



222 W. Hargett Street, Suite 601
Raleigh, NC 27602
(919) 996-3285

DATE: January 4, 2016

TO: Ruffin L. Hall

FROM: Matthew Keough, Senior Planner

CC: Diane B. Sauer, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Director

SUBJECT: Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board Recommendation to
Approve the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan

Background

The existing 21.1 acre park, located at the intersection of Leesville Road and W. Millbrook Road, is without a park master plan and required significant public involvement to address long-standing development concerns.

The Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB) held a public hearing on the draft Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan on November 12th, 2015. Public comment and the recommendations of the Council-appointed Citizen Planning Committee were presented. At a follow-up meeting on December 10, 2015, the PRGAB established a full consensus on the proposed master plan, recommending for City Council approval at their January 19 meeting.

The proposed park master plan includes an Executive Summary, which along with the official Program Statement, Conceptual Plan, and Concept Narrative reflect the master planning process which began in 2014 with the City Council's acceptance of the Park's System Integration Plan, Situational Assessment, and appointment of the Citizen Planning Committee.

For design and limited phase 1 development, \$117,000 is currently available in FY2016 CIP budget. An additional \$200,000 is planned in the adopted 5-year CIP program.

Recommendation:

- Approve the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan.

Please call on me directly if I can be of assistance with your preparations for this item at (919) 996-2654 or Matthew.Keough@raleighnc.gov.



Wooten Meadow Park

Proposed Master Plan

January 2015

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Prepared For

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department

Prepared By

DHM Design Inc., Landscape Architects
Graham Smith, Principal
Kara Peach, Community Engagement Specialist
Jeremy Arnett, Landscape Designer

In Conjunction with:
Ward Consulting Engineers
Axiom Environmental Inc.
S&ME Inc.



Acknowledgements

City of Raleigh Mayor and City Council

Nancy McFarlane, Mayor
Dickie Thompson, District A
David Cox, District B
Corey Branch, District C
Kay Crowder, District D
Bonner Gaylord, District E
Mary-Ann Baldwin, At Large
Russ Stephenson, At Large

Citizen Planning Committee

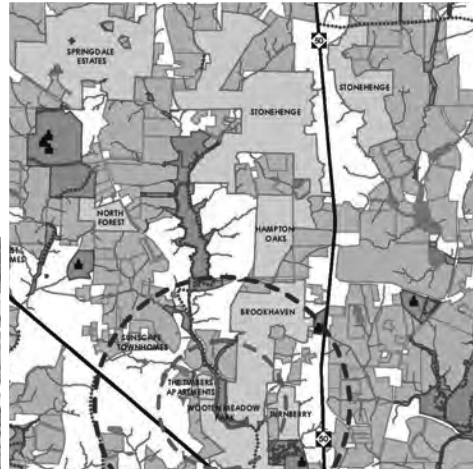
Stephanie Avett	Hobert Orton
Maggie Barlow	Carole Sawicki
Eric Childs	Steve Sheriff
Carol Clagett	Ralph Sherwin
Michael Durham	Joanna Smothers
Kevin Kirton	Carolyn Solomon
Rodger Koopman	Cathy Sprankle
Jennifer Hoverstad	Julie White
Caroline Landen	Alison Wilkinson
Ryan Moore	Laurie Williams

City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Staff

Diane Sauer, Director
Stephen Bentley, Superintendent, Design and Development Division
Shawsheen Baker, Senior Planner, Design and Development
Matthew Keough, Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan Project Manager
Melissa Salter, Land Stewardship Coordinator, Natural Resources
(Lead Author - System Integration Plan)

City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board

Richard Bostic	Shane Mellin
Patrick Buffkin	David Millsaps
Christopher Dillon	Thomas Moore
Dexter Hebert	Amy Simes
Steve Hepler	Mike Surasky (Chair)
Jennifer Hoverstad	Charles Townsend
Rodger Koopman	Kimberly Wicker
Clodagh Lyons-Bastian	



Clockwise starting from left:
1. View of Hare Snipe Creek from W. Millbrook Rd. looking south; **2.** Neighborhood Context Map; **3.** Existing park entrance sign; **4.** Historic map of the surrounding area; **5.** Old pasture gates at south end of the meadow landscape

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, along with a design team led by DHM Design, has created a Master Plan for the long term development of Wooten Meadow Park. Launched in September 2014, the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan process extended through late 2015 with the hopeful approval of the park master plan in early 2016. The development process followed procedures for engaging the community established by the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning (City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources).

The 21.1 acre park is located at 2801 West Millbrook Road at the intersection of West Millbrook Road and Leesville Road in Northwest Raleigh. The land for the park was donated to the City of Raleigh in 1996 by the Wooten family for the enjoyment of the citizens of Raleigh as a park and/or greenway. This park was originally classified as a neighborhood park, suggesting a one-mile service radius with a special focus on the recreation needs of those living within a one-half mile walkable radius to the site.

The first phase of the Master Plan process evaluated existing conditions through documentation and public engagement. A System Integration Plan (completed by City staff) documented the existing site conditions and proposed interim management recommendations for the park. It was finalized during the first phase of the master planning process along with identification of key issues for full consideration in the park planning process.

Also completed in late 2014, the Situation Assessment provided an overview of the strategies to collect community feedback; summarized key stakeholder issues to address; and presented an overview of the planning process. The Situation Assessment included a recommended roster for the Citizen Planning Committee (CPC); the recommended roster was subsequently officially appointed by City Council. From late 2014 through October 2015, the CPC held facilitated meetings to guide the development of the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan.

The Master Plan was developed to reflect eight guiding values that were defined by the CPC and validated several times by the community-at-large. Those values are (in priority ranking): Nature, Preservation, Education, Passive Recreation, Aesthetically Pleasing, Safety, Quiet, and Play. The Master Plan is a physical manifestation of these values, as the Plan strives to provide spaces for enjoying nature, engaging in passive recreation, educating the community, preserving the landscape, and playing with childlike fervor. Features provided by the plan include pedestrian access to Millbrook Road; a looping pedestrian network within the park; a future greenway connection to the Capital Area Greenway (along Hare Snipe Creek); a natural-themed play area; an open play lawn; a display garden; learning nodes throughout; access to an overlook for the historic dam on the property; a constructed wetland with boardwalk; a forested wetland with boardwalk; an array of various successional Piedmont landscapes, including a meadow landscape, a loblolly pine forest, and a hardwood forest; several flexible-use lawn/meadow areas; a small restroom; a shade structure; and a parking area for nearly 30 vehicles.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Summer '14

- Completion, by City staff, of System Integration Plan (SIP)
- Request for Proposal for Consultants
- Consultant Selection
- Consultant Contracting

September '14

- Northwest CAC Presentation
- Launch of Project Webpage (City Website)
- Coordinated Site Visits (Team and City)
- Web-based Community Survey for the Situational Assessment

October '14

- Community Interviews
- Creation of Citizens Planning Committee (CPC)
- Creation of Situational Assessment (SA) Document
- Recommendation of the SA, SIP, and CPC roster to Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB)

November '14

- Raleigh City Council acceptance of the SA, SIP, and CPC roster

December '14

- CPC Meeting #1 (Charter, Values, Project Introduction)

January '15

- Site Analysis Documentation

February '15

- CPC Meeting #2 (Charter, Values, Findings and Opportunities)

March '15

- CPC Meeting #3 (Findings and Opportunities)

April '15

- Public Workshop #1

May '15

- CPC Meeting #4 (Design Charette)
- Alternative Park Concepts Creation

June '15

- Public Workshop #2 (Alternative Park Concepts Review)
- CPC Meeting #5 (Alternative Park Concepts Review)

July '15

- Concept Refinement

August '15

- CPC Meeting #6 (Refined Concept Review)

September '15

- Concept Refinement

October '15

- CPC Meeting #7 (Refined Concept Review)
- Public Workshop #3 (Refined Concept Review)
- Draft Master Plan Report Creation
- CPC Meeting #8 (Community Consensus Recommendations to the Parks Board)

November '15

- Final Master Plan Report Creation
- Public Hearing on the Park Master Plan to PRGAB

December '15

- Approval of Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan to PRGAB (pending)

January '16

- Presentation and Approval of Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan to City Council (pending)

CITIZEN PLANNING COMMITTEE SELECTION

A major component of the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan process was community engagement through the formation of a Citizen Planning Committee (CPC). The members of the CPC were selected to be representative of the larger community, and they provided ongoing direction and feedback on the development of the park master plan.

Volunteers for the CPC were solicited through the Community Survey and identified by other members in the community. Each interested individual participated in a brief telephone interview which included the same set of questions regarding personal information, knowledge, and skills; understanding of the community context; and comfort level working in groups. The Project Team considered each interviewee and evaluated their qualitative responses. Per adopted park planning guidelines for a consensus-oriented body, selection qualifications included an individual's commitment to be fully open to other perspectives and to bringing forward other's ideas towards an open definition of community interest and consensus.

In an effort to strike the required balance of representation in the CPC, the evaluation process included a review of how interested individuals met the different criteria. Of the 32 individuals that expressed interest in the committee, 18 were recommended for inclusion on the CPC as standing members (see Table 1 below) with an additional two persons added from the Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board for a total of 20 persons.

Throughout the master plan process, there were continuous opportunities for the public to openly contribute to the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan, including the following:

- Initial online community survey
- Northwest CAC meeting (1) - to kick off the process and initially engage the public
- CPC meetings (8) - the public was invited to each meeting and given specific times to speak/present findings
- Public workshops (3) - held at locations near the park (one was held on-site) with open comment and post-meeting comment follow-up opportunities
- Online community survey (after Public Workshop #2) - to review concept options
- MySidewalk online forum (YourParksYourFuture website) - to continually engage and ask questions about the parks needs, vision, and conceptual diagramming
- City's Park Planning website - to ensure timely updates to all meetings and materials presented at meetings, thus allowing for emails directly to the City's project manager

CONSENSUS & VOTING PROCESS

The CPC, in conjunction with facilitation by City staff and the consultant team, utilized the City's Public Participation Policy for Park Planning through the voting and consensus-seeking process.



Clockwise starting from left:

1. *Rudbeckia laciniata*, a common species within the riparian areas;

2. Mature pine stand; **3.** Manhole

cover, typical of those along the sewer easement; **4.** View of the meadow landscape looking south;

5. Reference stream section of Hare Snipe Creek south of the historic dam

SYSTEM INTEGRATION PLAN

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department undertakes a public master plan process to help determine the specific elements that are desired in a particular park. Development of the Wooten Meadow Park System Integration Plan (SIP) followed the process defined for development of such documents by a subsection of the overall City Park Master Planning process described in City of Raleigh Council Resolution 735 (2003).

The purpose of the SIP document is to document existing site conditions and constraints, establish the park's classification consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and as applicable, define any proposed special intent for the park. Another purpose of the site-specific System Integration Plan is to develop a set of guidelines for the interim management of parkland prior to the initiation of a Master Plan. The System Integration Plan for Wooten Meadow Park is included in Appendix A.

Property Acquisition

Wooten Meadow Neighborhood Park was donated to the City of Raleigh in 1996 to be developed and used for the enjoyment of the citizens of Raleigh as a park and/or greenway. The property donator, Mr. Louis E. Wooten Jr., requested that the park and/or greenway be named for his father L.E. Wooten.

Deed Restrictions

The Warranty Deed for the property contains the following "Exhibit A." Title to the property is subject to the following exceptions:

- Right of way of Pleasant Grove Church Road and Leesville Road, and to easement for additional right of way to the City of Raleigh as described in Book 1613, Page 95, Wake County Registry
- Forty-foot sanitary sewer easement shown on aforesaid map by J. Fred Davis, Jr., Inc. dated December 21, 1984 and to other sewer easements of record to the City of Raleigh

Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment was completed in 1995 for Wooten Meadow Park during the site acquisition process; the Executive Summary of the report is included in Appendix B. The Phase 1 report concludes no significant evidence of environmental contamination, environmental impairment, or Recognized Environmental Conditions in association with the property.

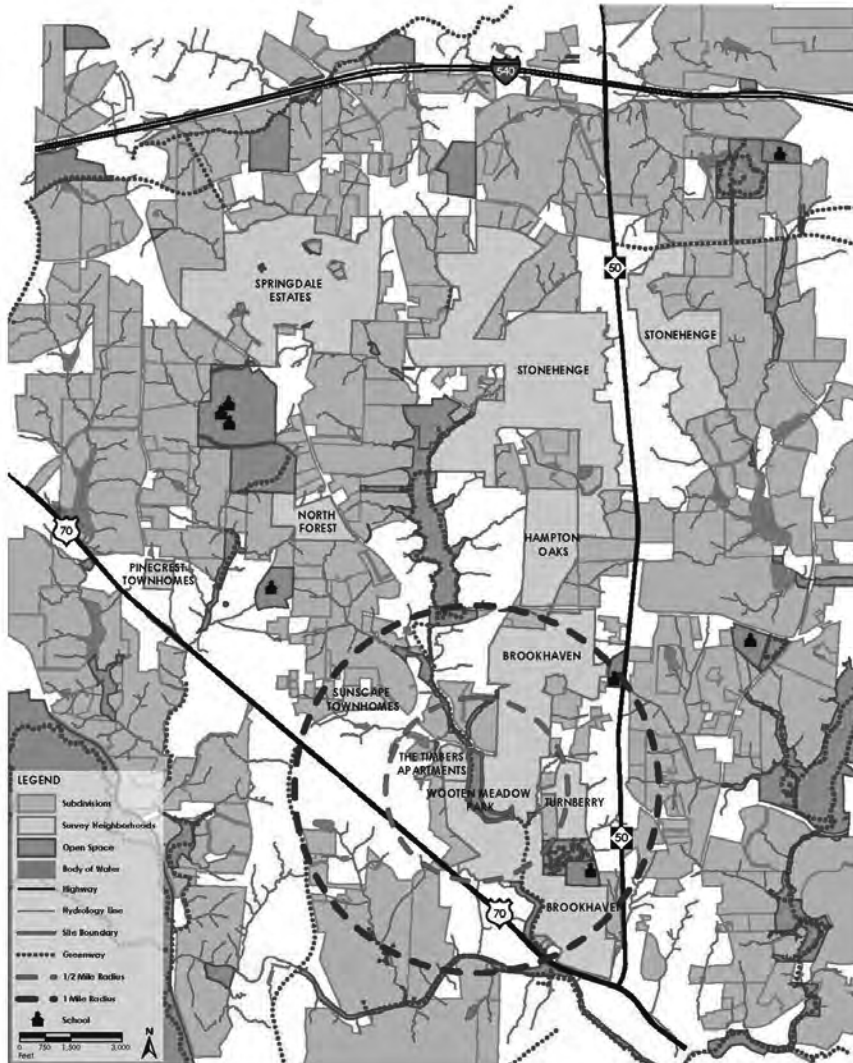
PROJECT CONTEXT

Surrounding Neighborhood & Park System

Located in Northwest Raleigh at the intersection of West Millbrook Road and Leesville Road, Wooten Meadow Park is situated in a primarily residential area. There are several established neighborhoods near the park. The Brookhaven neighborhood surrounds the park on all sides, with the exception of the Timbers Apartment Homes along the northwestern edge of the park. The Brookhaven neighborhood also extends north across West Millbrook Road. There are several other apartment complexes along nearby Pleasant Valley Road.

Several other parks are located in close proximity to Wooten Meadow Park. Brookhaven Nature Park is less than one-quarter mile away, but the sole access to the park on Berkeley Street is 1.5 miles from the entrance of Wooten Meadow Park. Playground facilities at York Elementary School, just under two miles east, were recently renovated. Lake Lynn Park is approximately 2.5 miles north of the park entrance. An existing greenway trail runs south

from Lake Lynn but terminates just north of the park site at West Millbrook Road. A greenway planning corridor is shown on the adopted Capital Area Greenway System Plan, running south of this termination point, to one day connect to the existing Crabtree Creek greenway, south of Highway 70.



Context map

A new Raleigh Park System Plan process was approved immediately prior to the beginning of the Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan process. This System Plan created an entirely new roadmap for the evolution of Raleigh's Parks system over the next 20 years. This System Plan organizes the City Parks System around a Vision and Implementation Approach, with action items and implementation strategies. Keys to that roadmap are citizen engagement, high-quality park development, connectivity, natural lands preservation, and park equity/ accessibility throughout the City.

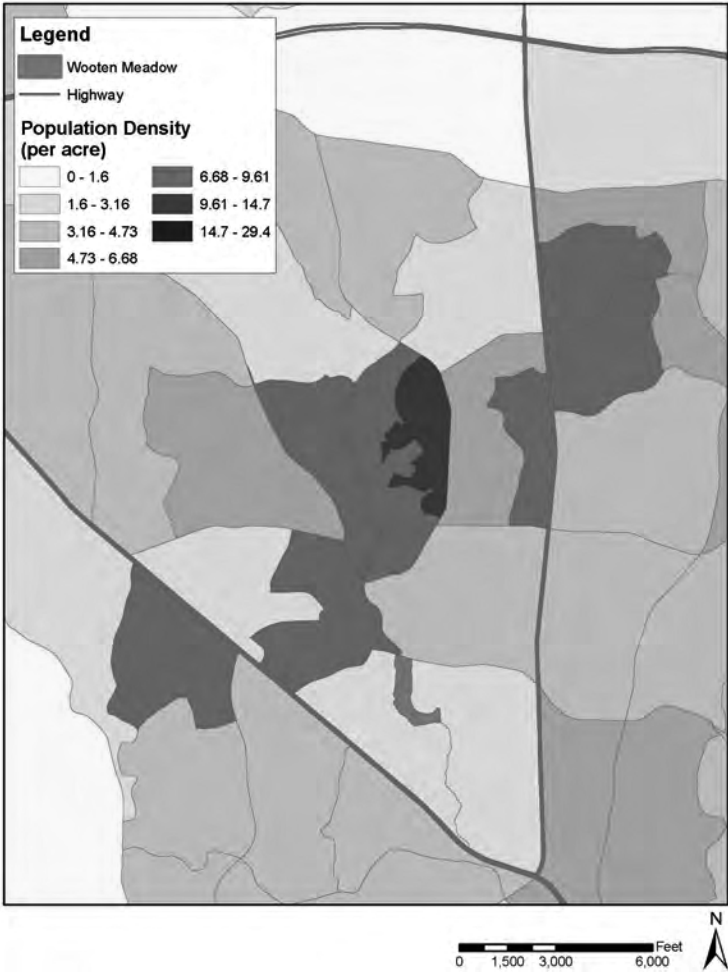
Project Background

Demographics

The Project Team reviewed demographic information for the six US Census Block Groups within a one-half mile radius of the park site to assist in identifying any special populations, formulating outreach strategies appropriate for the community, and assembling a representative citizen committee.

The neighborhoods near Wooten Meadow Park are well-established with a low turnover, yet are becoming more attractive to newer and younger families. The data shows that the proportion of adults over the age of 60 (18.7 percent) is higher than that of Wake County (12.8 percent). The proportion of adults in the 20-39 age group in the study area is 5.0 percent higher when compared to that of in Wake County. Furthermore, just over half (56 percent) of the households in the project area are considered family households, but only 27 percent of households have related children under the age of 18 years living in the house. While this is significantly lower when compared to Wake County (36.5 percent with children under 18 years), it is widely reported to be on the increase.

Compared to Wake County overall, racial makeup in the area is similar except for a slightly lower proportion of Hispanic individuals. The area has a slightly higher proportion of individuals living below or at the poverty line. Individuals in the area are predominantly English speakers. A full description of demographic comparisons can be found in the Situational Assessment in Appendix B.



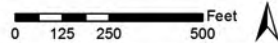
Population density surrounding the site - by block group

EXISTING CONDITIONS & SITE ANALYSIS

Overall

Wooten Meadow Park has a total area of 21.1 acres and is zoned Residential-4 (R-4). Adjacent land uses include an apartment complex along the northwest corner and single family lots along the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the site. West Millbrook Road bounds the property along the northern edge.

The site is mostly undeveloped land consisting of a gravel parking lot, managed open fields, and floodplain forest. The forest consists of a variety of evergreen and hardwood trees; unfortunately, much of the understory is covered with invasive, non-native vegetation. Hare Snipe Creek, which borders the western and southern edges of the site, is a dominant landscape feature. A large portion of the site sits within the creek's floodplain, which is known to flood during periods of intense or steady precipitation. Public sewer easements run along the western and eastern property boundaries and a lateral sewer easement



Site aerial

connects the two near the middle of the site.

The property also contains structural remains of cultural and historical significance. Remains include an old, dry-stacked stone dam associated with the 1773 Moses Parks Mill and old roads and paths that may be of historical importance. Mill foundations and remains of a mill head race are located in the vicinity of neighboring properties. Further archeological study of the site was completed in April 2015 by S&ME. Findings from the study can be found in an independent report filed with the City of Raleigh.

Transportation and Access

The only existing sidewalk near the park are along the south side of West Millbrook Road and the west side of Leesville Road. There are currently no sidewalks through the adjacent neighborhoods.

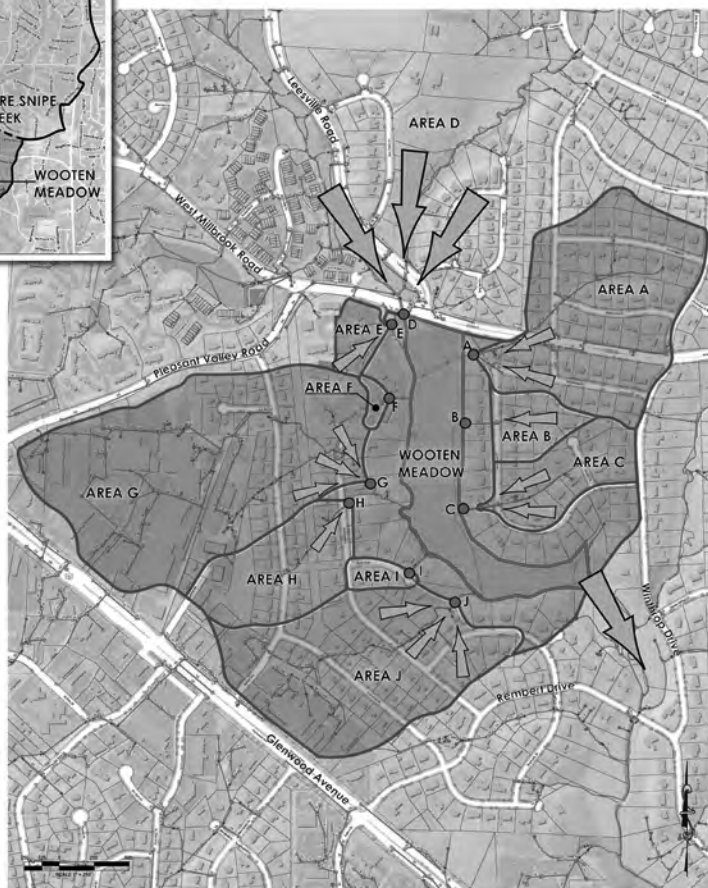
The main access point to the park is at the signalized intersection on West Millbrook Road, with a small gravel parking lot and park sign present at this entrance point. There are several sanitary sewer easements entering the site from the east and west with noticeable unauthorized access points located along with an existing major sanitary sewer easement within the southeastern corner of the property as the line heads towards Winthrop Drive.

Project Background

Drainage Basin

The site's floodplain location is of significant importance to its historic uses as well as its potential future development. Over 6,000 acres of upstream land drains into the Wooten Meadow site. Nearly 97% of that drains directly into Hare Snipe Creek, which runs along the western boundary of the site. It is expected that additional upstream development will affect the flow rate and quality of this water.

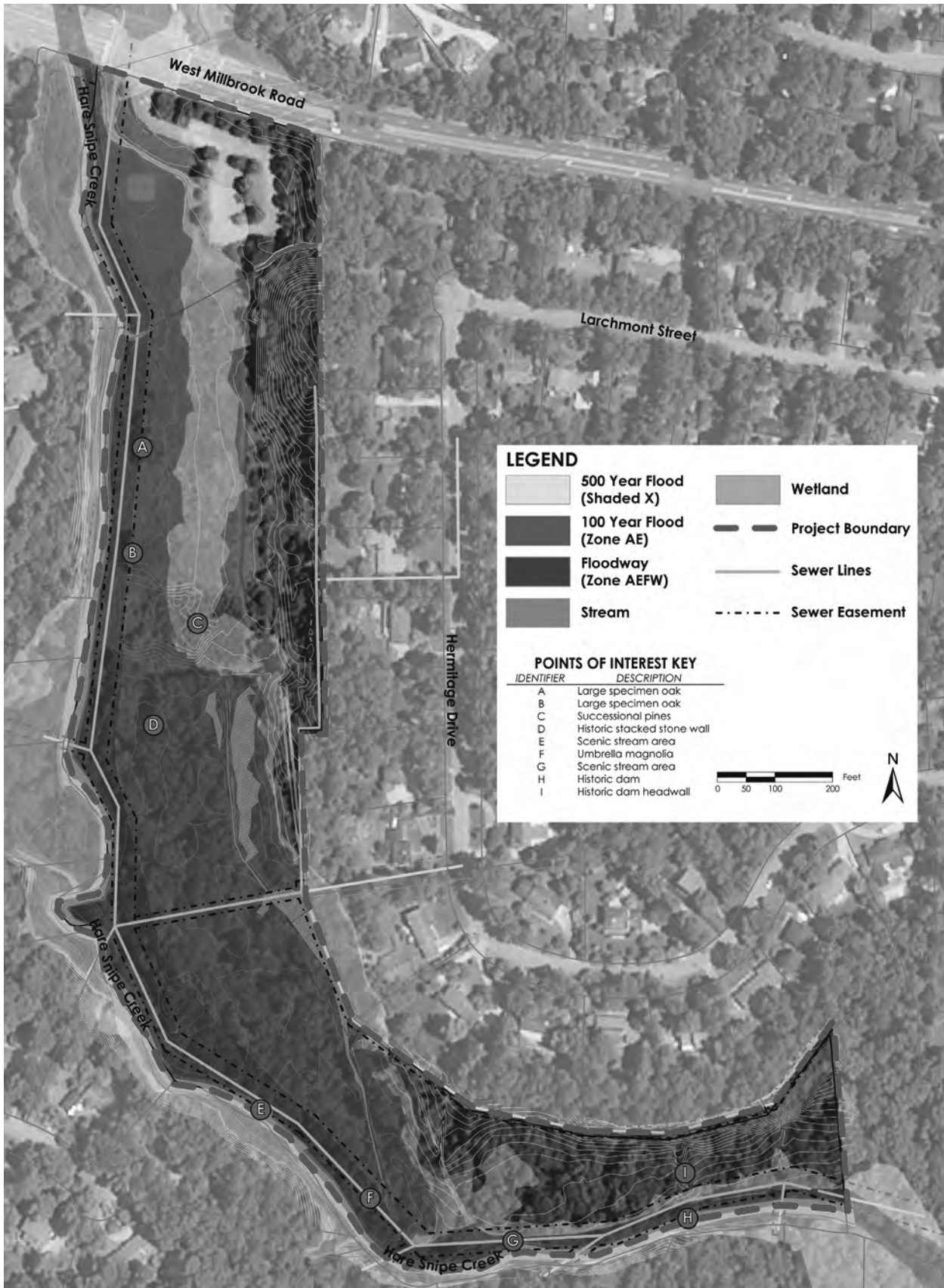
The stormwater draining from the west enters Hare Snipe Creek before reaching the project site. Therefore, 99% of the stormwater entering the site is conveyed directly through Hare Snipe Creek before affecting the land area of Wooten Meadow Park. The remaining 1% enters from the east and has the potential to be incorporated into a park element or design feature.



97% from the North (Area D)
• Primarily Single and Multifamily Residential with some Industrial and Commercial land use

2% from the West (Areas E-J)
• Approx. 40% Single Family
• Approx. 60% Commercial or Multifamily
• Approx. 126 Acres

1% from the East (Areas A-C)
• All Single Family Residential
• Approx. 58 Acres



Floodplain analysis and points of interest

Project Background

Regulated Flood Zones

As evidenced by the graphic shown, nearly 75% of the site sits within the 500-year flood zone (0.5% chance of a flood occurring within this area) and over 50% of the site sits within the 100-year flood zone (1% chance of a flood occurring within this area). There is also a floodway running parallel to Hare Snipe Creek. This zone is essentially unbuildable via the regulations that limit and 'net-fill' within this zone.

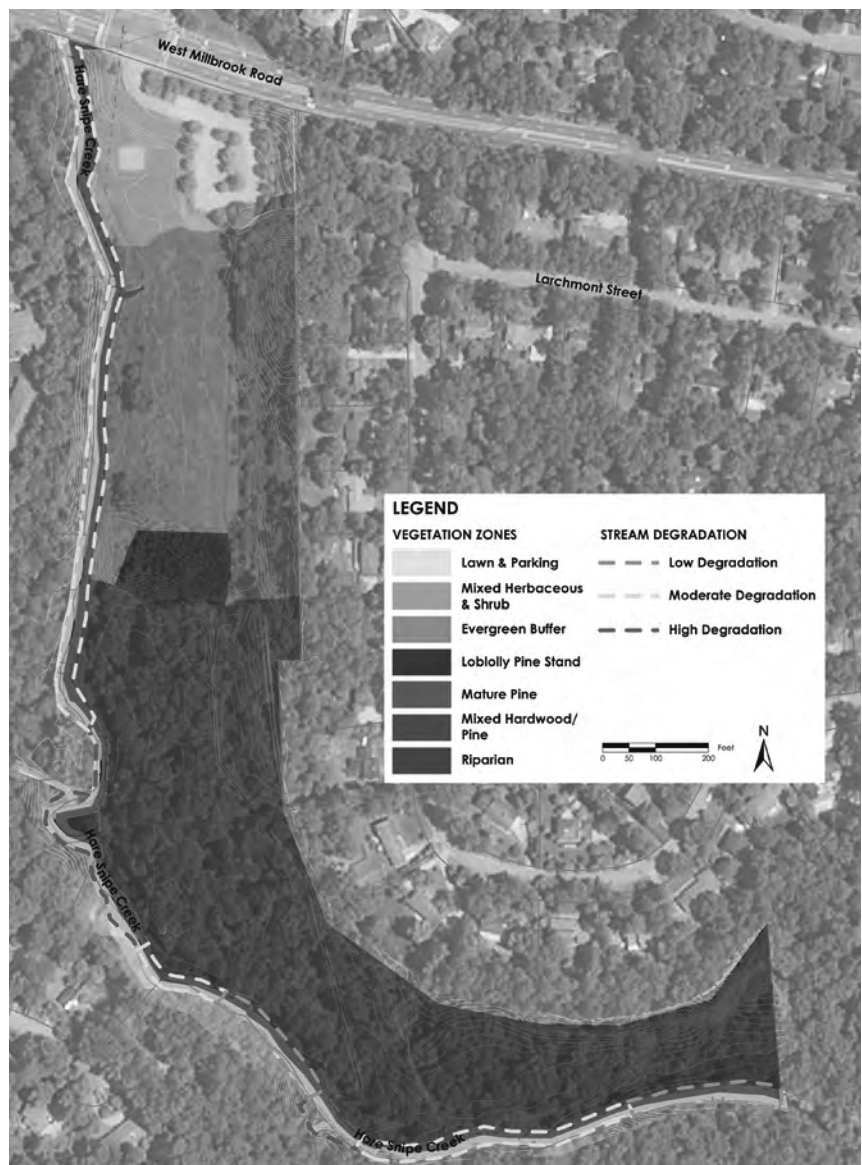
Raleigh's Unified Development Ordinance allows for limited development within the 100-year zone, with additional regulatory processes required for any floodplain development. However, for resiliency, long term cost value, and for limited permitting scope, the most prudent route is to limit development of significant park elements within the 100-year floodplain.

Regulated Water Bodies

Due to the State's Neuse River Basin Buffer rules, there is also a 50-foot restricted development buffer running the entire length of Hare Snipe Creek and in several small locations within the park. These areas can have trail and other limited impacts, yet it is optimal to not have any impacts during development of these areas. The wetlands in the park are also regulated water bodies. Wetlands do not have a regulated buffer. However, if the wetlands are impacted by park development, a permitting process will be necessary to show how mitigation will be handled: either paid for or mitigated on-site.

Streambank Degradation

Hare Snipe Creek is a significant contributor to the Crabtree Creek Drainage Basin. There are consistent water flows throughout the yearly seasons within the creek channel. In general, the stream corridor through the park is in good health. Yet, during rain and storm events, the



Vegetation zones and streambank degradation areas

flows are dangerous and can fluctuate rapidly. As development has increased north of the project site, flow velocities have increased and thus have caused some degradation of the stream banks, both on the park property and more significantly on the west side of the creek.

The team conducted site assessments, drainage basin studies, and ecological walks to determine a preferred course of action to address the degradation. The areas noted in dashed red on the diagram on the previous page are where streambank restoration should occur within the project boundaries. It is suggested that biological approaches be utilized such as willow staking, coir matting, and vegetated shelves.

Vegetative Zones

The vegetative zones constitute one of the most distinctive characteristics of the existing landscapes at Wooten Meadow Park. As highlighted in the images below, there are several distinctive zones showing a successional-type vegetation pattern: Maintained, Meadow (mixed woody and herbaceous), Loblolly Pine Forest (and evergreen hedge), Mature Pine Canopy, and Mixed Hardwood (upland and lowland).



Parking & lawn area (Maintained)



Mixed herbaceous & scrub (Meadow)



Successional pines



Mature pine forest



Mixed hardwood & pine forest



Riparian corridor

Project Background

This vegetative collection creates an opportunity for education of the park users and the community about successional patterns within the Piedmont of North Carolina. This collection also allows the potential park user the opportunity to experience every type of Piedmont landscape within the confines of the 21.1 acre park.



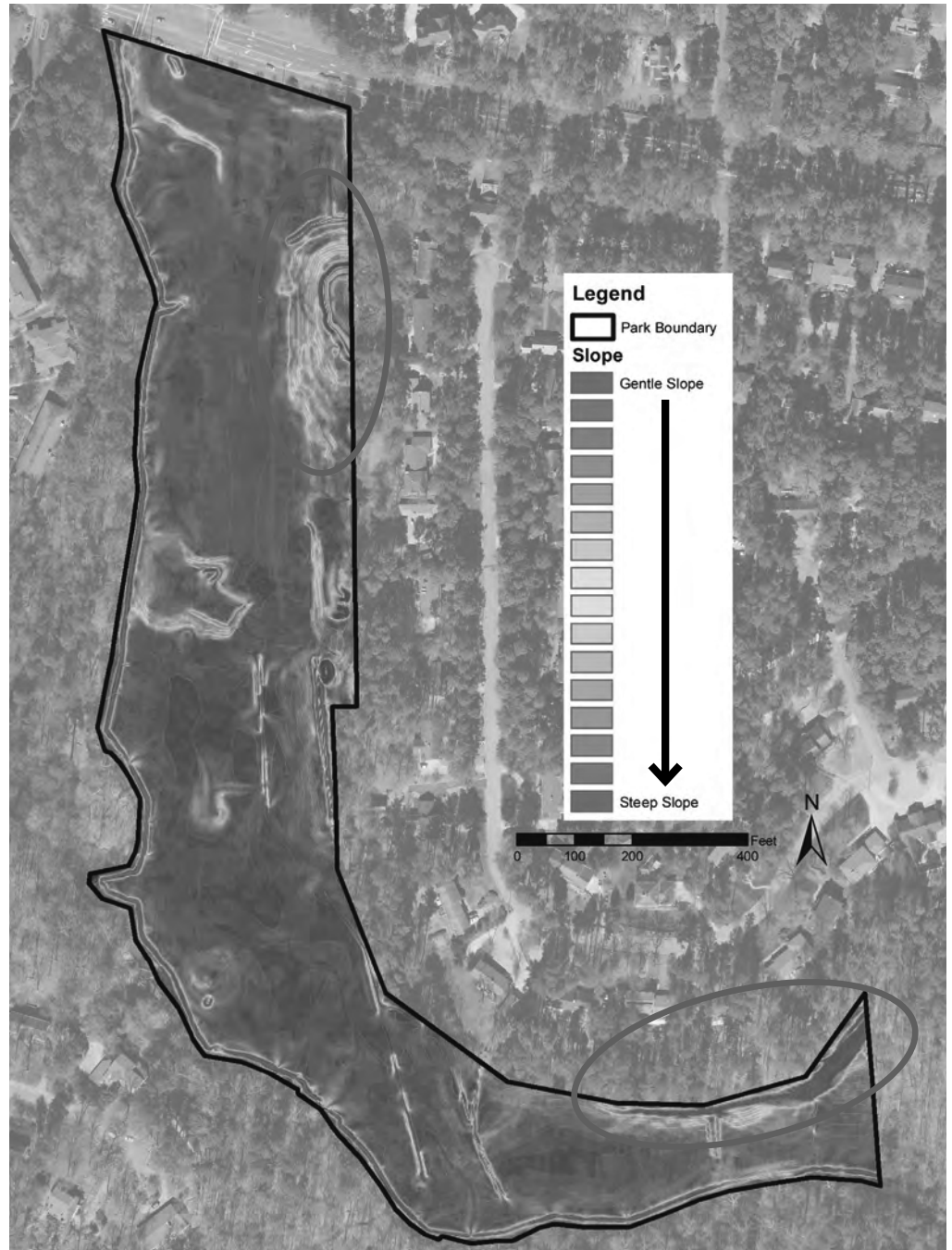
Tree survey color coded by species - survey provided by City

Slope Analysis

The site is generally flat except for a hill running north-south along the (north)-eastern boundary. This hillside provides some separation between possible park development and adjacent homesites.

There is a more steeply sloping area along the southern portion of the site just north of the historic dam. This sloping area is likely the remnant of a former mill pond/dam access road.

The site's overall gentle slope (1% - 4%) allows for park elements to be easily developed with very limited earthworks (costs), yet with the site laying within a flood zone, the slope also limits quick and efficient drainage after flooding or prolonged rain events.



Slope analysis of site

Project Background

Section A



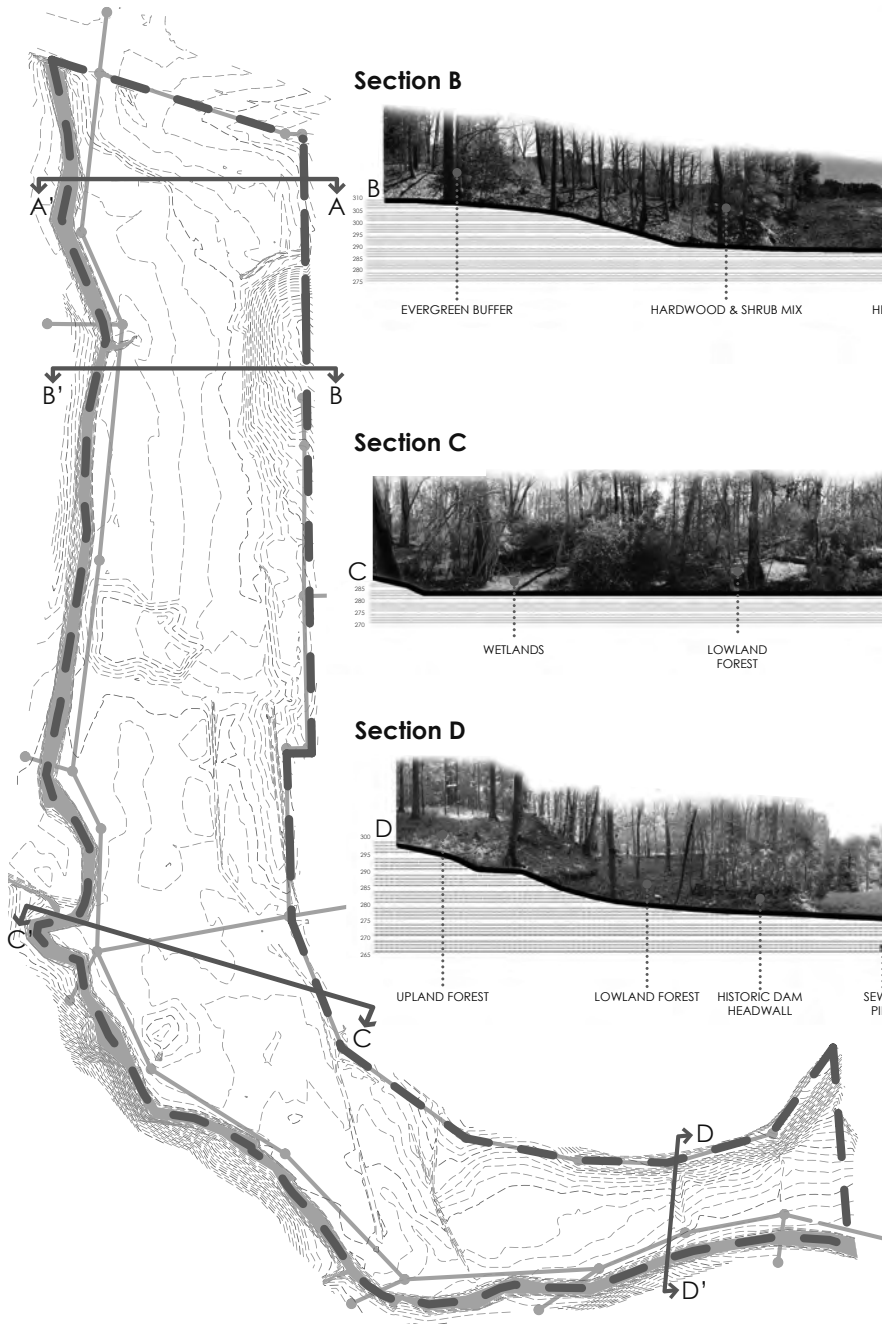
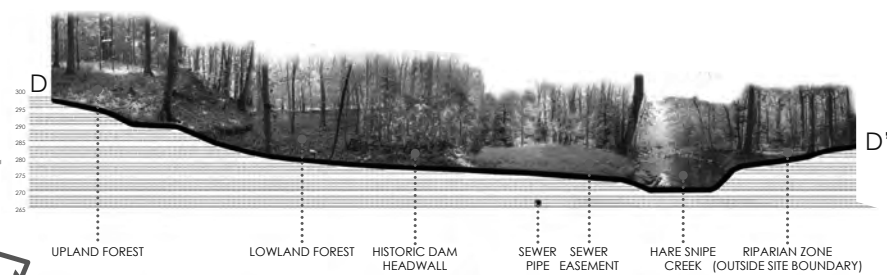
Section B



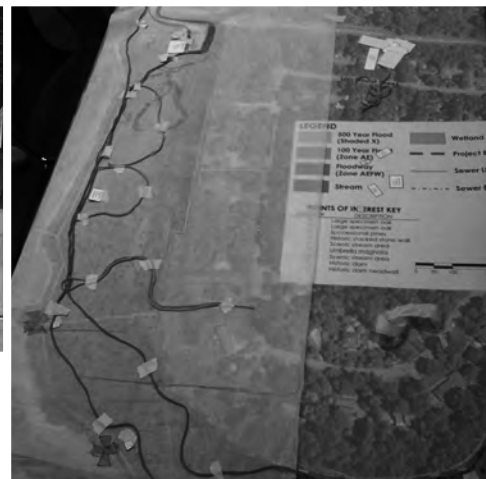
Section C



Section D



Sections of existing conditions



Clockwise starting from left:
1. Tabletop discussion at Public Workshop #2; **2.** Presentation boards at Public Workshop #1; **3.** Group discussion at CPC meeting #3; **4.** Charrette concept at CPC meeting #4; **5.** Presentation at Public Workshop #2

CITIZEN PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS #1-3 + PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1

Values

The Citizen Planning Committee (CPC) held several visioning and value-making sessions early in the Master Plan development process. These were facilitated exercises led by the design team. Values for park planning and development were vetted and confirmed by the public during Public Workshop #1. Higher priority values were confirmed at various times throughout the project and used to evaluate conceptual designs. The highest priority values identified were:

1. Nature
2. Preservation
3. Education
4. Passive Recreation
5. Aesthetically Pleasing
6. Safety
7. Quiet
8. Play



Citizen planning committee meeting #1



Public workshop #1 on Saturday, April 11, 2015 (on-site)

CITIZEN PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS #4-5 + PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2

Concepts

At CPC Meeting #4, the CPC engaged in a facilitated design charrette with groups of four persons working in small groups to create four varied park concepts. The four concepts are shown in the photos below; the graphic on page 24 illustrates the process of translating the charrette concepts to more formal design concepts. Each of the four concepts was presented to the larger group and vetted with questioning. The concepts were then utilized by the design team to create three distinctly different concepts. The three concepts varied in form and content. Each attempted to show distinctly different levels of various features including active park programmed spaces; pedestrian circulation routes; disturbed area; preserved area; structure locations; vehicular access configuration; and pedestrian access configuration.

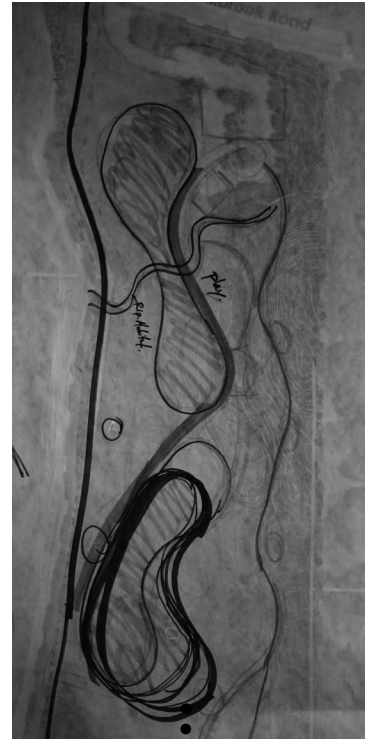
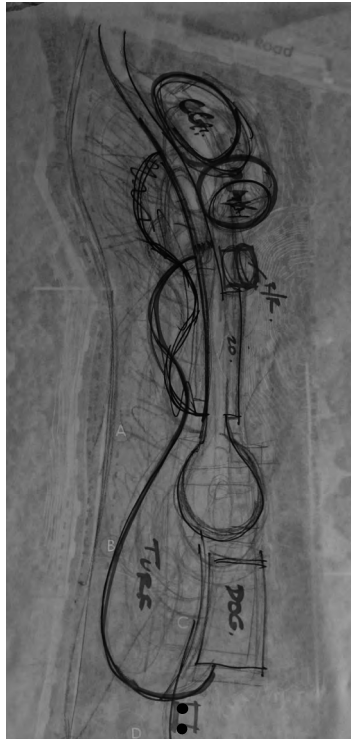
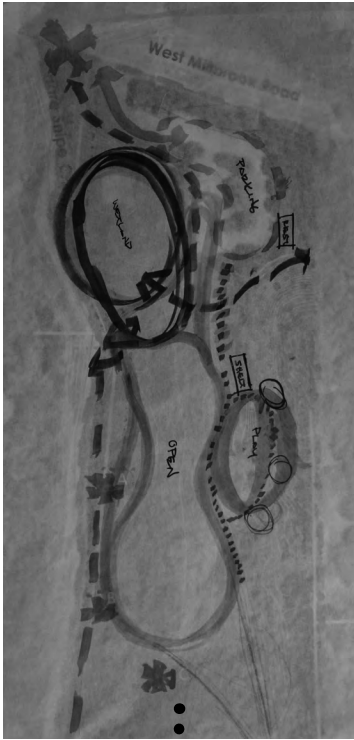
At Public Workshop #2, three concepts were evaluated by the public and then by the CPC. Forty-six workshop attendees completed a questionnaire that asked a variety of questions about preferences. At this workshop and CPC meeting immediately following, a clear preference emerged to limit direct pedestrian access to the Brookhaven neighborhood, limit active recreation programming, and preserve much of the site for interacting with the natural environment. Interaction with nature would be achieved through walking areas, passive recreation opportunities, learning areas, and natural play elements.

For a four week period after Public Workshop #2, the three concepts were posted online on the Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Department MySidewalk forum. That online survey generated an additional 50 responses, many of which agreed with the initial feedback received regarding a dog park, a community garden, and more defined play areas.



Concepts from the CPC charrette on Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Meetings & Workshops



Concept A



Concept B



Concept C

Design refinement by the design team to produce three varying concepts



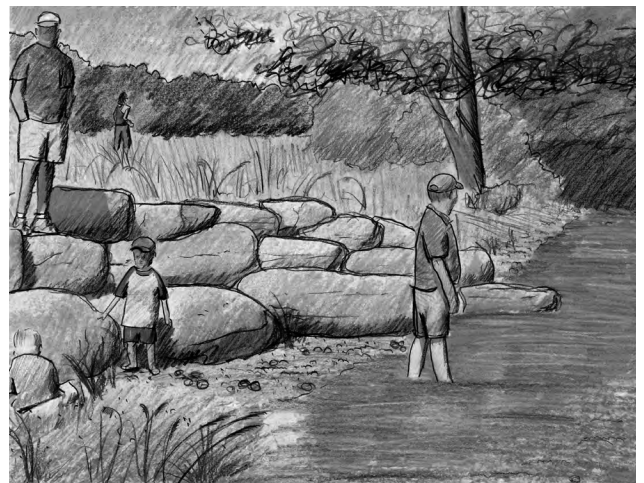
Concept A - View from entrance



Public Workshop #2 - Monday, June 22, 2015
(York Elementary School)



Concept B - Wetland boardwalk



Concept C - Creek access points

CITIZEN PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS #6-7 + PUBLIC WORKSHOP #3

Design Refinement

A consolidated concept was presented at CPC Meeting #6 for evaluation. The review focused on specific program elements and their alignment with the values identified earlier in the master planning process. CPC members determined that the following program elements did not align with the park's values:

1. Active recreation courts
2. Organized field sport play areas
3. Dog park area (voted on directly at this meeting)
4. Large shade shelter – any shade structure containing more than 6 picnic tables (voted on directly at this meeting)
5. Large parking area (larger than 30 parking spaces)
6. Pre-determined community garden (there would be a 'flex space' area if a community group established itself with the City with a viable garden program and sustainable management plan.)

Through diligent reflective work and with active participation of public attendees, the CPC continued to resolve issues related to park elements and locations. At CPC meeting #7, the following design criteria for park elements was discussed and agreed upon by the CPC:

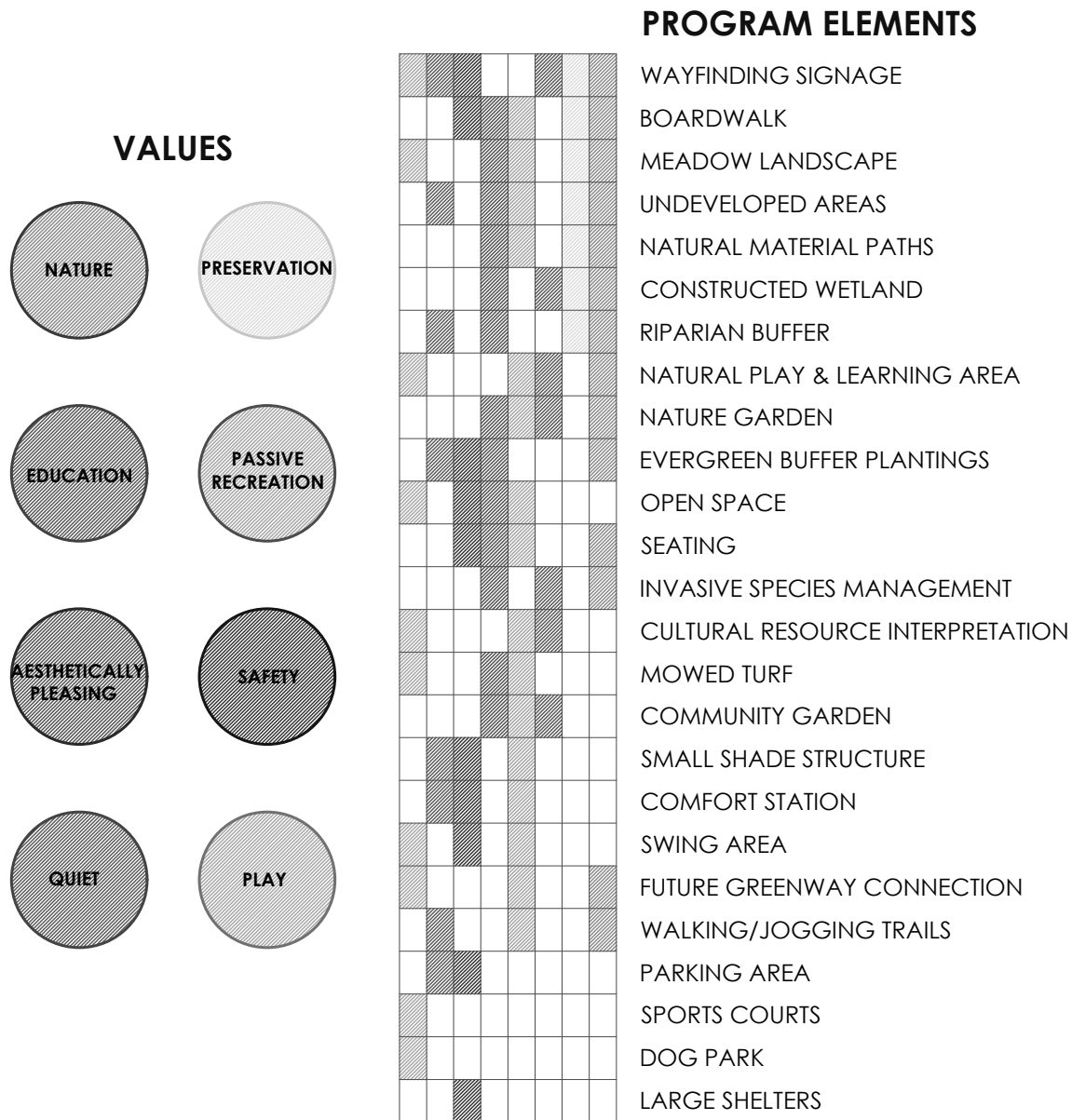
1. Restroom Structure
 - Small restroom with 2 toilets/stalls and a sink per male and female 'side'
 - Nearest edge of the restroom structure is to be located no closer than 125' from any property line
 - Farthest corner of the restroom is to be located no further than 150' from a drive-able fire lane
 - Natural design and material characteristics for the restroom facility
 - Restroom facility is to be similar in size to new "prototype" recently built at Optimist Park (approximately 500 s.f.)
2. Open Lawn (Mowed Turf) Areas
 - A significant area of mowed turf is to be maintained as open lawn area close to the natural themed play area and swing/toddler play area so a variety of passive recreation and play-focused activities can occur in a common vicinity
3. Parking Area
 - No more than 30 parking spaces
 - Parking spaces and associated pavement to be located as far from eastern property boundary as possible

4. Constructed Wetlands

- Place educational signage illustrating the benefits of this ecosystem enhancement
- Locate an educational gathering spot for small groups learning within 75' of constructed wetlands, preferably with shade
- Place benches and/or seating on a wetland walk/boardwalk to create a unique park experience, preferably with shade

5. Pathway System

- Ensure a separate greenway path from the main park path
- Pathways to be paved within park – except for areas in forest where natural materials (stones, gravels, mulches) are to be used
- Pathways to create looped system for variety of pathway experiences



Graphic illustrating how concept elements fit the values set by the CPC



Rendered plan presented for voting at CPC meeting #8

CITIZEN PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #8

Consensus Voting

CPC Meeting #8 continued longer than expected, ending only when the building closed for the evening. CPC members expressed a desire to discuss issues further before taking a consensus vote on the plan. To accommodate the scheduled public hearing on November 12th, the CPC members agreed to meeting one week later to continue CPC Meeting #8 on October 26, 2015. All members present at CPC Meeting #8 attended the extension of CPC Meeting #8.

As part of the facilitated dialogue at the extension of CPC Meeting #8, the following additional concept plan decisions and design criteria were set and supported by the CPC:

1. Toddler Area/Swing Area
 - Locate generally halfway between restrooms and Nature Themed Play Area.
 - Locate on a secondary pathway – not primary pathway for park
 - Limit the size of this play area to 1,200 s.f.
 - Locate vertical edge of play/swing structure no closer than 125' from east property line
 - Do not locate within the existing 100-year floodplain
2. Small Shade Structure
 - Locate generally halfway between restrooms and Nature Themed Play Area.
 - Limit the size of the roof to 200 s.f.
 - Locate vertical edge of shade structure no closer than 125' from east property line
 - Do not locate within the existing 100-year floodplain
 - Located close to the proposed toddler/swing play area, constructed wetland, and display garden area for multifunctional use as a small shade spot for those users
 - Do not provide electricity to this structure to discourage the use of amplified music
3. Display Garden/Learning Landscape
 - Locate no closer than 125' from eastern property line
4. Additional Planting Along Eastern Property Boundary Near 'Activity Zones'
 - Include in the master plan additional planting, consisting of a mix of evergreens, understory trees, shade trees, and native shrubs, along the eastern property boundary to provide additional privacy for the first seven neighboring properties south from Millbrook. The City will consult with these property owners to create the planting scheme during the construction documentation phase to ensure these plantings provide additional privacy.

5. Open Lawn (Mowed Turf) areas

- Develop as a consistently managed turf area consisting of one of the following turf grasses: Fescue, Bermuda, Zoysia, or Centipede
- Develop a larger turf area as:
 1. Limit this area to no larger than 23,000 s.f.
 2. Develop as a non-rectilinear form (similar to what is shown on the concept plan) to discourage organized field activity play
 3. Slope area with 2%-4% grade
- Develop other turf areas within the park as follows:
 1. Limit this area to no larger than 7,000 s.f.
 2. Develop as a non-rectilinear forms (similar to what is shown on the concept plan) to discourage organized field activity play
 3. Slope area with 2%-4% grade

The following park management recommendations came forth from this CPC and should be taken into consideration by park staff:

- A policy ensuring that no organized or programmed athletic events occur on this site (ball sports specifically)
- A policy limiting the amplification of music within this park, for programmed or un-programmed activities



Consensus-seeking exercise at CPC meeting #8

Meetings & Workshops

At the end of the extended CPC Meeting #8, a consensus-seeking vote was taken by the CPC. There were 13 members in attendance. Using the following voting criteria, from the City of Raleigh's Public Participation Policy for Park Planning, votes were cast:

Each individual member voted as below by holding up fingers to note their 'score':

1. Endorsement – CPC member fully supports it (5 VOTES)
2. Endorsement with minor point of contention – Basically, CPC member likes it (3 VOTES)
3. Agreement with minor reservations – CPC member can live with it (4 VOTES)
4. Stand aside with major reservations – CPC member has a formal disagreement, but will not block or hold up the proposal/provision (0 VOTES)
5. Block – CPC member will not support the proposed plan (1 VOTE)

The proposed Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan is recommended **without consensus**.

Representative comments in support of the master are provided below.

#1 Votes:

- "Felt strongly that it is a simple design that enhances park features without stressing any particular aspect, protects and looks to improve the park ecosystem, seeks to prompt curiosity and provide education, while strengthening the greenway system, adding to the places where people can play or sit quietly in a natural setting, AND protects the privacy and safety of adjacent neighborhoods."
- "This plan fairly incorporates the community values of nature, preservation, education, passive recreation, aesthetically pleasing, safety, quiet, and play--in that order. The park is odd in shape, being so narrow and long, and has the added constraints of being largely in the 100 year floodplain. Much of the park is being preserved in a more natural state, while even restoring and creating a wetland area and combating invasive species, which will address nature, preservation, education, and being aesthetically pleasing. Most of the park is geared towards passive recreation, in the form of trails and boardwalks, educational nodes, and seating and shade structures. Play has been incorporated in a nature-themed play area, in the woods, where it addresses the values of nature, education, aesthetically pleasing, quiet, and play. The grass lawn area is of modest size and a shape that will draw play of a smaller, looser, and thus quieter, nature, as opposed to a field the size for athletic programming. This design is the best design that takes into consideration the juxtaposition of quiet and play."

#2 Votes:

- “Support it but still have some concerns over the noise; good compromise overall.”
- “Overwhelming in support of the design but there are some other spaces that would allow for more features closer to the bathroom such as shade structure or playground. Support what is there, but would still like to see more.”
- “Would like to see the swing set on the west side of the infinity shaped turf area.”

#3 Votes:

- “Felt there should have been more things in the plan, but it was a compromise. As the voting structure states, the CPC member can live with it.”
- “Two groups that needed to compromise, and felt that this was a compromise. If had gone more one or the other – activated vs. passive/less activated, it would not have succeeded.”
- “My primary reservation related to this plan is the location of the swing area and shade structure. The survey results from Public Meeting 3 strongly suggested that the swing area and shade structure be moved to the natural play area. I do not feel that the public's wishes have been met with the placement of these items on the east side of the property. It will be inconvenient for families with multiple children of varying ages.”
- “Concerned about the inclusion of a manmade play structure that appeared to be minimally supported by the CPC – felt forced based on one CPC supporter and significant public input at CPC meeting. Felt that the CPC had already agreed that the only manmade ‘play’ equipment in the park would be a set with 4 swings. Also, concerned that there was no criteria built into the document related to size and/or number of structures.”
- “Want to ensure that park design and park management measures could be taken (grading techniques, minor obstructions such as boulders, etc.) to prevent organized sporting events from taking place in the open lawn area. Ultimately those measures don't seem to be firmly included in the final plan. There was also no firm commitment to prevent any ‘amplified noise’ from being allowed in the park.”

Meetings & Workshops

The comments not in support of the master plan are summarized as follows:

#5 Votes:

- “Representing a number of neighbors who only wanted trails and boardwalks, educational signage on the boardwalks, shelters established along the boardwalk. Felt that to support them needed to register the 5. And as a resident of the area and have lived through the noise and past experiences – lack of someone policing/hearing your concerns – enforce the potential for noise. Potential for a lot of noise. Neighbors did not have much luck in the past. Noise issue is the biggest concern and have to live with this. It is an amphitheater and heard in the yards and houses. Neighbors wanted a more passive park, wildlife/ecosystem focus and not necessarily play and concern over noise. Concern about size of mowed turf area.”



CPC meeting with members of the public



Clockwise starting from left:
1. Shade structure; 2. Nature play;
3. Boardwalk with educational
signage; 4. Picnic area; 5. Pine
maze

PROGRAM STATEMENT

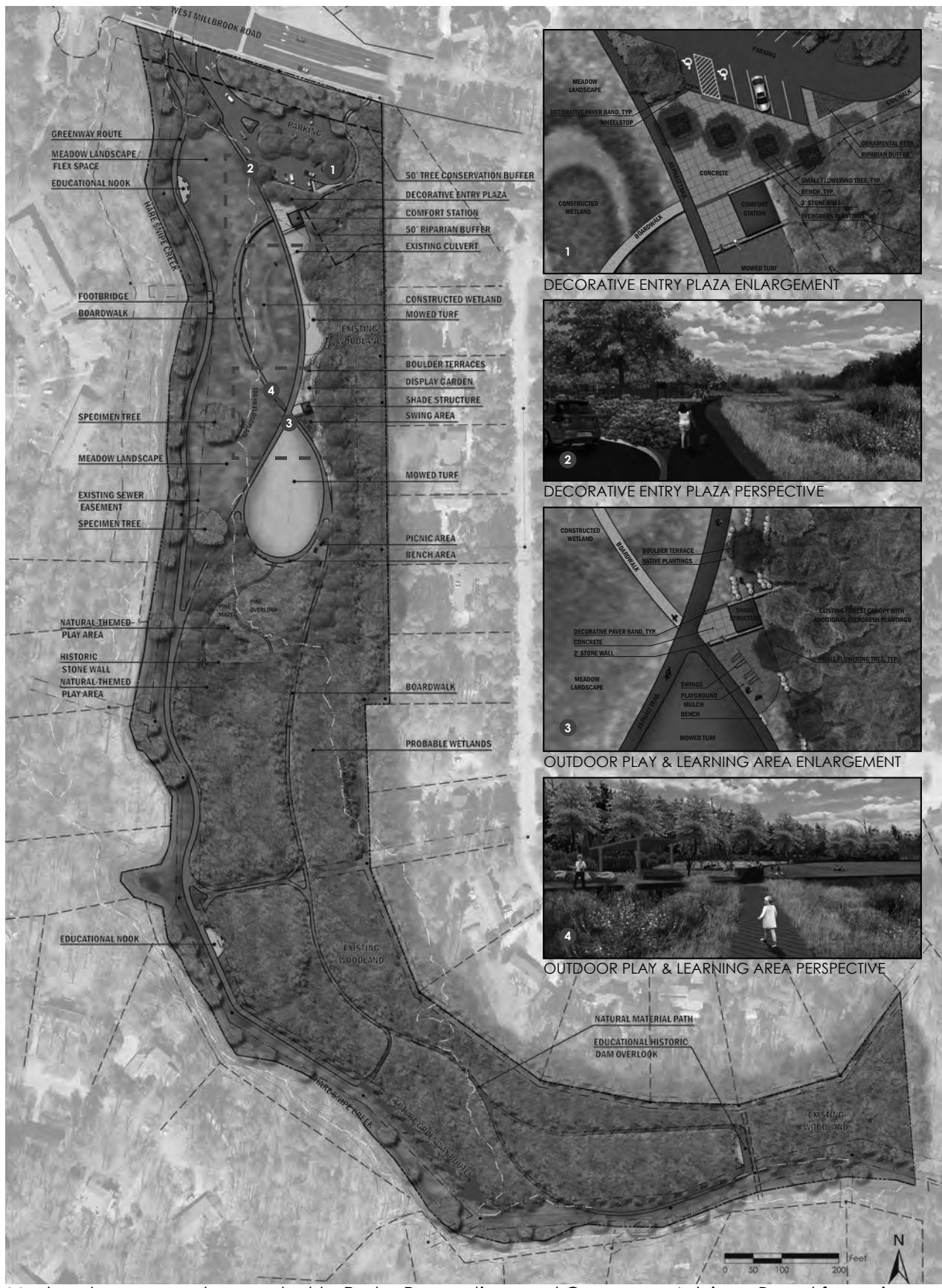
The Park Master Plan delivers on the community's vision to have a park experience informed by nature. A constructed wetland at the front of the park welcomes boardwalk strolls. The wet soils and floodplain instruct visitors about stormwater, especially how it can be slowed, cleaned, and celebrated. Educational overlooks here and along Hare Snipe Creek raise awareness of the natural and manmade systems on display and evolving with the park's development. Sensitively placed trails and boardwalks make the unique landscapes and diverse habitats within Wooten Meadow Park accessible and safe. The trails themselves provide for various interests, including taking a one-mile run off the greenway system or birdwatching among forest and marsh areas. The centralized paved path, just off a comfortable gathering and orientation plaza, provides sweeping views of the park, including glimpses of new access points to the forest and to the creek. Play opportunities are likewise linked to one another for family convenience, introduced lightly with limited equipment that encourages both physical movement and exploration of the next landscape. For example, the swing area is directly across the open lawn from the loblolly pine maze. The maze then marks the entry to a nature-themed playground located among the shade of once-forbidding woods, previously strangled with invasive English Ivy. A managed meadow also invites off-trail exploration among flora and fauna or picnicking by the creek, under preserved specimen trees.

Among an urbanizing upland watershed, Wooten Meadow Park will demonstrate the positive relationship possible between development and nature. The site's history as a floodplain, mill pond, and horse pasture will be reflected in material choices, signage, and educational programming. The past will excite the future here, with eventual plans for greenway and park use deep into the park among historic remains, all requiring careful site interpretation and linkages over time. Nature will be a central draw for both creekside respite and accessible safe recreation, making an underutilized acreage a treasured park experience for the surrounding neighborhoods.

VALUES

As noted above when discussing the preliminary work done by the CPC, the following values served as the framework for all decisions made in developing the Park Master Plan:

1. Nature
2. Preservation
3. Education
4. Passive Recreation
5. Aesthetically Pleasing
6. Safety
7. Quiet
8. Play



Master plan concept presented to Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board for review on Thursday, November 12, 2015

CONCEPT NARRATIVE

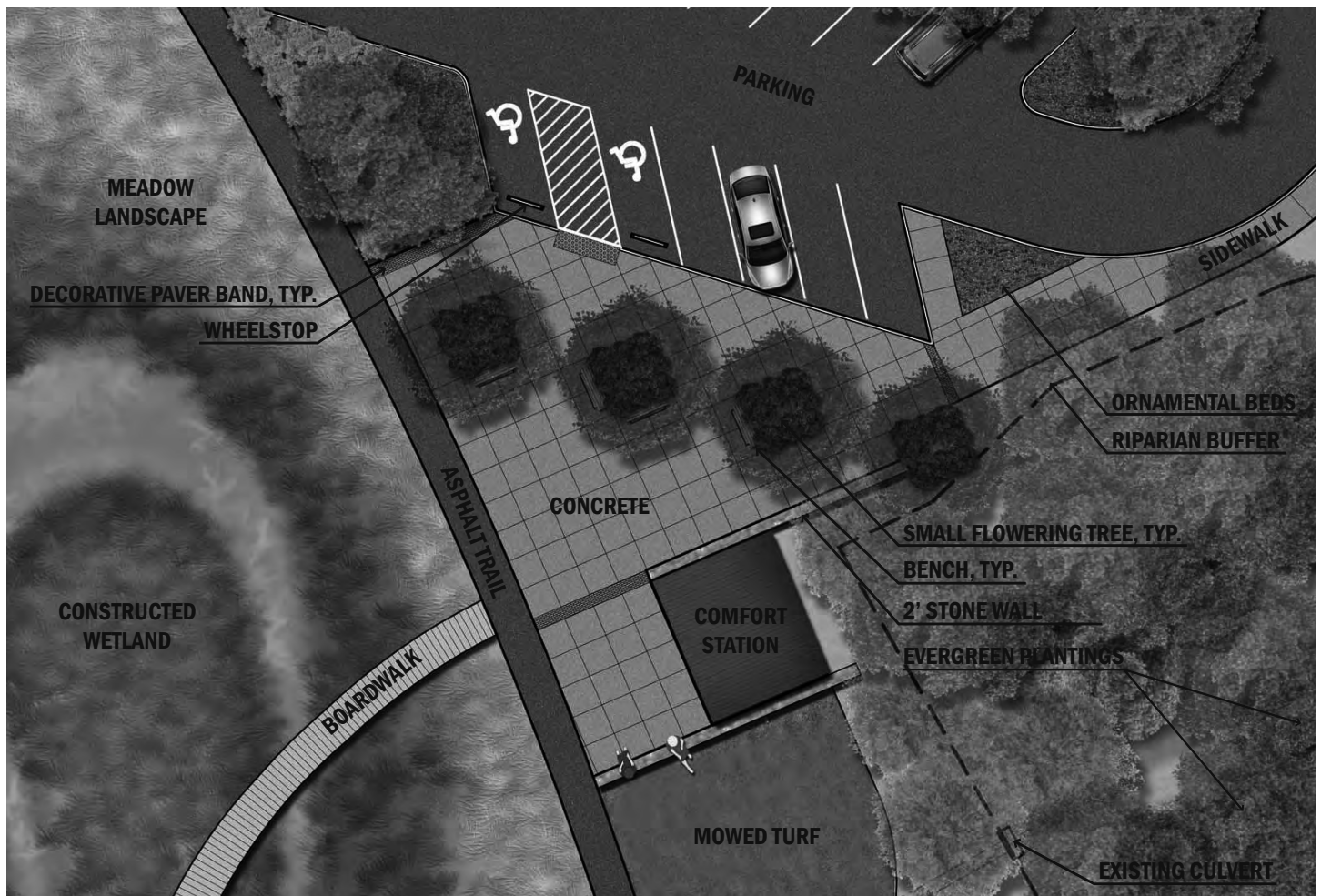
The Master Plan was created based on eight guiding values that were defined by the CPC and validated several times by the community-at-large. Those values are (in priority ranking): Nature, Preservation, Education, Passive Recreation, Aesthetically Pleasing, Safety, Quiet, and Play. The Master Plan is a physical manifestation of these values, as the Plan strives to provide spaces for enjoying nature, engaging in passive recreation, educating the community, preserving the landscape, and playing with childlike fervor. The Plan provides pedestrian access to Millbrook Road; a looping pedestrian network within the park; a future greenway connection to the Capital Area Greenway (along Hare Snipe Creek); a natural-themed play area; an open play lawn; a display garden; learning nodes throughout; access to an overlook for the historic dam on the property; a constructed wetland with boardwalk; a forested wetland with boardwalk; an array of various successional Piedmont landscapes, including a meadow landscape, a loblolly pine forest, and a hardwood forest; several flexible use lawn/meadow areas; a small restroom; a shade structure; and a parking area for nearly 30 vehicles.

PARK FEATURES

Entry Plaza

The park's entry is critical to the park experience, as all users will enter from Millbrook Road either on foot or by vehicle. This entry plaza seeks to organize users into an area that provides a variety of necessary functions including gathering space, restroom/drinking water facilities, and seating.

The plaza acts as a gateway between the proposed parking area and the remaining park, focusing users onto the main circulation pathway entering the site. Material choices would be concrete, stone, landscape plantings, and timbers.



Enlargement of plaza area



Perspective of entry plaza



Small comfort station



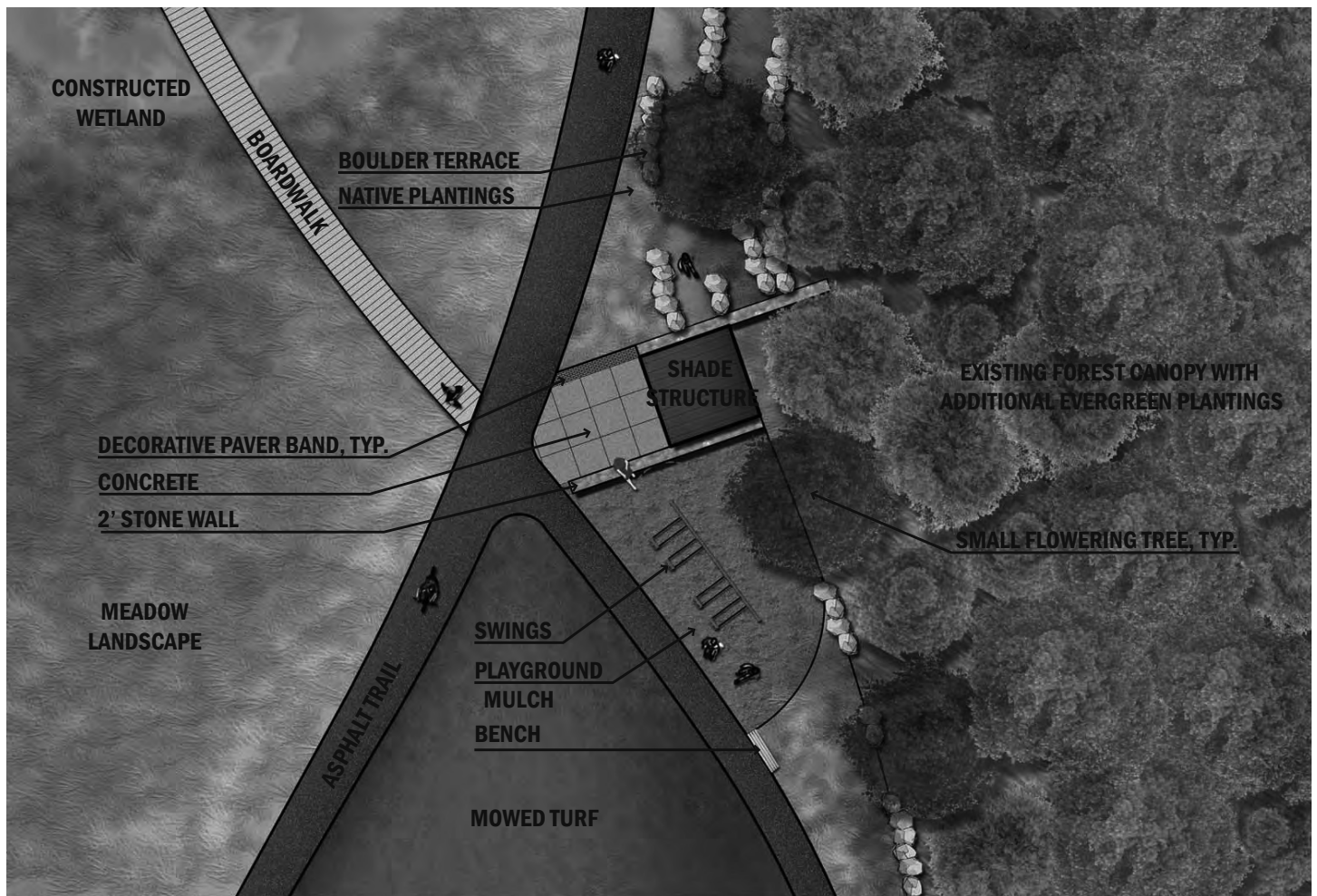
Stone wall



Small entry plaza

Outdoor Play & Learning Area

This area of the park is the main nexus within the park, where many of the pathways join and where park exploration opportunities abound. The main path continues its arc southerwesterly towards Hare Snipe Creek and the potential greenway. The constructed wetland's boardwalk crosses from northwest to southeast to create a loop around the open lawn area. At this nexus, a small shade structure is located for picnickers, families, school kids, gatherers, and learners. The immediately adjacent display garden highlights and educates visitors about the park's unique flora collection. This area also has a small play area, highlighted by swings for various ages. This play element begins the "play experience" for the park visitor, who first encounters the swing area, continues past the open lawn play area, and finally reaches the natural-themed play area within the existing loblolly pine forest. The natural-themed play area will utilize natural materials including concrete, stone, native landscape plantings, and timbers.



Enlargement of outdoor play & learning area



Perspective of outdoor play & learning area



Educational display garden



Small shade structure



Meadow landscape

MAJOR PARK PROGRAM AREAS

Trails

Trails were the community's and CPC's top priority program element. Looping trails to allow for passive recreation, exploration of natural settings, preservation of existing vegetation, and education were all distinctly commented on as being part of the success of Wooten Meadow Park. With trails placed throughout the park and engaging the user in a variety of landscapes, this program goal is met and highlighted. The park is defined in its form by the patterns that trails make on the land and the connections that those trails make for the park visitor.



Natural material paths



Natural material paths



Asphalt paths

Educational Nooks

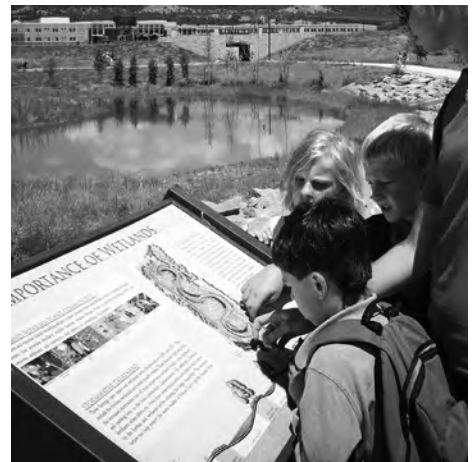
These nooks were noted as the key methodology to create spaces for park visitors (families, neighbors, small school groups, etc) to stop, listen, and learn. Wooten Meadow Park has many things to learn about, primarily from the land and adjacent Hare Snipe Creek. Therefore, educational nooks are a key program element for the future of the park.



Natural overlooks



Various seating types



Educational signage

Constructed Wetland

A constructed wetland with a boardwalk or educationally-focused walkway were included within the Master Plan in order to blend the values of nature, preservation, education, and passive recreation. The creation of this wetland and pedestrian amenity will allow for the park to function as an agent for ecologically-based floodplain assistance by detaining and then treating rain water through infiltration. As water moves slowly through the constructed wetlands, the water will infiltrate down into the soil and substrate, cleansing itself before it recharges the aquifer. This wetland will also allow for educational opportunities for park users with seating and signage.



Boardwalk with signage



Meadow landscape



Boardwalk seating

Mowed Turf / Open Lawn

As a key organizing element within the park, this space is seen as a playful and restful space for all park users to enjoy. This space will be welcoming in its form, yet not large enough for organized recreation play. Its "non-natural" landscape will also provide a balance a man-made space to balance the multiple natural-themed areas within the park.



Open lawn



Recreational opportunities



Passive activities

Natural Play

Natural play elements were included within the Master Plan in order to blend the values of nature, preservation, education, and play. The natural-themed play areas will provide the park with a unique feature that allows the users (children) to learn about themselves, the natural processes, and creative play. Some of the play elements will be 'off-the-shelf' play elements from national vendors, with natural themes. Other play elements will be less defined and may include boulders, logs, stumps, water, soil, and vegetation. This mixture will allow for maximum user engagement, regardless of age, abilities, skillsets, or interests.



Successional pine maze



Natural play elements

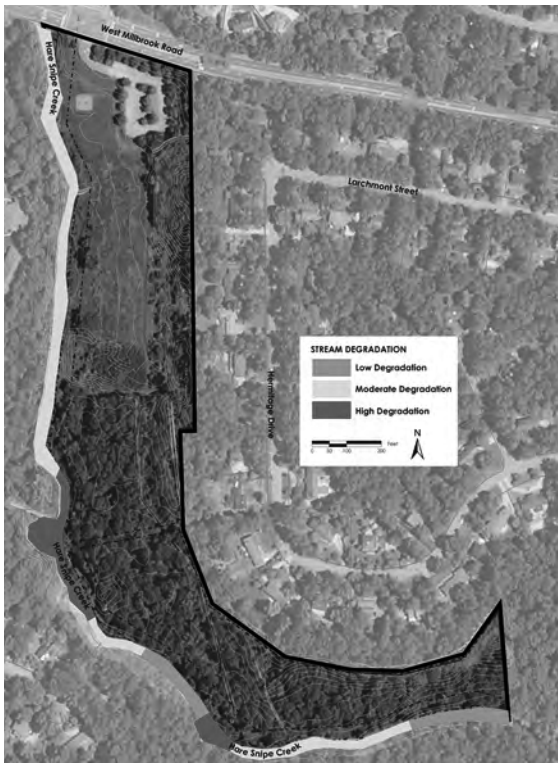


Natural play elements

STREAM RESTORATION

During the site analysis phase, the design team visited the site, walked along Hare Snipe Creek, and determined that there were several areas of the creek (and also within Park boundaries) that were worthy of initial bank restorations. These areas are highlighted on the diagram below. While all of the stream banks are degraded on some level, the majority were relatively stable and minimal bank restoration was considered necessary.

Note that partnerships may be available with the State and other departments within the City for maximizing funding.



Areas of stream degradation



Existing stream conditions at high degraded area



Creek condition before



Restoration process



Creek condition after



Clockwise starting from left:
1. Small class birdwatching;
2. Scenic rock outcrop along Hare Snipe Creek; **3.** Stone wall;
4. Invasive english ivy on historic stone wall; **5.** Great Blue Heron, common species of the park

PRIORITIES & PHASING

As part of feedback gathered at CPC Meeting #7, Public Workshop #3, and CPC Meeting #8, the CPC reviewed possible phasing scenarios and prioritization opportunities. Public input gathered specifically at Public Workshop #3 asserted trails as the main priority of the park. The design team facilitated discussion at CPC Meetings #7 and #8 about construction methodologies, budget implications, and park master plan values.

At the end of the extended CPC Meeting #8, there was a consensus-seeking vote taken by the CPC **on phasing recommendations only**. There were 13 members in attendance. Using the following voting criteria, from the City of Raleigh's Public Participation Policy for Park Planning, votes were cast. Each individual member voted as below by holding up their fingers to note their "score":

1. Endorsement – CPC member full supports it (5 VOTES)
2. Endorsement with minor point of contention – Basically, CPC member likes it (6 VOTES)
3. Agreement with minor reservations – CPC member can live with it (2 VOTES)
4. Stand aside with major reservations – CPC member has a formal disagreement, but will not block or hold up the proposal/provision (0 VOTES)
5. Block – CPC member will not support the proposed plan (0 VOTE)

Therefore, the proposed Wooten Meadow Park Master Plan recommendations for phasing did reach full consensus.

These are the phasing priorities that were approved by the CPC:

1. Primary Priorities (Not in priority ranking except where noted)
 - Trails (noted as #1 Priority for CPC and Public)
 - Paved
 - With Learning Nodes/Educational Spots where possible
 - ½ mile loop of trails
 - Benches/Trash Receptacles
 - Earthworks/Infrastructure for Constructed Wetland
 - Improved Parking Area including
 - Entry Plaza
 - Pedestrian Connections to Millbrook Road
 - Infrastructure for Future Restroom
 - Invasive Plant Management, to begin preparation of the Play areas
 - Meadow/Improved Landscape for 'front' of park
 - Open Lawn/Mowed Turf Area
2. Secondary Priorities (in no priority order-only alphabetical):

- Boardwalk/Wetland Walk for Constructed Wetlands
- Greenway Connection Trail, west of Wetland and south of park areas
- Natural Material Pathways
- Play Areas – Toddler/Swing Area and Natural-Themed Play Area
- Restroom
- Second Paved Loop approved in meeting #8
- Small Shade Structure

The diagrams below graphically reflect the Citizen Planning Committee's prioritization previously described.

It should be noted that these prioritization phases do not reflect current construction dollars available. Final build-out phases have not been determined by City staff at this time. Until final funding mechanisms and build-out phases are determined, the current management of the park will continue to utilize the guiding principles recommended and approved within the System Integration Plan for land management.



Primary priority phase diagram



Secondary priority phase diagram

EXPANSION OPTIONS

Parking

With the current concept of the parking area, the parking could be constructed in phases and/or grown slightly to allow for some gravel parking areas to allow for future expansion. This expansion would most likely occur near the 'pull-off/drop-off' space currently shown on the plan or at the eastern end where the loop occurs. Any expansion would not expect to push the total parking area over 30 spaces. However, if safety and parking concerns occur either on Millbrook Road or within the adjacent neighborhoods, this maximum should be revisited for the betterment of the park users and neighbors.

Flexible Meadow Space

As discussed with interested parties during the public engagement process, the area currently labelled as 'Flexible Meadow Space' could be retrofitted to house a community garden area. With its close proximity to the 'drop-off' space and Millbrook Road providing good access and sightlines, this area is a good location for possible future consideration of this feature.

Continuation of Hare Snipe Greenway

The Master Plan accommodates the future possible expansion of the Hare Snipe Greenway (as part of the Capital Area Greenway System). There are many unknown variables at the time of this Master Plan in regards to constructability, costs, and land purchases related to land 'downstream' of this site. Therefore, the plan accommodates and promotes the extension of the greenway, while allowing flexibility with regards to its future full construction.

BUDGET & SCHEDULE

Opinions of Probable Construction Costs

The costs shown below outline a strategy to incorporate the previously described priority phase recommendations of the CPC to construct the park. Note that this is only a vision for the build-out of the park and not the final determination. Partnerships may be available with the State and other departments within the City for maximizing funding.

Primary Priority Items

- Trails: \$200,000
- Earthworks/Infrastructure for Constructed Wetland: \$50,000
- Improved Parking Area: \$250,000
- Invasive Plant Management: \$20,000
- Meadow/Improved Landscape for 'front' of park: \$90,000
- Open Lawn/Mowed Turf Area: \$80,000

Subtotal: \$690,000

Secondary Priority Items

- Boardwalk/Wetland Walk for Constructed Wetlands: \$125,000
- Greenway Connection Trail: \$80,000
- Natural Material Pathways: \$50,000
- Play Areas: \$220,000
- Restroom: \$120,000
- Second Paved Loop: \$40,000
- Small Shade Structure: \$50,000

Subtotal: \$685,000

Contingency (30%): \$412,500

Design Fees (10%): \$137,500

Testing/Environmental/Specialty Services (15%): \$206,250

Total Construction Cost Estimate: \$2,131,250

Probable Design and Construction Schedule

- Schematic Design through Construction Documentation (and Permitting): 15 months
- Bidding and Construction (Primary Priority Phase): 8 months
- Bidding and Construction (Secondary Priority Phase): 8 months

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