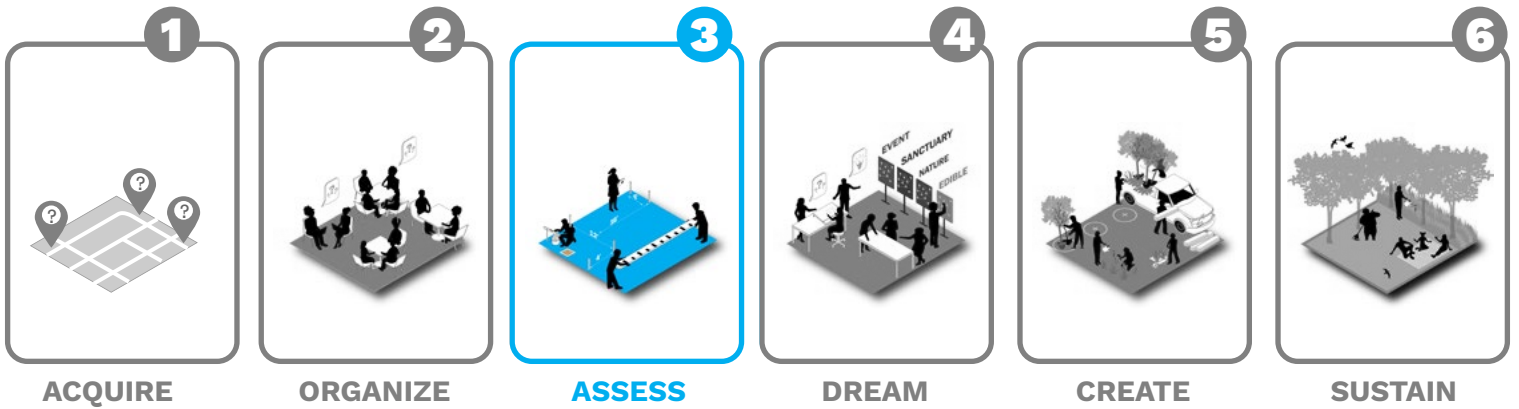


PARK in a TRUCK
ASSESS
WORKBOOK



A do-it-yourself toolkit for neighborhood parks

The Landscape Architecture Program +
The Lab for Social and Urban Innovation
Thomas Jefferson University
Philadelphia, PA



ACQUIRE

ORGANIZE

ASSESS

DREAM

CREATE

SUSTAIN



PARK IN A TRUCK TOOLKIT - WORKING VERSION 1.0

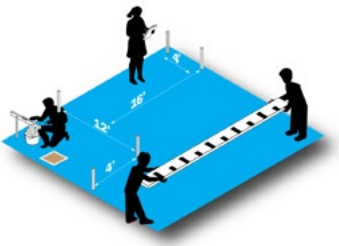
Kimberlee.Douglas@jefferson.edu

ParkinaTruck@jefferson.edu

This toolkit is a working toolkit, a formalized process of how a few communities have bettered themselves through designing, building and maintaining their own park. As a working toolkit, it is a work in progress. It is not perfect, but it is a great start towards a complex issue distilled into a few chapters. This is the first of several versions that will be published. Behind the scenes many parks are being build, communities bettering themselves, and people reviewing this process. Each park built, each community meeting, and every trip to home depot - something is learned. All this knowledge gained contributes to this book continuously as a feedback loop. Also crucial to the next version is getting feedback from professionals, organizations, and most importantly, community members like you! Please share your thoughts, questions, or ideas with us!

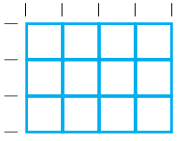
Welcome to the Assess Workbook! This book assumes you have already read the Park in a Truck Toolkit and completed Workbooks 1-2. There will be some repetition of the Toolkit section, this is as a reminder and provides a little more detail about what you will be doing.

ASSESS CONTENTS



OVERVIEW
MEASURE YOUR LOT
DIAGRAM YOUR LOT
VERIFY YOUR DIAGRAM
RECORD YOUR OBJECTS
ASSESS YOUR OBJECTS
CREATE A BASE PLAN
SUMMARY

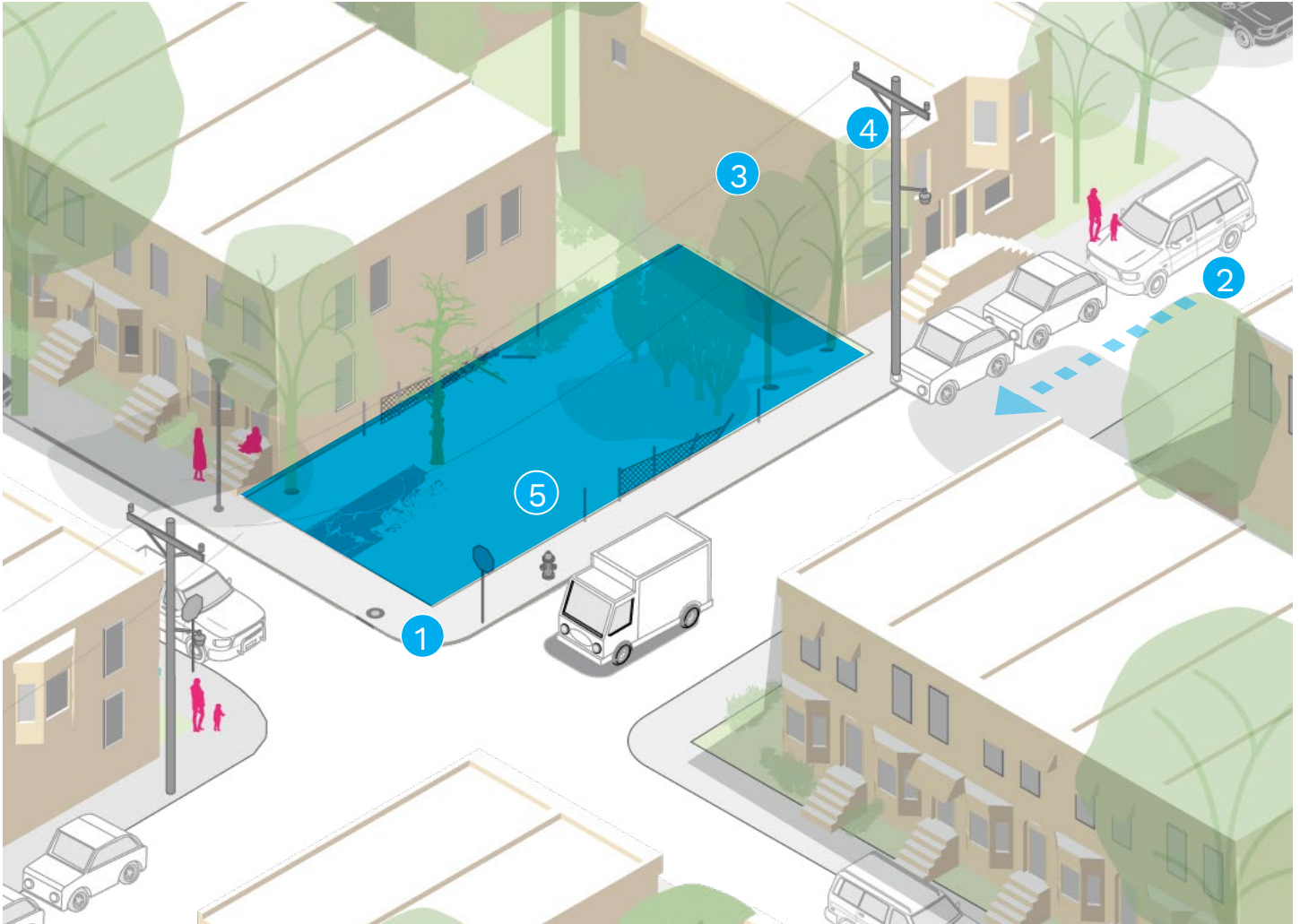
Your goal for this step is to visit your project 'site' and document important characteristics that will influence the park concept. The worksheets will guide you through this site assessment process.



OVERVIEW

The Assess Workbook includes tasks to observe and document the unique characteristics of your park site and create a base plan for your park planning. It is important to understand site characteristics in order to maximize the potential park use and benefits while avoiding impractical park use.

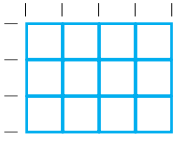
This booklet explains each step with an example project site.. By following each step, you will be able to document a variety of characteristics of your park site. Of course, there may be additional factors to consider, depending on the location, shape, and context of your park site—but this is a great place to start!



SITE CHARACTERISTICS

This diagram shows an example project site (in blue). There are several important characteristics that make this lot unique, including:

- 1 location on a busy corner
- 2 on a bus route
- 3 large blank wall
- 4 utility lines along the street edge
- 5 a sunny area along the sidewalk



SITE VISIT

Below is a list to help you understand the unique characteristics of the site. These characteristics include: the physical aspects of the site, such as trees and buildings; the neighboring context that surrounds the site; the environmental factors, including areas of sun and shade; and aesthetic factors such as areas with desirable/undesirable views.

The following activities can be done as a group or individually when you visit the park site.

1. COLLECT A SOIL SAMPLES. Understanding the soil nutrients is very helpful in determining what may grow best in your park. In addition, a simple test for lead will also help to ensure your park is safe. Penn State Extension offers a simple soil test procedure, found here: agsci.psu.edu/aasl/soil-testing/fertility/soil-fertility-submission-forms

2. PHOTOGRAPH. We all see the landscape differently and taking photographs is one way of sharing with others what we see. Set aside 30 minutes to walk around and take photos of the park site and surrounding context. Then share your photos with one another and describe why you took each photo. By doing so, you can start to get a sense of the future park's unique aesthetic, cultural, and other site attributes.

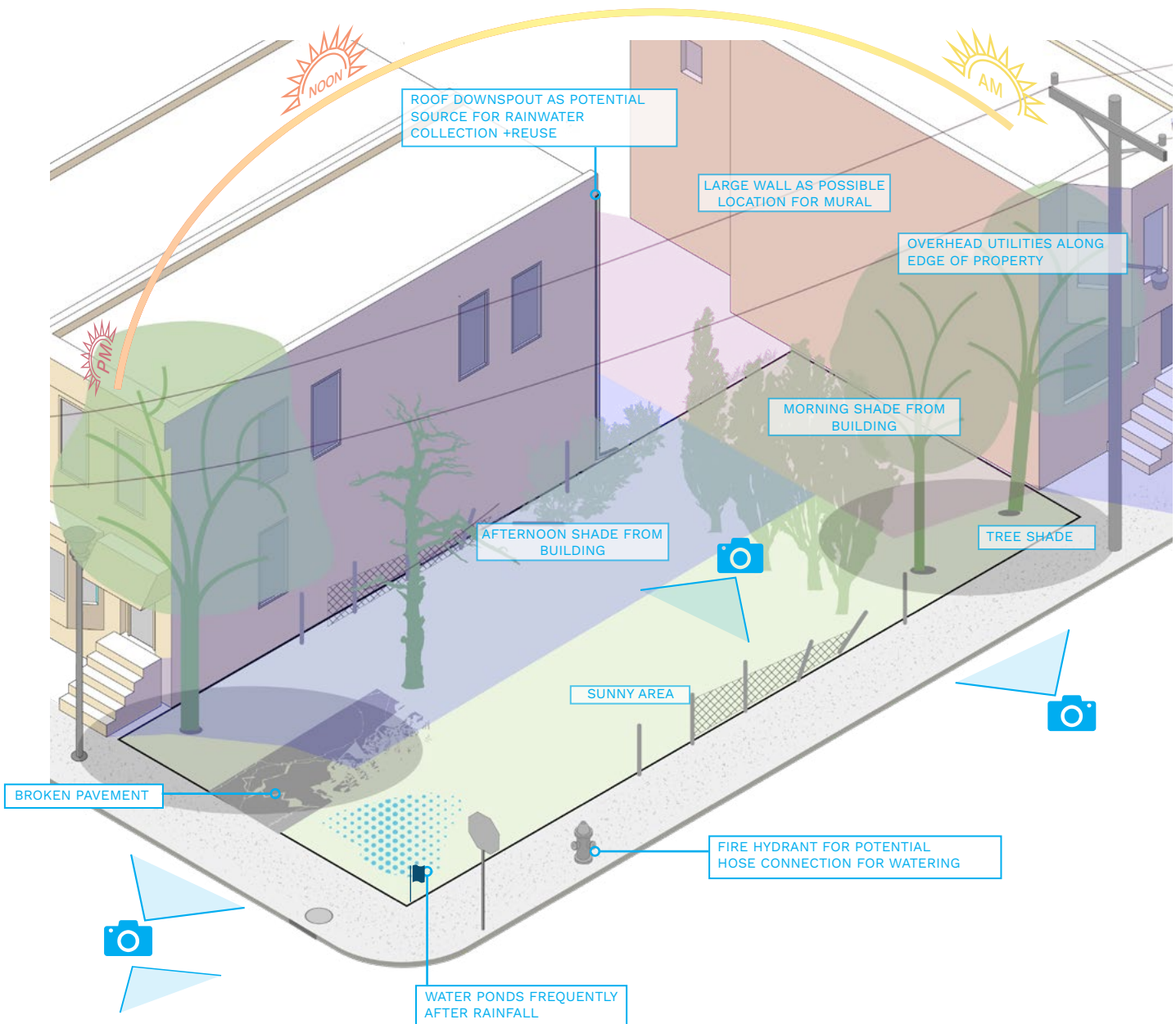
3. SIT AND LISTEN. Sit quietly in the park site and listen with all your senses. What can you hear, smell, and touch? After 30 minutes record what you sensed and discuss this with your park group as to how this might impact what you do. Are there positive senses that can be incorporated into the park design or are there negative senses that could be lessened by the park design? How would it be different on a different day of the week or time of day/night?

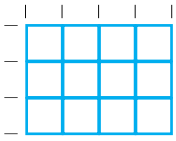
4. MEASURE+EVALUATE. Taking measurements of the park site is a way to help understand the site in more detail. The following pages describe some key steps to record what's currently at the site.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

CONDITIONS TO DOCUMENT

- sidewalks and other pavement
- visible utilities (overhead and ground)
- general direction of sunrise/sunset
- areas that are sunny and/or shady
- areas of gravel, pavement, or bare soil
- areas where water collects after rainfall
- adjacent buildings
- shrubs and trees (and their type, if you know it)
- existing stand-alone structures (sheds, fences)
- building remains (foundation, old wall, etc)
- sloping terrain, mounds and/or large depressions
- good and/or undesirable views
- windy/breezy areas
- primary sounds /potential nuisance areas





MEASURE YOUR LOT

Follow the steps below to begin making a diagram of the existing park site. The base map can then be printed and used at the site to record locations of various site elements and important characteristics.

1. Navigate to Google Maps website. This website includes aerial photos of the city and tools to measure the property.



2. Enter address for the property, or next closest property with known address. **Zoom to the address** using the navigation tools on the page. **Notice where the existing sidewalk and corners of the property** or located. If exact corners are not known, you can estimate the location for now.

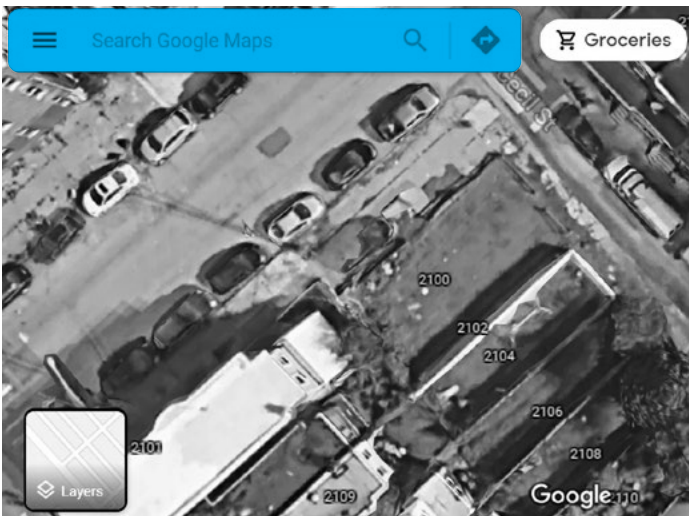
3. Review the aerial photograph of the property and determine a starting point to begin taking measurements. The starting point should be one corner of the park property. **Click the right mouse button on your starting point and select “Measure Distance”.**

4. Find the **next closest corner** of the park property and **move the cursor** and **click the left mouse button**. A distance between these two points will appear. Write this number down.

5. Drag the starting point to the next corner. Write this number down.

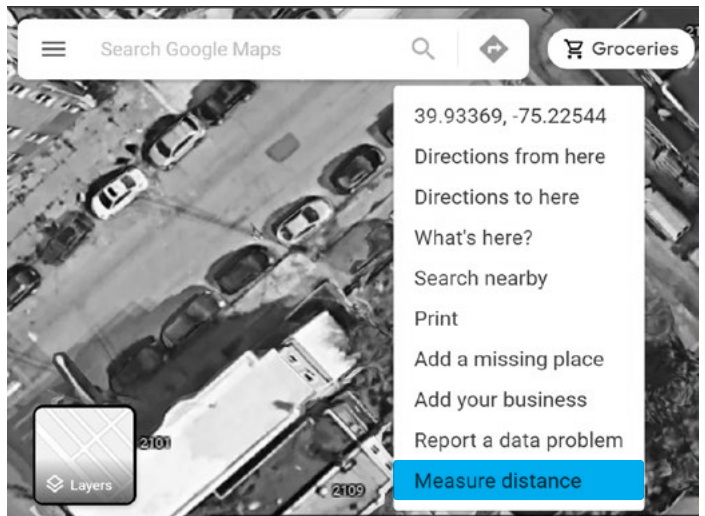
6. Repeat for each corner of the park until you have measured each side of the park. The last measurement should be back to the starting point.

STEPS 1+2



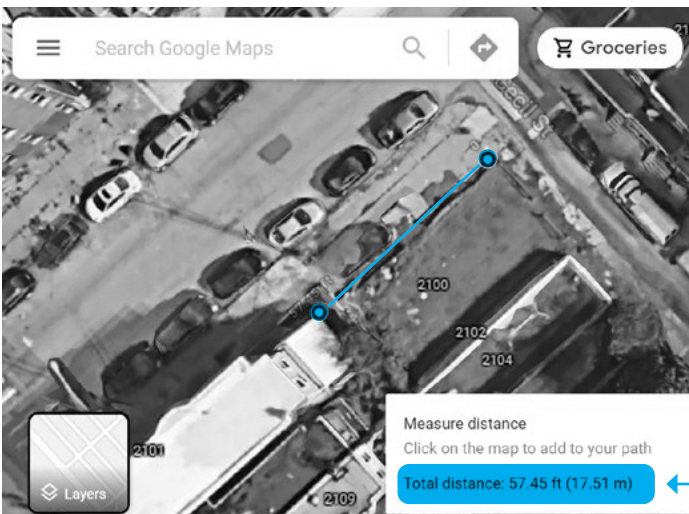
ENTER ADDRESS

STEP 3



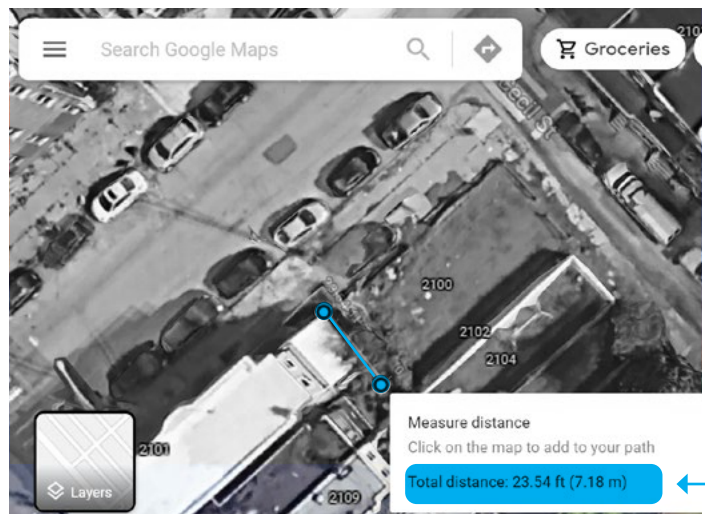
RIGHT CLICK on corner of lot and SELECT 'Measure Distance'

STEP 4



LEFT CLICK on second corner, JOT NUMBER DOWN

STEP 4



MOVE the first corner to the THIRD CORNER, JOT NUMBER DOWN

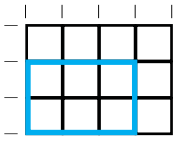


DIAGRAM YOUR LOT

You will now create a diagram of the current park boundaries. This diagram will be used to record any dimensions for objects (like trees, etc) that are on your site. The diagram is a “plan view”, viewed from directly above similar to the Google Maps aerial. Follow the steps below to create your base plan of the existing park site. The sequence of steps is the same as those used when taking the measurements from Google Maps

The boundary diagram uses grid paper to represent the ground.

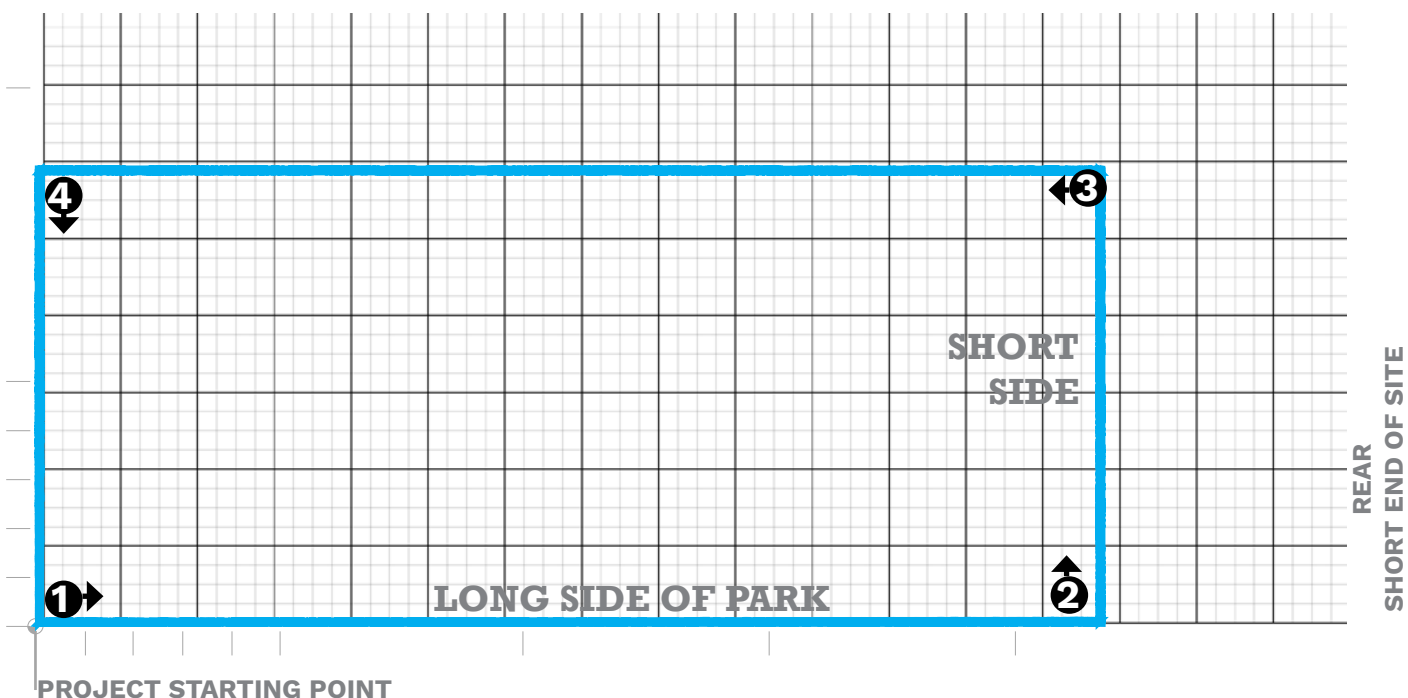
1. Draw the LONG SIDE. Using the longest dimension, draw a horizontal line from the Starting Point along the grid line. This line represents the LONGEST EDGE of the park. Each small grid segment represents 1 foot in actual length. (In this example, the LONG EDGE is 70 feet long, so the line is 70 segments long on the grid).

2. Draw the SHORT SIDE. Starting from the end of the LONG EDGE line you just drew, draw a vertical line. This line represents the read SHORT END. Draw the line to the same length of measured distance.

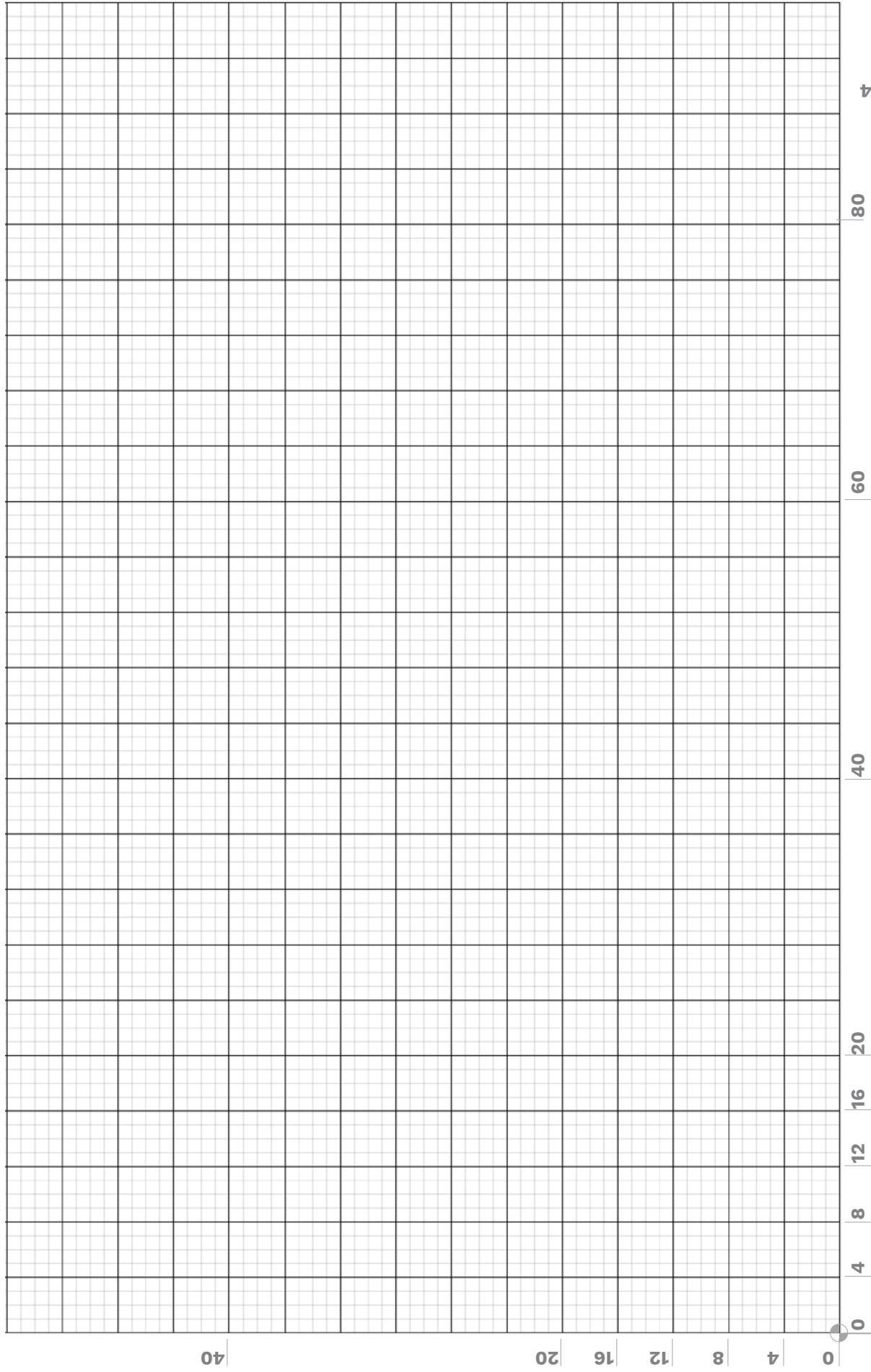
3. Repeat for the other LONG EDGE of the park.

4. Repeat for the other SHORT EDGE of the park.

TIP
You can use the [grid on the next page](#) to create your plan.
Or, you can download an additional grid sheet, at a bigger scale, with [this link!](#)

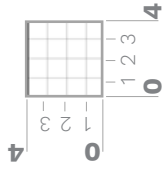


BASE MAP GRID | 1" = 10'-0"

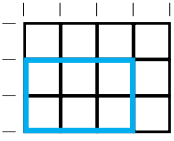


PROJECT STARTING POINT

1 BOX IS 4 UNITS (FEET)



REAR
SHORT END OF SITE



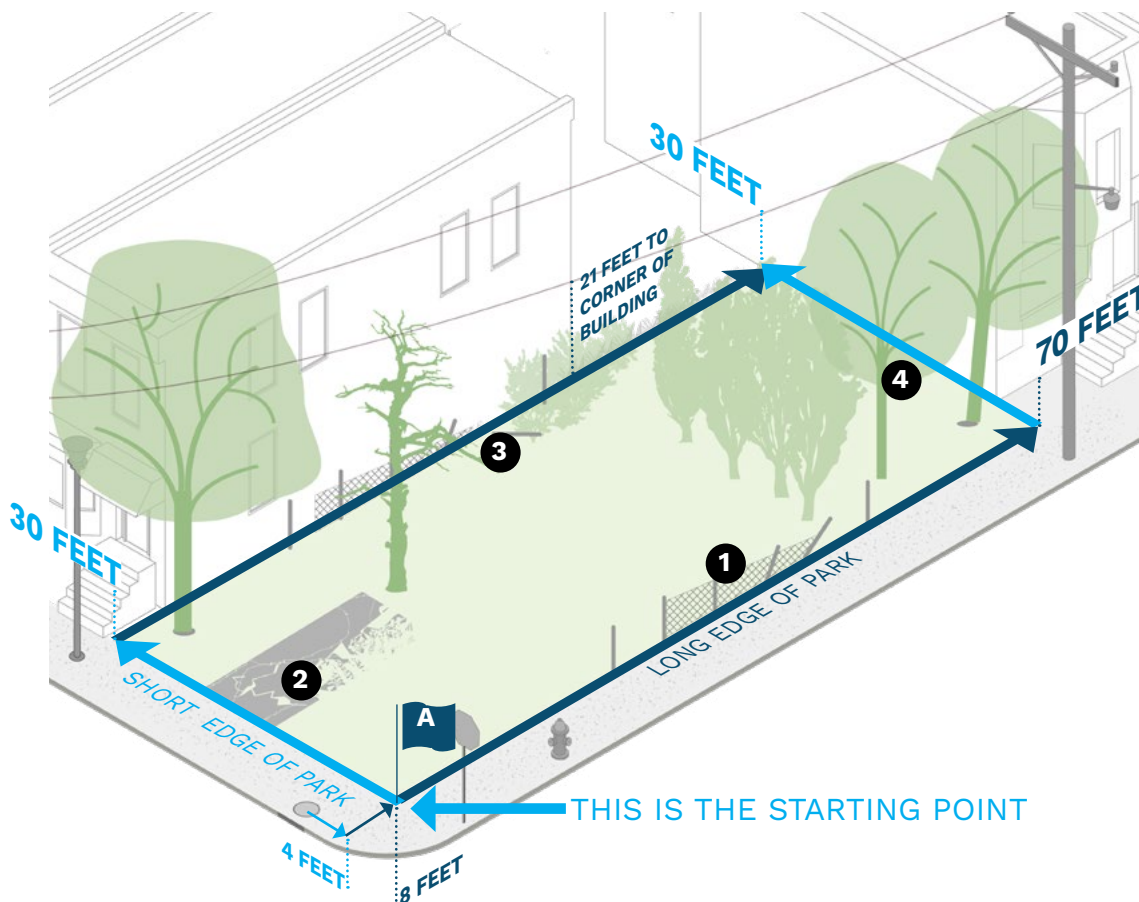
VERIFY YOUR DIAGRAM

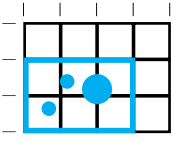
The next step in developing your field is to visit the park site to measure and record the length of each property boundary, Field located dimensions should be trusted over digital dimensions.

The following steps are recommended:

A. Locate the project Starting Point. This is the same location as where you started in Google Maps.

- 1.** Using a 100 foot tape measure, **measure and record the distance along the long outside edge of the Park from corner to corner.**
- 2.** Using a 100 foot tape measure, **measure and record the distance along the short outside edge of the Park from corner to corner.**
- 3. Repeat** for the other LONG EDGE of the park.
- 4. Repeat** for the other SHORT EDGE of the park.





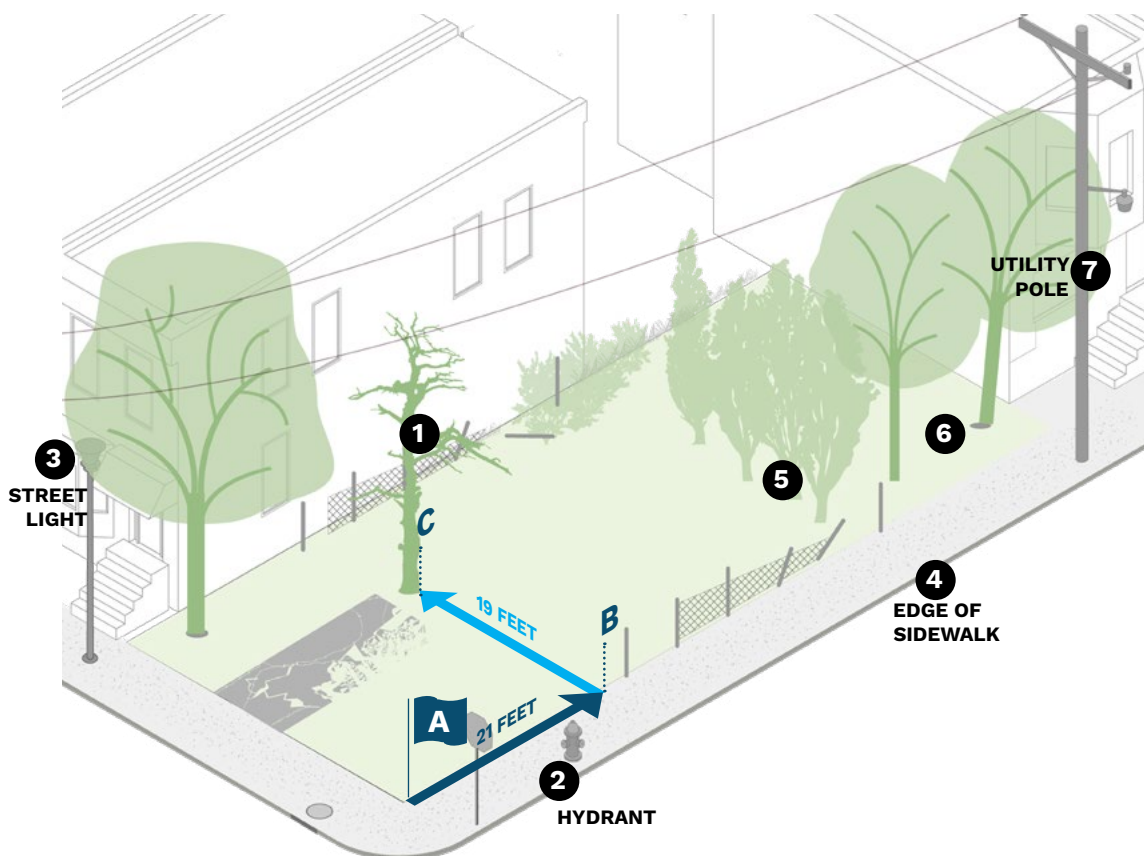
RECORD OBJECTS

The next step in developing your base plan is to record the locations of all objects on the project site. The objects are located by taking measurements from project starting point and from the park edge. Two distances for each object are recorded.

This is also a good opportunity to note locations of objects that are immediately adjacent to, but outside, of the project site. These can be objects that influence the park plan, such as an adjacent utility pole, hydrant, edge of sidewalk, or other important objects.

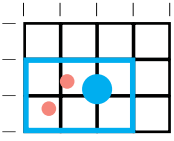
The following steps are recommended:

- 1. As you did with length measurement, extend 100 foot tape measure along the edge of the park.**
- 2. Walk along the tape measure and mark the location of trees, fences, or other objects in the park.**
- 3. Use a second tape measure to find how far the object is away from the park edge. Record what the object is (Tree, etc) and locate the object on your base map using both distances.**
- 4. Repeat** for all other objects in the park.
- 5. Repeat for any objects in the sidewalk or directly adjacent to the park** that may impact your park planning and use.



LOCATIONS

		NOTES
	21FT 19FT	LARGE DEAD TREE; NO LEAVES
(1)	_____	_____
(2)	_____	_____
(3)	_____	_____
(4)	_____	_____
(5)	_____	_____
(6)	_____	_____
(7)	_____	_____
(8)	_____	_____
(9)	_____	_____
(10)	_____	_____
(11)	_____	_____
(12)	_____	_____
(13)	_____	_____
(14)	_____	_____
(15)	_____	_____
(16)	_____	_____
(17)	_____	_____
(18)	_____	_____
(19)	_____	_____
(20)	_____	_____

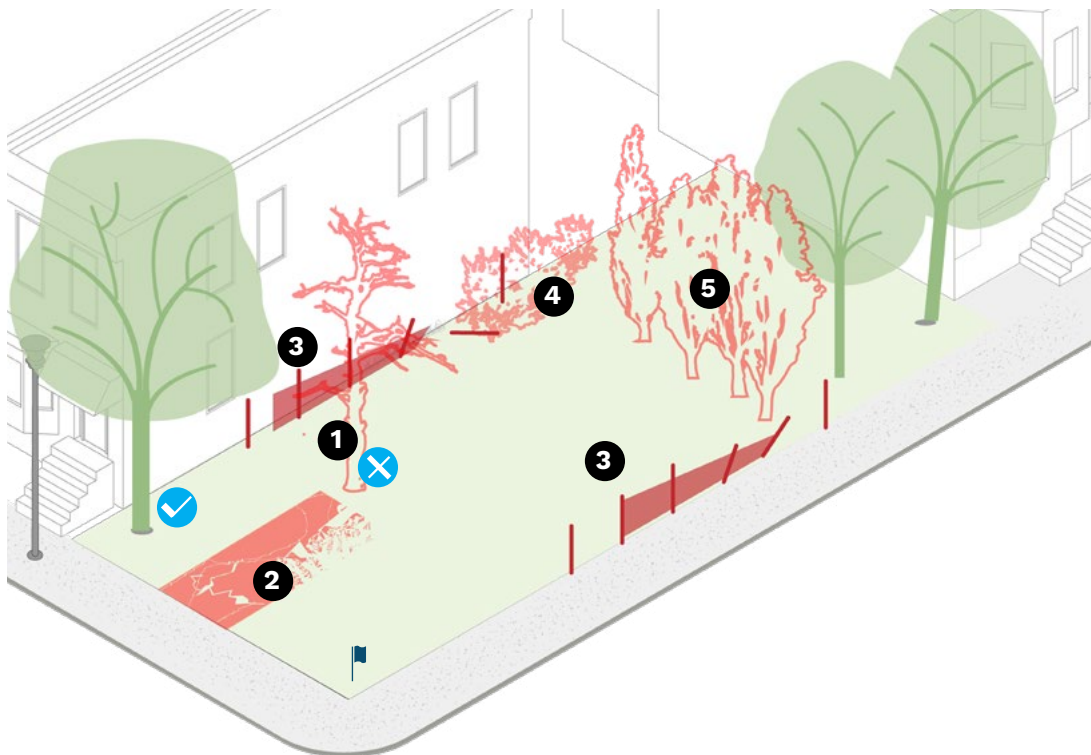


ASSESS OBJECTS

The next step is to assess the conditions of the objects on your lot. This means evaluating the current condition of an object and its potential value to the future park. There are many ways to assess objects, including: beauty/character, expected longevity, stability, potential liability, re-use potential, habitat value, etc. As you assess each object, indicate whether the object should be kept (or not) and include any notes for future consideration.

The following objects are shown in red in the example. These have been assessed and determined they will be removed.

- 1. DEAD TREE.** The tree has met the end of its life. While a standing dead tree provides excellent habitat, it may be a hazard for future park users if it were to fall. The tree will be removed and cut into pieces, perhaps for stump seats or other uses?
- 2. OLD SIDEWALK.** The concrete pavement led to the building that use to stand here. It would be nice to keep the sidewalk as an entrance to the park. However, most of the concrete is broken apart. Instead, the larger pieces of the old sidewalk will be kept and reused in the park for stepping stones and other uses.
- 3. RUSTED FENCE.** The old fence is in such bad shape that the best thing is to remove it and recycle the materials.
- 4. OVERGROWN SHRUBS.** Unfortunately these shrubs are very thorny and will need to be removed.
- 5. SMALL TREES.** Assess the existing trees. If there are any found on your site see if they can be kept for the new park design. If existing trees are noted you may need to adjust the park plan. The undesirable trees can be turned into mulch for use in planting beds instead.



ASSESSMENT

KEEP?

NOTES



DEAD TREE; CUT AND RE-USE FOR SEATING??



NICE SHADE TREE (MAPLE?)

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

(11)

(12)

(13)

(14)

(15)

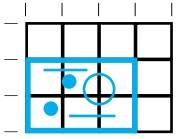
(16)

(17)

(18)

(19)

(20)



BASE PLAN

DRAW OBJECTS TO REMAIN

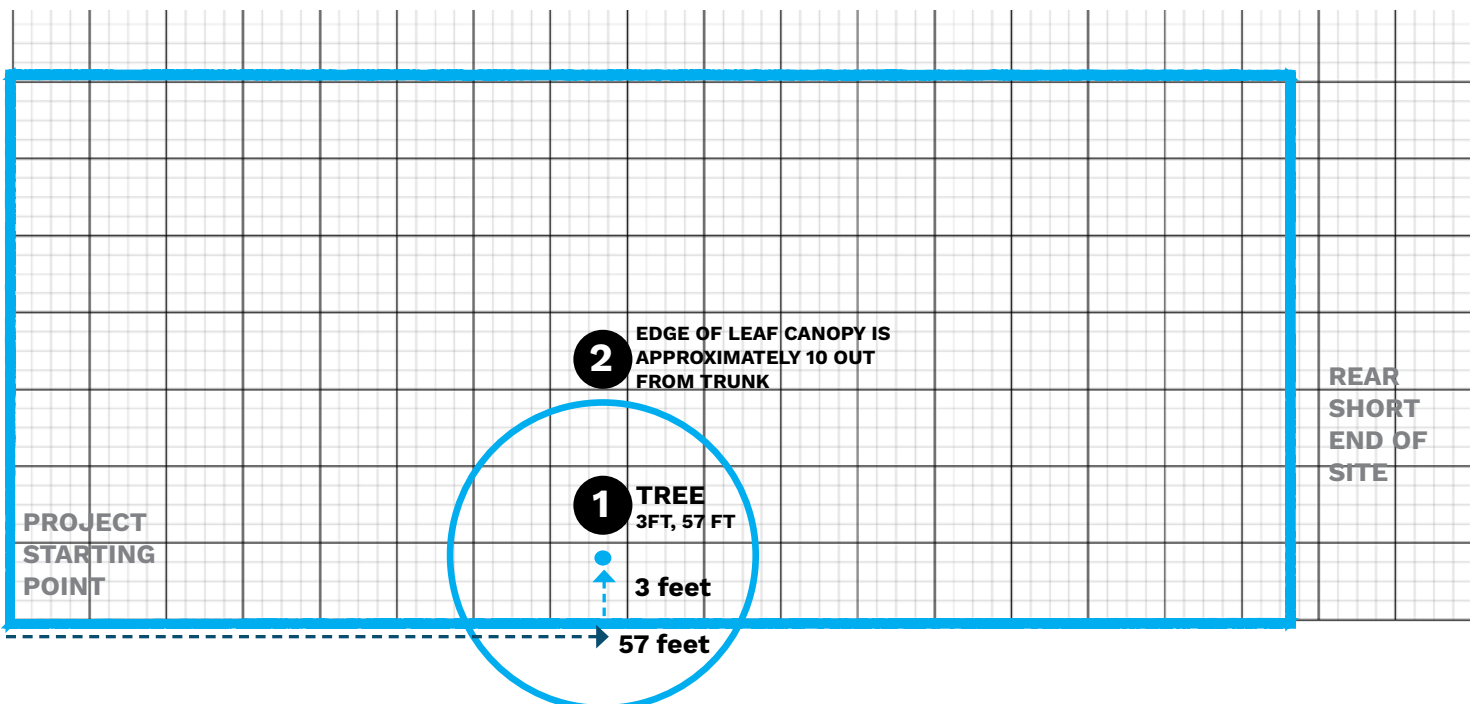
Follow the steps below to add objects, such as trees or other typical elements, to create the base plan. The sequence of steps is nearly the same as those used when taking the measurements at the park site.

1. Draw the location of all objects to be kept. Using the measured coordinates, draw the locations of objects to be kept. To do so, find an object and its coordinates. Then like a treasure map, begin at the starting point and count off the object's measurements from the Project Starting Point and place a dot or an X to mark the spot!

Remember that each small grid segment represents 1 foot in actual length.

2. Draw the size of the object.

- For trees and shrubs, draw a circle with a solid dot in the center. The dot at the circle's center represents the trunk location and the edge of the circle represents the approximate edge of the leaf canopy.
- For utility posts or other single vertical objects, draw a circle.
- For perennial plant beds, find the coordinates for a corner of the planting bed and draw the perimeter of the planting bed much like you drew the boundary of the park.
- For fences, at a minimum, draw the first and last post, with each post represented by a small square. You may also draw the other fence posts if desired.
- For sheds or other structures, find the coordinates for the corner of the shed (or other structure) and draw the perimeter of the shed, the same as how you drew the boundary of the park.



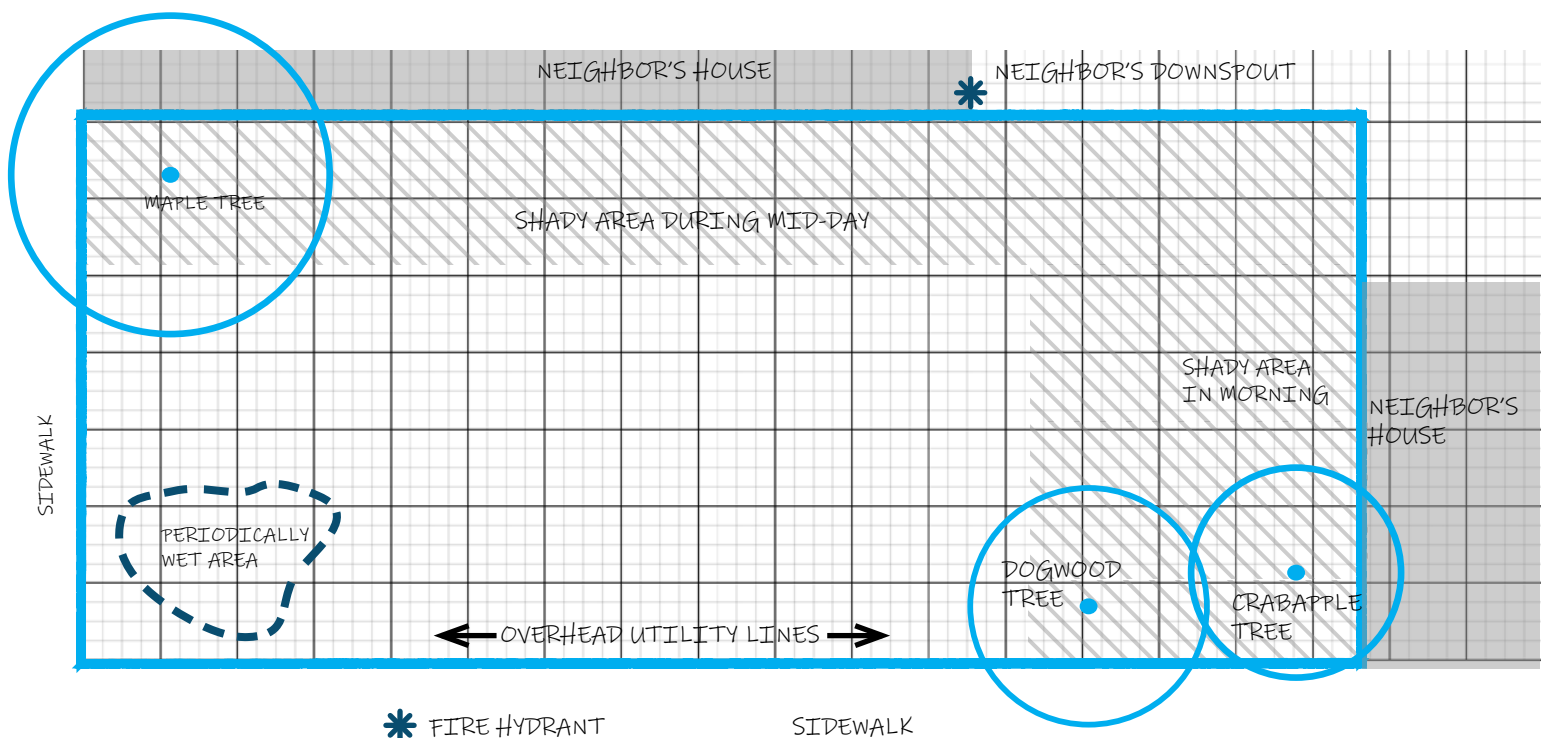
DESCRIBE THE CONDITIONS

Follow the steps below to create your existing park site base plan. The sequence of steps is nearly the same as those used when taking the measurements at the park site.

3. Draw other features. Using your observations of the site characteristics, draw the approximate locations of various objects and label.

- For building shadows, draw the approximately outer edge of shady areas and hatch the areas that receive shadow.
- For buildings, draw the outline of the building and hatch it in.
- For overhead utilities, simply label the location above the site.
- For areas on the ground with distinct features (such as wet areas), draw a blob shape that is the approximate location.
- For trees, label with the type of tree (i.e. Maple Tree)

4. Complete!



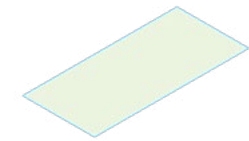


ARE YOU READY?

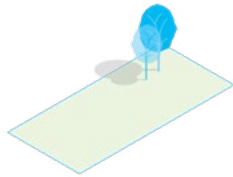
The following four characteristics of the site will have significant influence on the overall design of your park. Summarize your site's key characteristics. These will be used during next step to help design your park.

EXISTING TREES?

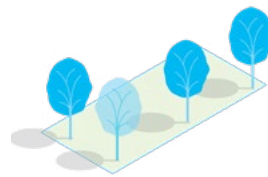
The number of trees—if any—that are currently on the site (don't count trees that will be removed)



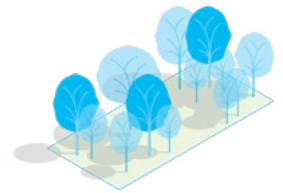
NO TREES



ONE OR TWO TREES



SEVERAL TREES



MOSTLY TREES

AMOUNT OF SUNLIGHT?

How much sun the site receives a day



FULL SUN ALL DAY



MOSTLY SUN



MOSTLY SHADE



DEEP SHADE ALL DAY

LOT LOCATION

Is the lot on in the middle of the block, or on a corner? If on a corner, where is the street in relationship to the long side?

CORNER LOT (street left)

CORNER LOT (street right)

MID-BLOCK LOT

LOT SIZE

How long each side is, and the overall square footage. Check the box that your lot's square footage is within range of.

L _____ FT **X** **W** _____ FT = _____ SQ. FT
LONG EDGE SHORT EDGE TOTAL AREA (SQUARE FEET)

L
W

YOUR LOT SIZE IS A

L
W

YOUR LOT SIZE IS B

L
W

YOUR LOT SIZE IS C

L
W

YOUR LOT SIZE IS D

L
W

YOUR LOT SIZE IS E