

Project Background and Existing Conditions

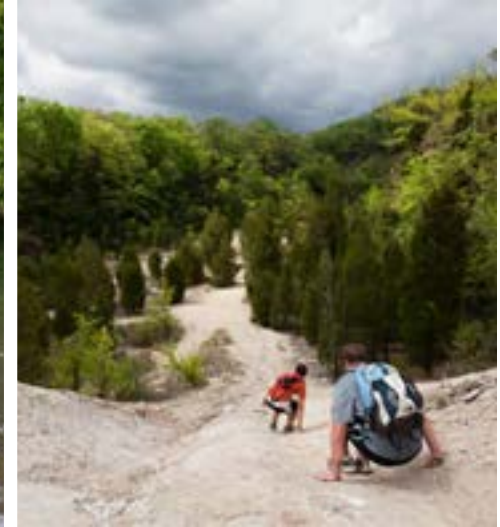
Knoxville's Urban Wilderness

Comprised of over 1,000 acres of forested land south of the Tennessee River, the Urban Wilderness is an incredible natural, recreational, and cultural resource in the city of Knoxville. The Urban Wilderness is composed of two major areas, the South Loop and the Battlefield Loop.

The South Loop includes a 12.5-mile signed trail connecting 7 recreational areas: Ijams Nature Center, Forks of the River Wildlife Management Area, Anderson School Trails, William Hastie Natural Area, and Marie Myers Park. The new Baker Creek Preserve, and Baker Creek Play Forest.

The Battlefield Loop, 600 acres of forest, links together culturally and historically significant sites, including two civil war defense fortifications, a battlefield site, two naturally occurring lakes, a large quarry lake and a 200' high bluff overlooking the Tennessee River.

Today the loops and destinations are connected as a loose constellation of destinations. There is great opportunity to create better connections between the sites and establish a stronger and more holistic identity for the Urban Wilderness.





Urban Wilderness Implementation Plan

In 2016 the City of Knoxville and Legacy Parks Foundation commissioned team member Equinox to draft an Implementation Plan for developing and strengthening the Urban Wilderness. The Plan articulates a Vision and 8 primary Project Goals for the Urban Wilderness (included here) as well as short and long-term priority projects to steer the future development of the Urban Wilderness in a thoughtful, sustainable and strategic manner. The Gateway Park is identified in this document as a short-term priority project, targeted for completion by 2020.



Vision

The Urban Wilderness, in the heart of Knoxville, is the Southeast's most desired place to live and adventure in the outdoors. It has a connected system of trails, waterways, open space, parks, thriving neighborhoods, and historic, cultural, and shopping destinations. Whether you are a visitor or resident, the Urban Wilderness provides world-class outdoor adventure at your doorstep.

Project Goals

The Systems are Interconnected: including parks, open space, trails, pedestrian/bike facilities, schools, communities, downtown, and commerce.

Make the UW Inclusive and Accessible: All ages, abilities, level of experience, and interests in outdoor recreation have a place in the Urban Wilderness.

Spur Economic Development and Revitalize Communities: Increase regional attention as an outdoor destination that spurs business development, increases visitors, and increases quality of life for residents.

Create a Destination with a Sense of Place & Quality Experience: Build upon the cultural, natural, and heritage assets, lauding what makes this place unique and building civic pride.

Engage Visitors and Residents to Get Outside: Gets more residents and visitors outside as their awareness of access and opportunities is increased.

Make the UW a National and Regional Destination for Adventure Sports and Travel and Heritage Tourism: Provides a venue for all kinds of adventure sports, competitions, novice outdoor adventurers, heritage and cultural tourism, and increases recognition by national media for outdoor and heritage tourism.

Collaboratively Manage and Champion the UW: Partners have a unified vision, have clear roles, collaboratively manage, collectively seek funding, and measure and celebrate successes. Partnerships are strengthened or born in support of the vision.

Increase Health of Community: Provide opportunities for group recreation, school commuter, business commuter, or family outings that will improve the community's health and combat obesity.

Short-term Projects

Urban Wilderness-Wide

- Comprehensive Wayfinding Plan
- Gateways Pilot Project
- Cooperative Partnership Structure
- Expand Tourism Marketing Efforts

The Battlefield Loop

- River Bluff Park
- Fort Dickerson Park

Ijams Nature Center

- Mead's Quarry Improvements
- Tennessee River Access

Parks

- IC King Park Expansion
- Gateway Park at James White Parkway

Long-term Projects

Urban Wilderness-Wide

- Comprehensive Wayfinding Plan Implementation
- Develop Further Gateways
- Develop Cooperative Partnership Structure
- Work with Partners to Further Economic Development

The Battlefield Loop

- Log Haven Historic Cabin Community
- Goose Creek Restoration and Preservation
- Fort Stanley

Ijams Nature Center

- Overnight Visitor Experience
- Property Expansion

Parks

- South District Recreation Center

Why A Gateway? **No Primary Destination or Access Point**

The Urban Wilderness would greatly benefit from a primary access point, a “jumping off point” from which other sites within the system could be easily identified and reached. At this access point, information about the entire Urban Wilderness recreational area could be available for visitors. This access point needs to be strategically located at an easily accessible location, well placed between the Battlefield and South Loops and connected to key recreational areas. The Urban Wilderness Gateway project site, situated between the James White Parkway and Baker Creek Preserve, is ideally suited for this purpose.

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AUGUSTA QUARRY



MEAD'S QUARRY



FORKS OF THE RIVER



IJAMS NATURE CENTER



Why A Gateway? **Unclear Sense of Entry and Lack of Hierarchy**

Today there is no entrance, or 'front door' to the Urban Wilderness. Expansive and varied, navigation within the Urban Wilderness can be unclear. A primary entry point, with clear navigation from this point to other destinations in the Urban Wilderness, would help create a cohesiveness between sites in the larger network.



Why A Gateway? **Varying Identities at Destinations**

No two sites in the Urban Wilderness are alike, and while this diversity is an asset these sites would benefit from a layer of shared identity, branding, and wayfinding. These efforts would help to build a more robust, collective and varied community of users, as well as crossover of activities, amenities and resources.



Why A Gateway? **Lack of Connectivity Between Loops**

While each of the loops is fairly well connected, there is currently no direct link between the Loops. Ideally these Loops would be linked, so the rich natural and cultural resources could be better and more easily appreciated by a wider audience.

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MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS, SOUTH LOOP



HIGH GROUND PARK, BATTLEFIELD LOOP



DOWNTOWN KNOXVILLE

FORT STANLEY

FORT DICKERSON QUARRY LAKE

RIVER BLUFF

HIGHGROUD PARK

LOGHAVEN

MARY VESTAL PARK

JAMES WHITE PARKWAY

SOUTH KNOXVILLE

IJAMS NATURE CENTER

MEADS QUARRY LAKE

FORKS OF THE RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

ROSS MARBLE QUARRY

MARIE MYERS PARK

URBAN WILDERNESS GATEWAY

BAKER CREEK PRESERVE

HASTIE NATURAL AREA

PRIVATE LAND EASEMENT

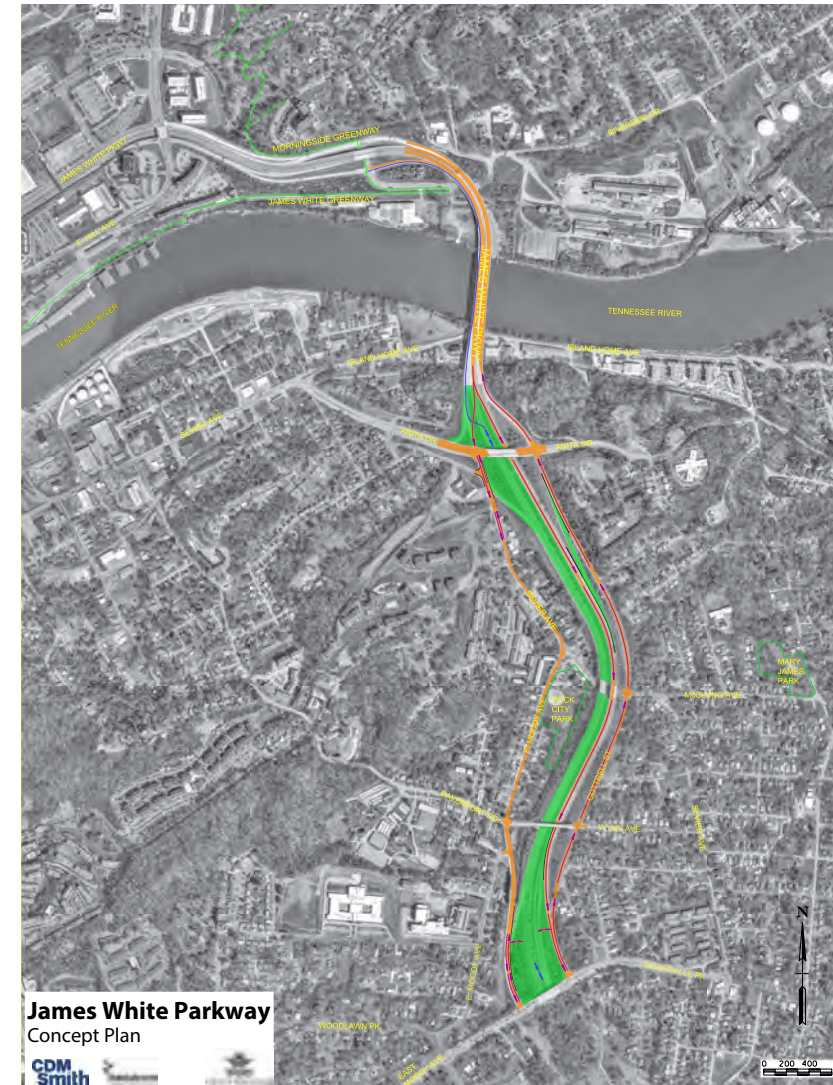
Gateway Site and the James White Parkway

The Gateway site was acquired by the City of Knoxville via an excess land transfer from the Tennessee Department of Transportation. Located between the terminus of the James White Parkway and Baker Creek Preserve, it is perfectly positioned to serve as a gateway to the Urban Wilderness.

In addition to acquiring the gateway site, the City of Knoxville has studied the potential for transforming lanes of the James White Parkway into bike and pedestrian greenway. This study can be found in Appendix A. This Framework Plan and Concept Design takes that study as a start point, connects the James White Parkway work to the Gateway site and further develops the concept.

As first steps towards the transformation of the James White Parkway, a TDOT land transfer to the City of Knoxville has concluded for the land south of Sevierville Pike. A grading permit to allow access to the Gateway site from the terminus of the James White Parkway is currently in process. Additionally, the City is in discussion with TDOT for the full transfer of land from Sevierville Pike to Anita Drive, which is necessary to eventually create the greenway and park.

The following pages detail the existing site conditions and context at both the original Gateway and expanded Parkway sites.





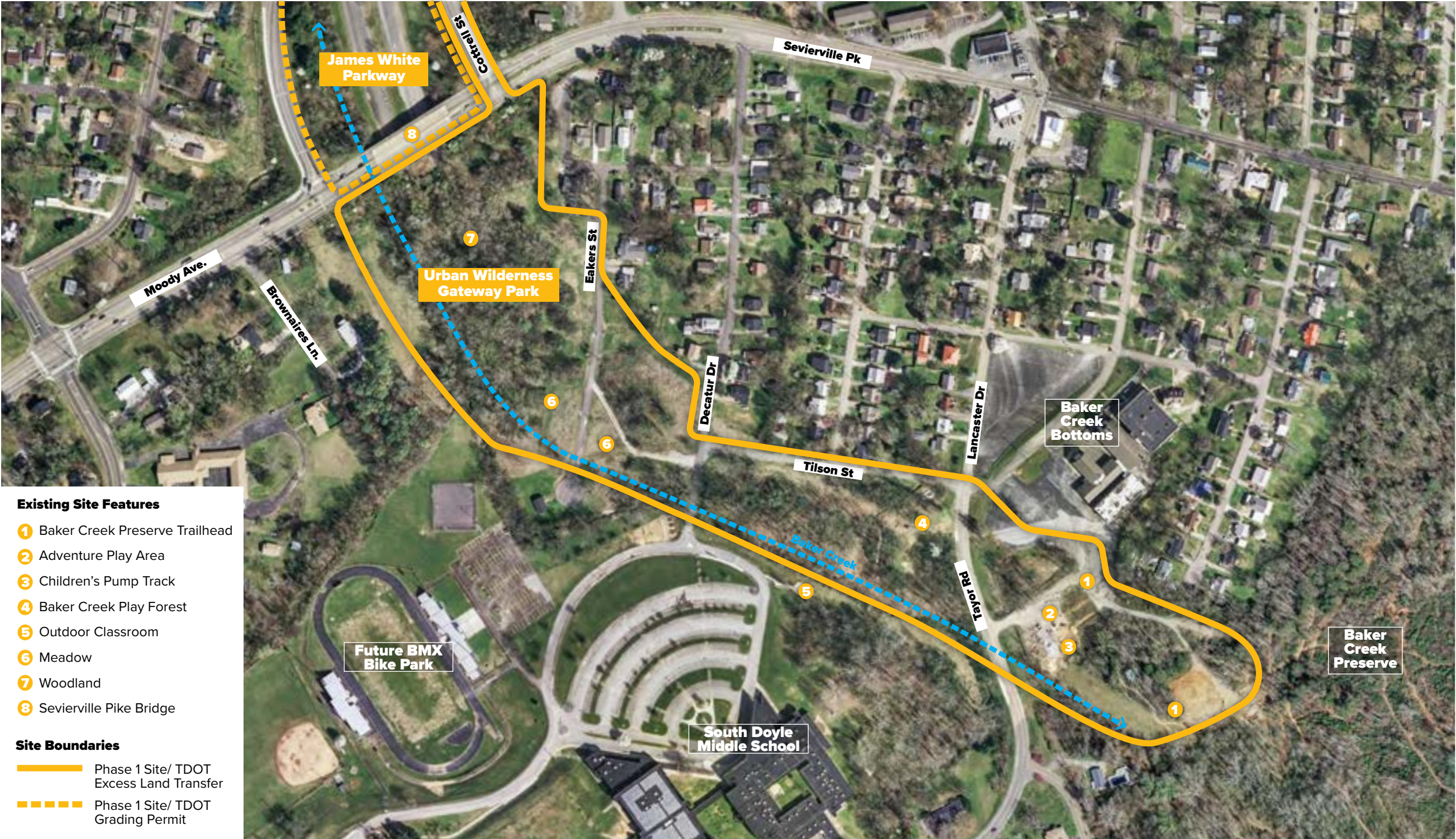
Site and Context **Gateway Park Site**



Adjacent Projects

- (A)** Suttree Landing Park
- (B)** South Waterfront Streetscape Project
- (C)** South Waterfront Riverwalk
- (D)** G+O Trail Project
- (E)** Stanley Lippencott Ridge Park Trail Connections
- (F)** Dogwood Elementary Outdoor Classroom and Trails
- (G)** Cecil Webb Recreation Center
- (H)** Lindberg Forest Neighborhood Tipton Avenue Traffic Calming Initiative
- (I)** Baker Creek Area Vision Plan SDMS + BMX Park Connection
- (J)** Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- (K)** Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- (L)** Baker Creek Bottoms





Existing Site Features

- 1 Baker Creek Preserve Trailhead
- 2 Adventure Play Area
- 3 Children's Pump Track
- 4 Baker Creek Play Forest
- 5 Outdoor Classroom
- 6 Meadow
- 7 Woodland
- 8 Sevierville Pike Bridge

Site Boundaries

- Phase 1 Site/ TDOT Excess Land Transfer
- Phase 1 Site/ TDOT Grading Permit

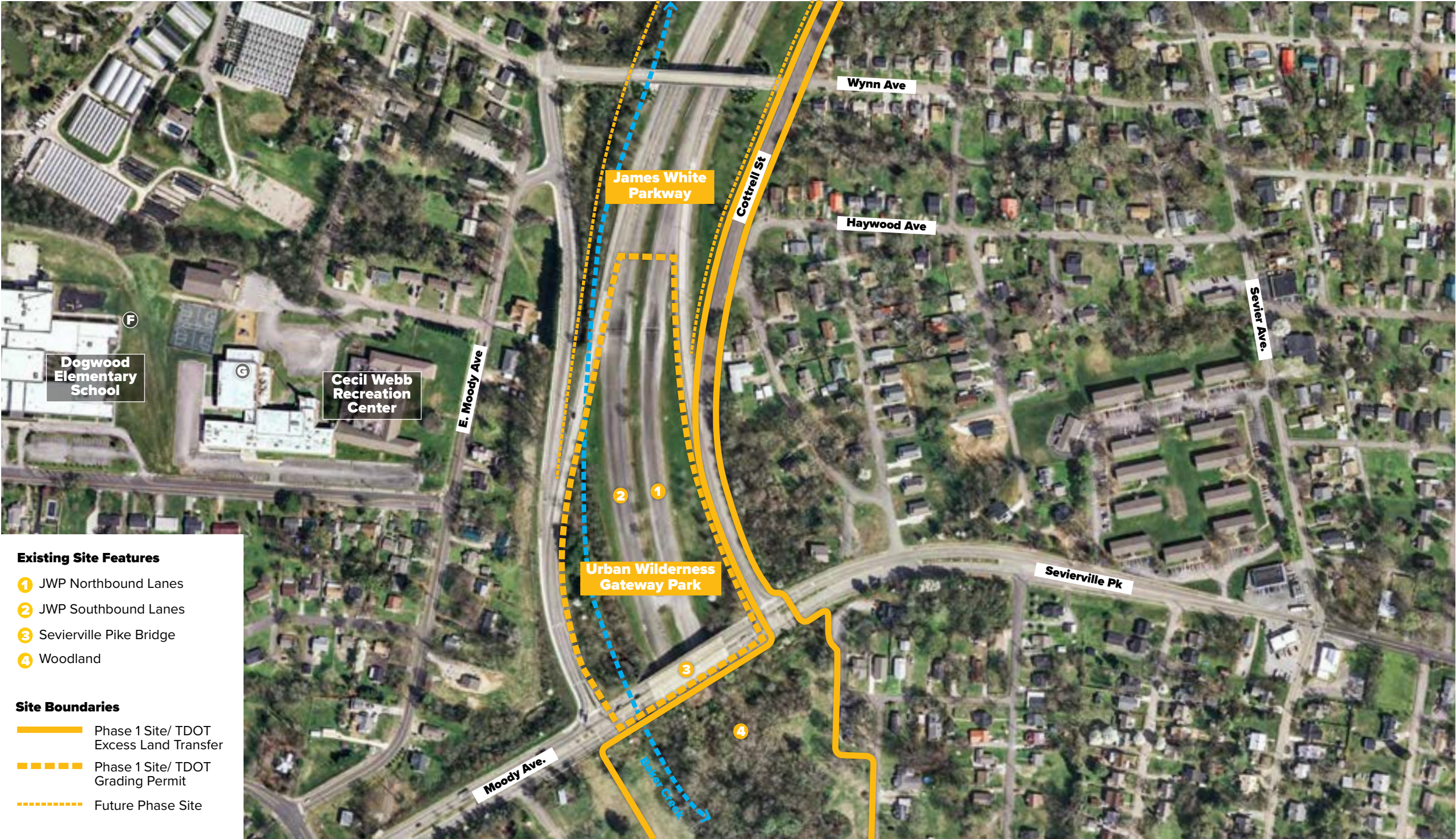
Site and Context **James White Parkway Terminus**



Adjacent Projects

- Ⓐ Suttree Landing Park
- Ⓑ South Waterfront Streetscape Project
- Ⓒ South Waterfront Riverwalk
- Ⓓ G+O Trail Project
- Ⓔ Stanley Lippencott Ridge Park Trail Connections
- Ⓕ Dogwod Elementary Outdoor Classroom and Trails
- Ⓖ Cecil Webb Recreation Center
- Ⓗ Lindberg Forest Neighborhood Tipton Avenue Traffic Calming Initiative
- Ⓘ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan SDMS + BMX Park Connection
- Ⓝ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- Ⓚ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- Ⓛ Baker Creek Bottoms





Existing Site Features

- 1 JWP Northbound Lanes
- 2 JWP Southbound Lanes
- 3 Sevierville Pike Bridge
- 4 Woodland

Site Boundaries

- Phase 1 Site/ TDOT Excess Land Transfer
- Phase 1 Site/ TDOT Grading Permit
- Future Phase Site

Site and Context

James White Parkway + Cottrell St



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Adjacent Projects

- Ⓐ Suttree Landing Park
- Ⓑ South Waterfront Streetscape Project
- Ⓒ South Waterfront Riverwalk
- Ⓓ G+O Trail Project
- Ⓔ Stanley Lippencott Ridge Park Trail Connections
- Ⓕ Dogwod Elementary Outdoor Classroom and Trails
- Ⓖ Cecil Webb Recreation Center
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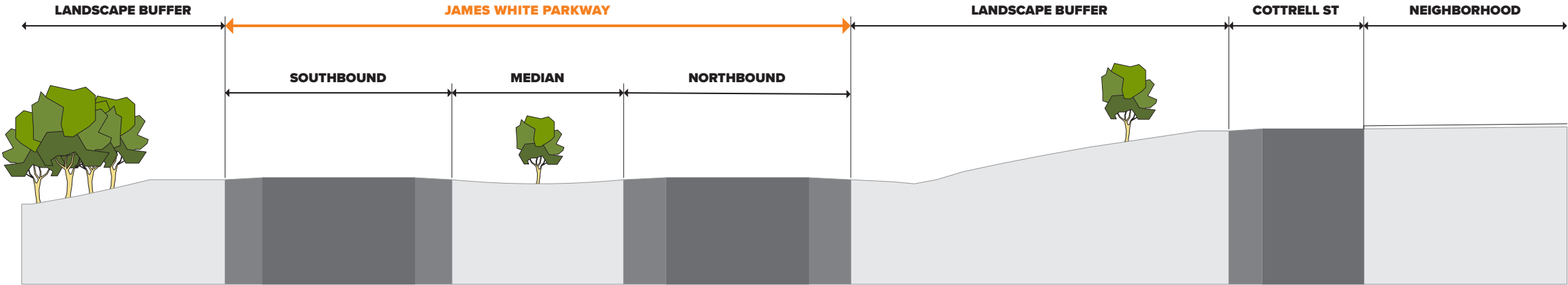


Existing Site Features

- 1 JWP Southbound Lanes
- 2 JWP Northbound Lanes
- 3 Cottrell St. Vehicular Lanes
- 4 Cottrell St. Sidewalk

Site Boundaries

- Phase 1 Site/ TDOT Excess Land Transfer
- Future Phase Site

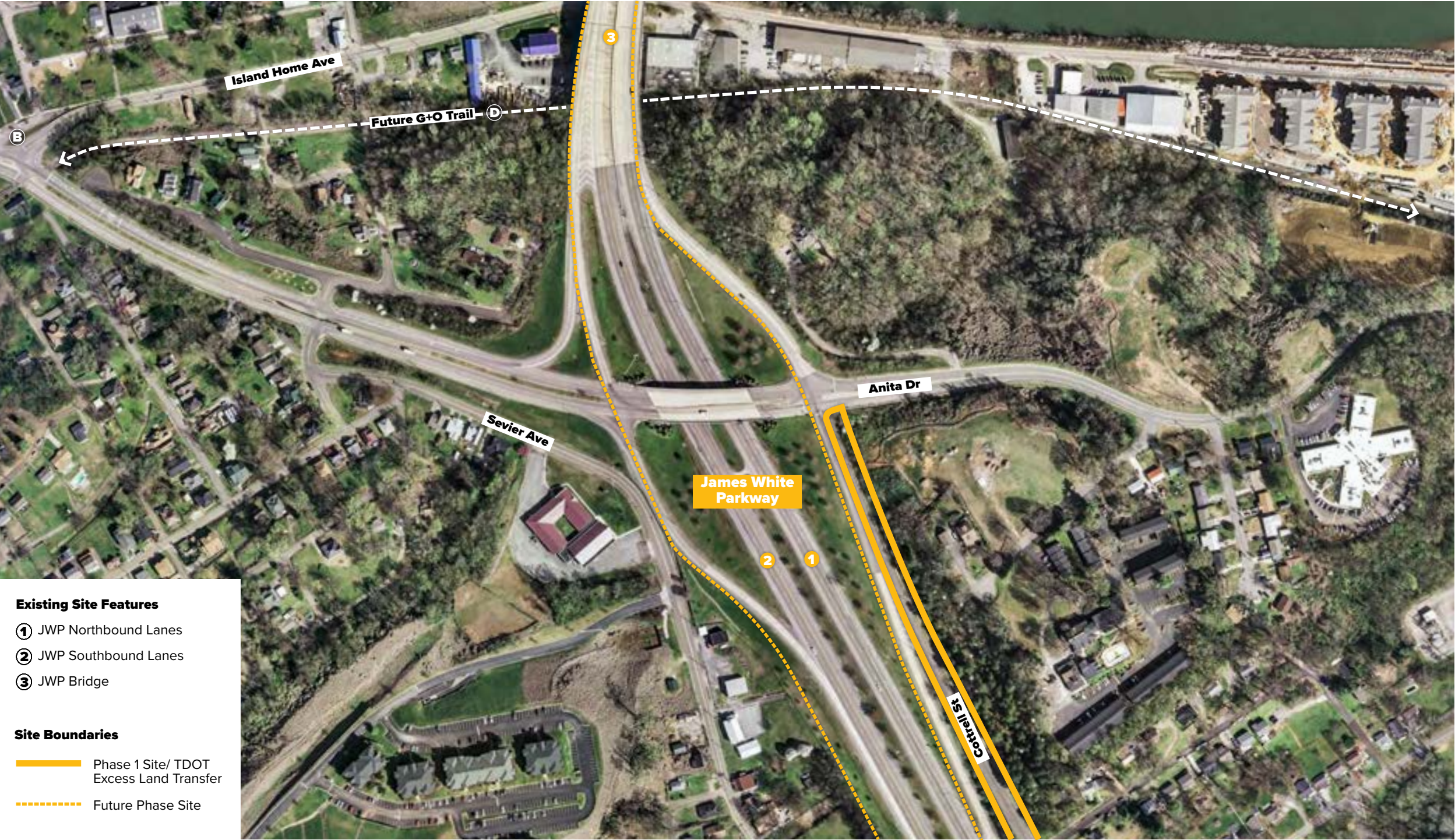


Site and Context **Anita Interchange**



Adjacent Projects

- Ⓐ
- Ⓑ South Waterfront Streetscape Project
- Ⓒ South Waterfront Riverwalk
- Ⓓ G+O Trail Project
- Ⓔ Stanley Lippencott Ridge Park Trail Connections
- Ⓕ Dogwod Elementary Outdoor Classroom and Trails
- Ⓖ Cecil Webb Recreation Center
- Ⓗ Lindberg Forest Neighborhood Tipton Avenue Traffic Calming Initiative
- Ⓘ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan SDMS + BMX Park Connection
- Ⓝ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- Ⓚ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- Ⓛ Baker Creek Bottoms



Site and Context

James White Parkway Bridge and Morningside Park Connection



Adjacent Projects

- Ⓐ Suttree Landing Park
- Ⓑ South Waterfront Streetscape Project
- Ⓒ South Waterfront Riverwalk
- Ⓓ G+O Trail Project
- Ⓔ Stanley Lippencott Ridge Park Trail Connections
- Ⓕ Dogwod Elementary Outdoor Classroom and Trails
- Ⓖ Cecil Webb Recreation Center
- Ⓗ Lindberg Forest Neighborhood Tipton Avenue Traffic Calming Initiative
- Ⓘ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan SDMS + BMX Park Connection
- Ⓝ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- Ⓚ Baker Creek Area Vision Plan Lancaster Drive Improvements
- Ⓛ Baker Creek Bottoms



Existing Site Features

- ① JWP Northbound Lanes
- ② JWP Southbound Lanes
- ③ Connection to Morningside Park

Site Boundaries

----- Future Phase Site

