

BioPark Children's Fantasy Garden Renovation

The Abq BioPark is launching a major renovation of the Children's Fantasy Garden, a family favorite since 2001. For over 20 years, this space has invited Albuquerque families to explore, play, and create lasting memories. Now, the garden will be thoughtfully reimaged to improve accessibility, update aging infrastructure, and expand opportunities for creativity and learning.

Community Input at the Core

Community involvement will be central to shaping the new vision. The BioPark will gather ideas from its members, guests, and especially children through a variety of interactive engagement activities—both in person and online. Planned outreach includes a community survey, pop-up booths at the BioPark, sessions at Camp BioPark. To make the process fun and engaging—especially for younger participants—the team is developed creative tools that encouraged imaginative input. A central feature was the Drawing Kit, which invited children to submit illustrations of their dream garden. These submissions helped inspire the final design and build a sense of connection and ownership among young visitors.

The project team also used the redesign effort as an opportunity to promote informal STEM education. During community events and summer camps, children and families met with professionals involved in the project including urban planners, landscape designers, civil engineers, and artists. These interactions highlighted the diverse careers behind the scenes and helped spark interest in STEM fields through real-world examples.

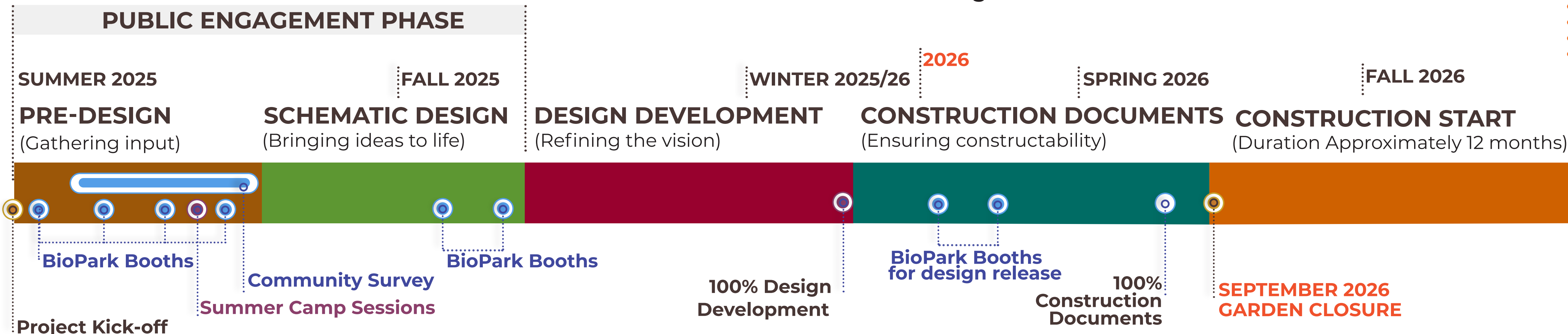
Project Timeline and Phases

The redesign effort will unfold over several key phases. Public input will be emphasized early to ensure the final design reflects community values and aspirations:

- Pre-Design (Early Summer 2025): Visioning and idea-gathering through surveys, pop-ups, summer camp sessions, and Drawing Kits.
- Schematic Design (Late Summer–Early Fall 2025): Initial design concepts will be developed and shared for feedback at BioPark events and online.
- Design Development (Fall–Winter 2025): The preferred concept will be refined based on community input and technical considerations.
- Construction Documents (Winter–Spring 2026): Detailed drawings and specifications will be prepared by the design team.
- Bidding & Permitting (Spring–Summer 2026): Final coordination with regulatory agencies and contractor selection.

While the formal public input phase concluded after schematic design, the BioPark will continue to share updates and progress throughout the project.

The Fantasy Garden has long been a place where imagination takes root. Now, with your input, it's ready to grow into something even more magical. This is more than a renovation; it's a transformation shaped by the voices of children, families, and the community. Together, we're creating a vibrant and inclusive space where creativity, learning, and wonder can flourish for generations to come. The next chapter of the Fantasy Garden is beginning, and we're excited to see what we can build together.



Meet our Team!

Leading the redesign is a collaborative team including local design firm **Dekker**, engineering consultants **Bohannon Huston Inc.**, and the nationally recognized immersive arts and entertainment organization **Meow Wolf**. Together, the team brings expertise in landscape architecture, civil engineering, and experiential design—well suited to create a vibrant, inclusive space for visitors of all ages.



Emma Heuertz, landscape designer at Dekker, and Noah Pierce, civil engineer at Bohannon Huston, revisit the Children's Fantasy Garden—where they once played as children. Now part of the team reimaging this beloved space, they're helping shape its next chapter with a deep sense of connection and commitment to honoring its legacy for future generations.



Several members of the design team are parents who regularly visit the Children's Fantasy Garden with their own kids. Now, as professionals reimaging the space, they bring both personal experience and professional care—helping shape a garden that honors its past while inspiring wonder for the next generation of families.



MEOW WOLF
Architecture in Progress

BRIDGERS & PAXTON
Bohannon Huston

Dekker
Architecture in Progress

ABQ BIOPARK

LEARN MORE & STAY INVOLVED!

For questions or inquiries please contact the project team at BioParkChildrensGarden@dekkerdesign

Visit www.cabq.gov/artsculture/biopark or scan the QR code to learn more.

Outreach Summary

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To ensure the redesign of the Children's Fantasy Garden reflects the needs and aspirations of the community, the project team implemented a comprehensive engagement strategy combining in-person and digital outreach. Through interactive activities, surveys, and online participation opportunities, children, families, and stakeholders helped shape the vision of the garden's future.

CAMP SESSIONS

- Interactive STEM-focused presentations introducing the design process.
- Opportunities to learn about landscape architecture, engineering, planning, and exhibit design careers.
- Fantasy garden mapping and drawing activities.
- Show-and-tell sessions celebrating participant ideas and creativity.

POP-UP BOOTHS

- Four outreach events conducted during Pre-Design phase (May-June 2025).
- Located at family-oriented events and high-traffic BioPark areas.
- Activities included:
 - Feedback boards
 - Drawing Stations
 - Mapping and modeling exercises
 - STEM education displays

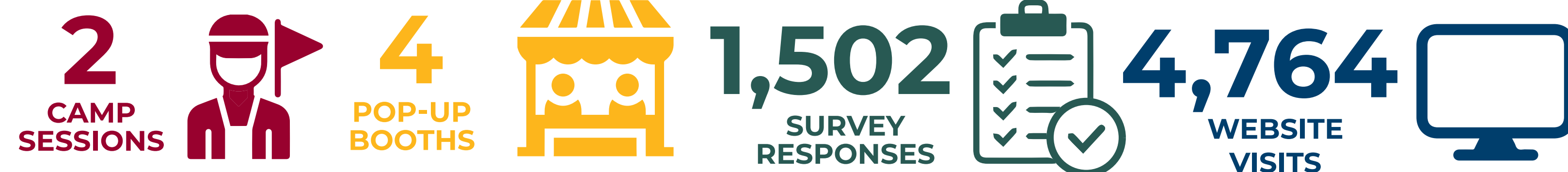
DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

- Project website with project background, vision, and design updates.
- Online surveys and feedback opportunities.
- Digital drawing kits for children.
- Memory-sharing platform for stories and photos.
- Event announcements and milestone updates.

EXPANDED REACH

- Distributed drawing kits to nearby school and community partners.
- Enabled participation from community members unable to attend events in person through the project website.
- Supported project outreach through media articles, press releases, and news coverage

COMMUNITY IMPACT



Outreach Summary

COMMON THEMES IDENTIFIED

As part of the community engagement process, children were invited to create fantasy garden features using clay and modeling materials. This hands-on activity encouraged participants to express ideas in a creative and tangible way while helping the design team better understand the types of experiences, spaces, and elements that inspire young visitors. The models provided valuable insight to the imagination interests and priorities of future garden users.



FANTASY & ADVENTURE

Children frequently created imaginative elements including:

- Dragons and mythical creatures
- Dinosaur habitats
- Fairy gardens
- Secret hideaways and magical spaces
- Colorful fantasy landscapes



NATURE & WILDLIFE

Participants showed a strong interest in:

- Animals and insects
- Water features and ponds
- Trees, flowers, and gardens
- Habitat-focused play experiences



PLAY & EXPLORATION

Many models incorporated:

- Climbing features
- Discovery zones and sensory experiences
- Adventure pathways
- Interactive Play Spaces
- Areas designed for exploration and movement



DESIGN INSIGHTS

The activity highlighted a desire for a garden that is:

- ✓ Imaginative and immersive
- ✓ Interactive and hands-on
- ✓ Connected to nature and wildlife
- ✓ Designed for exploration and discovery
- ✓ Inclusive for children of different ages and abilities

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Children consistently gravitated toward fantasy-themed environments, interactive play opportunities, animals, and nature-based experiences. The models reinforced feedback gathered through surveys, drawing activities, and public outreach events, helping establish a design vision centered on creativity, adventure, learning and discovery.

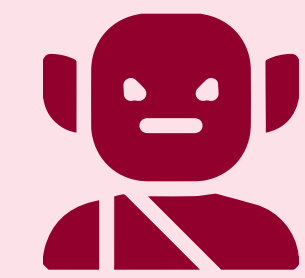
Respondents overwhelmingly want the future Children's fantasy Garden to inspire imagination, wonder, and emotional well-being. The community envisions a magical and enchanting environment where children can explore freely, engage in creative play, connect with nature, and step away from screens to experience adventure and discovery.



Outreach Summary

COMMUNITY IDEAS REFLECTED IN THE DESIGN

Community input directly influenced key features throughout the Children's Fantasy Garden. Ideas shared through sketches, models, and interactive workshops inspired the final design.



FANTASY CREATURES

Children imagined friendly creatures hidden throughout the garden



COMMUNITY IDEAS



DESIGN RESPONSE



CASTLES & FANTASY WORLDS

Participants envisioned castles, kingdoms, and magical places to explore and play



BUTTERFLIES

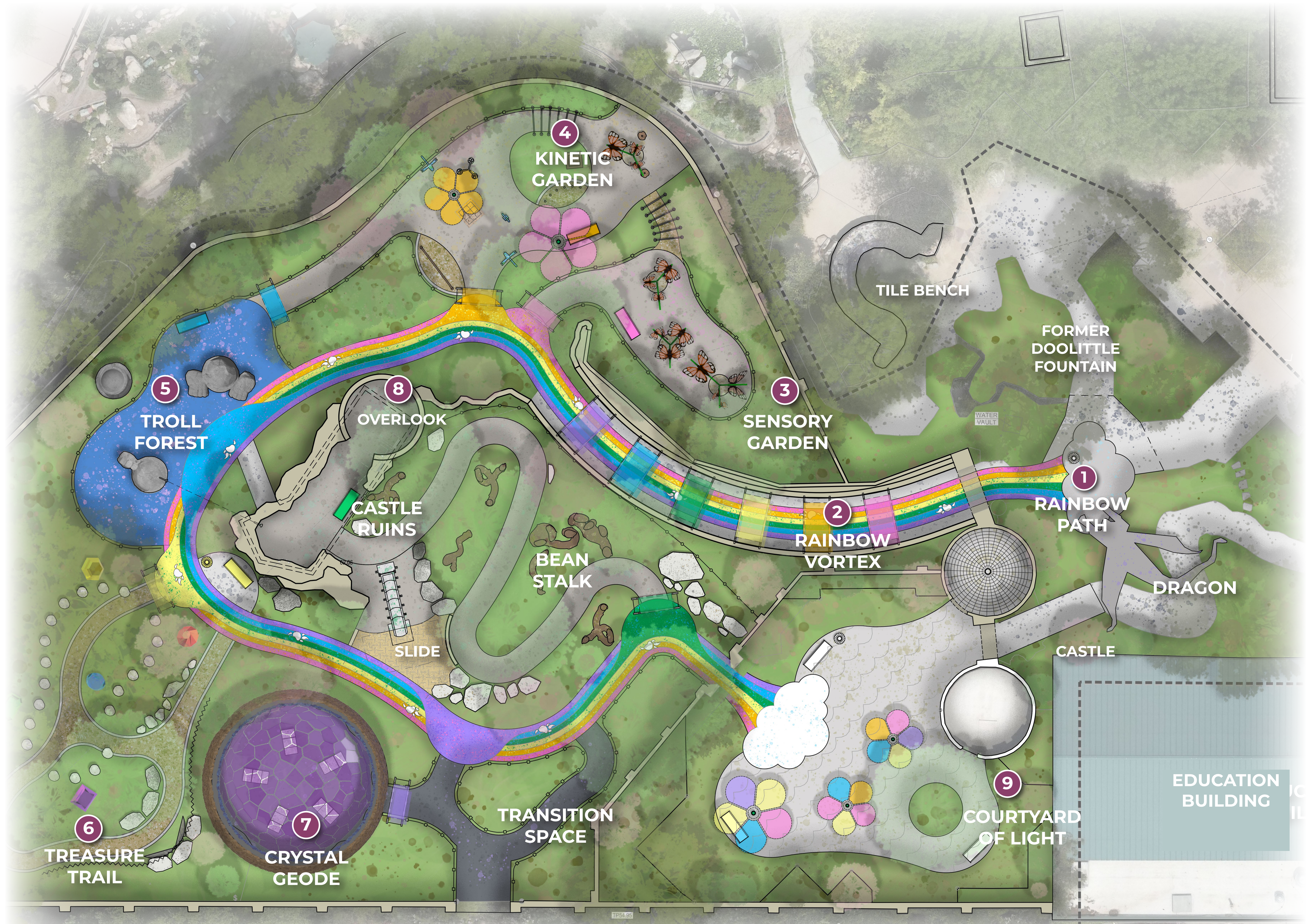
Butterflies emerged as a recurring theme inspiring colorful, nature-filled elements



Dreamlands – Exploring a Mythical World

The Children's Fantasy Garden is reimagined as an immersive fantasy landscape where visitors follow a vibrant Rainbow Path through enchanted environments filled with dragons, trolls, magical forests, sparkling treasures, and interactive sensory experiences. Inspired by the tale of a beloved dragon and her mythical world, the design blends storytelling, nature, art, and play to spark wonder, curiosity, and exploration for visitors of all ages.

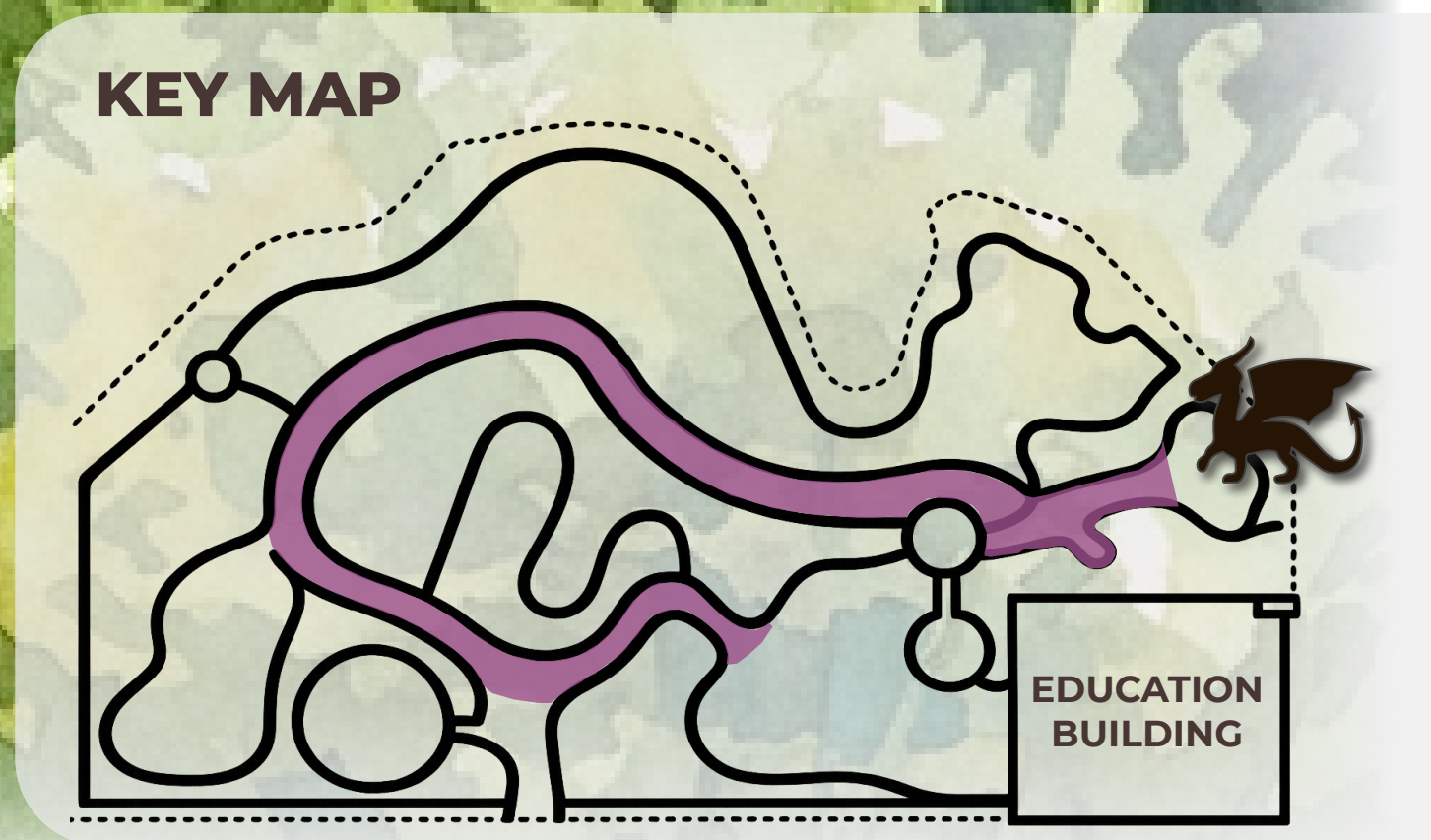
- 1 Entry & Rainbow Path**
A welcoming entry features a dragon landmark and colorful footprints guiding visitors into Dreamlands.
- 2 The Rainbow Vortex**
A welcoming entry features a dragon landmark and colorful footprints guiding visitors into Dreamlands.
- 3 Sensory Garden**
Sensory gardens, glowing butterfly structures, and friendship stones inspire wonder, connection, and exploration.
- 4 Kinetic Garden**
Interactive music, playful sculptures, and a train garden overlook inspire curiosity and engagement.
- 5 Troll Forest**
Children can climb, explore, and interact with three larger-than-life troll sculptures.
- 6 Treasure Trail**
A trail of sparkling jewels lines a nature trail. Giant crystals, a gold chain and locket, and a stone necklace tell the story of the dragon's secret fortune.
- 7 Crystal Geode**
A monumental walk-in geode featuring crystal walls, prismatic light, and rotating elements.
- 8 Beanstalk & Overlook**
A winding path climbs to a castle ruin with panoramic views and a slide back to the geode.
- 9 Courtyard of Light**
A colorful gathering space with a castle turret, flower shade structures, and flexible areas for play and events.



Rainbow Path

PLAY JOURNEY + ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

Conceptual rendering illustrating the Fantasy Garden arrival experience, featuring a vibrant pathway and rainbow vortex that guide visitors through the garden while encouraging movement, exploration, and imaginative play.



SENSORY GARDEN

SENSORY EXPLORATION & DISCOVERY

Native fragrant plantings engage all five senses. Overhead, oversized tinted acrylic butterfly wings cast colorful shadows by day and glow at night. Seating invites visitors to linger, while friendship stones at the butterfly bases encourage connection and play.



KEY MAP



KINETIC GARDEN

A GARDEN IN MOTION

Conceptual rendering of the Kinetic Garden, where chimes, pebble harps, and tinker bells invite musical play and creative expression. Interactive sculptures dance and spin with a touch, encouraging hands-on exploration and movement. An overlook at the existing perimeter wall provides views into the miniature train garden beyond.



TROLL FOREST

CLIMB, EXPLORE & IMAGINE

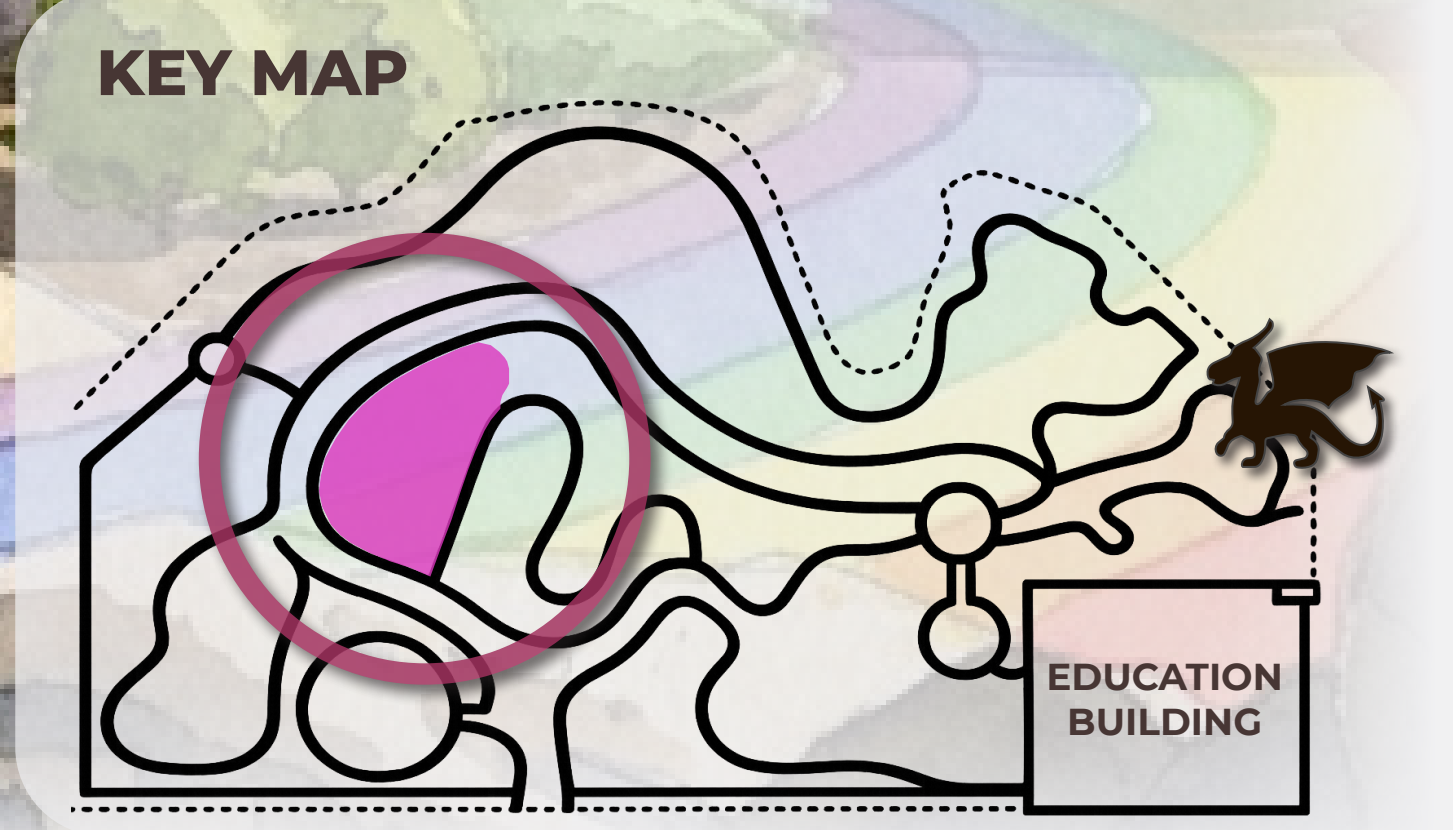
Conceptual rendering illustrating the Troll Forest play experience, where three giant trolls invite exploration and imaginative play. Children can sit in a troll's open palm, climb through its hair, and gaze into expressive faces. Wild hairstyles come to life through integrated planters atop each troll's head, blending sculpture, nature, and storytelling into an immersive play environment.



OVERLOOK

CLIMB TO THE VIEW

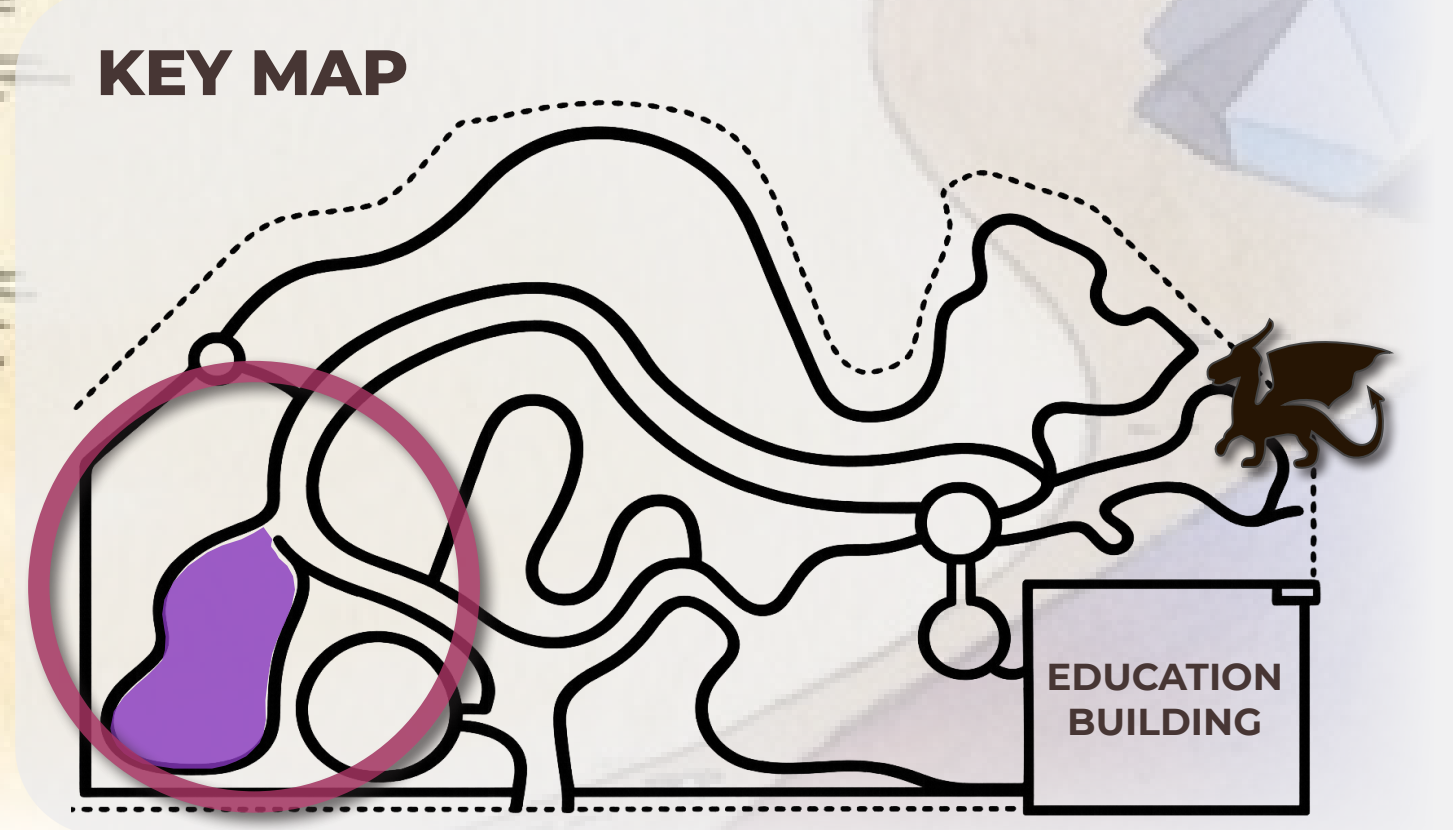
Conceptual rendering illustrating the Rainbow Path as it ascends toward the Overlook, winding around a castle turret entwined with a towering beanstalk inspired by a beloved fairytale. Together, these iconic elements create a whimsical landmark that draws visitors upward to sweeping views of the Fantasy Garden and surrounding park.



Treasure Trail

A JOURNEY OF HIDDEN WONDERS

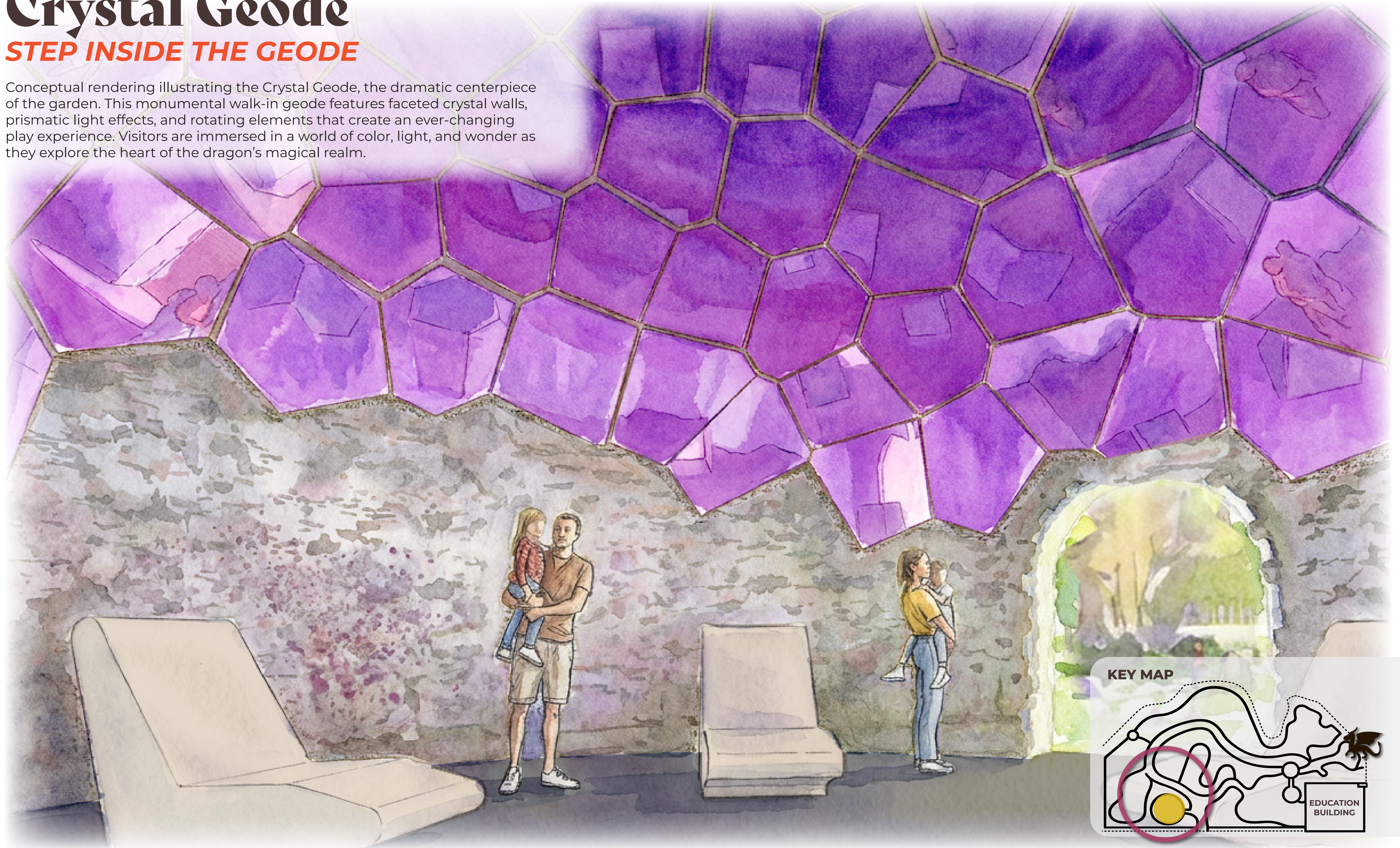
Conceptual rendering illustrating the Treasure Trail experience, where a sparkling path of jewels winds through the landscape, revealing clues to the dragon's hidden fortune. Giant crystals, a gold chain and locket, and a stone necklace create moments of discovery along the trail, inviting visitors to explore, imagine, and uncover the story of the dragon's treasure.



Crystal Geode

STEP INSIDE THE GEODE

Conceptual rendering illustrating the Crystal Geode, the dramatic centerpiece of the garden. This monumental walk-in geode features faceted crystal walls, prismatic light effects, and rotating elements that create an ever-changing play experience. Visitors are immersed in a world of color, light, and wonder as they explore the heart of the dragon's magical realm.



BEANSTALK

STEP INTO A GIANT'S WORLD

Towering beanstalk-inspired play elements invite children to climb, explore, and imagine their journey into the clouds. Winding pathways, oversized leaves, and whimsical natural features create an enchanting space that encourages adventure, discovery, and imaginative play as visitors make their way toward the castle ruins and overlook.



KEY MAP



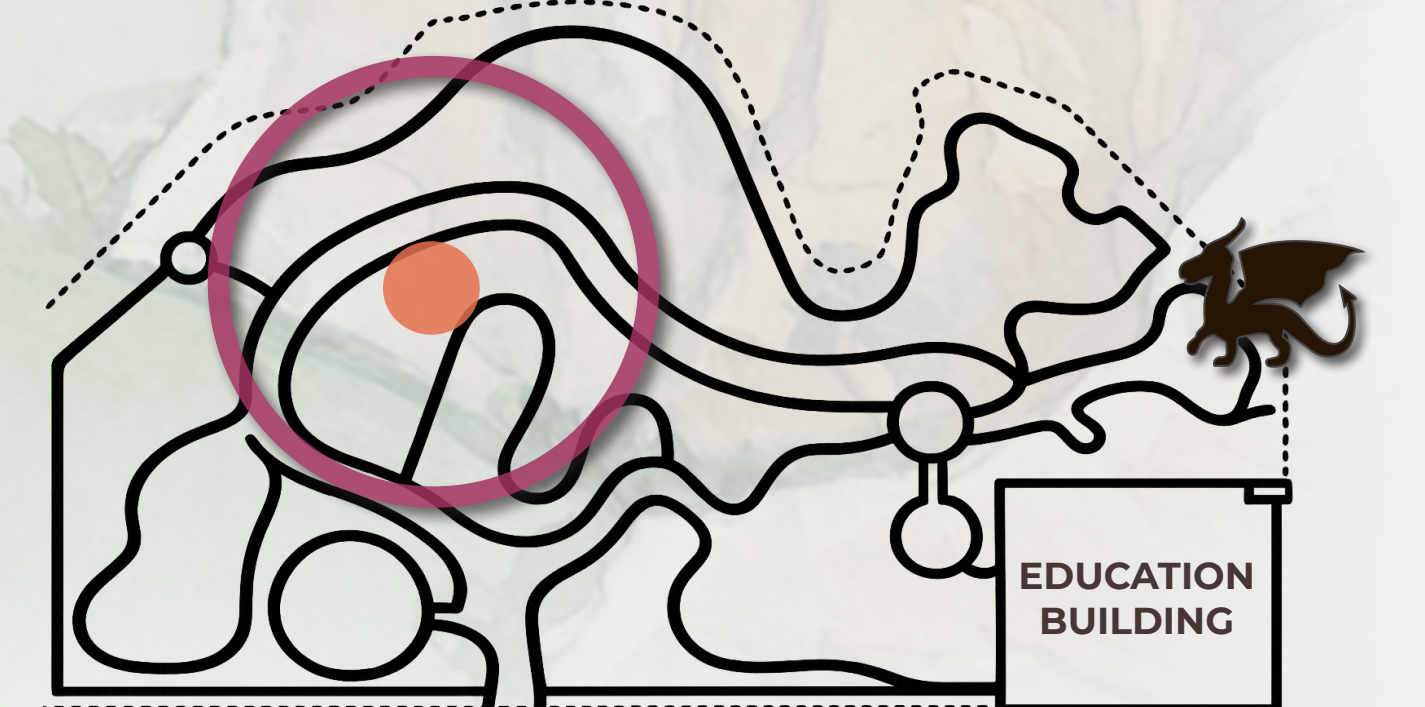
OVERLOOK

CLIMB TO THE VIEW

Conceptual rendering illustrating the Overlook experience, where a winding path ascends through sculptural vines to a castle ruin at the summit. From the pinnacle, visitors enjoy panoramic views across the park before racing back down via an embankment slide that returns them to the Geode play area.



KEY MAP



Courtyard of Light

A GATHERING PLACE FOR CELEBRATION

Conceptual rendering illustrating the Courtyard of Light, a spacious and flexible destination designed for both everyday play and special events. A climbable castle turret serves as a focal point, while sculptural flower-inspired shade structures and vibrant flowering gardens create a colorful, welcoming atmosphere. Open gathering spaces support exploration, relaxation, community events, and imaginative play.

