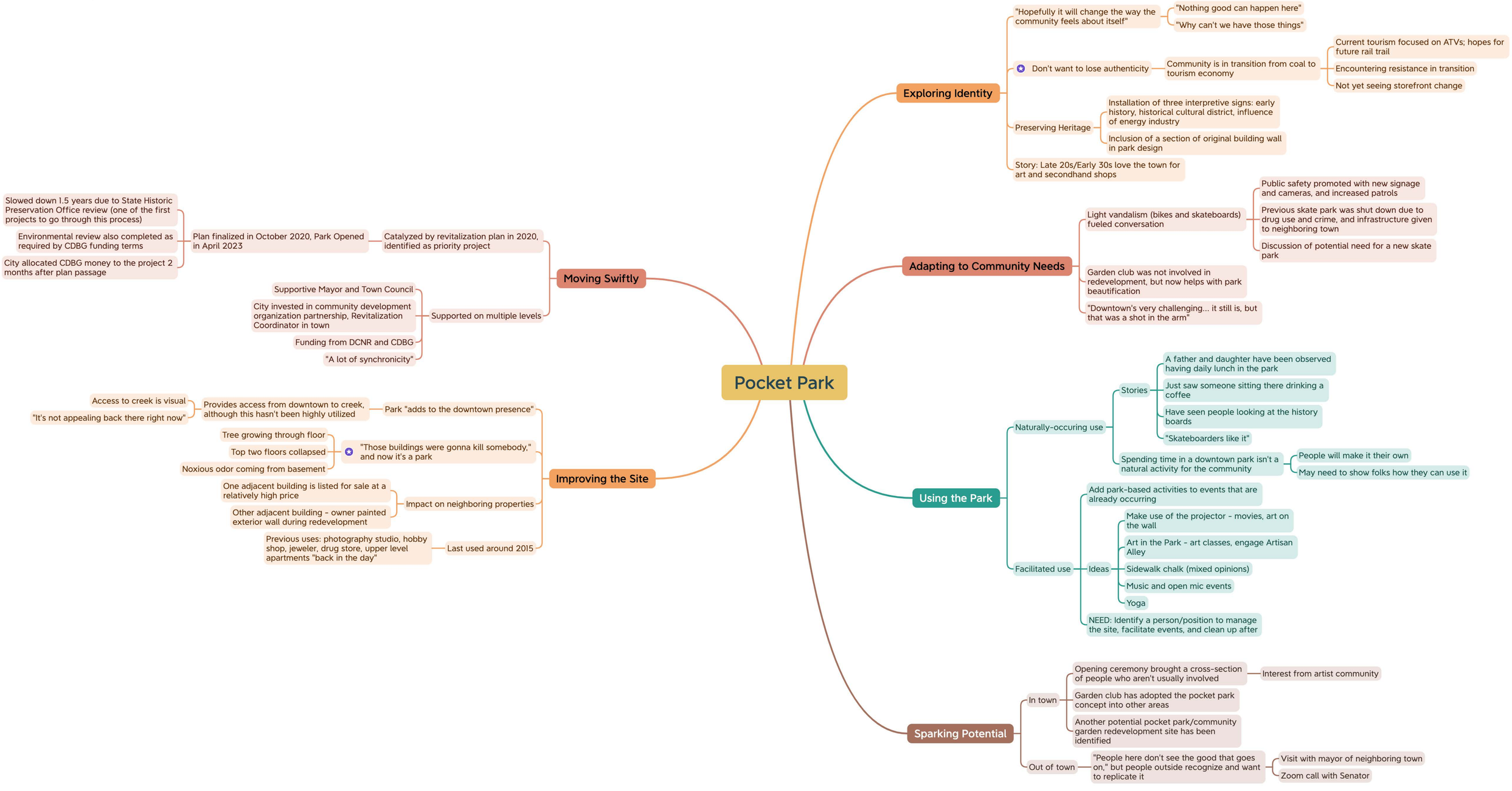
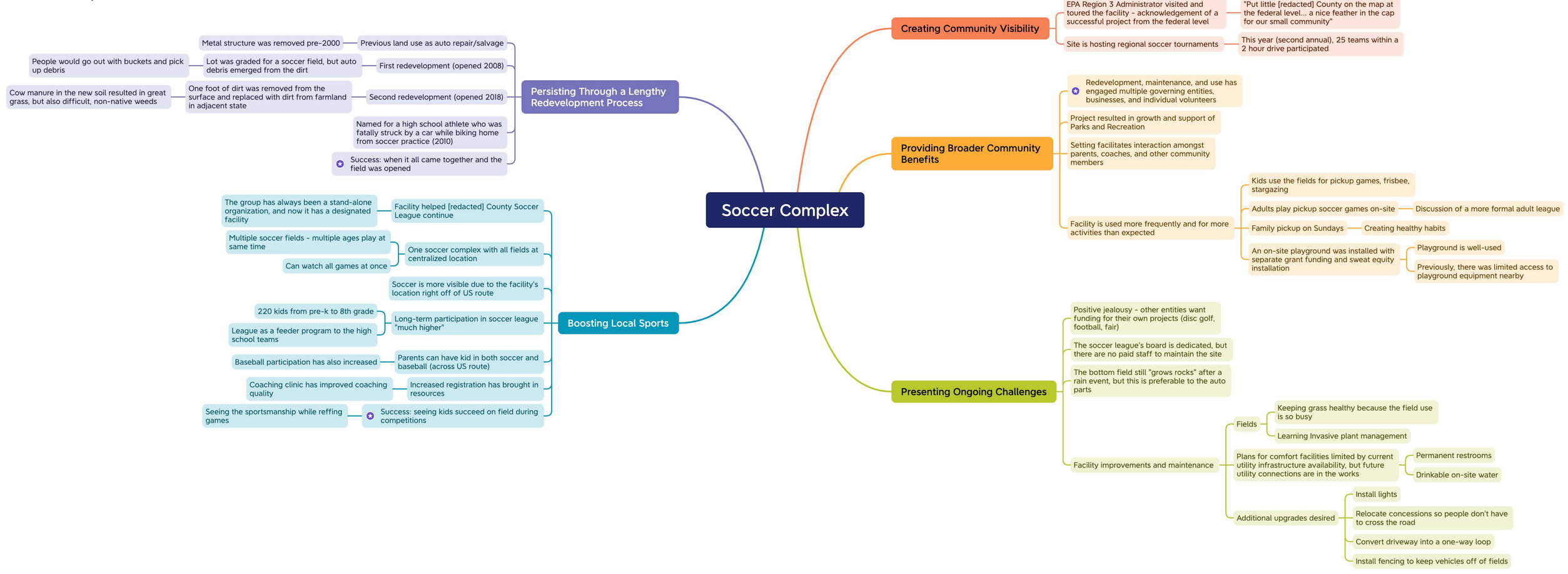
Site A Mind Map



Site B Mind Map



Site C Mind Map

Skate Park

Persisting through Redevelopment

- Red tape was challenging
  - Project took 7-8 to complete
  - Under state environmental review for 2 years
  - Residents get frustrated when projects don't move along in a timely manner
- But the community persisted and it was completed
  - Skaters came to Town Council in 2015 to request improvements to previously existing skate park
    - Request pre-dated plans for skate park at this location
  - Capping complete in 2021
  - Skate equipment installed in 2022
  - Basketball court finished in 2023
    - Lines finished the day of this workshop
- Initial idea for a community garden was not feasible due to soil pollutants
  - Idea was proposed by a consultant
- Skate park was primary intended use
  - Original plan for the skate park area was estimated to cost over $1 million, but not feasible due to cost
    - Some components of this plan were used in the development
  - Entire site needed to be capped for remediation, so basketball court was added to the plan

Engaging Resources

- Teenage skaters spoke before Town Council, advocating for a skate park
  - Led a small GoFundMe fundraiser
    - YMCA managed fundraiser proceeds, as they're a 501(c)3
  - "The spirit of the youth in the community"
- Financial and in-kind resources
  - Brownfields funds to demolish former building
  - $240k of Brownfields funds were used to remove the former building foundation
  - American Rescue Plan Act (COVID-19) funds were used to fund fencing, lighting, and the basketball court, as well as other outdoor recreation facilities
  - City staff did finishing work
    - Moved bleachers on-site to provide seating
- Nearby property/business owners have been permissive of parking occurring on their properties

Improving Recreation Opportunities

- Skate Park
  - Improvement on old, poorly maintained skate park
    - Previous skate park elsewhere - that site was less accessible and visible
      - Now, the unused park site (10 acres) is being explored as a potential site for needed housing
    - Fell into disrepair and was site for vandalism
  - Lighting at the park has resulted in people being out in the evenings
    - Due to summer heat, people are using the park less during the day and more during the evening
    - Police have been allowing after hours use because users are not causing problems
      - Location is highly visible
      - "Gives them something to do that's not mischevious"
  - Town stubbed out a sewer line so restrooms can be built if demand warrants
- Synergy with other improving facilities
  - Splash pad being installed (flood prone area)
  - Mountain bike park built a few miles away (flood prone area)
    - Same park designer as the skate park
  - Pickleball courts are busy, especially in the morning before work
  - Refurbishment of playground equipment
- Builds upon regional outdoor amenities
  - Positive buzz about outdoor facilities
- Change of municipal policy regarding parks and recreation
  - Years ago, Council decided to stop maintaining parks and recreation sites and stop providing programming, relegating those duties to the county
    - This position has since been reversed
    - External funding for recreation has facilitated the maintenance of a full-time municipal recreation employee

Prompting Continued Redevelopment

- Seeing more private interest in investing in the downtown
  - Plans for the city to rehabilitate the adjacent building (asbestos) and redevelop into a brewery with outdoor space
    - Brewer/lessee has already been identified
    - Site was previously owned by the Housing Authority
  - Plans for redevelopment of a school building to vertical gardens
  - Developer bought property across the street from park to develop into 32 apartments
- Town demolished a dangerous, dilapidated building to create needed parking
  - Parking will benefit park and downtown businesses
  - $60k of city funds used

Enhancing Community Culture

- Park adds to the feeling of downtown and extends the downtown
- Social Benefits
  - Library hosted a storytime reading event
  - Local skaters hosted a skate-off event
  - Brings people in from all parts of town
  - Used by people of all ages
    - Parents with kids on scooters
    - Less experienced skaters being mentored by older skaters
    - Older generation of skaters teaching their children
- Access to Nature
  - Helps people access the outdoors right in town
  - More people using the pedestrian bridge over [redacted] Creek
    - Plans for a [redacted] Creek Walk trail to cross the bridge and pass the park, looping around downtown
- Community Engagement
  - People are taking great care of the park
    - Minor vandalism was graffiti on the port-a-potty, and the port-a-potty was removed
      - This vandalism was found elsewhere, not park-specific
  - Builds local awareness
- Environmental Health
  - Removing blighted property
  - Army Corps of Engineers will be doing a study of [redacted] Creek ecology and flooding
  - Capping the site will reduce runoff and other exposure risks

Transforming the Local Economy

- Drawing skaters from out of town
  - Ramp company is well-known, and parks are listed on the company's website
  - Information is being promoted through regional skate shops
  - Students are coming to skate from places across the region
- Making [redacted] an attractive option for potential residents and business owners
  - People are moving out from [nearby town redacted] due to price and demand
  - Have had investment interest that hasn't happened before
- Presence of out-of-towners reminds [redacted] residents that there's a lot of beauty that isn't being fully taken advantage of
  - Community knows that outside sources of income are necessary for the town to thrive