF LARGE-SCALE CONCERTS

- Proactively solicit desired events
- Remain aligned with City nightlife goals
- Continually reassess impact of large concerts as abutting buildings are developed



# ENGAGEMENT: CONTINUE TO ENGAGE PARK VISITORS



# ENGAGEMENT: SOLICIT INPUT FROM POTENTIAL REGULAR VISITORS



District Park presence at major events not in the District



Targeted outreach to specific neighborhood and cultural organizations



Programming partnerships with entities from underrepresented communities



# FINANCIAL: ESTABLISH PARK SELF-SUFFICIENCY



Bolster the success of the restaurant through strategic scheduling of programming and events



Facilitate private events managed by restaurant tenant



Develop a sponsorship strategy



# FINANCIAL: DIVERSIFY REVENUE STREAMS



Secure additional sponsorships



Position the restaurant tenant to attract catered events



Expand the boundaries of properties contributing to the park



Begin proactive marketing of the venue to regional/national production companies





# PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION

KEY PARTNERS  
STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES  
PHASING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

# KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS



## City of Providence

License or operating agreement related to pedestrian bridge

Collaboration on arts-related events and programs

Vision for nightlife and major events



## 195 District property owners and businesses

Programming content

Communications with people who live in, work in, and visit the 195 District



## DPPN and other local programming partners, artists, and fabricators

Programming content

Cooperative promotion

# STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES

Area	Obstacle	Potential Solution
Capital improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No consistent, predictable source of dedicated funding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Predictable public funding</li><li>Philanthropic support</li><li>Sponsorships for certain projects</li><li>Phasing in lower-priced alternatives over a longer period</li></ul>
Revenues: sponsorships and corporate philanthropy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>195 District is not eligible for many foundation grants</li><li>Commercial sponsorships aren't compatible with public procurement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Create an aligned nonprofit organization</li></ul>



# PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PHASING

## 2026 / Immediate

- Address litter can deficiencies
- Use signs and decals to prevent ped/bike conflicts
- Install interim solution for Dorrance Street entrance
- Develop community arts programming hub
- Cost estimate: \$100,000

## By Oct. 2030 / Medium-Term

- Create a dog park
- Create a sculptural play element
- Upgrade permanent and temporary park signage
- Design a distinctive gate for the Dorrance Street entrance
- Install irrigation on the east side and improve shoreline plantings
- Cost estimates: \$1.1M to \$3.2M depending on projects and alternates selected

- Diversify and increase furniture park-wide
- Create flexible and permanent shade
- Define more spaces with more border plantings
- Develop 2-3 additional programming hubs
- Cost estimates: \$600K to \$1.1M depending on alternates selected

## By Oct. 2027 / Short-Term



# PROPOSED OVERALL MILESTONE SCHEDULE





# DISCUSSION