

## SIMPSONWOOD PARK



GWINNETT COUNTY DEPARTMENT  
of COMMUNITY SERVICES,  
PARKS & RECREATION PROJECT  
ADMINISTRATION

SEPTEMBER, 2016

## **Simpsonwood Park Master Plan Gwinnett County, Georgia**

Prepared For:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services  
Parks & Recreation Project Administration

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September, 2016

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## Simpsonwood Park

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The Simpsonwood Park Master Plan was prepared with the participation and guidance of the Master Plan Steering Committee Members and Department Staff. We appreciate their time and efforts:

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### SECTION PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1.0 The 2007 Gwinnett County Capital Improvement Plan includes a prototype for Open Space Parks. Open Space Parks are generally large parcels of mostly undeveloped land that embody natural, scenic and cultural values, resources and landscapes. These parks provide passive, non programmed recreation opportunities in a managed environment.

In order to serve a dual purpose of open space preservation / protection, Open Space parks are typically developed with only minimal amenities needed to provide public access for low-intensity and dispersed recreation. Open Space parks are designed for a maximum of 10 to 15% impervious surface coverage. Where possible, Open Space Parks should be located along and / or connected to the greenway system.

The typical Open Space Park can include facilities and features similar to those found in Passive Community Parks, including but not limited to; playgrounds, picnic areas and pavilions, nature trails, paved multi-use trails, accessible public open space such as meadow or woodland, tennis, basketball and sand volleyball courts, disk golf course, dog park, irrigated turf field for informal non-organized sport and free play.

Open Space Parks are increasingly popular amongst residents as they not only protect and conserve natural areas, but also provide for some level of public usage - particularly for unstructured and self-scheduled forms of recreation such as walking, hiking, riding, or nature enjoyment. The acquisition and development of open space parks has been a key thrust of the County in recent years.

This report addresses the development of park services on the recently acquired 222.733 acre Simpsonwood Property in the recently formed City of Peachtree Corners. The goals driving this master plan include the following:

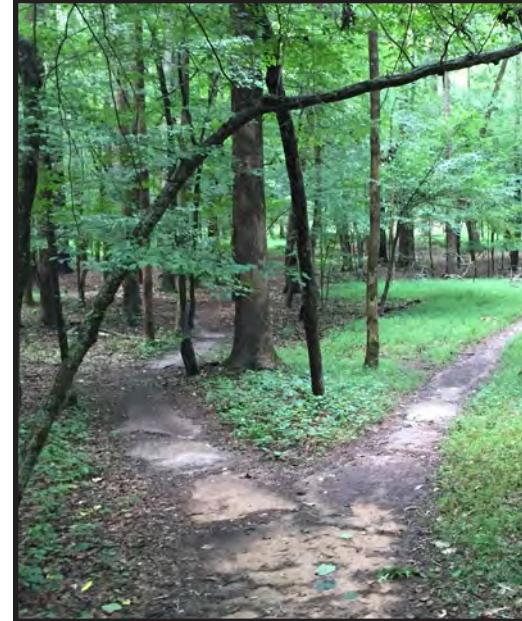
- Realize goals of the 2007 Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Plan.
- Integrate a variety of diverse passive recreation activities which will serve a variety of age groups and abilities.
- Establish appropriate facilities within a post demolition site.
- Respect the constraints imposed by the impervious surface percentage limits.



### SECTION PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

2.0 This project will require the development of a new Open Space Park master plan for Simpsonwood Park. The recently acquired 222.733 acres is located in the City of Peachtree Corners, the largest city located within Gwinnett County. The site is bounded by Johns Bridge Circle, several residential subdivision rear yards, and the Chattahoochee River which abuts the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. A large portion of the park site lies within the Chattahoochee River Corridor under MRPA (Metropolitan River Protection Act) regulatory control administered by the ARC (Atlanta Regional Commission) and local review authorities.

The property was formerly owned by the North Georgia Conference of the United Methodist Church and was used as a retreat / conference center. Several buildings that were used for this purpose have been demolished but the historic chapel will be retained on site. A major Gwinnett County Sanitary Sewer Lift Station is located within the park boundaries; access to this location will need to be maintained. In addition, the park property has two dammed ponds whose history, prior to this master planning project, was unknown.



The park property currently remains open to the public with limited vehicular access into the site. While there are no structured facilities for use, there are multiple natural surface trails that wind throughout the site and are used on a daily basis by the community.

This park is to be utilized as a Open Space Park. While the exact mix of park amenities will be determined by working with a Citizen Steering Committee, the park may include any of the park elements as listed in the County description for an Open Space Park

### SECTION PROJECT APPROACH

3.0 Using a standard Master Planning project approach toward Simpsonwood Park, the project passed through a series of design stages before a final Master Plan was approved. The following represent the milestones completed along the way.

- Notice to proceed issued to jB+a, inc.
- Flyers advertising public meeting distributed, public meeting sign erected.

- Public Input meeting, Community Interest Forms and Steering Committee Membership applications distributed.
- Steering Committee Scheduling Meeting
- Steering Committee Park System Tour with Consultant and County Representatives
- Steering Committee Park Site Walk
- Presentation of Inventory & Analysis Graphics and Park Programming Discussion
- Presentation of Concept Drawings to Steering Committee
- Presentaion of Preliminary Master Plan and Cost Estimate to Steering Committee
- \* Public Drop in Meeting (Additional Meeting requested by Steering Committee)
- Master Plan Presentation w/ phasing prioritization
- Presentation to Gwinnett County Recreation Authority

The following provides a brief description and timeline of sequence of Meetings. Refer to Appendix H - Meeting Minutes (Page 101) for more information on each meeting.

### Preparation of Base Information

jB+a, inc. prepared AutoCAD base information utilizing GIS files and aerial photography obtained from Gwinnett County.

### Community Interest Meeting

The initial Public Meeting was held at the Norcross High School Theater on November 12, 2015, with a presentation of the park boundary survey, 1938, 1955 , 1972, and 2014 aerial photographs, and a description of an Open Space Park as per the County Park Classification System. The master planning process and the role of a steering committee was explained. Community Interest form surveys and steering committee applications were distributed and collected. Refer to Appendix B - Community Input Tabulations & Comments (Page 69).

### Scheduling Meeting

The Steering Committee members met with the Consultant and Gwinnett County Staff on January 28, 2016 to schedule all meetings for the Simpsonwood Park Master Planning Process.

### Tour of County Parks

Gwinnett County Staff, Consultants and Steering Committee members met at the Simpsonwood United Methodist Church Parking lot on February 13, 2016 to begin the Park System Tour. The Park team visited 5 parks to discuss specific elements located at each park. These parks included the following:

*Little Mulberry Park (3800 Hog Mountain Road, Dacula, GA 30019):* NOTE: There are multiple entrances to this park due to its size. Little Mulberry Park is an 890 acre Open Space Park. With an extensive trail system for Pedestrians and Equestrians, playground facilities, disc golf

## Simpsonwood Park

course, fishing lake, and picnic pavilions. The Steering Committee visited the newest playground area, walked a section of paved multi-purpose trail and visited a lake overlook. The trail winds through densely wooded and open areas of varying terrain. Special attention was given to the way the trail was laid out to provide active drainage and a positive user experience. The trail layout was influenced by safety issues, visibility, topography, and visual interest. The Steering Committee then briefly visited the picnic pavilion area located at 3855 Fence Road, in Auburn, Georgia 30011.

*Harbins Park (2995 Luke Edwards Road, Dacula GA 30019)* Harbins Park is a 1,960 acre park comprised of an active community park and a passive conservation park. The conservation park is Gwinnett County's largest park that provides only passive recreation types including picnic pavilions, playground activities, a paved multiuse trail, mountain biking, hiking and equestrian trails. The Steering Committee viewed the existing equestrian parking area via windshield tour and then visited the parking area / trail head area for the conservation park. Typical of the majority of open space parks within the Gwinnett County System, the vehicular / parking areas are confined to the front of the park; not impinging on the core of the park. The Steering Committee briefly visited the multi-use trail, stopping to view an open space park standard pavilion (more rustic in nature) and the large playground area provided near the front of the park. Overflow parking and pervious pavement types were pointed out.

### *Tribble Mill Park (2125 Tribble Mill Parkway SE, Lawrenceville, GA 30045):*

Tribble Mill Park is a 718 acre Open Space Park which was developed before a standard Open Space Park definition was developed. Tribble Mill Park includes an extensive vehicular access system that winds throughout the park; the separation between vehicular and pedestrian traffic is compromised. The Steering Committee visited the Festival Field area where overflow / reinforced parking was identified. In addition, water quality practices and detention basin



Little Mulberry Park-Lake Overlook



Harbins Park - Open Space Park Kiosk



Tribble Mill Park - Playground

## Simpsonwood Park

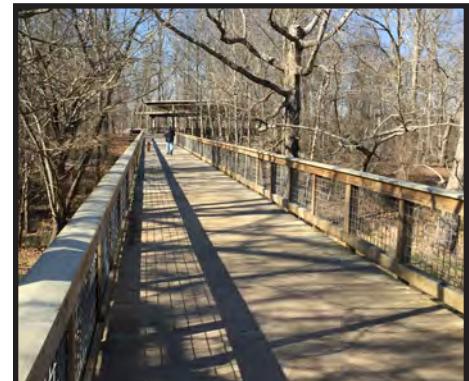
requirements were discussed. The Festival Field area of this park includes a large playground. Color selection of playground equipment was discussed. Other amenities at Tribble Mill Park include a fishing lake with boat access (non-motorized only), picnic pavilions with grills, multi-purpose trails and soft surface trails.

Alexander Park (800 Old Snellville Hwy, Lawrenceville, GA 30044): Alexander Park is a 91 acre community park that offers a variety of passive activities for park users. Due to the extreme popularity of this park and the number of cars within the parking area, Alexander Park was viewed from the bus to limit bus / car conflict. The importance of day-use activities in the park was discussed. Providing park activities; such as playgrounds, walking trails, and pavilions, that can be utilized during off-peak hours (weekdays) allows for passive policing within our parks.



Alexander Park - Amphitheater

McDaniel Farm Park (3251 McDaniel Road, Duluth, GA 30096): McDaniel Farm Park is a 134 acre Passive Heritage Park. Steering committee members discussed the architecture of the park and the design decisions that went into designing /siting them. By simply skewing the roof structure of the pavilion to reinforce the directional flow of the multi-use trail, the architect was able to direct the user's attention toward a pedestrian bridge and historic barn structure. The Steering Committee walked a portion of the multi-use trail, visited the pedestrian bridge and returned to the pervious paving parking area.



McDaniel Farm Park - Pedestrian Bridge

The McDaniel Farm Park tour continued with a visualizing exercise for the next phase of construction at the northern corner of the park. Steering Committee members processed into the site from what will be a northern entrance into the park. While looking at a graphic of the Phase II park improvements, the proposed layout of a new parking area, picnic pavilion, restroom building, playground, and dog park was discussed and visually sited while standing within the proposed construction zone.



Settles Bridge Park - Skate Park

Settles Bridge Park (380 Johnson Road, Suwanee, GA 30024) – The 268-acre park includes a 1.8-mile paved trail, 2.4-acre dog park area, playground, 60'pavilion with grill area, two half-court basketball courts, 10,000 sq. ft. skate complex with bowls, and restrooms. The skate park was visited and the liability of having such an element was discussed. (Statistics show that fewer lawsuits were filed due to injuries obtained due to skating accidents than any injury obtained through structured active recreation types – Football, baseball, soccer, etc.) Additionally, the importance of providing activities and a place to gather for teens was discussed. The dog park area was then visited and the importance of a 6' high fence and the separation of uses for dogs of a variety of sizes were discussed.



### Park Site Visit

Gwinnett County Staff, Consultants and Steering Committee Members met at the project site on February 13, 2016 for an informative site walk. The intent of the site walk was to become familiar with the opportunities and constraints of the park site. Steering committee members actively participated in the site tour by voicing concerns and requests for their Open Space Park.

### Presentation of Inventory & Analysis

The Consultant presented the Park Site Inventory & Analysis diagrams to the Steering Committee on March 10, 2016. Analysis Diagrams included; Soils Analysis, Slope & Hydrology Analysis, Vegetation Analysis, and Opportunities and Constraints Analysis. Following the presentation of the graphics, park programming elements were discussed.

### Presentation of Conceptual Master Plans

On April 28, 2016, jB+a presented three (3) Concept Plans to the Steering Committee. Each concept was depicted in a monochromatic form, utilizing bubble diagrams. Each followed the same program requirements and differed only through spatial relationships and layout locations. The main focus of the discussion was the spatial relationships between the various park elements.

### Preliminary Master Plan

The Preliminary Master Plan graphic and cost estimate were presented to the Steering Committee on June 16, 2016 by the Consultant. The Preliminary Master Plan was derived by combining layouts from the concept plans.

### Public Drop in Meeting

The Steering Committee Developed Preliminary Master Plan graphic was on display on June 30th, 2016 to the public for review and comment. Revisions requested from the Steering Committee during the Preliminary Master Plan Meeting were incorporated into this graphic. County Staff and Consultants were available to answer questions for the attendees. Steering Committee Members were encouraged to attend.

### Master Plan Presentation

On August 4, 2016, jB+a presented the Master Plan graphic to the Steering Committee. The plan included modifications that had been made based on comments from the Steering Committee at the Preliminary Master Plan Meeting and comments received from the Public Drop In Meeting. The project cost estimates was also presented to Steering Committee. By majority acclamation (17 approved, 4 Opposed, 1 in absentia) the Steering Committee accepted the Master Plan as shown in the graphic presented (RE: Graphic K- Page 57).

The Committee voted to accept the prioritized park elements by means of majority rule. Following the prioritization of park elements the Steering Committee took a vote which requested that the Recreation Authority and Board of Commissioners consider placing Simpsonwood Park under conservation easement. The vote passed unanimously. Through united vote, the Committee agreed to submit the Graphic Plan and their development priorities to the Recreation Authority for their acceptance.

### Presentation of Master Plan to Recreation Authority

The Master Plan and Steering Committee Prioritization recommendations were presented by the Consultant to the Gwinnett County Recreation Authority on August 11, 2016. County Staff presented the recommendation for a Conservation Easement for Simpsonwood Park. Several Steering Committee members were present in the audience and mentioned that there was unanimous support for the conservation easement among committee members and a huge support within the community. The Recreation Authority unanimously voted to accept the Master Plan as the guiding document for the development of Simpsonwood Park. In addition, District 2 Recreation Authority Member Jack Bolton made a motion for the conservation easement process to commence, it was seconded by Steering Committee Member / Recreation Authority member Robert Gates. The motion passed and will be brought forth and presented to the Board of Commissioners.

## SECTION SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

**4.0** Prior to concept development a series of analyses were conducted. The following is a summary of each of these analyses; a graphic diagram accompanies each summarization.

### Soils Analysis (RE: Graphic A - Page 37).

- Helps determine which soils on site are most stable and favorable for development.
- The site has a variety of different soil types – 18 different major soil types

- The majorities of existing soil types on site are favorable for development utilizing some planning and design techniques.
- Soils located within the floodplain of the stream and tributary on site, indicate poor percolation and unstable soil structure and are therefore not favorable for development.
- 6 soil types that are not favorable for development;
  - BfS, Cfs, Cos, Cus, – due to stability, they are frequently flooded, poorly drained, and generally lie within the stream setback.
  - LDF, and MiF2 – due to steep slopes; although with some engineering development may be possible.

### Slope Analysis (RE: Graphic B - Page 39).

- Site reflects variable topography with both hills and valleys.
- Graphic indicates a contour interval of 2'.
- Majority of the slopes on the site lie in the range of 5%-10% covering 63.5 Acres, 10-15% slopes covering 52.0 acres and 0-5% Slopes covering 47.6 acres. The remaining 59+ acres have steep slopes in excess of 15%.
- The high point (elev. 984.0 is located centered near the entrance to the park on Jones Bridge Circle. The low point (elev. 870.0) of the site is located at the western most corner of the site where it touches the Chattahoochee River. The maximum grade change across the site is 114 vertical feet.
- Site possesses positive drainage patterns due to ridges and stream valleys across site.
- The main water feature near the site is the Chattahoochee River. A blue line stream, Bucks Creek cuts through the southern portion of the site. There are also several minor tributaries that intersect Bucks Creek.
- A Primary Ridgeline cuts through the site draining water into 2 major watershed areas. One draining toward the Chattahoochee River, the other draining toward Bucks Creek.

### Vegetative Analysis (RE: Graphic C - Page 41).

- Site illustrates a mixture of vegetation types.
- The transitional forest type (transitioning into deciduous hardwood forest) predominates with some stands entirely hardwood.
- The early emergent forest type; still a mixture of young pine and successional hardwoods; maples, tulip poplar, etc. (oaks, hickory and beech trees have not migrated in yet) is a more desirable area for development. Younger trees tend to acclimate to changes easier than older trees. Slope gradient may limit development in some areas.
- A substantial area of young pine (approximately 17 acres) exists near the eastern portion of the site. It too is a favorable location for development as it has less botanical diversity and is furthest from a climax hardwood forest on the continuum of forest succession.
- Riparian forest types exist within the river and stream corridors.

- Areas within the park that have been intentionally left as open space include the great lawn area, the small lawn area near the chapel and a small area near the basketball courts.
- Resultant open space areas are largely open as a result of the demolition of former structures, with groups of trees that once occupied the margins of parking lots and buildings area plus areas void of trees due to the presence of sanitary sewer easements.
- The site has a great diversity of existing plant materials / communities that are assets to the park site. While not intricately detailed within this analysis graphic they will be considered. The intent is to try to keep any development that may occur within the park site within areas that have already been disturbed (through past development / demolition) and are unlikely to house these plant communities or to limit development to areas within the park that are capable of recovering quickly.
- Many invasives found along stream banks and low lands, specifically privet, need to be removed from site.

### Opportunities / Constraints (RE: Graphic D - Page 43).

The opportunities and constraints graphic was developed by overlaying the constraints from each of the other graphics;

- Unfavorable soils
- Slopes that were greater than 15%
- 100 year floodway, and 100 year flood zone,
- Stream setbacks
- Vegetated areas of the site that should be conserved

By overlaying each constraint (area where development is not favorable) 3 specific areas emerged as to the most favorable areas for development. These areas included:

- An area near the eastern edge of the site (off Jones Bridge Circle) located predominantly within the pine forest area.
- A centrally located zone near the existing chapel located within a large Early Emergent forest type on favorable soils and slopes.
- A zone deepest into the park site where the former buildings have been demolished. Limited vegetation, land formerly graded to accommodate buildings, favorable soils.

Using these locations elements such as proximity to neighbors, view-shed, noise, access can all be considered.

## SECTION **PROGRAM OPTIONS**

**5.0** In order to understand the changing needs and new recreation trends in the community, the Gwinnett County Department of Community Services developed a Community Interest Form to distribute during the Community Input meeting. These forms are used to assess the needs

and wants of the local community. The interest forms are then collated, and tabulated. The information in Appendix B- Community Input Tabulation and Comments (Page 65), contains the complete results. Approximately 133 community participants attended the meeting held at the Norcross High School Theater on November 12, 2015.

Following the presentation of the graphics at the Analysis and Programming Meeting (March 10, 2016) tabulations of requested park elements from the Simpsonwood Park Public Meeting were distributed. Each of the elements listed on the spreadsheet was highlighted to fall into 1 of 5 categories;

1. Not an amenity (Example: Educational Programs – programming element)
2. Baseline Amenity - an amenity appropriate for this open space park (Example: Nature trails)
3. Not Suitable here – (Example: River Access – no safe way to access river, slopes are too steep and unstable. Better access at Jones Bridge Park)
4. Committee choice – elements within the tabulation list up for vote by the Committee (Example: Playground, Dog Park, Camping)
5. ??????? – Elements that were listed on the Community Interest Forms but were either vague in description or didn't fall into a category (Example – Architectural features, Bigger DNR / NPS Presence)

The categorization of the Community Interest Form Tabulations was intended to serve as a point of departure for discussion during the Programming portion of the meeting. Committee members were asked to comment on the requested elements as well as state programming elements they wished to see in the park.

After significant discussion on how to commence with the programming discussion the Steering Committee decided to eliminate all elements that were up for Steering Committee consideration (Fell within the Committee Choice Category) that did not have a rating of 10 or higher, unless someone spoke out about an element.

*Note: One member spoke out for including Disc Golf course in the park. The committee voted 1 for with 22 against. Disc Golf will not be considered as a park element within Simpsonwood Park*

Discussion continued for each of the other park elements within the Committee Choice Category Commenced. Based off much discussion the following elements are to be included per the Steering Committees direction, in the concept graphics for Simpsonwood Park.

### Baseline Elements

1. Nature Trails
2. Multi-use Trails (Including an accessible section)

3. Trail Markers – Kiosks
4. Park for All – activities for a variety of ages and abilities
5. Site Restoration
6. Interpretive Trail
7. Open Space
8. Picnic Pavilion
9. Parking
10. Bridges
11. Restrooms
12. Restore historic chapel (Use as an event space)

### Committee Choice

1. Camping – (Vote – passed unanimously)  
Group camping only (Scouts, church groups), primitive
2. Open Picnic Areas (Vote – passed unanimously)  
No shelter, just picnic tables
3. Wildlife Sanctuary – (Vote passed unanimously)  
Voted to include a section in the Project report that recommends placing a Conservation Easement on the Simpsonwood Park site.
4. Fishing Dock / Overlook Areas - (Vote passed unanimously)  
Overlook areas are to be planned near rivers edge to allow views of the river, serve as a resting / contemplation area, and allow for pole fishing from dock.
5. Playground – (voted 15 for with 8 against)

*Note: (The playground was categorized as a Baseline Element; however, many of the Steering Committee Members were opposed to including it in the park and requested a vote be taken.*

*Several Steering Committee members spoke out against including a playground within Simpsonwood Park stating:*

- *Every neighborhood nearby has its own playground,*
- *Nearby Jones Bridge Park has a playground and to put one at Simpsonwood would be a duplication of uses,*
- *Simpsonwood Park should be kept natural! No additional development*
- *Nature should be the playground. We don't need commercial playground equipment in the park!*

*Other Steering Committee Members spoke out for including a playground stating:*

- *It's one of the highest requested elements on the Community Interest Form, we are supposed to be representing the community at large; to not include the playground would be to ignore the requests of the community.*

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## Simpsonwood Park

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- *Would like to include the playground so there are things to do for all ages  
One of the requests on the Community Interest Forms is "A Park for all ages."*

### 6. Dog Park - (see below)

*Note: During the programming discussion, the inclusion of a Dog Park was debated. As with the playground, the dog park was a very contentious item. Several Steering Committee Members spoke out against including a dog park within Simpsonwood Park stating:*

- *We don't need a dog park, we need to limit development.*
- *No one will use a dog park.*

*Other Steering Committee Members spoke out for including a Dog Park Stating:*

- *If the County leash law is going to be enforced (County Regulatory Ordinance 1029) then we should think about giving dog owners a place where the dogs can run around unleashed.*
- *It's a highly requested element on the Community Interest Form. If we are representing the community at large then I think we need to include a dog park in the programming.*

*A Vote was taken 8 for with 15 against.*

*Following the discussion of the program elements additional Steering Committee Members spoke out on behalf of including a Dog Park in the programming elements stating:*

- *I feel strongly about this, we are not giving fair consideration to those people who requested a dog park.*
- *I think we need to at least see what it looks like in plan to understand what type of land requirements it takes.*
- *We really need to give the dogs a place to go. It might even help keep the dog poop off the trails if they have a place they can go to run around.*

*Steering Committee members requested a revote to include the dog park in the concept graphics.*

*\*\*A Vote was taken 12 for with 7 against.*

*\*\*Note: Since several committee members left the meeting prior to the Dog Park revote, two additional Concepts would be prepared for presentation; they will illustrate options that include the dog Park. Three concepts will be prepared to illustrate the*

*original elements that were voted on and approved by the full number of Steering Committee Members that had been present at the meeting.*

*One other item was voted on by the Steering Committee and requested to be documented in the project report. That item was to allow for the park to be dog friendly provided the leash law (County Regulatory Ordinance 1029) is enforced.*

*The Committee endorsed the ordinance unanimously*

The Consultant then used this programming information as a point of departure for the development of the three alternative concept plans for Simpsonwood Park

### SECTION **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

**6.0** Working with the Citizen Steering Committee, and representatives from Gwinnett County, the consultant, jB+a, developed a program outline. What follows is the design stage progression from concept through the final master plan design. A description of each of the stages is included.

#### **6.1 Concept Development**

A total of three (3) concept plans were prepared and presented to the Steering Committee on April 28, 2016. Utilizing the information inventoried and analyzed during the analysis phase of the project, a variety of park elements were located within the three conceptual diagrams. The inventory graphics are intended to be referred back to in an effort to locate these elements in the most favorable locations. Each concept followed the same program requirements and sited the same baseline elements as requested at the programming meeting:

- Chapel with dedicated parking & Restroom
- Maintenance Compound
- Adequate Parking
- Trail System (Multi-use trail with accessible section, nature / interpretive trails, new bridges, boardwalks and overlooks at river)
- Pavilion Playground Complex / Restroom
- Group Camping Area
- Open Space

The Concepts differed only through spatial relationships and layout locations. In addition, options for potential dog park locations / sizing were overlaid on each of the concept graphics as requested during the programming



**Simpsonwood Park - native mushroom**

meeting. The main focus of the discussion was intended to be the spatial relationships between the various park elements.

Prior to demolition of the existing buildings at Simpsonwood Park, impervious surfaces covered nearly 8.5 acres of the site. Each concept depicted reduced the amount of impervious surface by 10-30% constituting 4-6% of the entire property.

### Concept 1 (RE: Graphic E - Page 45)

- Entrance relocated to align with curb cut at Simpsonwood UMC
- Development at front of Park
  - Pavilion / Playground Complex on subsidiary drive
  - Located in Pine woods near cell tower – preserves hardwoods
  - Maintenance yard relocated to be near development
- Total Parking – 266 parking spaces
- Vehicular access terminated at chapel
- Multi-use trail
  - ADA Section (<3%) 1.5 mile loop
  - Connector Loop (not ADA) .75 Mile
  - Shared Section 575 LF
- Group Camping Area proximate to restroom and parking serving chapel
- Open Space / Meadow
  - Three large open areas w/ shelters
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space
- Dog Park Option
  - Three options with parking proximate
  - Utilizes existing / remnant open space.

### Natural Learning Playground

- Playground – At the programming meeting there was conflicting interest regarding potentially including a playground within Simpsonwood Park. The option of a Natural Learning playground rather than a traditional playground was discussed. This type of playground is intended to provide a play area within nature and to help promote the importance of the natural environment in the daily experience of children through the design. Rather than being grouped together in a single play area, the play equipment is to be distributed throughout highly landscaped areas so that over time the playground will “blend” into the natural surroundings. The square footage required by the playground equipment would typically fit within a 10,000sf play area, however the extra square footage of the natural learning playground will allow for more “play” in the malleability of the site to provide interesting vantage points, and transfer routes. Seating walls and planters constructed out of natural materials (stone / granite) make these types of elevation changes possible. In addition, placards can be included throughout the playground area illustrating various types of things found in nature.

### Concept 2 (RE: Graphic E - Page 47)

- Circular loop entrance aligned with curb cuts at Simpsonwood UMC
- Development at front of park
  - Pavilion / Playground complex at ridge
  - Located in Pine woods near cell tower – preserves hardwoods
  - Maintenance yard located to be near development
- Total Parking 245 parking spaces
- Vehicular access terminated at Chapel
  - Chapel Event parking occupying the demolished pool / tennis court zone
- Multi-Use Trail
  - ADA Section (<3%) 1.5 mile loop
  - Connector Loop (not ADA) .87 Mile
  - Shared Section 850 LF
- Group Camping Area proximate to restroom and parking at Playground / Pavilion complex.
- Open Space / Meadow
  - Two large open areas w/ shelters
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space
- Dog Park Option
  - One option with parking proximate – utilizes existing meadow.

### Concept 3 (RE: Graphic E - Page 51)

- Existing entrance and Maintenance yard locations maintained
- Development deeper into the site
  - Pavilion / Playground complex shares parking with Chapel
  - Occupies space at largest meadow (remnant)
- Total Parking – 240 parking spaces
- Vehicular access terminated at large parking area
- Multi-use Trail
  - ADA Section (<3%) 1.5 mile loop
- Group Camping Area proximate to restroom and parking at existing great lawn
- Open Space / Meadow
  - Three large open areas w/ shelters
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space



Simpsonwood Park - Existing Natural Trail

- Dog Park Option
  - Three options w/ Parking proximate
  - Utilizes existing meadow / remnant open space.

Following the presentation of the Concepts and additional clarification discussion each Steering Committee Member was given the chance, in turn, to comment on each of the concepts, to voice which concept they preferred and to offer up any additional comments. Following the discussion, a vote was taken to determine if a dog park would be included in the park master plan; the vote did not pass (1 for, 25 against). A second vote was taken to determine which concept plan would be advanced toward the Preliminary Master Plan. Votes were decided by the raising of hands and majority rules. The comments relating to the compilation of the concepts toward the Preliminary Master Plan are as follows:

Concept 3 was the basis for the Preliminary Master Plan with some modifications (Passed 22-3)

Modifications include:

1. Optimize central area – pavilion playground parking,
2. Some parking at the chapel - reinforced turf - minimal
3. Camping zone at maintenance area
4. Some parking at the front
5. Parking at great lawn for trail users
6. Entrance will need to be refined – can't say entrance will be identical, attempt to keep is as similar as possible
7. Great lawn stays
8. Large meadow in cleared zone.
9. One or two structures on the river

\*\* Provide note in project report indicating that barrier / signs at the end of the sanitary sewer easement indicating private property.

### 6.2 Preliminary Master Plans (RE: Graphics H & I - Pages 51 & 53)

During the Concept Meeting several committee members requested more information regarding a Natural Learning Playground; the spatial requirements, etc. For the June 6, 2016 Meeting two Preliminary Master Plans were presented to the Steering Committee. The development of the park plans were the same except for the area at the central core; where the pavilion / playground complex would be located, one plan illustrated a 10,000 square foot playground, the other a much larger (35,000 square foot) Natural Learning Playground. Descriptions of each plans are as follows:

- Entrance relocated to align with curb cut at Simpsonwood UMC per County DOT requirements.

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## Simpsonwood Park

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- Utilizes former exit lane as new entrance lane. New exit, with left turn lane, to be constructed to align with Simpsonwood UMC curb cut.
- Former entrance lane utilized as multi use trail spur connector; allowing for connection from the frontage sidewalk to the multi-use trail loop within the park.
- Deceleration lane provide per County DOT requirements
- Left turn lane into park from Jones Bridge Circle Provided per County DOT requirements. (Potential to utilize existing road shoulder to minimize encroachment into wooded area)
- Park drive utilizes existing alignment to terminate at chapel area.
- DWR access road relocated to edge of meadow area to allow for uninterrupted views of meadow area.
- Development limited at the front of the Park
  - 44 space parking area for immediate access to natural surface trail.
  - New restroom building provided
  - Provides parking area for group camping
- Group Camping provided near cell tower
  - 10 tent sites provided for primitive camping
  - Field located in pine woods near cell tower – preserves hardwoods
  - Amphitheater seating with fire pit for classroom type instruction
  - Proximate to natural trails, boardwalk for educational opportunities
- Open space lawn retained
  - 1 20x20 shelter provided at meadow edge
  - Existing gravel lot retained but improved
  - Pedestrian bridge provided to connect open lawn with camping area by spanning ravine.
- Central Core Development
  - Pavilion / Playground Complex located on demo-ed tennis / pool area; utilizes existing open space.
  - Parking provided for 106 cars.
  - Pavilion utilizes area where court currently resides
  - Restroom building provided proximate to pavilion / playground
  - Access to Multi-use trail
  - ½ acre lawn separates pavilion and playground; unstructured play.

### Playground Option – 10,000 sf

- o Roughly the size of 2 tennis courts
- o Natural toned play equipment to blend into surroundings
- o Equipment may include more contemporary play equipment that encourages more physical movement (slack lines, climbing nets, swings, etc.)
- o Equipment clustered together within a single area

### Playground Option – 35,000 sf Natural Learning Playground

- o Utilizes same mix of playground equipment as 10,000sf option
- o Equipment distributed throughout highly landscaped areas
- o Over time, will “blend” into natural surroundings
- o Encourages interaction with nature
- o Requires additional land disturbance due to size, but offers interesting grading options due to playground equipment being distributed throughout.
- o Requires slightly longer multi-use trail length.
- 49 parking spaces proximate to chapel for event parking (one-way, 45° parking)
- 12 parking spaces (4 HC) to east of chapel (Existing parking removed to provide ADA compliance and better access to HC ramp at chapel)
- Provides fire truck access to chapel via negotiable loops
- Signage and striping to designate access; gated access for DWR and maintenance access.
- Public vehicular access terminates at chapel.
- Restroom building provided
- Access to Multi-use trail
- Multi-use trail
  - ADA compliant (<3.5%) 1.5 mile loop
  - ADA compliant sub loop .75 Mile
  - Located on plan to minimize grading / impact. Will be field located at time of construction to avoid trees, etc.
  - Accessible trail route to one overlook at the river
  - Two river overlooks provided.
- Open Space / Meadow
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space
  - Fine graded to even out slopes
  - Intended to be reseeded with native grasses and wildflowers to increase bio diversity and habitats.
  - Retains some trees from existing parking islands to add interest.
  - Removes existing impervious surfaces.
- Natural Surface Trail
  - Retains majority of existing 2 mile marked loop.
  - Relocates trail in two areas to either add distance between multi-use trail and natural surface trail, or relocates trail out of regulatory buffer at river to allow for the healing of river banks.
  - .2 mile elevated boardwalk structure provided in south eastern sector to provide a more sustainable connection across wet/ low lands. Provides for educational opportunities.

- At time of construction all trails and bridges will be reevaluated in field and adjusted as necessary for sustainability.
- Existing location for Maintenance building retained (building updated, access updated)
- Total parking provided in Preliminary Master Plan – 211 parking spaces
- Sanitary sewer easements / access are to receive appropriate native re-vegetation plantings.

Following the presentation of the Preliminary Master Plan graphics and additional clarification discussion each Steering Committee Member was given the chance, in turn, to comment on each of the Plans. Three committee members were not able to be in attendance, however, their comments were received by email (Full documentation of the question and comment session is located in Appendix H of this document)

After plan clarification questions and committee discussion the Steering Committee members were asked to vote on the following refinements to the master plan; majority rules applied.

1. Which playground was preferred?  
Natural Learning Playground (15 Votes)  
Traditional Smaller Playground (5 Votes) \*\*

*\*\*NOTE: Two votes were submitted via email by Steering Committee members that were not able to attend the meeting.*

2. How many river overlooks are preferred?  
Overlook – (Overlooks are approximately 20' at the river frontage with integral bench for seating)  
2 Overlooks – (11 Votes)  
1 Overlook – (7 Votes)

Based on comments from the Steering Committee and Staff, the Preliminary Master Plan was revised and further developed into the Master Plan for the next meeting (June 30, 2016). The comments relating to the progression of the Preliminary Master Plan toward the Master Plan are as follows:

1. Master Plan will include a Natural Learning Playground
2. Two river overlooks will be included on the plan
3. Parking area near the chapel area is to be moved forward and away from the Revington Subdivision.

A vote was taken to advance the preliminary master plan with the revisions to final master plan level. It was approved unanimously.

### 6.3 Preliminary Master Plan Public Drop-in - June 30, 2016 (RE: Graphic J - Page 55)

The Steering Committee Developed Preliminary Master Plan graphic was on display at the Simpsonwood United Methodist Church gym to the public for review and comment. Revisions requested from the Steering Committee during the Preliminary Master Plan Meeting were incorporated into this graphic. County Staff, Consultants and Steering Committee Members were available to answer questions for the attendees. Comment forms were available for the public to fill out. Documentation of the comments received can be found in Appendix H of this document.

### 6.4 Master Plan, August 4, 2016 (RE: Graphic J- Page 57)

jB+a developed a final, rendered Master Plan graphic which included modifications based on comments received from the Steering Committee at the June 16, 2016 meeting and comments received during the Public Drop-in Meeting on June 30, 2016. Each Steering Committee member was emailed this latest graphic to review prior to the August 4th meeting. Modifications included:

1. *The boardwalk restricted trail in the vicinity of the Bay Star Vine on the natural surface trail flanking the Chattahoochee River.* The intent here is to work out a route through the zone where the Bay Star Vine is growing that will avoid the plants, and then construct a slightly elevated boardwalk with railings through that zone in order to encourage hikers to stay on the trail in that particular area. Final routing of course depends on having qualified individuals note the locations of the plants.
2. *Modifications to the route of both the orange Marked Natural Trail and the western end of the Perimeter Trail Loop paved trail.* The natural surface trail is routed lower on the slope in a continuous descent that will allow a more sustainable earthen trail slope, while the paved trail is shifted towards the east. The orange natural surface trail no longer has two crossings of the paved trail, and the greatest part of the paved trail is shifted to the east side of the ridge. The effect of both modifications is a greater separation between the two trails in that zone.
3. *The western section of the multi-purpose trail (lighter color gray on the plan labeled Perimeter Trail Loop) has been reduced in width to 10' width.* Note the section of multi-purpose trail (darker gray labeled Interior Multi-Use Trail Loop) retains its 12' width. The intersections between the two trail sections have been changed to better facilitate children bicycling on the Interior Multi-Use Trail Loop. With fewer bicycles on the Perimeter Trail Loop, we feel we can reduce that section to 10' width. Both loops maintain their 3.5% slope for superior ADA access.
4. *Note that the area inside of the 1.5 mile Multi-Use Trail Perimeter Loop (Core Area),* includes field, forest, Maintenance Compound, Chapel, Chapel Restroom, Chapel

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## Simpsonwood Park

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Drive and Parking, Pavilion, Pavilion Parking, Pavilion Restroom, Natural Learning Playground, Parking for Natural Learning Playground and 1.5 mile total perimeter Multi-Use Trail, and the portion of service and park drives within that zone. The core area occupies approximately 15% of the park site.

5. *Note that the park area outside of the 1.5 mile Multi-Use Trail including the Great Lawn, 6.9 miles of natural surface trails, Parking and Restroom to serve Great Lawn and natural surface trail users, forest, fields, Existing Lift Station, Existing Cell Tower, River Overlooks, and the portion of the service and park drives within that zone occupies approximately 85% of the park site.*

Each Steering Committee Member was given the chance, in turn, to comment on the revised graphic. One Committee Member was not in attendance but submitted his comments via email. (Full documentation of the comment session is located in Appendix H of this document.)

Following the Steering Committee comments session, a vote to accept the Master Plan as the guiding document for development of Simpsonwood Park was taken. A majority vote passed the graphic for submission to the Recreation Authority. (17 approved 4 opposed, 1 in absentia).

A consolidated costs handout was given to the steering committee which showed a breakout of the costs associated with the total development of the various park elements. A general overview of the breakout of costs was given and the steering committee was then asked to utilize the prioritization exercise to individually rate the priorities in order of preference for development.

Priorities are as follows:

(Elements were voted on and followed majority rules).

NOTE: Base infrastructure for the park was not voted on as these elements were deemed necessary for all other park element construction. The base infrastructure includes: entrance modifications, access drive, maintenance access, frontage sidewalk, utility provisions, site testing, entry signage, natural surface trail access (Parking / restroom facilities), Chapel facilities (parking, restroom).

1. Paved Trail System
2. Meadowland, Natural Surface Trails Remediation, Boardwalk @ the river
3. Group Camping Area
4. Pavilion/ Playground Complex
5. Removal of exotic invasives @ river, Revegetation of Sewer Easements
6. Overlooks @ the River (2 Total)
7. Boardwalk @ wetlands
8. Main Lawn Area / Parking

### 9. Pedestrian Bridge Connecting Camping and Great Lawn

Following the prioritization of park elements, a vote to accept the priorities as listed above and to submit the progression to the Recreation Authority was taken. By unanimous vote the prioritization of park elements was approved for submission to the Recreation Authority

The Steering Committee and community repeatedly expressed interest in having a conservation easement placed on the Simpsonwood Park property. Following the prioritization of park elements the Steering Committee took a vote which requested that the Recreation Authority and Board of Commissioners consider placing Simpsonwood Park under conservation easement. The vote passed unanimously.

#### 6.5 Presentation to Recreation Authority

The Steering Committee Final Master Plan recommendations were presented to the Gwinnett County Recreation Authority on August 11, 2016. Several Steering Committee members were in attendance. The Recreation Authority voted unanimously to accept the master plan for presentation to the Board of Commissioners.

In addition, a motion for the Conservation Easement process for Simpsonwood Park to commence was made and seconded and would be presented to the Board of Commissioners for additional consideration.

#### 6.6 Program Elements

##### Vehicular Circulation and Parking

*Note: The park entrance and entry drive are to be adjusted as noted in the descriptions below. The existing paved parking areas near the Chattahoochee River are to be removed and the land returned to nature as meadowland (RE: Meadowland). The groupings of trees from the former parking islands are to be protected and retained. The existing paved parking area near the Chapel will also be demolished and replanted with native species that will add to the aesthetic of the Chapel rental (weddings, etc.); the loop drive is to remain.*

The new park entrance drive will utilize the existing Simpsonwood Park exit drive requiring a new park exit to be constructed that will align with the drive entrance at Simpsonwood United Methodist Church on the opposite side of Jones Bridge Circle. The new exit from the park will consist of two (2) lanes, a left turn lane and a through or right turn lane. A deceleration lane and left turn lane on Jones Bridge Circle will need to be constructed to meet all GDOT requirements and will be sited to take into consideration sight distances. A median separating ingress and egress and striped pedestrian crosswalks at the entrance will be provided.

The new entrance drive will then tie into the existing park drive. Much of the existing drive is narrow in width with an inadequate subbase. The park drive will need to be reconstructed to accommodate not only daily two way directional traffic but larger / heavier Department

of Water Resources (DWR) maintenance trucks and emergency vehicles. The width of the park drive from the entrance to the "Limited Access Gate", just west of the Chapel, is to be 24' with a surface profile of heavy duty vehicular grade asphalt. Vehicular access beyond this point is limited to DWR and park maintenance vehicles. This limited access road has been relocated to the edge of the "Meadowland" as noted on the Final Master Plan Graphic. The width of the paved asphalt drive drops to the minimum DWR requirement of 15' from the access gate to the sewer easement corridor along the river at which point the existing gravel access road is retained.

The surface profile of the vehicular drive lanes within the parking areas will be vehicular grade asphalt. Parking area bays are to be pervious pavement. A total of 211 parking spaces are provided within the park. Each parking space is to be provided with a concrete wheel stop. Forty-four (44) parking spaces are provided at the front of the park to provide immediate access to the natural surface trail system and parking for the great lawn.

Thirty- eight (38) parking spaces are provided on the northern side of the entrance drive in the central core of the park to provide convenient parking for the chapel rental. This parking area was sited to allow for significant buffering between the parking area and the Remington Subdivision to the north and to minimize the disturbance of the large existing hardwood trees between the chapel drive and the parking area. This parking area is sited within a pine stand.

The bulk of the parking is located south of the park drive in the central core of the park. One hundred seventeen (117) parking spaces are provided within this lower central core parking area. The parking is configured to minimize the boxiness of the parking area, take advantage of the existing clearing / former built space, and allow for a significantly wide landscaped median.

Twelve (12) parking spaces, including four (4) accessible parking spaces, are located along the western arm of the loop drive at the chapel. The eastern arm of the loop is to be modified to accommodate fire access for the chapel. Fire access is to be a 60 "Y" configuration (per International Fire Code). The entry road is to be widened to 20' for 60 linear feet then taper back to the existing width of the loop road. Backing radii of 26' are to be provided at the intersection of the main park drive and the chapel loop drive.

The gravel lot at the great lawn is to remain and be improved. The parking area should be fine graded to minimize standing water and improve drainage. The shape of the parking area is to remain roughly the same although edges should be more clearly defined and additional GAB should be spread.

### Group Camping Area

Located within an existing pine stand, proximate to the existing cell tower, in the eastern sector of the park site, a group camping area will provide ten (10) tent sites for primitive

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## Simpsonwood Park

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camping type activities only. This area is intended to be utilized by organized, institutional, adult monitored, groups such as The Boy Scouts and church groups; it is not intended to be utilized for individual family camping. The sites are to be tucked into the existing woodland and laid out along the existing contours to minimize disturbance of the forest. The tent pads are to be graded flat and held up with granite faced retaining wall if necessary.

A single common fire circle with amphitheater type seating is to be situated within the camping area to over look the valley to the southeast. The amphitheater area will consist of terraced mulched seating walls and utilized for group gatherings, outdoor classroom participation and performance type activities. Low granite faced walls will retain the soil need to accommodated the terracing.

A natural surface path (RE: Natural Surface Trail Network -page. 30) intended for pedestrian only use connects tent sites to each other, to the fire circle amphitheater and to the front parking area and restroom building.

### Great Lawn

The existing great lawn is to remain as it is and be maintained as an open lawn. This space is intended to be used for unstructured play, kite flying, Festivals, concerts, Frisbee, sunbathing and picnics. This space is to be irrigated. A single shelter is shown located at the northwestern corner of the open lawn.

### Shelters

One (1) 20'x20' shelter is to be sited within Simpsonwood Park at the edge of the existing "Great Lawn". The shelters are available on a first come first served basis. The shelter will provide a covered picnic area with picnic table. Additionally, the structure provides shelter for trail / park users in the event of inclement weather. No electricity or security lighting is provided in the shelter.

### Elevated Pedestrian Bridge

A 6' wide elevated / suspension type pedestrian bridge is planned for the ravine area east of the great lawn. The bridge is intended to provide a connection between the group camping area and the great lawn; to allow for a more direct connection. The bridge is elevated at least 10' above the marked natural surface trail that passes below. The design of the bridge should blend with its surroundings and provide visual interest rather than detracting from it.

### Rental Pavilion

A large standard Open Space Park rental pavilion will be located per the Master Plan at the Pavilion Playground Complex area in the central core of the park. The footprint for the pavilion is the same as the design for the large pavilion at Little Mulberry Park. A gathering plaza comprised of concrete pavers on structural soils is associated with the pavilion and

will provide an expansion area for larger gatherings. The pavilion will contain picnic tables, outdoor grills and security lighting. It is to be accessible from the parking lot. The pavilion will be available for reservation through the County, or on a first come first served basis. The pavilion has direct access to the half-acre open lawn, 35,000sf natural learning playground, and ADA compliant multiuse trail.

### Natural Learning Playground

Centrally located within the core of the park as part of a pavilion playground complex is a 35,000sf natural learning playground. This type of playground is intended to provide a play area within nature and to help promote the importance of the natural environment in the daily experience of children through the design. Rather than being grouped together in a single play area, the play equipment is to be distributed throughout highly landscaped areas so that over time the playground will “blend” into the natural surroundings. The square footage required by the playground equipment would typically fit within a 10,000sf play area, however the extra square footage of the natural learning playground will allow for more “play” in the malleability of the site to provide interesting vantage points, and transfer routes. Seating walls and planters constructed out of natural materials (stone / granite) make these types of elevation changes possible. In addition, placards can be included throughout the playground area illustrating various types of things found in nature.

The playground is to be configured to accommodate children of varying ages and abilities. Play equipment will be prefabricated in natural tonal colors to include: swings, free standing play structures, and compound structures, all suitable for a variety of play – separated into zones to accommodate the various ages. ADA compliant transfer routes to access a representative portion of the compound structures should be provided, as well as 2" thick rubber particle mats under wear zones such as swings, slides and any other concentrated wear zone.

A 4' high black vinyl fence on the north side of the playground provides a safety barrier between the playground and the parking area. The playground surface is engineered wood chip mulch with sub-drainage per departmental standards.

### Open Lawn Area

A .5 acre lawn area is to be centrally located; connecting the Pavilion / Playground complex. This space is intended to be used for unstructured play. The lawn will follow a structural soils profile, including: sand, 89 stone, and 57 stone, the intent is to provide a structural subsurface that will allow for deep sod root growth without compaction. This open space area will be irrigated and maintained as an open lawn.

### Restroom Buildings

Three (3) medium Gwinnett County restroom buildings will be provided within Simpsonwood Park. One restroom building will be located at the front of the park at the southern end of the parking area (The existing restroom building will be demolished and replaced). A second

restroom building will be located near the pavilion / playground complex in the central core of the park. A third restroom building will be located near the existing chapel off the parking lot. Each 580 sf (approximate) restroom will provide three commodes / urinals per sex, sink and diaper changing station. The footprint includes a small supply closet incorporated into the footprint with an access door between the men's and women's restrooms. Facilities are to be sited so that doors face the most active areas of the park for safety. A freeze resistant drinking fountain with doggie dish is to be sited on a concrete pad at each of these restroom facilities.

### **Pedestrian Access to Park**

Pedestrian access is to be provided along Jones Bridge Circle in the form of a 6' wide concrete sidewalk. The existing concrete walkway will be removed to accommodate the deceleration lane. GDOT standard painted crosswalks, ADA ramps and a 'safe haven' median at the park ingress and egress will allow for safer pedestrian crossing at the entrance of the park.

A 12' wide paved asphalt spur trail will utilize the former park entrance drive and will connect the frontage sidewalk to the Interior Multi-Use trail as shown on the Master Plan.

### **Directional Kiosks**

Two (2) information kiosks are located within the park. One kiosk is to be located in the vicinity of the restroom building at the front parking area. The other is to be located between the pavilion and the restroom building in the core of the park at the pavilion / playground complex. Each kiosk should include park information and provide a site map indicating "You are here" graphics for user orientation. Kiosks should be roofed structures to provide additional shelter during inclement weather. Park maps should be UV protected.

### **Trails**

#### **Multi-use Trail System**

The master plan calls for a paved asphalt multi-use trail within the interior of the park to provide an accessible route for all users. The multi-use trail encompasses the majority of the development within the park; linking most of the park elements. The entire perimeter paved trail system measures approximately 1.5 miles in length but the multi-use trail network is broken down into smaller loops for additional trail use options; spur trails connect these loops to the individual activity areas. The multi-use trail winds throughout the park allowing for a variety of park experiences and views. The multi-use trail is completely separated from the marked natural surface trail to provide a better "Nature" experience for those users. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic (excluding maintenance vehicles) are primarily separated, where uses do intersect striped crosswalks (3) and signage are provided.

Construction practices are to minimize the width of the corridor necessary to construct the trail. Trail routes are to be staked in the field to avoid large trees and steep slopes, and to optimize scenic quality. Where tree root systems cannot be avoided, root bridging practices

are to be utilized to minimize impact on the tree. At the completion of the trail construction, the trail verges are to be healed back in by planting them with appropriate native species; shrubs, groundcovers and wildflowers.

### **Interior Multi-use Trail Loop**

The interior Multi-use Trail is a 12' wide, paved asphalt trail approximately 1 mile in length. Along the interior loop the grades average less than 3.5%. Beginning at the parking area east of the chapel the trail meanders through an early-emergent forest type consisting of medium growth evergreen trees and young deciduous trees, to the reclaimed meadow area. Set at the base of the slope the intent is for the trail to "disappear" into the meadow so that a park user from higher and lower vantage points will not be able to see the pavement of the trail through the meadow / wildflower grasses. The trail then crosses the limited access road at a marked crosswalk and continues along the contours through a transitional forest type consisting of medium growth, deciduous hardwoods, across the sewer easement (RE: Sanitary Sewer Revegetation) toward the natural learning playground area. Here it turns north toward the park entry drive and then turns east toward the gravel parking area at the great lawn, crossing the park entry drive at this point via marked crosswalk to close back on itself at the parking area east of the chapel.

### **Perimeter Trail System**

The Perimeter Trail System is comprised of a section of the 12' Interior Multi-Use Trail (approximately .75 miles) and a 10' wide section that extends the trail experience deeper into the park. The Perimeter Trail System is completely ADA compliant with grades not exceeding 3.5% with the majority of the trail being between 2 and 3% grade. The 10' wide perimeter trail section intersects with the Interior Trail at the meadowland just west of the chapel. The perimeter trail meanders through the meadow area down toward the river, along regraded routes that were formerly park drives, parking areas, or building pads. The path then continues up hill toward the limited access drive where an accessible spur trail ties into the drive. (This spur trail provides an accessible route from the perimeter trail to the river overlook via the limited access drive.) After crossing the limited access drive just west of the maintenance building complex, the perimeter trail continues through transitional forest along the contours; maintaining accessibility to again tie into the 12' wide Interior Multi-use Trail loop on the southern side of the entrance drive just south of the chapel.

Where the Perimeter Trail System and the Interior Trail Loop connect, the intersections are to be kept at short radius curves so as to discourage cyclists from veering off the wider interior loop.

### **Natural Surface Trail Network**

#### **Marked Natural Surface Trail**

The center line of the 2.3 mile Marked Natural Surface Trail will be field located and flagged by a County approved professional trail designer and builder. All attempts have been made within this master planning process to utilize as much of the existing marked natural surface

trail as possible to minimize grading and disturbance to the site while providing positive user experiences and sustainability. At the time of development the natural surface trail loop as shown on the master plan should be revisited on site to ascertain trail stability and adjust the trail as necessary.

The .3 mile section of the Marked Natural Surface Trail (Riverside Path) nearest the river is to be located outside of the 25' undisturbed buffer. Vegetation is to be thinned (or removed in the case of invasive plant materials such as Chinese Privet) so that a view from the path to the river can be maintained in an effort to keep users from straying off the path to get a view of the river.

The typical tread way of the natural surface trail system will be graded mineral soil, pitched to drain with high and low points to assure that whenever water accumulates on the trail it will shed to the down slope side before the water joins with drainage pattern parallel to the trail. The trail will should be cleared of hazards, such as dead or leaning trees, which should be cut down and left in full contact with the ground to hasten decay. Small hanging branches should be chipped and spread as mulch. Roots, trunks and other trail debris may be placed as barricades to prevent users from straying too far off the intended path.

### Unmarked Trail Network - Remediation

There are numerous natural surface "social" trails which have been cut through the site. A good portion of these trails are eroded, narrow, overgrown with vegetation, and have numerous intersections which makes this trail "network" confusing. The soft surface trail network (4.66 miles) shown on the master plan represents those existing trails that created the simplest trail circuit. At the time of development these trails should be revisited on site to ascertain trail stability and adjusted, upgraded or abandoned as necessary. The unmarked trail network should follow the typical tread way as described for "Marked Natural Surface Trail" within this document.

### Pedestrian bridges (along trails)

Where a trail crosses the natural drainage channels, a pedestrian bridge with handrail is to be placed. The style of bridge should blend with the surrounding environment yet meet all the County standards pertaining to pedestrian bridges.

### Boardwalk

Elevated boardwalk structures are to be located in two places within Simpsonwood Park. Each sector of board walk is to be constructed utilizing helical piles and pressure treated substructure and decking. A Gwinnett County standard handrail, with wire mesh barrier, is to be installed along each side of the length of each boardwalk.

A 10' wide raised boardwalk section approximately 1050 feet in length is to be located at the low / wetlands in the southeastern sector of the park site near the group camping. This

section of boardwalk is intended to provide a more sustainable trail connection across these low lands and offer a perch for educational opportunities. This boardwalk is to be located in the field to minimize disturbance of this delicate environment. Interpretive signage placards should be included in this area.

A 6' wide raised boardwalk section approximately 425 feet in length is to be located along the riverside path near the accessible river overlook. This section of boardwalk is intended to provide protection for a known delicate / rare species (Bay Star Vine). Prior to the construction of this boardwalk the plant should be identified and marked by a knowledgeable plantsman so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure its protection.

### River Overlook

Two (2) overlooks are planned for Simpsonwood Park. The overlooks are to be constructed utilizing heavy timber and helical piles with poured pile cap. Each overlook will be an elevated structure with incorporated seat benches. A standard Gwinnett County handrail is to be provided. Areas near the overlooks are to be cleared of invasive plant materials and replanted with native riparian plantings.

### Deceleration Lanes

A deceleration lane will be located at the park entrance. The deceleration lane is to follow all guidelines and regulations set forth by the Georgia Department of Transportation and all County Regulations.

### Site Lighting

The park entrance drives, parking lots, rental pavilion, restroom and playground will be the only elements illuminated in the park. The lights will be operated to turn off and on per a timer system. Lights are to be low cut-off to prevent light spill and glare. This system will allow visitors in the park from dawn until dusk.

### Retaining Walls

All seating and retaining walls are to be faced and capped with granite stone

### Park Signage

A single Gwinnett County Park entrance sign will be provided at the entrance. The sign should be visible to motorists but not encroach upon sight lines. Internal directional, vehicular and posted park rules, trail signs and markers will also be per County Standard.

Trail directional signs will be placed at intersections of all trails. Trail mileage signs will be placed along stretches of trails at .25 mile intervals. A trail route and mileage map should be included on a kiosk sign (RE: Kiosk) to explain the trail routes (shown in different color alignments), lengths and ability levels.

### Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signage should be included along all trails, streams, wildlife habitats, and other points of interest which interpret natural, cultural and historic features or stories for park visitors. Interpretive signage may also interpret management activities within the park such as instruction on the removal of invasive species, the reforestation of slopes, or the reintroduction of native species for example.

### Irrigation

Open lawn areas, and common areas are to be irrigated. Use economical large diameter turn irrigation heads. All controller heads, piping, irrigation emitters and supporting elements will be per Gwinnett County Standards.

### Landscape Management

Landscape management will consist of regular mowing of open turf areas. Watering newly planted materials until they are established and the occasional removal /eradication of invasive species. Due to the “natural” character of a park, native plant species are recommended for planting associated with park development. Native plantings will help new development / disturbed areas blend with the undeveloped areas of the park.

### Trail Verges / Establishment of ground flora

At the completion of the trail construction, the trail verges are to be healed back in by planting them with appropriate native species; shrubs, groundcovers and wildflowers. While much of the site is in various types and ages of forest the native ground flora has not yet been established. The intent through the replanting of the trail verges is to not only heal the trail into the site, minimize erosion but also to introduce many of the native wildflowers, and ground covers that are missing from the site.

### Meadow Management

A large open meadow area is provided within this master plan. The meadow area is a result of the removal of former parking and built sites. The larger trees that existed within the parking islands should be protected and retained for added interest. The meadow area should be graded for more even terrain and easier maintenance. The meadow field is to be seeded with native wildflowers and native grasses indigenous to the Georgia Piedmont. Maintenance requirements will be kept to a minimum, requiring mowing 1-2 times per year, with occasional hand removal of invasive species that may root. Meadow areas are intended to be used as wildlife habitat and should include informational placards. Potential topics include native flora, fauna, history, maintenance practices, etc.

### Remediation of Riparian Plantings

The Chattahoochee riverfront within Simpsonwood Park is overgrown with dense exotic invasive plants, including Chinese privet. As part of the relocation of the riverside path outside of the 25' buffer and in an effort to protect the river banks the views from the path should be opened up and cleared of overgrown vegetation to keep people from veering off the path. Underbrush and invasives should be removed and the river front area is to be replanted with appropriate native riparian species.

### Sanitary Sewer Revegetation

The Sanitary Sewer easements are to be replanted along the length of the easement with low growing native species such as ferns. No trees or large shrubs are to be planted within these easements.

### Forest Management

Forest management will consist of pruning or removing trees that obstruct trails, roadways and parking lots; threaten buildings and other structures' or interfere with any type of circulation activity. Diseased trees should be monitored and removed if the spread of disease cannot be controlled. Efforts to preserve healthy trees will be a high priority in all areas, as well as the preservation and restoration of the understory woodland shrub layer. Where possible invasive species such as kudzu and privet should be managed with eradication and replaced with appropriate native species.

### Reforestation

Areas designated for reforestation (slope 3:1 or greater) should be replanted with a combination of small pines and successional hardwoods such as; red maple, sweet gum, tulip poplar, and understory trees such as red bud. Trees are to be planted in mass and mulched as large beds, not as individual trees.

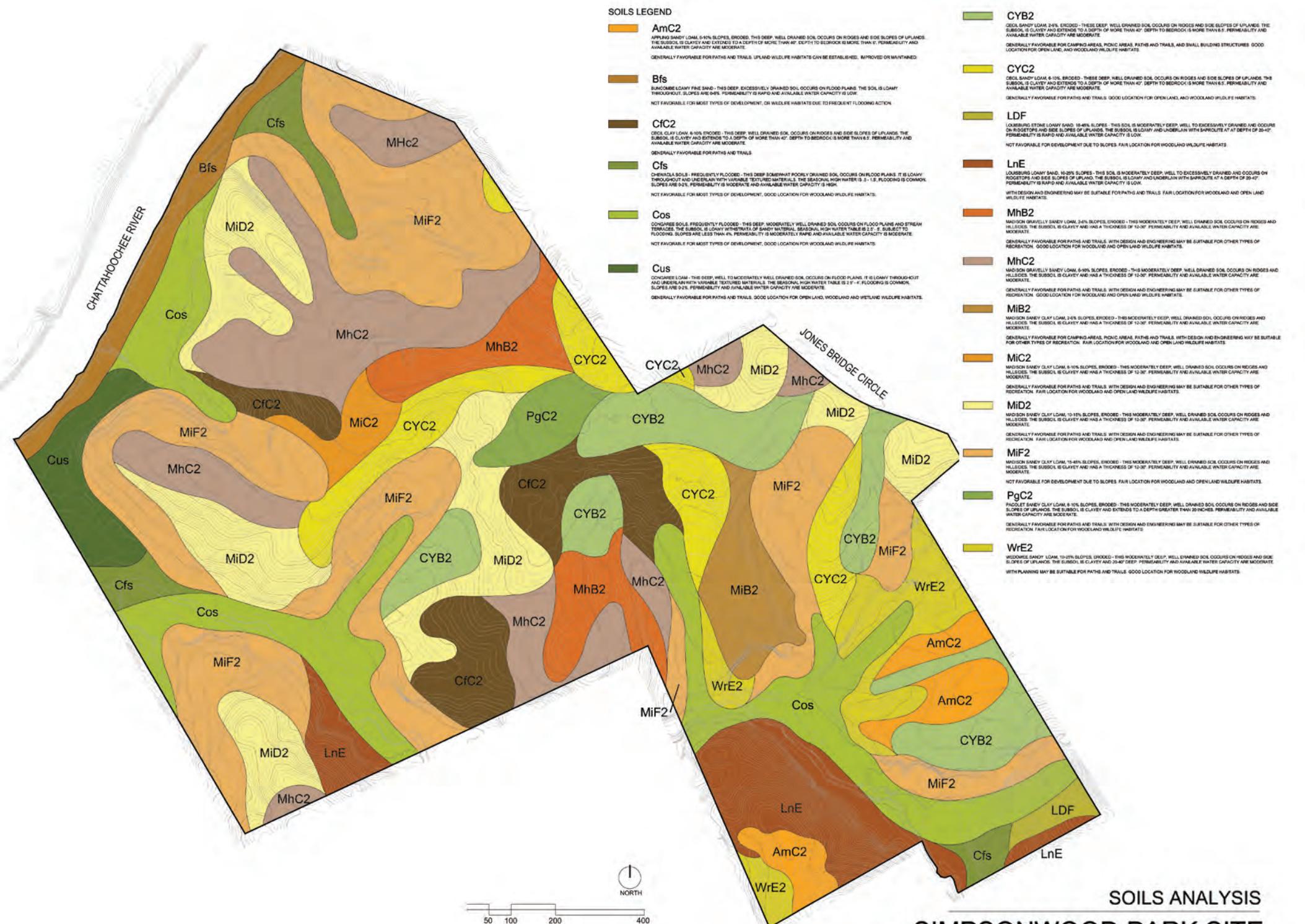
### Pervious / Impervious Surfaces

At the time of acquisition, impervious surfaces covered approximately 371,445 square feet (8.52 acres) of Simpsonwood Park. Through the entire master planning process the goal has been to minimize impervious surfaces and return as much of the park back to nature. Each of the concepts developed and presented significantly reduced the impervious surfaces. As the master plan was further developed into the preliminary master plan and the final master plan, the goal to provide a diverse selection of recreational activities for a variety of users while minimizing impervious surfaces was at the forefront of the design. The Final Master Plan graphic illustrates a reduction of impervious surfaces of nearly 10% from what was existing at the time of acquisition. The vast majority of the impervious surface is contained within the core of the park as requested by the Steering Committee.

**SECTION GRAPHICS****7.0**

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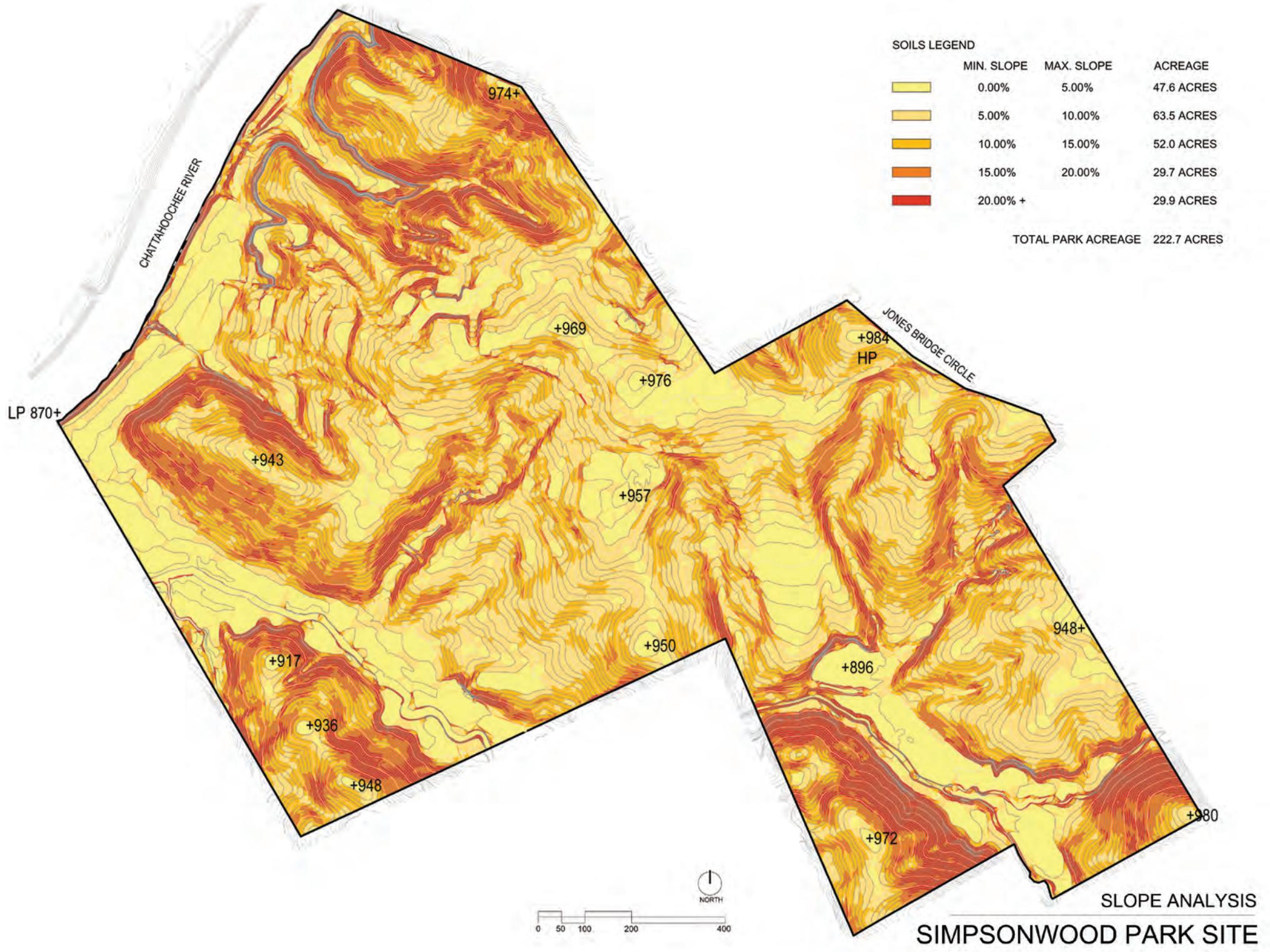




SOILS ANALYSIS  
**SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE**

March 10, 2016 37

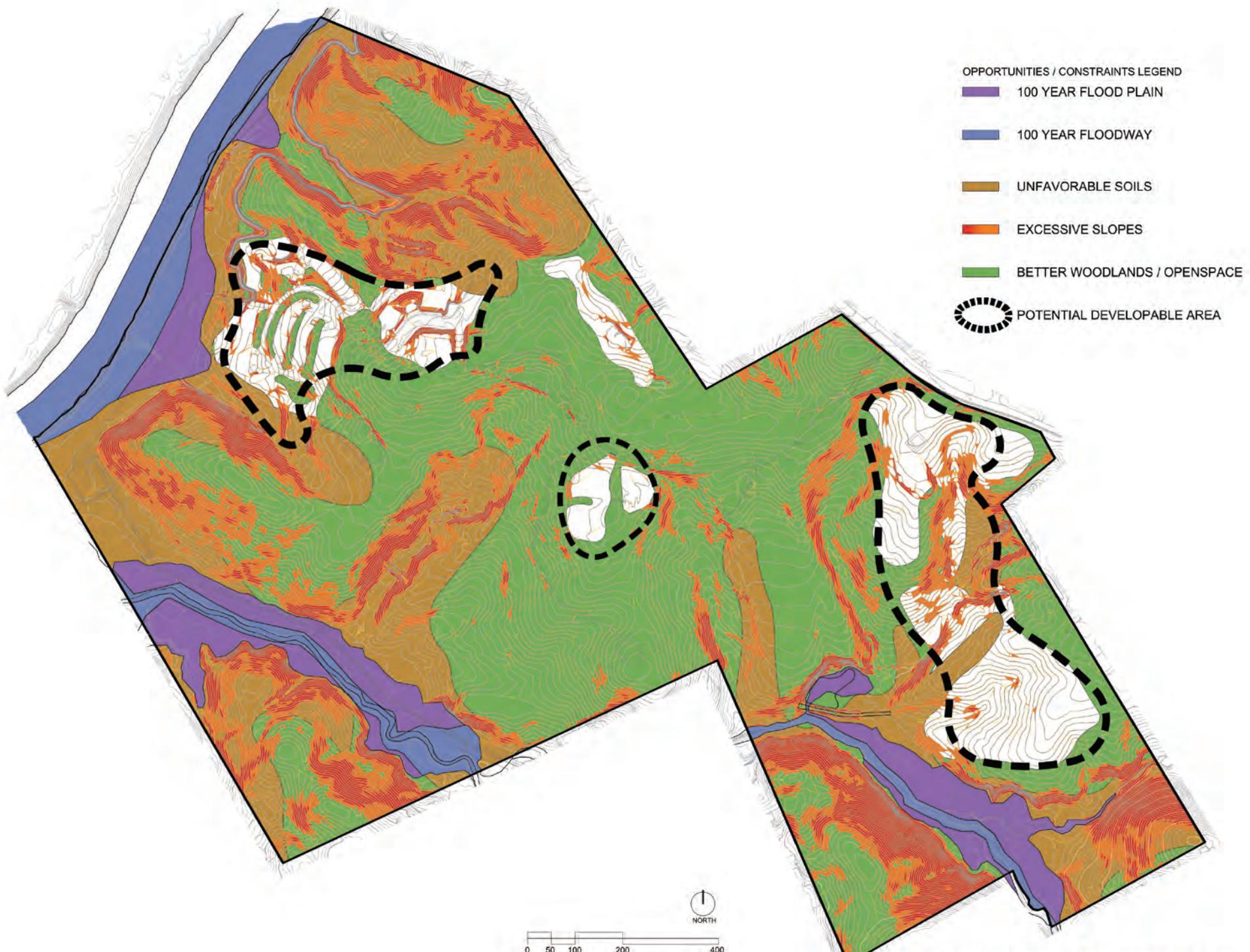




















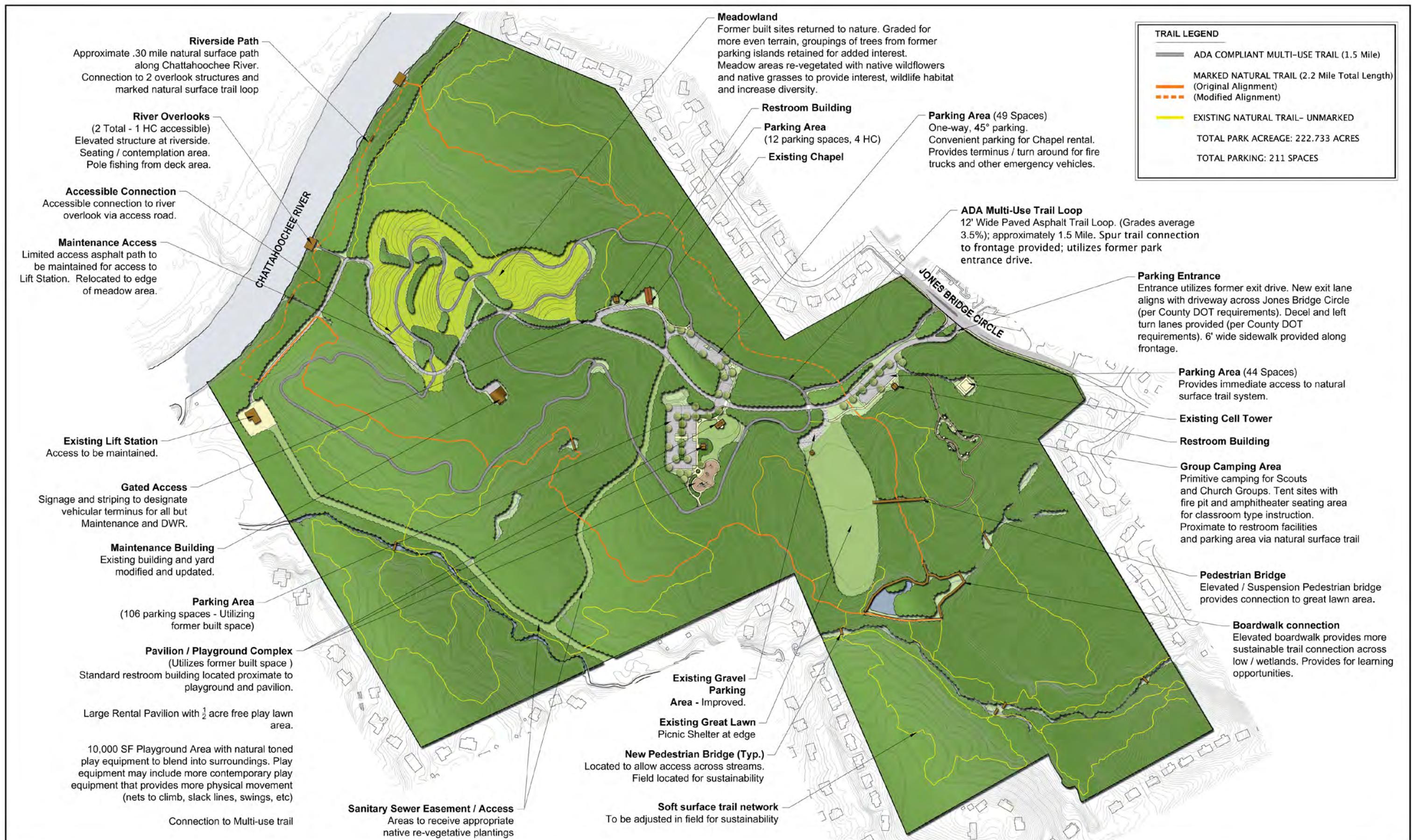
**CONCEPT 2**  
**SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE**  
April 28, 2016





**CONCEPT 3**  
**SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE**





Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



0 100 200 400 800



PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

SIMPSONWOOD PARK

JUNE 16, 2016





Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



0 100 200 400 800



PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN  
SIMPSONWOOD PARK  
JUNE 16, 2016





Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

SIMPSONWOOD PARK

JUNE 30, 2016

0 100 200 400 800







Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



MASTER PLAN

SIMPSONWOOD PARK  
AUGUST 4, 2016

0 100 200 400 800





**SECTION APPENDICES**  
**8.0**

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Appendix D: 1938 Simpsonwood Park Aerial	page 85
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Appendix H: Meeting Minutes	page 101
Appendix I: Hydrological Assessment Report	(Supplemental Report)
Appendix J: Cultural Resources Investigation Report	(Supplemental Report)
Appendix K: Structural Assessment Report	(Supplemental Report)



## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A: Cost Estimate**

Refer to the attached itemized Master Plan level Spreadsheet





**FINAL COST ESTIMATE FOR  
 SIMPSONWOOD PARK  
 GWINNETT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
 COMMUNITY SERVICES**

August 4, 2016

<b>SIMPSONWOOD PARK</b>					
<b>ENTRANCE / ENTRANCE DRIVE</b>	<b># OF UNITS</b>	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>COST/UNIT</b>	<b>ITEM TOTAL</b>	
<b>SITE PREPARATION</b>					
TREE PROTECTION	8,500	LF	\$4.00	\$34,000.00	
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	8,500	LF	\$3.50	\$29,750.00	
VEGETATIVE CLEAR & GRUB	0.5	AC	\$700.00	\$350.00	
TOPSOIL REMOVAL, STOCKPILE, RELAY	250	CY	\$4.00	\$1,000.00	
GRADING	883	CY	\$10.00	\$8,830.00	
STAKING	2	AC	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00	
DEMOLITION (EX. ROAD PAVEMENTS, C&G, SIGNS)	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
<b>ROADWAY</b>					
DECELERATION LANE (Pavement, grading/ drainage, structures, traffic control, etc)	1	LS	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	
ROADWAY - ASPHALT- HEAVY DUTY (Includes base)	8,600	SY	\$35.00	\$301,000.00	
ROADWAY - STRIPING	1	LS	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
ROADWAY - LIGHTING	20	EA	\$9,000.00	\$180,000.00	
ROADWAY - GRAVEL (Access @ floodplain)	232	CY	\$65.00	\$15,080.00	
GRANITE FACED RETAINING WALL	230	LF	\$250.00	\$57,500.00	
STANDARD CROSSWALK (PAINTED)	5	EA	\$800.00	\$4,000.00	
CONCRETE CURB / GUTTER	700	LF	\$12.50	\$8,750.00	
LIMITED ACCESS GATE (AUTOMATIC)	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
SIGNAGE	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
LANDSCAPE - ENTRANCE	1	LS	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	
6' WIDE CONCRETE SIDEWALK (Frontage)	5,600	SF	\$4.50	\$25,200.00	
6' WIDE CONCRETE SIDEWALK - 2" GAB	33	CY	\$65.00	\$2,145.00	
MAINTENANCE BUILDING - MODIFICATIONS	1	ALLOWANCE	\$65,000.00	\$65,000.00	
<b>UTILITIES</b>					
SANITARY SEWER (Piping, Manholes, Cleanouts, Connect, Testing)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	
STORM WATER MANAGEMENT (Piping, Structures, Connect, Stone, Geotextile, etc)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00	
WATER SERVICE	1	ALLOWANCE	\$65,000.00	\$65,000.00	
ELECTRICAL SERVICE - SITE ELECTRICAL & FIBER OPTIC SERVICE	1	ALLOWANCE	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	
IRRIGATION (ENTRANCE)	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
<b>ENTRANCE / ENTRY DRIVE SUBTOTAL</b>					<b>\$1,098,605.00</b>
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total)					\$109,860.50
Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%)					\$145,015.86
Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%)					\$135,348.14
<b>ENTRANCE / ENTRY DRIVE TOTAL</b>					<b>\$1,488,829.50</b>
<b>RESTROOM / ENTRY PARKING - Natural Surface Trail Access</b>	<b># OF UNITS</b>	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>COST/UNIT</b>	<b>ITEM TOTAL</b>	
TREE PROTECTION	450	LF	\$4.00	\$1,800.00	
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	500	LF	\$3.50	\$1,750.00	
VEGETATIVE CLEAR & GRUB	0.6	AC	\$700.00	\$420.00	
GRADING	210	CY	\$10.00	\$2,100.00	
STAKING	0.6	AC	\$2,000.00	\$1,200.00	
ROADWAY / PARKING ASPHALT-STANDARD (Includes base)	750	SY	\$28.00	\$21,000.00	
PARKING - PERVIOUS ASPHALT	810	SY	\$14.00	\$11,340.00	

PARKING STORM WATER MANAGEMENT (Piping, Structures, Connect, Stone, Geotextile, etc)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$28,000.00	\$28,000.00
ROADWAY / PARKING STRIPING	1	LS	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
ROADWAY/ PARKING LIGHTING	3	EA	\$9,000.00	\$27,000.00
CONCRETE WHEEL STOPS	44	EA	\$300.00	\$13,200.00
6' CONCRETE SIDEWALK	3,500	SF	\$4.50	\$15,750.00
6' CONCRETE SIDEWALK - 2" GAB	20	CY	\$65.00	\$1,300.00
RESTROOM BUILDING (Includes Slab)	1	LS	\$130,000.00	\$130,000.00
LANDSCAPE - (Parking Islands and Median)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
<b>AMENITIES</b>				
WATER FOUNTAIN (FREEZE RESISTANT)	1	EA	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR WATER FOUNTAIN (5X5)	25	SF	\$4.50	\$112.50
TRASH RECEPTACLES	1	EA	\$450.00	\$450.00
BIKE RACKS	1	EA	\$350.00	\$350.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR BIKE RACK	50	SF	\$4.50	\$225.00
<b>RESTROOM / ENTRY PARKING SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$265,697.50</b>
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total) <span style="float: right;">\$26,569.75</span> Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%) <span style="float: right;">\$35,072.07</span> Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%) <span style="float: right;">\$32,733.93</span>				
<b>RESTROOM / ENTRY PARKING TOTAL</b>				<b>\$360,073.25</b>
<b>MAIN LAWN / PARKING</b>				
TREE PROTECTION	112	LF	\$4.00	\$448.00
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	312	LF	\$3.50	\$1,092.00
GRADING	44	CY	\$10.00	\$440.00
PARKING - GRAVEL (Improved)	185	CY	\$65.00	\$12,025.00
PARKING STORM WATER MANAGEMENT (Piping, Structures, Connect, Stone, Geotextile, etc)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$8,200.00	\$8,200.00
COVERED SHELTER - 20' (Includes slab)	1	LS	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
WOOD FENCING (Between Gravel lot and lawn)	323	LF	\$15.00	\$4,845.00
<b>AMENITIES</b>				
TRASH RECEPTACLES	1	EA	\$450.00	\$450.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR TRASH RECEPTACLE (5X5)	25	SF	\$4.50	\$112.50
BIKE RACKS	1	EA	\$350.00	\$350.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR BIKE RACK	50	SF	\$4.50	\$225.00
IRRIGATION	1	LS	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
GRILL (Community W/ Tree Grate)	1	EA	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
HOT COAL BIN	1	EA	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR GRILL	100	SF	\$4.50	\$450.00
<b>MAIN LAWN / PARKING SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$91,137.50</b>
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total) <span style="float: right;">\$9,113.75</span> Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%) <span style="float: right;">\$12,030.15</span> Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%) <span style="float: right;">\$11,228.14</span>				
<b>MAIN LAWN / PARKING TOTAL</b>				<b>\$123,509.54</b>
<b>CAMPING AREA</b>				
TREE PROTECTION	1,000	LF	\$4.00	\$4,000.00
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	1,000	LF	\$3.50	\$3,500.00
SELECTIVE CLEARING	0.4	AC	\$1,000.00	\$400.00
GRADING	25	CY	\$10.00	\$250.00
STAKING	0.4	AC	\$2,000.00	\$800.00
10X10 TENT GRADED TENT PAD	100	SF	\$4.00	\$400.00
GRANITE FACED RETAINING WALL (S)	250	LF	\$250.00	\$62,500.00
CONSTRUCTED FIRE PIT - STONE	1	LS	\$800.00	\$800.00

6' WIDE - NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL (4" SHREDDED HARDWOOD MULCH)	5,500	SF	\$1.75	\$9,625.00
6' WIDE - NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL (4" GAB)	65	CY	\$65.00	\$4,225.00
<b>CAMPING AREA SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>\$86,500.00</b>	
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total)			\$8,650.00	
Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%)			\$11,418.00	
Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%)			\$10,656.80	
<b>CAMPING AREA TOTAL</b>			<b>\$117,224.80</b>	
<b>PAVILION / NATURAL LEARNING PLAYGROUND</b>	<b># OF UNITS</b>	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>COST/UNIT</b>	<b>ITEM TOTAL</b>
TREE PROTECTION	1,700	LF	\$4.00	\$6,800.00
VEGETATIVE CLEAR & GRUB	3.0	AC	\$700.00	\$2,100.00
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	1,700	LF	\$3.50	\$5,950.00
GRADING	2,063	CY	\$10.00	\$20,630.00
STAKING	3.0	AC	\$2,500.00	\$7,500.00
ROADWAY / PARKING ASPHALT-STANDARD (Includes base)	2,300	SY	\$28.00	\$64,400.00
PARKING - PERVERIOUS ASPHALT	2,335	SY	\$14.00	\$32,690.00
PARKING STORM WATER MANAGEMENT (Piping, Structures, Connect, Stone, Geotextile, etc)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
ROADWAY / PARKING STRIPING	1	LS	\$3,200.00	\$3,200.00
ROADWAY/ PARKING LIGHTING	9	EA	\$9,000.00	\$81,000.00
CONCRETE WHEEL STOPS	117	EA	\$300.00	\$35,100.00
6' CONCRETE SIDEWALK	6,700	SF	\$4.50	\$30,150.00
6' CONCRETE SIDEWALK - 2" GAB	40	CY	\$65.00	\$2,600.00
RESTROOM BUILDING (Includes Slab)	1	LS	\$130,000.00	\$130,000.00
LARGE PICNIC PAVILION - Includes Slab (STD. COUNTY OPEN SPACE PAVILION)	1	LS	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
PLAYGROUND AREA (10,000 SF)				
PLAY STRUCTURES	1	LS	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
ENGINEERED WOOD CHIP MULCH -12" DEPTH	10,000	SF	\$7.50	\$75,000.00
SUBSURFACE DRAINAGE (Playground Area)	1	LS	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00
GRANITE FACED SEATING WALL ( at Playground area)	300	LF	\$250.00	\$75,000.00
CONCRETE WALKWAYS AND GATHERING SPACE	5,800	SF	\$4.50	\$26,100.00
CONCRETE WALKWAYS AND GATHERING SPACE - 2" GAB	35	CY	\$65.00	\$2,275.00
4' HIGH BLACK VINYL COATED CHAIN LINK FENCING	200	LF	\$25.00	\$5,000.00
LANDSCAPE (Playground Surrounds)	1	LS	\$65,000.00	\$65,000.00
AMENITIES				
TRASH RECEPTACLES	3	EA	\$450.00	\$1,350.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR TRASH RECEPTACLE	75	SF	\$4.50	\$337.50
PICNIC TABLES @ PAVILION	12	EA	\$1,500.00	\$18,000.00
BIKE RACKS	2	EA	\$350.00	\$700.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR BIKE RACK	50	SF	\$4.50	\$225.00
GRILLS (Community w/ Tree Grate)	2	EA	\$1,500.00	\$3,000.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR GRILL	200	SF	\$4.50	\$900.00
HOT COAL BIN (1 per 2 grills)	1	EA	\$300.00	\$300.00
BENCHES (2 @ playground)	2	EA	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR BENCHES (2 - 5' x 10' @ Playground)	100	SF	\$4.50	\$450.00
WATER FOUNTAIN (FREEZE RESISTANT)	1	EA	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR WATER FOUNTAIN (5X5)	25	SF	\$4.50	\$112.50
DIRECTIONAL KIOSK	1	EA	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
LANDSCAPE (Parking / lawn area)	1	LS	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
SOD (LAWN AREA)	25,000	SF	\$0.45	\$11,250.00
IRRIGATION	1	EA	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
IRRIGATION METER	1	EA	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
<b>PAVILION / PLAYGROUND SUBTOTAL</b>			<b>\$1,434,820.00</b>	
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total)			\$143,482.00	
Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%)			\$189,396.24	
Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%)			\$176,769.82	
<b>PAVILION / PLAYGROUND TOTAL</b>			<b>\$1,944,468.06</b>	

CHAPEL / EVENT AREA	# OF UNITS	UNITS	COST/UNIT	ITEM TOTAL
TREE PROTECTION	1,750	LF	\$4.00	\$7,000.00
VEGETATIVE CLEAR & GRUB	1.1	AC	\$1,000.00	\$1,060.00
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	2,000	LF	\$3.50	\$7,000.00
TOPSOIL REMOVAL, STOCKPILE, RELAY	150	CY	\$4.00	\$600.00
GRADING	550	CY	\$10.00	\$5,500.00
STAKING	1.1	AC	\$2,000.00	\$2,200.00
ROADWAY / PARKING ASPHALT-STANDARD (Includes base)	1,900	SY	\$28.00	\$53,200.00
PARKING - PERVERIOUS ASPHALT	1,055	SY	\$14.00	\$14,770.00
PARKING - STORM WATER MANAGEMENT (Piping, Structures, Connect, Stone, Geotextile, etc)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
ROADWAY / PARKING STRIPING	1	LS	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
ROADWAY/ PARKING LIGHTING	9	EA	\$9,000.00	\$81,000.00
CONCRETE WHEEL STOPS	50	EA	\$300.00	\$15,000.00
6' CONCRETE SIDEWALK	6,800	SF	\$4.50	\$30,600.00
6' CONCRETE SIDEWALK - 2" GAB	40	CY	\$65.00	\$2,600.00
RESTROOM BUILDING (Includes Slab)	1	LS	\$130,000.00	\$130,000.00
<b>AMENITIES</b>				
TRASH RECEPTACLES	2	EA	\$450.00	\$900.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR TRASH RECEPTACLE	75	SF	\$4.50	\$337.50
BIKE RACKS	1	EA	\$350.00	\$350.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR BIKE RACK	50	SF	\$4.50	\$225.00
WATER FOUNTAIN (FREEZE RESISTANT)	1	EA	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
CONCRETE PAD FOR WATER FOUNTAIN (5X5)	25	SF	\$4.50	\$112.50
<b>CHAPEL / EVENT AREA SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$393,455.00</b>
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total)				\$39,345.50
Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%)				\$51,936.06
Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%)				\$48,473.66
<b>CHAPEL / EVENT AREA TOTAL</b>				<b>\$533,210.22</b>
MEADOWLAND AREA	# OF UNITS	UNITS	COST/UNIT	ITEM TOTAL
TREE PROTECTION	5,300	LF	\$4.00	\$21,200.00
VEGETATIVE CLEAR & GRUB	1.0	AC	\$400.00	\$400.00
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	1,500	LF	\$3.50	\$5,250.00
GRADING	1,850	CY	\$10.00	\$18,500.00
STAKING	1.0	AC	\$750.00	\$750.00
REMOVAL OF EXISTING PAVEMENTS	1	LS	7,500	\$7,500.00
NATIVE GRASS & WILD FLOWERS (Track & Hydroseed)	8	AC	\$850.00	\$6,621.50
<b>MEADOWLAND AREA SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$60,221.50</b>
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total)				\$6,022.15
Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%)				\$7,949.24
Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%)				\$7,419.29
<b>MEADOWLAND AREA TOTAL</b>				<b>\$81,612.18</b>
TRAIL SYSTEM	# OF UNITS	UNITS	COST/UNIT	ITEM TOTAL
TREE PROTECTION	15,000	LF	\$4.00	\$60,000.00
SELECTIVE CLEARING	3	AC	\$1,500.00	\$4,500.00
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Single Row)	15,000	LF	\$3.50	\$52,500.00
SILT FENCE "TYPE C" - (Double Row)	6,000	LF	\$3.50	\$21,000.00
GRADING	2,232	CY	\$10.00	\$22,320.00
STAKING	3.0	AC	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00
TESTING / HELICAL PIER DEPTH / STRUCTURES	1	LS	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
12' WIDE - ASPHALT MULTI USE TRAIL SECTION -2" ASPHALT	72,756	SF	\$3.00	\$218,268.00
12' WIDE - ASPHALT MULTI USE TRAIL SECTION -4" GAB	900	CY	\$65.00	\$58,500.00
10' WIDE - ASPHALT TRAIL SECTION - 2" ASPHALT	48,040	SF	\$3.00	\$144,120.00
10' WIDE - ASPHALT TRAIL SECTION - 4" GAB	590	CY	\$65.00	\$38,350.00
MULTI-USE TRAIL STRIPING	1	LS	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
GRANITE FACED RETAINING WALL	326	LF	\$250.00	\$81,500.00

10' WIDE RAISED BOARDWALK (.2 Mile Section) @ Wetlands					
Helical Pier Substructure(Two 5' sections per pier, assumed 10' depth to resistance)	50	EA	\$2,800.00	\$140,000.00	
PT Decking (Includes PT substructure and Standard rail system)	9,100	SF	\$55.00	\$500,500.00	
6' WIDE RAISED BOARDWALK (425 LF Section) @ River					
Helical Pier Substructure(Two 5' sections per pier, assumed 10' depth to resistance)	22	EA	\$2,800.00	\$61,600.00	
PT Decking (Includes PT substructure and Standard rail system)	872	SF	\$55.00	\$47,960.00	
OVERLOOK DECK @ RIVER (2 Total)					
Helical Pier Substructure(Two 5' sections per pier, assumed 10' depth to resistance)	20	EA	\$2,800.00	\$56,000.00	
PT Decking (Includes PT substructure and Standard rail system)	5,000	SF	\$55.00	\$275,000.00	
NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL REMEDIATION					
PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES	1	ALLOWANCE	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	
PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE @ LAWN	9	EA	\$8,500.00	\$76,500.00	
AMENITIES	1	ALLOWANCE	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	
BENCHES	12	EA	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00	
CONCRETE PAD FOR BENCHES (5' x 10' )	600	SF	\$4.50	\$2,700.00	
TRASH RECEPTACLES	5	EA	\$450.00	\$2,250.00	
CONCRETE PAD FOR TRASH RECEPTACLES (5'X5')	125	SF	\$4.50	\$562.50	
TRAIL SIGNAGE	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
INFORMATION KIOSK	1	LS	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
REMOVABLE BOLLARDS	7	EA	\$1,500.00	\$10,500.00	
TRAIL SYSTEM SUBTOTAL					<b>\$2,069,130.50</b>
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total)					\$206,913.05
Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%)					\$273,125.23
Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%)					\$254,916.88
TRAIL SYSTEM TOTAL					<b>\$2,804,085.65</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>					
CONSTRUCTION SIGN	# OF UNITS	UNITS	COST/UNIT	ITEM TOTAL	
NEW PARK ENTRANCE SIGN	1	LS	\$400.00	\$400.00	
SIGNAGE (PARK RULES, TRAFFIC-PARKING)	1	LS	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
NPDES	1	LS	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	
NPDES	1	LS	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	
REVEGETATION SEWER EASEMENTS (Native Vegetation)	1	ALLOWANCE	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	
REVEGETATION OF MU TRAIL VERGES w/ APPROPRIATE NATIVE PLANTS, SPECIAL TREATMENTS TO BRIDGE TREE ROOTS AND MEET GRADE.	1	ALLOWANCE	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	
REMOVAL OF EXOTIC INVASIVE PLANTS AT RIVER / REVEGETATION OF RIVER FRONTAGE WITH NATVIE SPECIES.	1	ALLOWANCE	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	
MISCELLANEOUS SUBTOTAL					<b>\$690,400.00</b>
Mobilization, Fees, Bonds, etc (10% Total)					\$69,040.00
Contingency for Master Plan Level Cost Estimate (12%)					\$91,132.80
Design, Engineering and Program Management (10%)					\$85,057.28
MISCELLANEOUS TOTAL					<b>\$935,630.08</b>
<b>SIMPSONWOOD PARK PROJECT TOTAL</b>					<b>\$8,388,643.28</b>
Note: This cost estimate is the Landscape Architect's opinion of probable cost but is not guaranteed because the Landscape Architect has no control over the market, the contractor's bid or the length of time between the estimate creation and the project bid.					



## APPENDICES

### Appendix B: Community Input Tabulations & Comments

Refer to the attached Spreadsheets for a summary of the tabulated Community interests and concerns information collected at the initial public meeting.

# Simpsonwood Park Site Master Plan

## Community Interest Form Tabulations

### Facility / Program Priorities

(Data derived from 106 submitted forms)

NOTE: Park Elements mentioned were not always ranked as a priority

**Gwinnett Dept. of Community Services**

**jB+a park design studio**

November 12, 2015

Program or Facility	Times Mentioned	Ranking				
		First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Keep Park Natural / Minimal Development / Passive / Preserve Trees, Native Plants	51	15	16	14	3	3
Nature Trails (Natural Surface, unpaved)	44	16	5	9	7	7
Multi Use Trails (Paved: Walking, Biking, etc.)	42	15	6	9	12	0
Trail Markers / Maps / Kiosks	31	3	9	5	2	3
Park for All / Variety of Activities / Multiple Age Groups & Abilities / Accessible	27	1	4	2	0	0
River Access / Boat Launch / Swimming Area	26	9	10	4	0	1
Site Restoration / Reforestation / Riverbank Protection/ Add. Landscape / Eroded Areas	26	0	4	6	9	7
Interpretive Trails (Native plants, Riparian, Birding, etc.)	25	0	4	3	9	5
Playground / Multiple Age Groups / Non Commercial Equipment / Natural	25	1	10	6	4	3
Open Space / Meadow / Open Fields	23	3	1	2	9	4
Picnic Areas / Picnic Pavilions / Picnic Shelters	22	1	4	3	8	4
Parking - Limited yet adequate / Low Impact	22	2	5	4	5	2
Educational Programs (Teach about nature / site)	21	2	2	6	3	0
Dog Park (Fenced w/ equipment, Doodie bags, off leash area)	20	1	10	4	5	0
Bridges - Improved, restored, more, connect across Chatt. to Fulton Co. Park	18	0	5	1	3	2
Restroom - Improved, More, LEED certified	18	0	0	3	4	0
Maintenance of Park and Trails	17	4	5	1	2	3
Running / Cross County Trail Circuit w/ mileage markers	16	3	3	1	4	2
Mountain Bike Trails	15	2	1	5	4	3
Safe / Secure Park Experience (Trail Call Boxes, Perimeter Fencing, Bollards, etc)	15	7	3	2	2	1
Preserve Historic Chapel	13	6	1	2	0	0
Camping / Boy Scouts / Family Camping	12	0	3	4	2	1
Guided Hikes / Nature Walks	12	2	1	0	0	0
Open Picnic Areas - No Structure	12	0	2	1	0	1

<b>Program or Facility</b>	<b>Times Mentioned</b>	<b>Ranking</b>				
		<b>First</b>	<b>Second</b>	<b>Third</b>	<b>Fourth</b>	<b>Fifth</b>
Wildlife Sanctuary / Preserve / Protect Wildlife	10	4	3	3	0	0
Fishing Area /Dock at River	10	0	2	0	0	0
Rest Areas with Benches on Trails / Viewing Areas on River	10	0	0	2	0	1
Event Space	9	0	3	0	0	1
Disc Golf	9	3	1	0	0	0
Project Sites for Scouts / 4H	8	0	2	0	0	0
No Development / Leave Park Alone	7	2	1	0	0	0
Community Garden / Master Gardener Area / Urban Agriculture	6	0	2	3	0	1
Exercise Trail w/ Stations	5	0	0	2	0	2
Connectivity to Community, Surrounding Neighborhoods, Other Parks (Jones Bridge)	5	0	2	2	0	0
Skate Park	5	1	0	0	1	0
Art in the Park	5	0	0	1	0	2
Nature Center	5	1	0	1	1	0
Deer / Coyote Control, Poisonous Snake Removal	5	2	0	0	0	0
Dog Friendly, Dogs Allowed	4	0	2	0	0	1
Basketball Courts	4	0	0	1	1	1
Bee Keeping	4	0	0	1	0	0
Tennis	4	0	1	1	0	0
Volunteer Opportunites (Trail Keepers)	3	0	0	0	0	0
Baseball	3	0	1	1	0	0
Religious Use (Walk through Bethlehem, Church Services, etc.)	3	1	0	0	1	0
Park Amenities (Benches, Bench Swings, Trash Cans, Recycling Bins, Bike Racks, etc.)	3	0	0	1	0	0
Pool	3	1	0	1	0	0
Adult Gym / Indoor Basketball	3	0	0	1	1	0
Geocaching	2	0	0	0	0	0
Donation Boxes/ Pay to Use /Park Pass	2	0	0	0	0	0
Kite Flying	2	0	0	0	0	0
Longer Hours	1	1	0	0	0	0
Photography	1	0	0	0	0	0
5 Mile Wood Surface Greenway	1	1	0	0	0	0
NO River / Boat Access	1	0	0	0	0	0
NO Restrooms	1	0	0	0	0	0
Bigger DNR / NPS Presence	1	0	0	1	0	0
Architectural Features	1	0	0	0	0	0

<b>Program or Facility</b>	<b>Times Mentioned</b>	<b>Ranking</b>				
		<b>First</b>	<b>Second</b>	<b>Third</b>	<b>Fourth</b>	<b>Fifth</b>
Year Round Interest	1	0	0	0	0	0
Archery	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hot Air Balloon Area	1	0	0	0	0	0
Maze	1	0	0	0	0	0
Tree Climbing	1	0	0	0	0	0
Skating Rink	1	0	0	0	0	0
Volleyball	1	0	0	0	0	0
Future Guidance via MP for Development	1	1	0	0	0	0
Pickle Ball Courts	1	0	0	1	0	0
UAV Field (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle)	1	0	1	0	0	0
Structures for Retreats (Non-Tent)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Amphitheater	1	0	0	0	0	0
Food Trucks	1	0	0	0	0	0
Soccer	1	0	0	0	0	0

# **Simpsonwood Park Site Master Plan**

## **Park Concerns Form Tabulations**

(Data derived from 106 submitted forms)

**Gwinnett Dept. of Community Services**

**jB+a park design studio**

November 12, 2015

<b>Community Concern</b>	<b>Times Mentioned</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Security issues / increased crime	30	1
Overdevelopment of Park - Park Elements	25	2
Maintenance	20	3
Too Much / Not Enough Parking	20	3
Increase in Traffic	17	4
Dogs off Leash, Dogs in the Park, Doggie Mess	17	4
Waterfront Development, Access to River - No boat Launches	15	5
Environmental Impact - Erosion, Watershed Management	15	5
Negative Wildlife Impact (Deer, Fishery Decline, etc)	13	6
Grills / Open Fires (Don't want them)	12	7
Repeat of Jones Bridge Park	12	7
Playgrounds -Do not want in Simpsonwood Park	11	9
Tree Removal	10	9
Excessive Trash	10	9
Deer / Coyote / Poisonous Snake Control / Removal	7	10
Park Hours (Enforcement of Dawn to Dusk)	6	11
Excessive Crowds	6	11
Excessive Noise	6	11
Bikes on Trails	5	12
Inappropriate Playground Equipment (Commercial Style)	5	12
Buffers(Between Park Property and Adjacent Residences)	5	12
Fencing (Do not want to see it in the Park)	4	13
Overnight Camping	4	13
Excessive Picnic Structures / Areas	3	14
Sports Fields / Active Recreation	3	14
No Paved Trails	3	14
Access to the Park (Pedestrian)	2	15
No Mountain Biking (Impact)	2	15
No Dog Park	2	15
No Rest Room Facilites (Does not want)	1	16
Summer Camps	1	16
Hunting	1	16
Ziplines	1	16
Pesticides	1	16

## Comments from the Simpsonwood Park Master Plan

Community Input Meeting 11.12.15

(Data derived from 106 submitted forms)

1. The primary appeal of Simpsonwood for many is walking the trails and enjoying nature. Most folks don't want or need a lot of buildings or facilities. Place emphasis and priority on protecting the wildlife and habitat
2. Protect the riverbank. Access to the river should be via walk in access only (except for Sewer plant operations and maintenance). Keep nearest available parking area back at the former pools / tennis courts. Do not build steps or handrail access to enter the river. Do not install BBQ grills at the river.
3. Limit mountain bike riding to a few designated trails, all remaining trails should be for foot access only.
4. I would like to see educational programs on Environmental topics
5. There should be environmental restoration of wetlands, streams, and the removal of exotic species, passive trails that connect to a longer system (NPS, city and ADA accessible), Environmental education, future guidance via master plan policies and strategies to guide for decades to come, no more monuments.
6. Need to use existing roads and parking and repurpose for ADA trail to maximum extent.
7. Would like park to retain "local" feel. Too much parking / amenities, etc...may draw large crowds (not desirable).
8. Ensure any new amenities; trails, etc. are not situated too close to adjacent residential lots. As an owner of property adjacent to the site, we occasionally see walkers, joggers, bike riders on private property.
9. Minimize construction activity to existing areas of buildings and improvements,
10. Remove invasive species along the river (bamboo and privet)
11. It is a beautiful piece of land with a lot of opportunities. I would love to help as I have a lot of background with the site.
12. Do not just put trails on the site. Make it usable for the community. Create year round interest.
13. As a passive park I do not see many problems with development. My concern is that we just do not leave it as is. We need something that makes the site and the river accessible to the community of Peachtree Corners and Gwinnett County.
14. Your biggest issue will be to have a balanced committee of people who want to see this be a positive event. There are a lot of folks who simply want it left alone.
15. I want wide walking / running paths that would also accommodate bike traffic – nothing motorized.
16. Keep all BBQ and pavilion areas as they currently are. Near the front of the park and away from the river.
17. Excited about our county able to have access to this wonderful property. So glad Gwinnett secured this making an amazing park system even better! Thank you for allowing public input, WAY TO GO!!
18. Want to see facilities for the handicapped for recreation, we need to do it right the first time! I am post polio, use crutches and a power chair. I have had input on many projects that have benefitted from my input. I do not get paid for my help but know what is needed, architects do not think of needs, I do. We need at least one disabled person on the committee.
19. We need facilities for an aging population.
20. My biggest concern about the park is security and safety not only in the park, but in the neighborhoods close to the park. Will the park be closed at night? Will there be patrols, emergency call phones, etc? Being on the river, there are lots of issues, especially in the summer, for people (especially teenagers) to hang out at the river at all hours – leaving trash, beer cans, etc.
21. Will dogs be required to be on leash or can they run free?
22. Will there be police presence when the park is open to the public?
23. Will park have a gate and if so will the gate be locked when the park is closed?
24. Is park usage limited to residents of Gwinnett County?
25. Will additional restrooms be added?
26. Where will parking be allowed?
27. Will fences be erected around the property?

28. What about the very large deer population? The deer roam our neighborhoods looking for food and are a nuisance.
29. Is the park maintained (existing trails) until the construction begins?
30. Park needs a rope bridge connection across river to the Fulton County Park on the other side.
31. Need Kayak / canoe access to the river.
32. More grazing fields for deer population.
33. Need better bridges to access other parts of the park.
34. I do not want to see fencing of any kind in the park; no fenced dog parks.
35. Park needs to have better flood management of streams and retention ponds.
36. I don't want to see any commercial type playground equipment; would like more natural concept playground.
37. Keep the park as it is, no additional development needed, just maintain the existing trails. Keep them "soft" no pavement or asphalt. Should allow geocaching –it's fun and passive.
38. I do not want another Jones Bridge park: I do want a conservation park.
39. Simpsonwoods greatest asset is its natural beauty, its trails, wildlife and flora. It would be wonderful if its trails were better marked, and if trees and other plants could be marked, identified for educational purposes. Schools could take advantage of the park to educate its students on native tree / flora etc. it would make a great educational field trip.
40. A dog park would be nice for the neighbors.
41. Keep picnic and playground area limited or none.
42. I am concerned about how to keep dirt bikes off the trails.
43. I would like to see well developed playground area in the shade for young children (Kaboom type playgrounds).
44. Well developed picnic facilities included roofed pavilions of varying sizes.
45. Will events with loudspeaker and music be allowed?
46. Is current parking sufficient or will spaces have to be added?
47. Isn't there some concept of budge range? Could the plan be stages of development, area by area?
48. I would like to see separate trails for walkers and mountain biking, MANY more trails for mountain biking with lots of switch backs, trail maps throughout so you know where you are and that other trails exist, longer park hours to 11pm for night walks and rides (especially in the winter), better river access like at Jones Bridge Park.
49. Keep soft natural trails a primary trail types, add some trail markers indicating coordinates, trail name, trail mileage, and bathroom locations.
50. Need doggie pickup stations with bags
51. Install some pillars of granite or concrete to keep the 4-wheelers and pickup trucks from mud bogging the riparian zones.
52. Need a few horizontal places to picnic without grills (think backpack lunches) and just sit down such as a stone bench or a rock along the trail.
53. Kiosks describing hiking activities such as geocaching and bird watching at trail heads.
54. Different trails with different labeling; birding trail, arboretum trail.
55. Have Karen build you and ArcGIS online story map and labeled web map apps of the paths/ trails showing natural features and locations of bathrooms, downloadable to android phones and iPhones.
56. Someone with Rex's knowledge should lead regular weekend trail hikes.
57. Keep the chapel nice and maintained.
58. Allow summer camps for elementary and middle schools to get kids out doors similar to McDaniel Farm Park and GEHC.
59. Don't install tree canopy zip lines!!
60. My main concern is maintenance. We always had people from the neighborhood abusing the property. They were not deterred by signs or requests. They would walk their dogs and leave dog crap that we would have to clean up before our guest could sue the soccer field of picnic areas. I recommend "No dogs allowed!"
61. Would like to see hub for connection to potential trail along Chattahoochee.
62. The cub scouts have used the land for camping in the past and consideration should be given to continue this use. Other camping not so much.

63. I don't want to see the waterfront developed at all. I even want picnicking limited; no grills, no open fires. No overnight camping, with possible exception for scouts.
64. I'm concerned it will be crowded like Jones Bridge Park on weekends, where trash will become excessive.
65. I want the forest preserved- all of it. I want the natural habitats preserved.
66. I would like to see a greenway of five miles with wooden surface.
67. Benches –seating intermittent throughout the park.
68. Ensure there are no poisonous snakes around.
69. No flooding.
70. I believe Preston Chappell should be on the committee. He has a full knowledge of the flora, fauna and animals and trail and history of the park.
71. No playgrounds! Use park as educational tool for kids, see Sandy Springs on the Chattahoochee.
72. Don't allow people and their activities take over nature. Let nature rule!
73. Pets should be welcomed!
74. No church and state!!!
75. No pavilions!
76. No playgrounds!
77. Please keep parking only at the entrance, reforest areas where buildings were. Keep walking trails up, no BBQ grills. Use Park for cub scouts /boy scouts training and camping.
78. Prefer nature trails and room to run, jump and play without playgrounds! There are plenty of playgrounds in this area. Prefer a natural environment and experience! DO NOT want picnic tables or grills. NO programs or facilities, only unstructured recreation. I do not want to see a large increase in traffic.
79. A wood in which to wander, think and contemplate in is a rare and wonderful gift. Simpsonwood provides that to many people already – children benefit from the opportunity to discover the natural world in an unstructured way. Playgrounds and ball fields are needed but not essential in all parks. That said I hope there is minimal development. Programs that teach about the plants and animals would be good. I would hope the plans minimize disturbing the riverbank. I use the park daily and am delighted to know it will be designed with integrity. I would not advocate having a big play area like Jones Bridge Park.
80. I think Gwinnett County has done a wonderful job providing parks for all the residents. When I see families enjoying the outdoors it makes me glad to live where that is a choice. There are several nearby places where large groups can gather to cook, socialize, play sports, etc. I look forward to a park nearby dedicated to more solitary pursuits – hiking, observing and meditating the natural wonders on of Simpsonwood. I lived down the street for 30+ years. Our boys were raised on the goodness of wandering in the woods. I am proud to know that will be an opportunity for future generations.
81. Restrict trails to people within ½ mile of residence. No dogs, no bikes.
82. If picnic / grill areas are all over the place this will attract the same type of people as Jones Bridge Park does. Go there on a weekend in summer you will see what I mean.
83. I really want Simpsonwood left as undisturbed as possible – it is a beautiful haven in the middle of concrete. I don't want to add I want to take away. Trail maintenance on existing trails would be great!
84. I am very frightened it will become built up with pavilions picnic tables, river access, paved trails, fenced dog park. I really want it left as an open, undisturbed, natural space. No Soccer fields, no grilling out. I am also concerned about the traffic through a highly residential area.
85. The trails need to be improved, bridges repaired and steps replaced. Currently the ground is quite dangerous to run / walk on. Trail markers would be nice to see how far the trails travels / maps of trails. A nature center would be a nice addition sine there is so much life along and in the Chattahoochee River.
86. Increase in traffic and crime are my biggest concerns since my neighborhood borders the park. Another concern is those who travel up the banks of the Chattahoochee and spend the day on the bank at the edge of someone's back yard. This occurs at Jones Bridge Park. It has diminished the value of the houses that are in walking distance up the bank of the Chattahoochee.
87. Control interior water flow – review of stagnant water presently in area – adjacent to meadow, assume artificially created by berm.

88. Gwinnett County has several excellent parks and I have been a user for well over 25 years. In fact, the excellent County Parks is one of the reasons I moved here in 1998. I frequently use Harbins Park, Tribble Mill and Yellow River, primarily for their excellent Mountain bike trail systems. As a resident of Peachtree Corners, I would love to see Simpsonwood used in a similar fashion –passive natural with a trail system open to both bikers and hikers. I ride most every Saturday and it would be wonderful to be able to do it in my own community, without at 35-40 minute drive to do so. Natural paths are a perfect fit for a riverside ecosystem and there are very active local groups like SORBA and GATR to help maintain the trails. Moreover, I believe this use honors and preserves the original wishes of Ms. Simpson, who strove to protect this land for the use of future generations of Gwinnetians.
89. I would like to see the existing lodge and office administrative buildings demolished and returned to natural habitat. They are no longer needed and will create a financial burden that the County does not need. Keep it simple and let Mother Nature take the lead!
90. Because Jones Bridge Park is nearby and already has amenities such as pavilions, a large playground and paved trails, I do not believe those features are necessary for Simpsonwood. These features are also available at Holcomb Bridge Park.
91. I would like to see perimeter fencing for safety and security of park visitor as well as adjacent property owners. I do not want to see mountain bike trails.
92. Prohibit biking with dog on leash in all County Parks. A cousin of mine was killed by a biker with a dog who tripped her from behind on a paved trail.
93. Limit the scale of "Event" usage.
94. It is a wonderful space and I am very pleased with the general direction this project is going. As a returning resident to GA I was particularly impressed with the parks and recreation we enjoyed while in Naperville IL 2000-2014. Simpsonwood give a good start to developing multi-use greenspace for community enjoyment. Bike trails, running and hiking trails are among the best use. However, it needs to be managed so that everyone understand and follows a uniform set of rules and those rules must be enforced. Everyone should feel safe at all times. There are common ways to manage trail use. Directions, signage, runners go some ways on Mon-Wed, Friday & Saturday and bikers the other. Reverse on Tues, Thurs., and Sun.
95. Buy more land in the west!
96. It would be nice to ride my bike from Jones Bridge Road into the park, getting off the main road for a bit.
97. I would like to see a hot air balloon area, fruit trees, edible plants, dark area to see stars, bike paths separate from walkers, water area you can walk in, parking outside the park, tree swings, tree climbing, maze to walk through, limited use for festivals (maybe 4 a year), wheelchair accessible, some lighted walking paths, a mix of natural and paved paths, an area for bees.
98. No residential or commercial development!
99. Community Involvement (Norcross & Peachtree Corners) – not limited to the Parks and Recreation Department!
100. As a representative of Simpsonwood UMC I hope we can continue a great relationship that is mutually beneficial to the park and church.
101. Would like to have fenced dog area for dogs to run unleashed. Many families take their dogs to the park presently. Settles Bridge Park has a nice dog park to model after as does Brook Run in Dunwoody. The back where the buildings previously stood would be a good location. A fenced dedicated area would provide space for dog owners that already utilize the park while also allowing those who do not wish to visit with dogs to utilize the park without chance of encounter.
102. Do not want "Drive UP" access to river like at Jones Bridge as it invites too much traffic and overuse. Keep most of the park natural and undeveloped. Do not clear out wooded areas along river. Only maintain what trails and greenspace presently exist.
103. Please protect the trail system! Do not pave the trails; these are the only soft trails in the area. We don't want a playground; we already have Jones Bridge Park.
104. You lost control of tonight's meeting by being unclear about the process. I would like to see another public meeting as this process continues.
105. Partner with Gwinnett County Schools to educate and teach students: Environmental factors especially near Chattahoochee River.

106. I am concerned the park will draw an undesirable element. Need to ensure security is taken care of.
107. I walk 3-4 miles there every day for the last 10 years. I wish to preserve the beauty and the tranquility of the wildlife and surroundings. I am very fearful of this park becoming a picnic weekend festival (as in Jones Bridge). I am very concerned about trash, hunting and fishing violations. This is a great community meeting place and I hope it keeps that flavor somewhat.
108. The area does not have a tennis or basketball court in any of the parks or its surroundings. It will be great to provide a need that has not already been met.
109. Could you please do something about the deer and coyote population?
110. Please do not develop this property. Keep it as natural as possible. Keep the trees, keep the trails. Security may be an issue but wild spaces are key as the rest of the County develops. Being a good neighbor to the river and surrounding residential areas is key. If there is any overnight camping allowed, Scouts should be able to participate.
111. I'm concerned that a future Commissioner would either change it from a passive park or sell it for cash.
112. Less is more!
113. Please don't ruin the wood with Frisbee Golf like in Suwanee (Suwanee Creek Park)
114. I'd like to see trails for walking and bicycles, a trail that parallels the park boundary, a trail giving view and access to the river and a restroom facility.
115. We would like to see camping – platform, water, power, fire pits and some "pioneer" spots. Clear paths especially along the river, field us e for Christmas Celebration (Walk of Bethlehem), encourage Boy Scout Eagle Projects, an inner circle paved trail (bikes & Strollers) more benches at trail intersections, maintain a limit to large organized events, eliminate usage for summer camps, no playgrounds.
116. Trails need to have the roots removed!
117. Large meadow should stay as it is!
118. As much as practical and fair, I want to preserve this as a 'community' park. Over installation of facilities and large parking areas will encourage overuse and increased traffic, and then run down facilities. While I want bike only areas, I am concerned that mountain bikes will tear up the unpaved trails. I live next door to the park so am very interested and vest in being part of the committee.
119. My biggest concern is too many older people who will not have a VISION for the future of the area running the citizen committee. The park is for people of all ages and for people who haven't moved here yet.
120. I want an expanded trail system to enjoy the natural beauty of the park, an addition of a small gravel wide path (similar to Powns Ferry) for walking, biking and access for elderly and disabled. Pavilions near open space are similar to Jones Bridge.
121. Take this as an opportunity to become one of Atlanta's only pesticide free parks. Let's become leaders in this movement. If there is a playground, at a bare minimum, let's start by (keeping) it pesticide free.
122. Small amphitheater for food truck night, similar to Brook Run Park in Dunwoody.
123. I would like the park to remain in the most natural state as possible to that end. I don't want any recreational facilities built and promoted. For programs, I would like the focus to be on nature preservation, Christian / Religious use with the chapel and walk through Bethlehem. If a playground is to be built, I would suggest that it not be near the river or trails. The tranquility of being in nature shouldn't be disrupted by noise or people. I'd really prefer no playground as there are two parks near this site that already have them.
124. Too many people ruining the feel of the park – don't want people to come and cook / hang out all day / leave their trash / be too loud / no respect the serenity of the park.
125. I'm concerned that the events that have been held in the past won't be allowed to continue – church services in the chapel, Walk through Bethlehem.
126. A swim / wading friendly area into the river
127. Landscaping around the chapel – perhaps a garden club could be based here to augment the landscaping around the chapel and grounds.
128. Skate park – While some may disapprove of this use I put up the Swift Cantrell Park in Kennesaw as an example of a great return on investment – dollar spent / use.

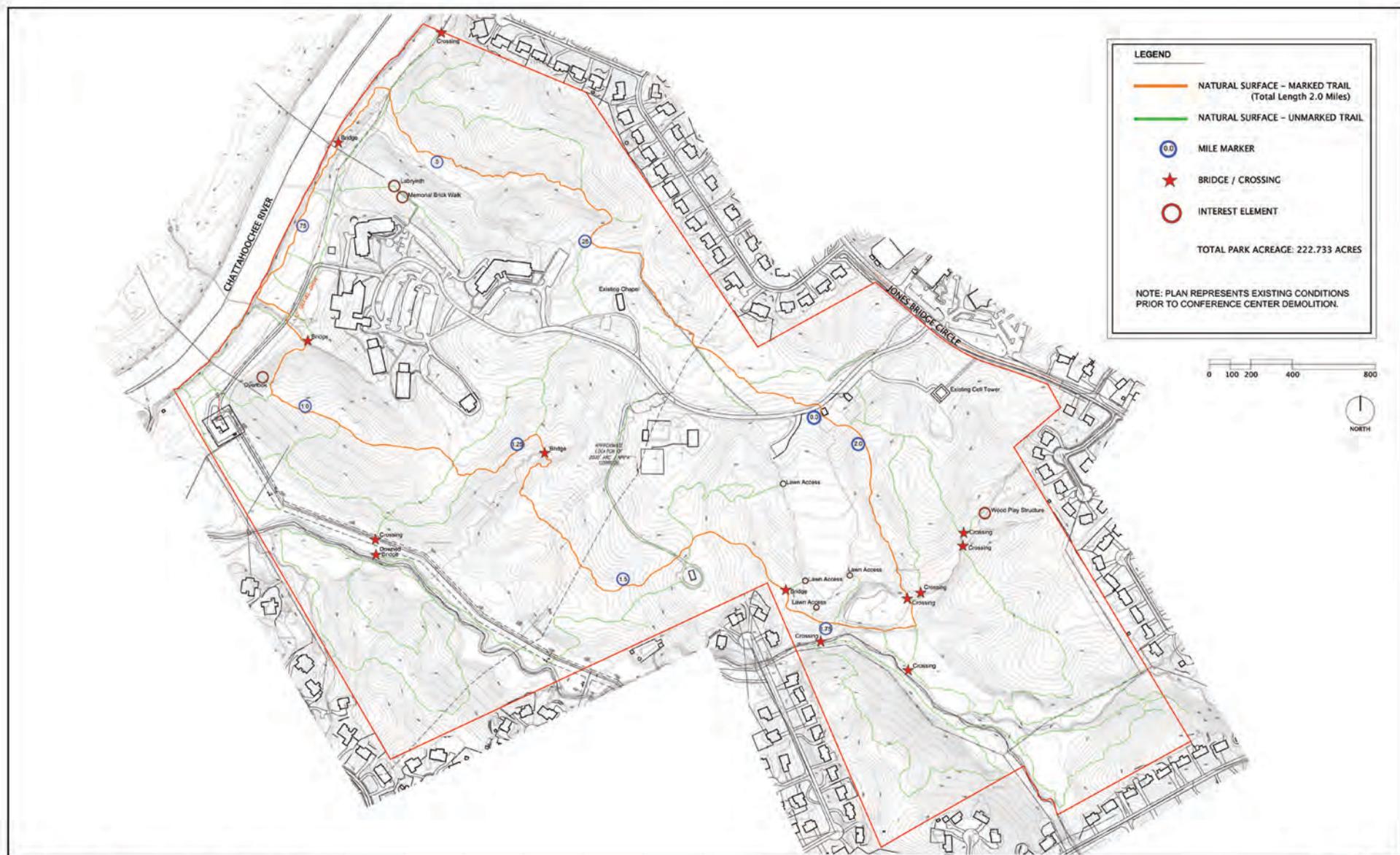
129. I want things to be put in the park that are going to be used; many structures in parks seem to be a waste of space.
130. Parking should be able to handle the capacity without infringing on the park.
131. Disk Golf!!! PDGA will assist with designing and even maintenance of the course. Look at East Roswell Park! Lots of activity good exercise minimal impact on park, it's a win-win.
132. Nature Center like Autry Mill.
133. My main concern is that the area never be developed for housing or commercial use. I want it to remain as pristine as possible so that people will have an opportunity for some tranquil time in natural surroundings. There's too much development around us. Just leave it alone! No organized sports facilities. Any changes to the area should be well advertised to citizens and not preceded without citizen approval.
134. Whatever we do the park should keep its beautiful appearance. We should add to the park while making it seem as though we didn't. The things that we add should benefit as many of the people who live in our community as possible.
135. Things that we should consider adding to the park are: new walking trails (using parts of old ones), one long paved trail winding in and out of the trees (2 miles), and the second should be more of a nature trail made of pine straw. Disc Golf; adds an activity that old and young can play, most of the course would be hidden within the trees and would not take away from the beautiful area. Outside activity area: a children's playground- simple and low to the ground, well shaded and spread out, an outside adult gym – one with equipment like at East Roswell Park; would be off the main road shaded and hidden by trees, 2 Tennis Courts, Pool, possible soccer and/ or baseball fields, restrooms
136. Some things that we should consider updating to the park are: campgrounds need road paved, add 3 more picnic tables to those near restrooms at the entrance, add 4 more picnic tables to the pavilion area, new buildings (Senior Center, Youth Center, Park Office, Buildings to rent for parties).
137. Some things that should be left alone: restrooms as you enter park, the historic chapel (could be rented), maintenance building
138. We could help raise some money for County by: having sponsors for things like (name things after whomever) Buildings and / or rooms, Holes on Disc Golf Course, Fields (baseball, soccer, Tennis), parts of walking trails, outside gym and/ or pieces of equipment, pavilion and/ or tables.



## APPENDICES

Appendix C: Simpsonwood Base Site Plan  
Refer to the attached Site Plan Illustration





Prepared for:  
**Gwinnett County Department of Community Services**

Prepared by:



BASE SITE PLAN  
**SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE**

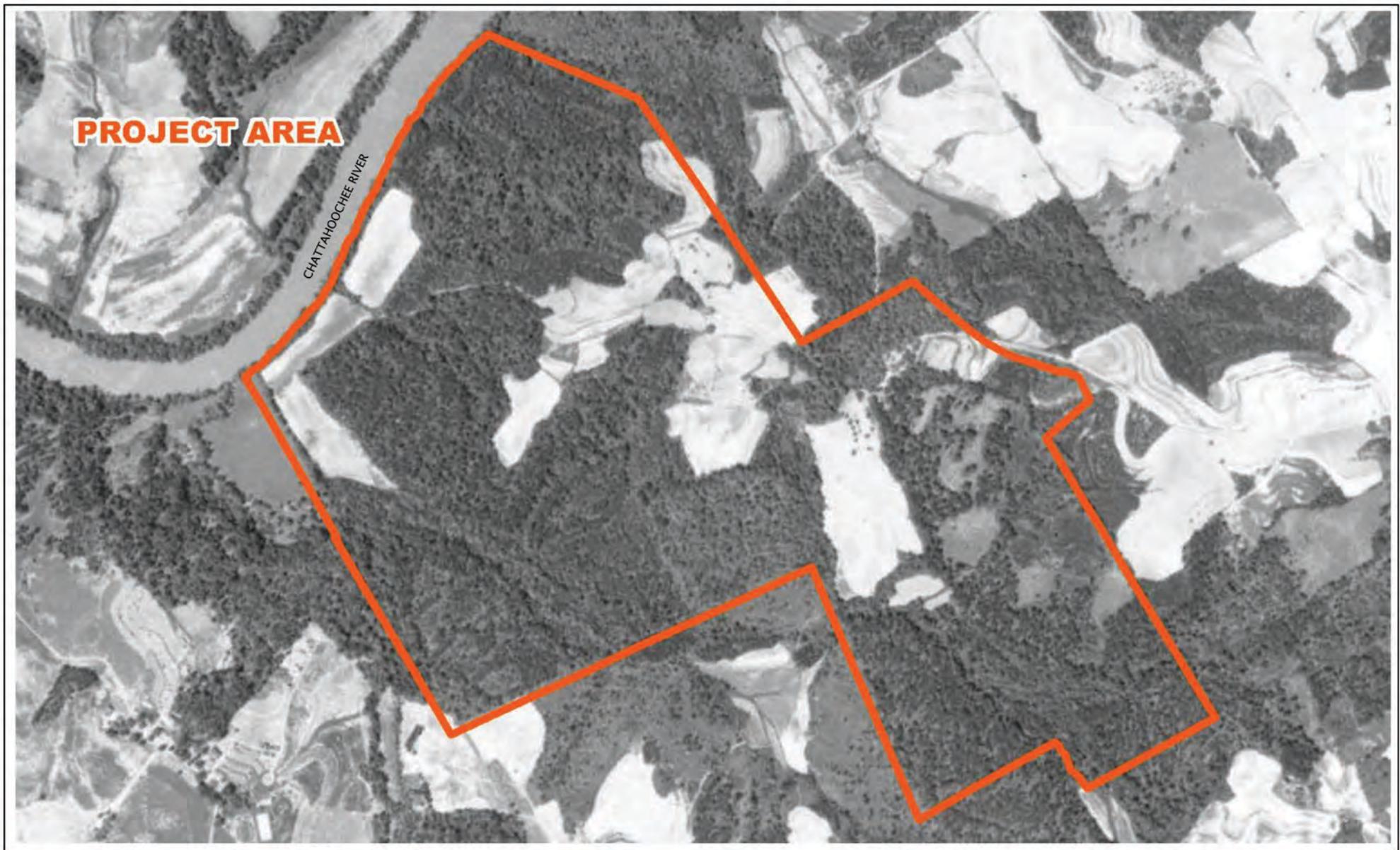
November 12, 2015



## APPENDICES

Appendix D: 1938 Simpsonwood Park Aerial Photograph  
Refer to the attached aerial photo.





Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



1938 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE

November 12, 2015





## APPENDICES

Appendix E: 1960 Simpsonwood Park Aerial Photograph  
Refer to the attached aerial photo.





Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



1960 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE

November 12, 2015

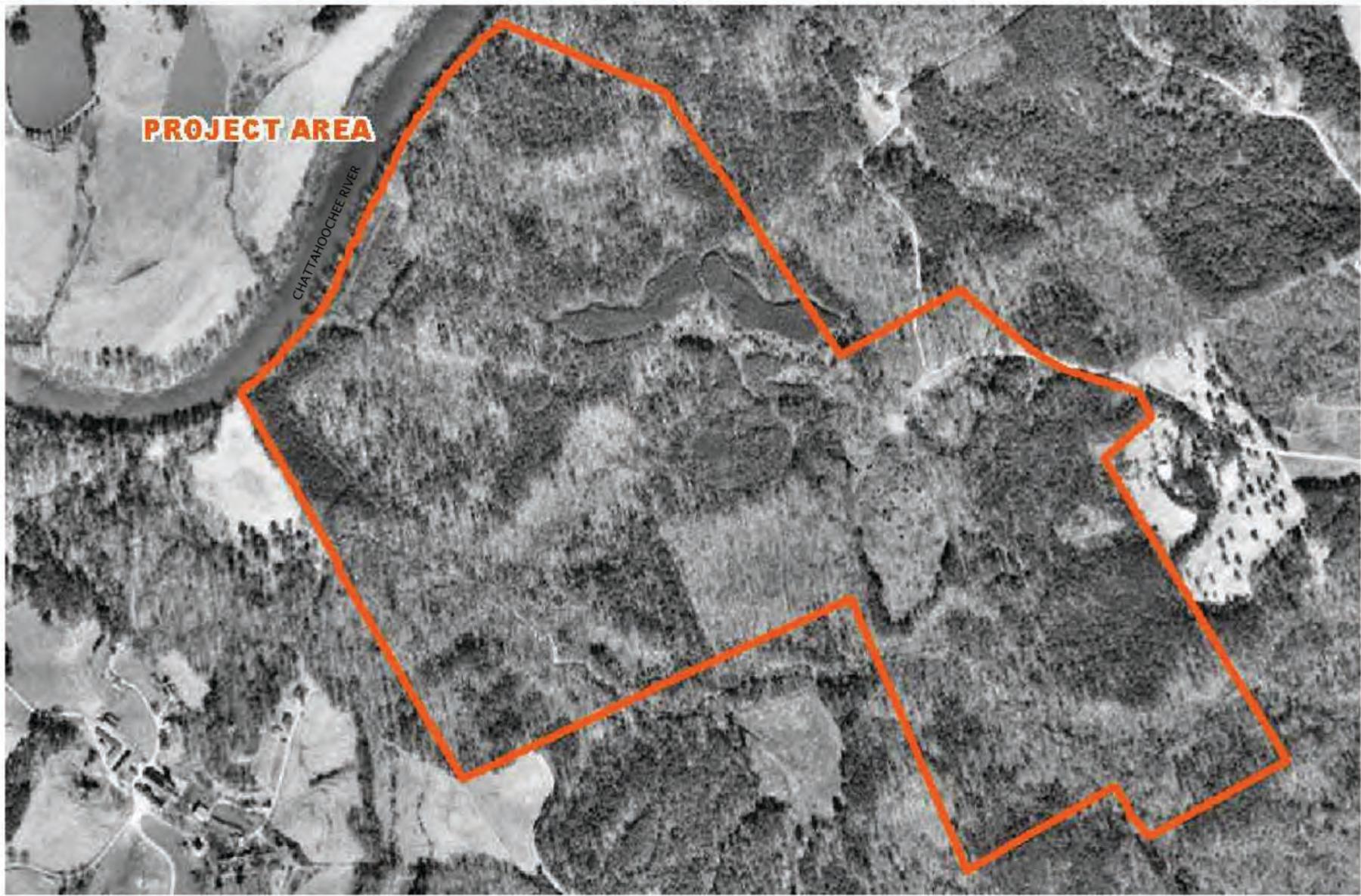




## **APPENDICES**

Appendix F: 1972 Simpsonwood Park Aerial Photograph  
Refer to the attached aerial photo.





Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



1972 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE

November 12, 2015





## **APPENDICES**

Appendix G: 2014 Simpsonwood Park Aerial Photograph  
Refer to the attached aerial photo.





Prepared for:  
Gwinnett County Department of Community Services

Prepared by:



2014 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE

November 12, 2015





## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix H: Meeting Minutes**

Refer to the attached meeting minutes for a summary of the discussion and presented materials at each steering committee meeting.



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Community Interest Meeting**

Minutes from: 11.1215 Community Input Meeting

Attendees: Gwinnett County Department of Community Services- Phil Hoskins, Grant Guess, Rex Schuder, David Clark, Erik Horne, Tina Fleming,

District 2 Commissioner – Lynnette Howard

City of Peachtree Corners – Mayor Mike Mason, Lory Christopher, Matt Houser, Robert Gates

jB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

Approximately 133 Community participants

Location: Norcross High School Theater  
Gwinnett County, Georgia

Time: 7:00pm – 9:00 pm

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The meeting was conducted in an open house format. Boards located at the front of the room included: Park Site 1938 Aerial Photo, Park Site 1955 Aerial Photo, Park Site 1972 Aerial Photo, Park Site 2014 Aerial Photo, Park Site Boundary , and a description of an open space park as per the County Park Classification System; essentially the following:

*Open Space Parks are generally large parcels of mostly undeveloped land that embody natural, scenic and cultural values, resources and landscapes. These parks provide passive, no-programmed recreation opportunities in a managed environment.*

*In order to serve a dual purpose of open space preservation / protection, Open Space Parks are typically developed with only minimal amenities needed to provide public access for low-intensity and dispersed recreation. Open Space Parks are designed for a maximum of 10-15% impervious surface coverage. Where possible, Open Space Parks should be located along and / or connected to the greenway system. Typical size of an Open Space park ranges from 10-1800 acres (existing range); the size is dependent upon opportunity, however, Open Space Parks are typically over 200 acres. An Open Space Park service area is County-wide.*

*Facility types include: passive recreation amenities, mountain biking trails, equestrian trails, boardwalks, special event facilities, interpretive elements, group camping, specialized facilities that complement the surrounding landscape and cultural / natural resources.*

Public Interest and Concerns forms were distributed as public participants entered the meeting. The form included an area where participants could list their interests, park priorities and their concerns. In addition, a graphic depicting the County's Conservation

Parks (Open Space and Passive Community Parks) listed in order of size (acreage) was distributed for reference.

As the meeting commenced, Grant Guess introduced several Gwinnett County Officials including District 2 Commissioner, Lynette Howard. Commissioner Howard gave a welcoming statement, thanked attendees for coming to the public input meeting and encouraged members of her district to voice their opinions and concerns during the meeting and to fill out the Steering Committee application for full involvement in the Master Planning process. Grant Guess then gave an overview of the meeting and mentioned that the County envisions the Simpsonwood Park Site being developed as an Open Space Park.

Rex Schuder then explained the master planning process and proceeded to explain the role of the Steering Committee and discussed how the information gathered on the public interest forms would be collated, tabulated and organized by the consultant (jB+a) and then presented to the Steering Committee for use during the Master Planning Process.

Applications were handed out to those interested in serving on the Steering Committee and the floor was opened for questions. The following comments / questions were posed during the meeting. (Note: additional comments are included in the public interest form tabulations. These comments were included within the responses on the interest form, not proposed during the meeting itself).

1. How long is the process? Approximately 6 months, with the County looking to start the Master Planning Process in January, 2016.
2. I find it hard to believe that this can be done with only 7 meetings. Do you feel confident that it can actually be done? Yes, this is the process that the County has used to plan over 35 successful parks.
3. How many meetings will there be for the public to weigh in on the master plan? This is the only public meeting. After this meeting we will rely on the Steering Committee (representatives of neighborhoods, interest groups, business districts, etc.) to filter the information to their groups.
4. I recommend that another public meeting be held. That is a lot of responsibility to put on one group of people that is not representational of the community. This park is really dear to the community and our citizens should be involved. The community is involved through the Steering Committee. That is one of the responsibilities of the Steering Committee that the County requests; serving as a representative of his or her interest group, board, neighborhood association etc. As we mentioned we rely on the Steering Committee to funnel the information back.
5. Where and when will the meetings be held? Typically they are held on Tuesday or Thursdays and we are looking at holding them at the Good Age Building at Jones Bridge Park.
6. Why is someone from the church on the committee? Someone from the church may be on the committee, but that is not definite.
7. Simpsonwood Church did not own Simpsonwood – the United Methodist Church owned Simpsonwood.
8. What are the criteria for being a member of the Steering Committee; how are people chosen? Several selection criteria; Demographics, try to have a balanced committee, Geographic 3 tiers; 1. Adjacency 2. Can you bike to the park? 3. Are

you within the outer limits of service area? Also, are you representing specific interest groups.

9. Will anything be posted after each of the meetings so that the public can comment? At this time, no. It is not practical to field answers for 11,000 or so questions. But the Steering Committee will be given minutes and hand held graphics at each meeting that they can distribute to interested people, and bring back comments or questions to the next Steering Committee Meeting.
10. Will a list of people chosen to be on the Steering Committee be posted? The County can look into that.
11. What is the status of the park right now? Open except for the areas where demolition is occurring.
12. Will the "Walk through Bethlehem" program be continued? County will certainly look into what will be needed to facilitate that and take it under advisement.
13. Where is the money for the park coming from? Conservation Funding? Park is mostly covered under SPLOST funding.
14. What is the timeline for the Committee Applications? Steering Committee will be notified in January.
15. What is going on now at the park? Demolition of the conference center buildings. The chapel, maintenance building, and restroom will remain.
16. Why? Had the buildings evaluated and it was determined that it would be too expensive to bring them up to code.
17. The existing wildlife should stay. I think the removal of the buildings should make it more passive and encourage wildlife, not detract from it.
18. Will there be a conservation easement put on the park? The County has done it in the past (Harbins Park). The Committee can make a recommendation for it.
19. Where does the decision go after the Steering Committee makes its recommendation? To the Recreation Authority and then to the Commissioners.
20. Dogs need to be kept on leashes; they scare the wildlife....and people.
21. More programs in the park might increase traffic. When it was a conference center most people came by bus so traffic wasn't so bad.
22. What is the policy on hunting in the park? It's illegal.
23. Will there be access to the river, like for kayaks and canoes? Vehicular access would need to be provided to the river for boat drop off.
24. Will the park be fenced? Fencing is not a County policy.
25. What do you do about private property owners encroaching on park lands? Ask them to remove whatever is on park property.
26. Why are trees being taken down in the park? County has not taken any healthy trees down. The ones that are coming down have been assessed as unhealthy, dangerous or dead. Typically once down they are left in place to encourage natural decomposition.
27. How much parking is in an open space park? Generally 150-200 parking spaces in an Open Space Park.

The meeting concluded at approximately 9:00pm

If there are any additions or corrections to these meeting minutes, please contact Raigan Carr of jB+a as soon as possible at 678.247.0727.



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE MASTER PLAN – Scheduling Meeting**

**Minutes from:** 01.28.2016 Scheduling Meeting

**Attendees:** Gwinnett County Department of Community Services –Grant Guess, Rex Schuder  
JB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

**Steering Committee Participants** - Joyce Teel, Lorrie Backer, Michelle Wehrheim, Lorrie Christopher, Matt Houser, Cindy Waldo, Preston Chappell, Nancy Geigler, David Sprinkle, Brad Reid, Anne Sheffield, Gray Terry, Julie Barnash, Mark Thornell, Linda Hostinsky, Steve Ratchford, Mike Verna, Pat O'Leary, Rodney Ho, David Jones, Renee Morehouse, Lauren Azoulai, Robert Gates

**Location:** Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C  
(4500 Jones Bridge Circle, Norcross, GA)

**Time:** 7:00 pm

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Attendees were asked to sign in as they entered and asked to take a Gwinnett County Conservation Parks handout before being seated.

Rex Schuder welcomed everyone to the Scheduling Meeting for Simpsonwood Park.

Introductions were made around the table; County Staff, Consultants and Steering Committee Members introduced themselves and the organization they represented, if any.

Rex gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the meeting - to schedule the meetings for the Simpsonwood Park Master Planning process, and then directed everyone's attention to the Gwinnett County Conservation Parks handout they had been given. Rex then noted that all the parks shown on the handout, except the Simpsonwood Property, had some form of easement, deed restriction or language placed upon it that protected / preserved the property as an open space park. The handout also included an example of a Deed of Conservation Easement as well as an example of an allowable facilities list extracted from a typical Gwinnett County Passive Park Conservation Easement.

Scheduling of meetings then commenced. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

- **February 13th, 2016 – Gwinnett Park System Tour**  
*(Saturday 8:30am to approximately 5:00pm)*  
Steering Committee Members are to meet at Simpsonwood United Methodist Church- Family Life Center, Building C, Upper Parking level by 8:15am. The bus tour will depart from the parking area at 8:30 am. Several park types will be visited and specific park elements will be highlighted. Lunch location TBD and everyone will be responsible for payment of his / her own lunch. Graphics of visited sites will be handed out. Steering Committee Members are encouraged to bring bottled water, individual snacks, note pad and writing utensil for taking notes. The park system tour will commence rain or shine. Please dress appropriately and bring an umbrella or rain gear.
- **February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 – Simpsonwood Park Site Walk**  
*(Sunday 1:00pm to approximately 5:00pm)*  
Steering Committee Members are to meet at Simpsonwood United Methodist Church- Family Life Center, Building C, Upper Parking level at 1:00pm. The site walk will commence at 1:15pm with the expectation of completing the walk and returning to the church by 5:00pm. Select portions of the site will be hiked to give an overview or tasting of the various characteristics of the site. Steering Committee Members are encouraged to dress appropriately; hiking boots, or comfortable walking shoes, weather appropriate outerwear or umbrella, bring a bottle of water, note pad and writing utensil for taking notes. Site walk will commence rain or shine.

- **March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016** – Inventory & Analysis / Programming Meeting  
(*Thursday, 7:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C*)  
jB+a will present Inventory & Analysis drawings (topographical, vegetation, hydrology, soil analysis etc.) and discuss the opportunities and constraints of the park site. A park programming discussion will follow the presentation of the graphics.
- **April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016** – Concept Development Meeting  
(*Thursday, 7:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C*)  
jB+a will present three (3) different concepts for the Simpsonwood Park Site based on the agreed upon program elements requested during the previous meeting. The drawings will be shown in color as loose form / bubble diagrams. The intent of the meeting is to focus on the relationships between the park elements rather than focusing on the details of the park elements.
- **June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016** – Preliminary Master Plan Meeting  
(*Thursday, 7:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C*)  
jB+a will present a graphic of the Preliminary Master Plan for the Simpsonwood Park Site for review and comment. This graphic will be illustrative in nature and will reflect a birds-eye view of the park. A preliminary cost estimate will be distributed to the Steering Committee at the close of the meeting; discussion of the cost estimate will commence at the Final Master Plan meeting.
- **June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016** – Public Drop in Meeting  
(*Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C*)  
The Steering Committee Developed Preliminary Master Plan graphic will be on display to the public for review and comment. Revisions requested from the Steering Committee during the Preliminary Master Plan Meeting will have been incorporated into this graphic. County Staff and Consultants will be available to answer questions for the attendees. Steering Committee Members are encouraged to attend.
- **August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016** - Final Master Plan Meeting  
(*Thursday, 7:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C*)  
jB+a will present the graphic for the Final Master Plan for the Simpsonwood Park Site. This graphic will be a refined illustrative graphic that incorporates any comments received back from the Public Drop-in Meeting. The main focus of the meeting will be the prioritization of park elements based on a more refined final cost estimate.
- **August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016** – Fall Back Meeting  
(*Thursday, 7:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C*)  
This meeting is scheduled as a reserved meeting date in the event an additional meeting (Ex. Hybrid Concept Meeting) is necessary to reach a consensus. If the additional meeting is added midway through the design process then each consecutive meeting would then be bumped to the next meeting date.
- \*\* **TBD- Recreation Authority Presentation.**  
jB+a will present the Steering Committee's approved Final Master Plan for the Simpsonwood Park Site and their prioritized recommendations to the Recreation Authority. Steering Committee Members are encouraged to attend this meeting if possible. Dates for presentations to the Recreation Authority will be determined at a later date and the Steering Committee will be notified by Rex Schuder.

Following the scheduling of the design development meetings 2 additional handouts were distributed to the Steering Committee Members:

Selected Demographic Data by Census Tract

The Selected Demographic Data by census tract demonstrates considerable community population constituency variation within the park's service area. Much of the difference is a function of

changes in housing stock across the area, with associated consequences in age cohorts and family types linked to housing type and affordability.

The Citizen Steering Committee reside principally in census tracts 503.21, 503.22 and 503.08. These tracts have more than the Gwinnett county average of persons age 65 and above, while simultaneously having more than the Gwinnett County average of persons age 18 and younger. These characteristics are joined to a less than average inclusion of the 20-24 and 25-34 age group cohorts, most likely due to few apartment or entry level single family home housing opportunities within those three census tracts.

The Demographics package contains data for the zone from the DeKalb County line, the Chattahoochee River, western Duluth City limits and the southeast to I-85.

Simpsonwood Park Master Plan Citizen Steering Committee Document Package included:

1. Meeting minutes and survey tabulations from the November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Public Input Meeting.
2. Cultural Resources Literature and Records Search of the Simpsonwood Park Property.

The Simpsonwood Scheduling Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00pm.



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE MASTER PLAN – Park System Tour**

Minutes from: 02.13.16 Park System Tour

Attendees: Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder

jB+a, inc. –Steve Provost, Raigan Carr, Chuck Ehmcke

Saturday Steering Committee participants – Linda Hostinsky, Rodney Ho, Cindy Waldo, Preston Chappell, Lorrie Christopher, Lorrie Backer, Brett Wylie, Anne Sheffield, Gray Terry, Pat O’Leary, Joyce Teel, Robert Gates, Mike Verna, Jody Meller, Brad Reid, Matt Houser, Steve Ratchford, Renee Morehouse, Lauren Azoulai

Tuesday (02.16.16) Steering Committee Participants – Nancy Geigler, Julie Barnash, Nancy Yang

Location: Simpsonwood United Methodist Church Parking Lot

Time: 8:15am meeting, 8:30am departure

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Consultants and Steering Committee Members met at the Simpsonwood UMC parking lot to begin a park tour that would include 5 existing park sites. The intent was to visit and discuss examples of different park elements and their spatial requirements that could potentially be sited on the Simpsonwood Park Site. These parks included the following:

Little Mulberry Park (3800 Hog Mountain Road, Dacula, GA 30019): NOTE: There are multiple entrances to this park due to its size. Little Mulberry Park is an 890 acre Open Space Park. With an extensive trail system for Pedestrians and Equestrians, playground facilities, disc golf course, fishing lake, and picnic pavilions. The Steering Committee visited the newest playground area, walked a section of paved multi-purpose trail and visited a lake overlook. The trail winds through densely wooded and open areas of varying terrain. Special attention was given to the way the trail was laid out to provide active drainage and a positive user experience influenced by safety issues, topography, visual interest, and trail materials. The Steering Committee then briefly visited the picnic pavilion area located at 3855 Fence Road, in Auburn Georgia 30011

Harbins Park (2995 Luke Edwards Road, Dacula GA 30019) Harbins Park is a 1960 acre Park comprised of an active community park and a passive conservation park. The conservation park is Gwinnett County’s largest park and hosts only passive recreation types. The Steering Committee viewed the existing equestrian parking area via windshield tour and then visited the parking area / trail head area for the conservation Park. Typical of the majority of open space parks within the Gwinnett County System, the vehicular / parking areas are confined to the front of the park; not impinging on the core of the park. The Steering Committee briefly visited the multi-use trail, stopping to view an open space park standard pavilion (more rustic in nature) and the large playground area provided near the front of the park. Overflow parking and pervious pavement types were pointed out.

Tribble Mill Park (2125 Tribble Mill Parkway SE, Lawrenceville, GA 30045): Tribble Mill Park is a 718 acre Open Space Park which was developed before a standard Open Space Park definition was developed. Tribble Mill Park includes an extensive vehicular access system that winds throughout the park; the separation between vehicular and pedestrian traffic is compromised. The

Steering Committee visited the Festival Field area where overflow / reinforced parking in addition to water quality practices (i.e. detention basin requirements). The Festival Field area of this park includes a large playground. Color selection of playground equipment was discussed. Other amenities at Tribble Mill Park include a fishing lake with boat access (non-motorized only), picnic pavilions with grills, multi-purpose trails and soft surface trails.

Alexander Park (800 Old Snellville Hwy, Lawrenceville, GA 30044): Alexander Park is a 91 acre community park that offers a variety of passive activities for park users. Due to the extensive popularity of this park number of cars within the parking area, Alexander Park was viewed from the bus to limit bus / car conflict. The importance of day-use activities in the park was discussed. Providing park activities; such as playgrounds, walking trails, and pavilions, that can be utilized during off-peak hours (weekdays) allows for passive policing within our parks.

McDaniel Farm Park (3251 McDaniel Road, Duluth, GA 30096): McDaniel Farm Park is a 134 acre Passive Heritage Park. Steering committee members discussed the architecture of the park and the design decisions that went into designing /siting them. By simply skewing the roof structure of the pavilion to reinforce the directional flow of the multi-use trail, the architect was able to direct the user's attention toward a pedestrian bridge and historic barn structure. The Steering Committee walked a portion of the multi-use trail, visited the pedestrian bridge and returned to the previous paving parking area.

The McDaniel Farm Park tour continued with a visualizing exercise for the next phase of construction at the northern corner of the park. Steering Committee members processed into the site from what will be a northern entrance into the park. While looking at a graphic of the Phase II park improvements, the proposed layout of a new parking area, picnic pavilion, restroom building, playground, and dog park was discussed and visually sited while standing within the proposed construction zone.

Settles Bridge Park (380 Johnson Road, Suwanee, GA 30024) – The 268-acre park includes a 1.8-mile paved trail, 2.4-acre dog park area, playground, 60' pavilion with grill area, two half-court basketball courts, 10,000 sq. ft. skate complex with bowls, and restrooms. The skate park was visited and the liability of having such an element was discussed. (Statistics show that fewer lawsuits were filed due to injuries obtained due to skating accidents than any injury obtained through structured active recreation types – Football, baseball, soccer, etc.) Additionally, the importance of providing activities and a place to gather for teens was discussed. The dog park area was then visited and the importance of a 6' high fence and the separation of uses for dogs of a variety of sizes were discussed.

Park System Tour adjourned at approximately 5:00pm.

Next Meeting: **February 21, 2016 – Simpsonwood Park Site Walk**

*(Sunday, 1:00pm – 5:00pm Simpsonwood UMC- Building C upper parking lot)*

We will meet / park at Simpsonwood UMC and then walk across Jones Bridge Circle to the Simpsonwood Park Site for our site walk. Site walk will commence at 1:00pm. Select portions of the site will be hiked to give an overview or tasting of the various characteristics of the site. Steering Committee Members are encouraged to dress appropriately for weather and terrain and to bring a bottle of water. Site tour will be conducted rain or shine, please dress appropriately.

## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK SITE MASTER PLAN – Park System Tour**

Minutes from: 02.13.16 Park System Tour

Attendees: Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder, Mark Patterson, Eric Horne

jB+a, inc. –Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

Saturday Steering Committee participants – Preston Chappell, Robert Gates, Joyce Teel, Don Backer, Lorrie Backer, Nancy Geigler, Steve Ratchford, Mike Verna, David Sprinkle, Linda Hostinsky, Lorrie Christopher, Cindy Waldo, Matt Houser, Gray Terry, Pat O’Leary, Jody Meller, Julie Barnash, Renee Morehouse, Rodney Ho

Location: Simpsonwood United Methodist Church Parking Lot

Time: 1:00pm

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Consultants and Steering Committee Members met at the Simpsonwood UMC parking lot, across Jones Bridge Circle, from the Simpsonwood Park site. Copies of the park site plan were distributed to the committee and the site walk commenced.

The tour began with a walk along the park entrance drive toward the existing chapel stopping briefly to discuss how exotic species brought to the United States for use as ornamental plantings have naturalized and are not considered exotic invasives. In addition, a brief discussion about early emergent hardwood forests was initiated. Early emergent hardwood forests are predominantly young to medium growth evergreen trees, such as loblolly pine, with young deciduous hardwoods consisting of red maple, black cherry, and tulip poplar mixed in. The forest type is young enough that oak, hickory, and beech have not had time to establish.

At the chapel the steering committee was met by Mark Patterson – Gwinnett County Conservation Parks District Coordinator. Mark has been with the County for over 25 years and his position focuses on the operation management of the county parks natural areas. Mark gave a status update of the projects the County is currently focusing on at Simpsonwood Park. These projects include:

1. Maintaining the Chapel as an event facility (small weddings, small gatherings)
  - Handicapped accessibility
  - Amended landscape through salvaging plants from demo areas on site.
  - Recycling Marble Memorial Benches (Salvaged from various areas on the park site, recycled to create reflection areas)
  - Construction of a restroom facility
2. Removing invasive plants such as privet, Nepalese browntop, mahonia, eleagnus (etc.) and improving the area for better biodiversity.
3. Planting more native species to increase the wildlife habitat within the park.
  - Mentioned a domestic cat issue. Cats are predatory by nature and have a disastrous effect on small reptiles, amphibians, and birds. Asked for cooperation from cat owners to keep cats inside rather than letting them roam.

The steering committee returned to the front of the park and the tour continued along an unmarked natural surface trail. Entering the trail just north of the existing restroom building the committee traveled southeast to an area rich with young pines. This area encompasses approximately 17.5 acres near the eastern boundary of the park. Discussion about how this area could potentially be a developable area; sacrificing the young quick growing pines to preserve the more valuable hardwoods found throughout the rest of the park site. In addition, with this area being so near the front of the park it would be easy to consolidate development of open space park elements (such as playgrounds, pavilions, required parking, etc.) leaving the remainder of the park more natural.

Back tracking through the young pine area and tying into the marked natural surface trail the steering committee continued on the marked trail to the detention area on the northern side of the dam. Discussion regarding the potential for the restoration of the natural system area took place. As a detention basin the area has silted in, so a certain amount of flow to stream would need to be established so that native flora and fauna could then thrive.

Continuing along the marked trail to the former camping area the group passed through a section of early hardwood forest. Within this area oaks and beeches are beginning to establish themselves but the ground plain is still void of a shrub layer. The location of the former campground was considered. Due to the proximity of the adjacent neighbors, it was determined that this location was not ideal for this use. While it is still possible to have camping as a potential park element within Simpsonwood Park relocation will be necessary. This former camping area would then be allowed to "heal back"; replanting native trees and shrubs.

As the committee approached mile marker 1.25 along the marked trail the group veered off the marked trail and made their way down toward the new sewer easement cut. This area has been severely impacted by the construction of the sewer easement; with tree removal, water ponding, and the lack of reestablishment of plant material. While this area needs to remain open for maintenance potential, this area can be salvaged with the planting of native grasses or ferns or other native, low maintenance ground covers. Rather than being an eye sore within the park site, it does have the potential to become something that blends in.

Following the ridge line toward mile marker 1.0 the committee stopped to consider this knoll as a potential location for the former camping area as the nearest neighbor is the lift station located in the western corner of the park site. This camping area would be similar to the camping element at Yellow River Park.

The committee continued along the trail to where it intersected the lift station access road, crossed the road and walked along the trail to where it began to parallel the Chattahoochee River. The marked trail at this area lies within the 100 year flood plain and within the setbacks that govern the river. In addition, there are obvious pedestrian "river access points" that add to the bank erosion and are a safety hazard. The banks within the Simpsonwood Park boundaries

are too steep to allow for river access. Better river access is available at Holcomb Bridge Park. Ideally, the trail will be moved back out of the river setback while still allowing visibility to the river and then providing access to the river via overlook structures. These structures could provide seating areas; similar to those we saw at Little Mulberry Park.

As the committee finished up the tour they made their way back to the front of the park by walking through the areas that have been demo-ed along the existing drive. Discussion about how the existing drive, or at least its road base, could be used as part of the multi-use trail and a part of that as an accessible trail with potential grades of 2-3% max.

The site walk concluded at approximately 4:00.



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Analysis / Programming Meeting**

**Minutes from:** 03.10.2016 Meeting

**Attendees:** Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder, Mark Patterson

jB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

**Steering Committee Participants:** David Jones, Mark Thornell, Lorrie Christopher, Preston Chappell, Lorrie Backer, Renee Morehouse, Steve Ratchford, Gray Terry, Cindy Waldo, Jody Meller, Brett Wylie, Linda Hostinsky, David Sprinkle, Robert Gates, Brad Reid, Jay Lowe, Nancy Yang, Joyce Teel, Matt Houser, Nancy Geigler, Lauren Azoulai, Julie Barnash, Anne Sheffield

**Location:** Simpsonwood United Methodist Church, Building C

**Time:** 7:00 – 10:00pm

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Rex Schuder welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Mark Patterson spoke briefly about the opportunity at Simpsonwood to protect and restore plant and animal diversity. Mark also noted that some areas of the site accessed by trails will need modification to insure long term sustainability, to reduce erosion and to remove/replace exotic invasive plant material. Mark noted that the park needed to be planned with a view to the long term.

Analysis graphics were then presented by Raigan Carr of jB+a. The following points regarding the site were emphasized:

### Soils Analysis

- Helps determine which soils on site are most stable and favorable for development.
- The site has a variety of different soil types – 18 different major soil types
- The majorities of existing soil types on site are favorable for development utilizing some planning and design techniques.
- Soils located within the floodplain of the stream and tributary on site, indicate poor percolation and unstable soil structure and are therefore not favorable for development.
- 6 soil types that are not favorable for development;
  - BfS, Cfs, Cos, Cus, – due to stability, they are frequently flooded, poorly drained, and generally lie within the stream setback.
  - LDF, and MiF2 – due to steep slopes; although with some engineering development may be possible.

### Slope Analysis

- Site reflects variable topography with both hills and valleys.
- Graphic indicates a contour interval of 2'.
- Majority of the slopes on the site lie in the range of 5%-10% covering 63.5 Acres, 10-15% slopes covering 52.0 acres and 0-5% Slopes covering 47.6 acres. The remaining 59+ acres have steep slopes in excess of 15%.
- The high point (elev. 984.0 is located centered near the entrance to the park on Jones Bridge Circle. The low point (elev. 870.0) of the site is located at the western most corner of the site where it touches the Chattahoochee River. The maximum grade change across the site is 114 vertical feet.
- Site possesses positive drainage patterns due to ridges and stream valleys across site.

- The main water feature near the site is the Chattahoochee River. A blue line stream, Bucks Creek cuts through the southern portion of the site. There are also several minor tributaries that intersect Bucks Creek.
- A Primary Ridgeline cuts through the site draining water into 2 major watershed areas. One draining toward the Chattahoochee River, the other draining toward Bucks Creek.

#### Vegetative Analysis

- Site illustrates a mixture of vegetation types.
- The transitional forest type (transitioning into deciduous hardwood forest) predominates with some stands entirely hardwood.
- The early emergent forest type; still a mixture of young pine and successional hardwoods; maples, tulip poplar, etc. (oaks, hickory and beech trees have not migrated in yet) is a more desirable area for development. Younger trees tend to acclimate to changes easier than older trees. Slope gradient may limit development in some areas.
- A substantial area of young pine (approximately 17 acres) exists near the eastern portion of the site. It too is a favorable location for development as it has less botanical diversity and is furthest from a climax hardwood forest on the continuum of forest succession.
- Riparian forest types exist within the river and stream corridors.
- Areas within the park that have been intentionally left as open space include the great lawn area, the small lawn area near the chapel and a small area near the basketball courts.
- Resultant open space areas are largely open as a result of the demolition of former structures, with groups of trees that once occupied the margins of parking lots and buildings area plus areas void of trees due to the presence of sanitary sewer easements.
- The site has a great diversity of existing plant materials / communities that are assets to the park site. While not intricately detailed within this analysis graphic they will be considered. The intent is to try to keep any development that may occur within the park site within areas that have already been disturbed (through past development / demolition) and are unlikely to house these plant communities or to limit development to areas within the park that are capable of recovering quickly.
- Many invasives found along stream banks and low lands, specifically privet, need to be removed from site.

#### Opportunities / Constraints

The opportunities and constraints graphic was developed by overlaying the constraints from each of the other graphics;

- Unfavorable soils
- Slopes that were greater than 15%
- 100 year floodway, and 100 year flood zone,
- Stream setbacks
- Vegetated areas of the site that should be conserved

By overlaying each constraint (area where development is not favorable) 3 specific areas emerged as to the most favorable areas for development. These areas included:

- An area near the eastern edge of the site (off Jones Bridge Circle) located predominantly within the pine forest area.
- A centrally located zone near the existing chapel located within a large Early Emergent forest type on favorable soils and slopes.
- A zone deepest into the park site where the former buildings have been demolished. Limited vegetation, land formerly graded to accommodate buildings, favorable soils.

Using these locations elements such as proximity to neighbors, view-shed, noise, access can all be considered.

Following the presentation of the Analysis graphics, the tabulations from the Community Interest Forms (RE: Minutes Simpsonwood Public Interest Meeting November 12, 2105) were distributed. Grant Guess gave an overview of the forms and commenced with the programming discussion. Each of the elements listed on the spreadsheet was highlighted to fall into 1 of 5 categories;

1. Not an amenity (Example: Educational Programs – programming element)
2. Baseline Amenity - an amenity appropriate for this open space park (Example: Nature trails)
3. Not Suitable here – (Example: River Access – no safe way to access river, slopes are too steep and unstable. Better access at Jones Bridge Park)
4. Committee choice – elements within the tabulation list up for vote by the Committee (Example: Playground, Dog Park, Camping)
5. ?????? – Elements that were listed on the Community Interest Forms but were either vague in description or didn't fall into a category (Example – Architectural features, Bigger DNR / NPS Presence)

The categorization of the Community Interest Form Tabulations was intended to serve as a point of departure for discussion during the Programming portion of the meeting. Committee members were asked to comment on the requested elements as well as state programming elements they wished to see in the park.

After significant discussion on how to commence with the programming discussion the Steering Committee decided to eliminate all elements that were up for Steering Committee consideration (Fell within the Committee Choice Category) that did not have a rating of 10 or higher, unless someone spoke out about an element.

*Note: One member spoke out for including Disc Golf course in the park. The committee voted 1 for with 22 against. Disc Golf will not be considered as a park element within Simpsonwood Park*

Discussion continued for each of the other park elements within the Committee Choice Category Commenced. Based off much discussion the following elements are to be included per the Steering Committees direction, in the concept graphics for Simpsonwood Park.

#### Baseline Elements

1. Nature Trails
2. Multi-use Trails (Including an accessible section)
3. Trail Markers – Kiosks
4. Park for All – activities for a variety of ages and abilities
5. Site Restoration
6. Interpretive Trail
7. Open Space
8. Picnic Pavilion
9. Parking
10. Bridges
11. Restrooms
12. Restore historic chapel (Use as an event space)

#### Committee Choice

- Camping – (Vote – passed unanimously)  
Group camping only (Scouts, church groups), primitive
- Open Picnic Areas (Vote – passed unanimously)  
No shelter, just picnic tables

- Wildlife Sanctuary – (Vote passed unanimously)  
Voted to include a section in the Project report that recommends placing a Conservation Easement on the Simpsonwood Park site.
- Fishing Dock / Overlook Areas - (Vote passed unanimously)  
Overlook areas are to be planned near rivers edge to allow views of the river, serve as a resting / contemplation area, and allow for pole fishing from dock.
- Playground – (voted 15 for with 8 against)  
(The playground was categorized as a Baseline Element; however, many of the Steering Committee Members were opposed to including it in the park and requested a vote be taken.)

Several Steering Committee members spoke out against including a playground within Simpsonwood Park stating:

1. Every neighborhood nearby has its own playground,
2. Nearby Jones Bridge Park has a playground and to put one at Simpsonwood would be a duplication of uses,
3. Simpsonwood Park should be kept natural! No additional development
4. Nature should be the playground. We don't need commercial playground equipment in the park!

Other Steering Committee Members spoke out for including a playground stating:

- 1. It's one of the highest requested elements on the Community Interest Form, we are supposed to be representing the community at large; to not include the playground would be to ignore the requests of the community.
- 2. Would like to include the playground so there are things to do for all ages. One of the requests on the Community Interest Forms is "A Park for all ages."
- Dog Park - (see below)  
During the programming discussion, the inclusion of a Dog Park was debated. As with the playground, the dog park was a very contentious item. Several Steering Committee Members spoke out against including a dog park within Simpsonwood Park stating:
  1. We don't need a dog park, we need to limit development.
  2. No one will use a dog park.

Other Steering Committee Members spoke out for including a Dog Park Stating:

1. If the County leash law is going to be enforced (County Regulatory Ordinance 1029) then we should think about giving dog owners a place where the dogs can run around unleashed.
2. It's a highly requested element on the Community Interest Form. If we are representing the community at large then I think we need to include a dog park in the programming.

A Vote was taken 8 for with 15 against.

Following the discussion of the program elements additional Steering Committee Members spoke out on behalf of including a Dog Park in the programming elements stating:

1. I feel strongly about this, we are not giving fair consideration to those people who requested a dog park.
2. I think we need to at least see what it looks like in plan to understand what type of land requirements it takes.
3. We really need to give the dogs a place to go. It might even help keep the dog poop off the trails if they have a place they can go to run around.

Steering Committee members requested a revote to include the dog park in the concept graphics.

A Vote was taken 12 for with 7 against.

Note: Since several committee members left the meeting prior to the Dog Park revote, two additional Concepts will be prepared for presentation; they will illustrate options that include the dog Park. Three concepts will be prepared to illustrate the original elements that were voted on an approved by the full number of Steering Committee Members that had been present at the meeting.

One other item was voted on by the Steering Committee and requested to be documented in the project report. That item was to allow for the park to be dog friendly provided the leash law (County Regulatory Ordinance 1029) is enforced.

The Committee endorsed the ordinance unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm

**Next Meeting:** April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – Concept Development Meeting  
(Thursday, 7:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C)

jB+a will present five (5) different concepts for the Simpsonwood Park Site based on the agreed upon program elements requested during the previous meeting. The drawings will be shown in color as loose form / bubble diagrams. The intent of the meeting is to focus on the relationships between the park elements rather than focusing on the details of the park elements.



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Concept Meeting**

**Minutes from:** 04.28.2016 Meeting

**Attendees:** Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder

jB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

**Steering Committee Participants:** Michelle Wehrheim, Lorrie Christopher, Jay Lowe, Gray Terry, Lauren Azoulai, Lorrie Backer, Julie Barnash, Preston Chappell, Robert Gates, Nancy Geigler, Rodney Ho, Linda Hotinsky, Jody Meller, Renee Morehouse, Pat O’Leary, Steve Ratchford, Brad Reid, Anne Sheffield, David Sprinkle, Joyce Teel, Mark Thornell, Mike Verna, Cindy Waldo, Nancy Yang, Brett Wylie.

**Location:** Simpsonwood United Methodist Church, Building C

**Time:** 7:00 – 10:00pm

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Grant Guess welcomes the Steering Committee Members to the meeting and makes opening comments. Reviews the stats on impervious surfaces that have been removed from the site since purchase of the Simpsonwood Property, and details the improvements/ maintenance that has been done at the Chapel

The Consulting Team, jB+a, inc. is then introduced.

Steve Provost, jB+a, presents concepts

- Still early in the design process - site analysis has been done and feedback has been gathered from committee on the types of program items would like to see or not see within the park.
- Concepts are designed to show relations between the various elements in the park – spatial proximity, not focused on details.
- Reviewed the format of the meeting; will have a discussion period where everyone individually will get a chance to voice their opinions on the concepts.

### **Presents PowerPoint Presentation**

- Impervious surface slide – prior to demolition 8.5 acres of impervious surface. Each concept reduces the amount of impervious surface by 10-30% constituting 4-6% of the entire property.
- Baseline elements as per Programming Meeting.
  - Chapel with dedicated parking and Restroom
  - Maintenance Compound
  - Adequate Parking
  - Trail System (Multi-use trail with accessible section, nature / interpretive trails, new bridges, boardwalks and overlooks at river)
  - Pavilion Playground Complex / Restroom
  - Group Camping Area
  - Open Space
- Subsequent Elements
  - Dog Park

### **Concept One**

- Entrance relocated to align with curb cut at Simpsonwood UMC
- Development at front of Park
  - Pavilion / Playground Complex on subsidiary drive
  - Located in Pine woods near cell tower – preserves hardwoods
  - Maintenance yard relocated to be near development

- Total Parking – 266 parking spaces
- Vehicular access terminated at chapel
- Multi-use trail
  - ADA Section (<3%) 1.5 mile loop
  - Connector Loop (not ADA) .75 Mile
  - Shared Section 575 LF
- Group Camping Area proximate to restroom and parking serving chapel
- Open Space / Meadow
  - Three large open areas w/ shelters
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space
- Dog Park Option
  - Three options with parking proximate
  - Utilizes existing / remnant open space.

### **Natural Learning Playground**

- Playground – At Programming meeting there was a lot of interest in or not in playground. Natural Learning Playground fits the playground into the environment. Site specifically to introduce children to nature and the natural environment with built structure. Designed to create spaces where children can use play equipment and learn about nature within the natural environment. Utilizes significantly more land than a traditional playground but area off set by incorporating plantings.

### **Concept Two**

- Circular loop entrance aligned with curb cuts at Simpsonwood UMC
- Development at front of park
  - Pavilion / Playground complex at ridge
  - Located in Pine woods near cell tower – preserves hardwoods
  - Maintenance yard located to be near development
- Total Parking 245 parking spaces
- Vehicular access terminated at Chapel
  - Chapel Event parking occupying the demolished pool / tennis court zone
- Multi-Use Trail
  - ADA Section (<3%) 1.5 mile loop
  - Connector Loop (not ADA) .87 Mile
  - Shared Section 850 LF
- Group Camping Area proximate to restroom and parking at Playground / Pavilion complex.
- Open Space / Meadow
  - Two large open areas w/ shelters
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space
- Dog Park Option
  - One option with parking proximate – utilizes existing meadow.

### **Concept Three**

- Existing entrance and Maintenance yard locations maintained
- Development deeper into the site
  - Pavilion / Playground complex shares parking with Chapel
  - Occupies space at largest meadow (remnant)
- Total Parking – 240 parking spaces
- Vehicular access terminated at large parking area
- Multi-use Trail
  - ADA Section (<3%) 1.5 mile loop
- Group Camping Area proximate to restroom and parking at existing great lawn

- Open Space / Meadow
  - Three large open areas w/ shelters
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space
- Dog Park Option
  - Three options w/ Parking proximate
  - Utilizes existing meadow / remnant open space.

### **Clarification Questions**

1. How many acres are cleared for Multi-use trail – 3 acres roughly for 2 mile trail – field located to minimize disturbance of existing trees. 15' wide (12' wide trail with 18" shoulders on either side) Possible to reintroduce native shrubs and groundcovers on the verges of the trail (species that are currently missing from the park site) to heal in the trail – it would appear as though it had been there for many years. Intent would be to build up the botanical biological diversity of the site through the mechanism of the construction of the site. On a 12' wide trail possible to run a water truck so that as the materials are being healed they can be watered.
2. Specifically what are the shoulders of the trail – Depends where you are in the construction drawings...it is possible to have a minimal 15' width. Won't be in all areas. Trails are laid out physically on the site. County will need to put a little extra money into the budget so that it stays natural with natural materials.
3. Great lawn currently has a gravel parking area – is that gone off these plans? These concepts are not to that level of detail.
4. Why is the trail 12' wide – AASHTO requirements. Multi-use trail for two way traffic. Safety issues.
5. Can the ADA compliant trail be natural surface? Not with these slopes. The trail will wash at 2%. This will be an asphalt surface, or boardwalk in areas. This will be the primary area where runners come to run. There may be areas where we switch to a pervious surface such as concrete or asphalt.
6. Does there have to be a MU trail – Yes. One of the higher ranking elements, steering committee requested this item at our last meeting. Time and time again it is the most used park element in every County Park.

### **Discussion**

The program that we have on this park is the absolute minimum of all the open space parks in the county.

Jay Lowe - Amount of traffic is my main concern being in a residential area.

Michelle Wehrheim – Concept one – Camping area and maintenance, concept 3 – rental pavilion,

Lorrie Christopher – Favorite layout #3. Least number of parking spaces, trail layout, like the camping location, like the preservation of the great lawn, not in favor of the dog park.

Jay Lowe – Concept 3, Group camping concept 1 – more camping, enjoy nature, MU trail less is more, not in favor of the dog park.

Gray Terry – Least amount of disturbance as possible a lot of passion about the park. Concept 3 appears to be the least invasive, has fewest parking, dog park – County enforcing the leash law. If you do the dog park then the County needs to enforce the leash law. No dog park if we have to take down trees – concept 2 would work the best for trees.

Lauren Azoulai – Concept 3, seems like parking is sufficient. Camping location needs to be inside further inside the park – Smart to align the entrances with the church for safety reasons. Dog Park should be interior...deepest in the site.

Lorrie Backer – No parking beyond the chapel –Campground should be more toward the tower. Concept 2 playground near meadowland MU trail – minimum is better (Concept 3). Dog Park location – no dog park.

Julie Barnash – Concept 2, parking is too close to the residences. Entrance from 3. Camping 1, MU trail as far from the houses as possible, maintenance stays where it is, no dog park.

Preston Chappell – Concept 3 modified, Existing entrance, concept 2 is good for parking, no playground utilize space where the existing pavilion is, no dog park, multiuse trail reduce width, permeable asphalt , align with existing trails, conservation easement.

Robert Gates – Concept 3 minimal, historical entrance, move parking back to former pool area, Concept 2 parking, no dog park, camping 1, multiuse trail looks good. Need accessibility of trail, like 2 loops but one is acceptable as well.

Nancy Geigler – Parking of 2 because it does not go as deep into the site, existing entrance #3, Concept 1 parking might be too close to the residential area – but we talked about putting elements there because of the type of trees, dog park at pool / tennis location. Group camping #1

Rodney Ho – Minimize the impact of the site, don't like how deep the parking goes into the site. MU trail #3. Dog park – open space at the clearing

Linda Hotinsky – Concept 3 parking moved so that it does not go beyond the chapel camping ok in 3, no dog park or playground.

David Jones – Concept 3. 80% of architects and planners have no clue as to how to design parking for ADA parking. In favor of a dog park, put it closer to the parking nearest the road. People might want to come and just walk their dogs, Group camp concept 1. Chapel parking gradient concern, MU would like to allow for ADA hope to have option to at least 1 overlook.

Jody Meller – Concept 3 no reason to change the entrance. Parking as close to the entrance as possible (#1). Phase in parking as constructed if necessary. Group camping (2 sites) concepts 1 and 3. MU trail not a fan would prefer only natural trails, challenged that you can put in a 12' trail and still have it be shaded. Love the park because it is cooler. Less is more. Do not want a playground in this park. Do not want a dog park.

Renee Morehouse – Parking closer to the entrance #2, original entrance, loop trails – 2 loops gives you more options #1#2, group camping #1, Not in favor of a dog park.

Pat O'Leary – Concept 3, shift parking in open space and put playground open lawn, group camping #3, would not move camping closer to cell tower because they are boys and they will climb. Do not want dog park in this park. This is a Dog park on leash, but not one that would have a dog park. Net gain of open space, and net space of trees. Like the double loop MU trail, but please don't put it near the camp ground area. Leave maintenance facility where you have it. Win Win,

Steve Ratchford - Concept 2 – keep everything toward the front of the park. Would like a smaller trail (width). Road to the lift station could be used as part of the trail system. Access to the river – don't really need 4 overlooks maybe 1. No dog park

Brad Reid – entrance on #3. I like everything to the front of the park, push the parking up toward the open space near the pool / tennis – although don't like the stacked parking (125 parking) make it not feel like a

parking lot. Playground, pavilion stacked. Minimize pavilion only 1. No dog park. Don't like moving the maintenance to front of the park. Keep camping near geographic center of the park. MU trail very close to neighborhoods

Anne Sheffield – parking prefer concept 2, camping keep it away from cell tower, maintenance further into the site away from homes, no dog park, MU trial #3 because it hugs the road, prefer not to have a playground in this park.

David Sprinkle – Concept 3 preference. 185 parking doesn't need to go back so far. Not sure that much open space is necessary. Would like to see concept 2 for playground at pool tennis location. Camping concept #1, MU trail – concept 3 adequate – but shorter loop with the 1 ½. Dog Park doesn't belong here.

Joyce Teel – Concept 2, like the big parking lot away from the chapel. People using chapel perhaps for a wedding aren't going to want all those cars there. I like the idea of the loop turn around, I like the activity at the front of the park, support the dog park – keep it toward the front I like it on the great lawn, group camping – everyone keeps saying it is too close to the residents, I don't have a problem with it being near the front.

Mark Thornell – Concept #3. I like the idea of moving the parking toward the center of the park (#2) no dog park, do like the group camping in #1 I think it is nice, away from the roads away from activity. MU trail I like the double loop.

Mike Verna – I like the entrance in #3 but I don't like the parking going that deep into the park. Would prefer parking to go near #2. I like the idea of the playground – the natural playground we were shown. I like the Camping area and MU trail in concept #2. Lived in Colorado, avid hiker and biker – 8' trails are tight, 12' trail is much safer. Really surprised at the shape of the trails that are in the park, very dangerous. Maintenance building keep it where it is. Dog park I just don't see it here.

Cindy Waldo – Concerned about the traffic flow. Concept #3 lease impact on the site. Concerned about the amount of parking, I don't think we will need that much. I liked what Jody said would like to phase it in if possible. Parking should be closer to the front of the park. Squeeze in parking across from the 45. Don't think we need 4 overlooks. Camping – I don't like to tear down the maintenance building but I like the location for the camping – can the both fit? Don't like a dog park. MU trail – less is better.

Nancy Yang – Concept #2 except that I like original entrance. Parking is too close to residences in concept 2. Move Parking and playground closer to the road. Camping concept #1. One or two overlooks, no dog park, I like the double loop.

Brett Wylie – Concept #3 is general framework. Playground not convinced that it is needed in the park but if it is Concept 2 would be better. 25 parking existing use these. From street Jones Bridge you can barely make out the cell tower 300' in you most likely would not see element within the park. Entrance of #3, parking up front, campground buried in the site if we can find a place for the maintenance building. Phase in overlooks. MU trail less is more #3. Smaller loop and larger loop within the 1.5. not in favor of a dog park but if a dog park would go in the great lawn area it would limit the use of that area.

### **Additional Discussion**

Joyce Teel – Would like for everyone to get on the same page. This park is a good thing, I trust the County to do what is right.

Mark Thornell – need to make sure we take care of the neighbors of the park. Keep all elements of the park toward the interior

Brett Wylie – I would like to see how the traditional and the natural learning playground impact the site. Just a foot print so that we can be informed to judge the impact of the site.

Michelle Wehrheim– Ask the steering committee before you address the public with the plans to actually go out to the park, look at the plans and look at the site. There is a lot of misinformation floating around out there.

Lorrie Backer – Can you give us an idea of acreage for the playground pavilion complex - yes, in the next iteration we will show that.

Pat O'Leary – Is it possible to leave the maintenance building where it is and have the camping there as well.

Preston Chappel –How large an area is needed for the group camping? I hear the concerns about it being too close to Barrick but that is substantially larger than where the current camping area. There is a swath of trees that could buffer the camping area.

### **Voting**

Dog park (25 No), 1 Yes

Advancing the plan – 22 for advancement

Preliminary Master Plan to include the following:

- Optimize central area – pavilion playground parking,
- Some parking at the chapel - reinforced turf - minimal
- Camping zone at maintenance area
- Some parking at the front
- Parking at great lawn for
- Entrance will need to be refined – can't say entrance will be identical, attempt to
- Great lawn stays
- Large meadow in cleared zone.
- One or two structures on the river

Barrier / signs at the end of the sanitary sewer easement indicating private property.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm

### **Next Meeting: June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 – Preliminary Master Plan Meeting**

*(Thursday, 7:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C)*

jB+a will present a graphic of the Preliminary Master Plan for the Simpsonwood Park Site for review and comment. This graphic will be illustrative in nature and will reflect a birds-eye view of the park. A preliminary cost estimate will be distributed to the Steering Committee at the close of the meeting; discussion of the cost estimate will commence at the Final Master Plan meeting.

## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Concept Meeting**

April 28, 2016

Public Audience Comments as taken from distributed forms

Public responders include: Joyce Bone, Rick Rogers, Blanton Watson, Marilyn and David Warden, James Winters, Betty Williams, Irving Eichel, Liz Ireland, Shana Eichel, Tracie Norwak, Ray Miklethon, William Woods Jr., Sally Salosman, Julie Korvakin, Tom Williams, Rosa Brinkman, Scott Walch, Michele Walch, Roby Kerr, Yu-Sheng Hsu, Dana Dominy

### **Joyce Bone**

I disagree with the amount of parking spaces, the playground and the paved trails.

- Jones Bridge Park is 1 mile away and lots of playgrounds there.
- 240 plus parking spaces destroys "Passive Park" feeling
- Paved Trails – Simpsonwood is a natural treasure, why destroy?

Gwinnett County has the opportunity to do something special here and leave the park natural – that's how children learn about nature. Go Visits Roswell's Park – they use gravel and natural trails in their main park, Roswell Mill Park is all natural trails. This is how Simpsonwood should stay. Go walk the trail and enjoy the water fall. No Dog Park, No Playground.

### **Rick Rogers**

Simpsonwood should be left as natural as possible. We already have parks in the area with paved trails, playgrounds and grills (Jones Bridge Park, Pinckneyville). Some reasons for keeping it natural:

- Removal of trees
- Displacement of wildlife
- Additional expense for taxpayers for building and maintenance
- Additional traffic into residential areas. Jones Bridge Park was really nice years ago until they rebuilt it, now it's over run with people and trash.
- No Dog Park
- No Playground.

### **Blanton Watson**

Minimize soil disruption / grading in all plans.

Restrict facilities to be passive recreation only

- Walking trails with appropriate seating areas (benches etc.)
- Recreation equals - walking, birdwatching, "absorbing Nature"
- Recreation does not equal – man made activity (playground equipment)
- Incorporate overlooks / observation sites where the landscape naturally accommodates.
- Facility restrictions equals vehicle reduction

Orient parking and activity areas away from all property borders

- Minimize potential impact / conflict with existing homes
- Orient maintenance facility away from the front of the park

Consider currently available recreation facilities at nearby parks – do not replicate recreation offerings (playground / Dog Park)

Overall – no playground, no dog park, centralize all parking, move trails, parking etc. away from current homes.

### **Marilyn and David Warden**

Simpsonwood should remain greenspace as stipulated in the will of Ludie Simpson who owned the land. This should be seen as more of a natural park, which our Peachtree Corners neighbors have enjoyed for many years. We have lived in PC for 35+ years and have enjoyed Simpsonwood every day, especially walking on the many beautiful paths and trail. Preserve the beautiful area around the Chattahoochee River.

Save don't Pave! Please don't ruin our beautiful natural greenspace. Our Labrador retriever also loves walking on the natural trails, minimize traffic, woodland trail with tree canopy sounds good, boardwalk / bridges sounds good, less asphalt, camping area sounds nice, Concept 3 is the best plan presented.

**James Winters III**

Thank you for your time to plan the Simpsonwood Park to meet the needs of the Gwinnett County Citizens in particular the citizens of Peachtree Corners. Please keep Simpsonwood a Natural Park.

**Betty Williams**

Please consider not putting parking for cars next to Jones Bridge Circle.

**Liz Ireland**

My parents' house is close to your first plan parking lot at entrance; Barrick Subdivision. I am a broker by trade for 18 years in real-estate. They and some of their neighbors feel if the parking lot at entrance backs up to their houses it will possibly bring down the value of the homes there, thousands of dollars and cause the resale to be tougher, mainly the value.

**Irving Eichel**

No Dog Park, Playground, Picnic Tables, Pavilions, New Maintenance Building or Jones Bridge Circle, No 250 parking spaces, No 12' paved trails. Ok for river platform.

**Shana Eichel**

No Dog Park, Playground, no new location for maintenance building, no 12' asphalt trails, no new pavilions, keep it as though it is a national park, no need to cut down trees, let nature beauty teach children, allow wild life thrive, no need for 250 parking places.

**Tracie Nowak**

I am here tonight to be a voice for keeping Simpsonwood Retreat green and wild. As a 19 year resident and 14 year church member my family and neighbors pray that logic will prevail and nature will be allowed to remain among our lovely and greatly desirable community. With Jones Bridge park within 2 miles of Simpsonwood there is already a beautiful park for all members of the County to enjoy a playground, river park, volleyball and outdoor cooking! SAVE NOT PAVE! Save the Simpsonwood natural refuge for adults, children and the animals

**Ray Miklethon**

Simpsonwood is a unique site; once it is developed it will never be able to be (restored) to its pristine state. Having lived in in Cleveland Ohio and having enjoyed the "emerald Necklace" a park system that circled the city, our family learned the results of far-sighted planners that preserved the natural wonder. This is a moment for Gwinnett County to demonstrate vision and leadership. Keep it natural!

**William Woods Jr.**

The park should be left in its current state as much as possible, with as little modification as possible. It's a rare gem and it need to be preserved. We have an example of what a park looks like with too much pressure on it; Jones Bridge Park is a prime example of what happens with too much modification. Leave this piece of nature intact.

**Sally Salossman**

We feel very strongly that Simpsonwood Park is a unique piece of land that should remain as natural as possible for many reasons. There are so few green spaces in our metro area and we have already desecrated so much of the land that we can never get back.

Please keep Ludie Simpkins wishes in mind when you make plans, as she gifted this land to the community with a love of nature and with the hope of sharing this natural beauty with future generations in perpetuity.

We agree with making the land handicap accessible, but feel strongly that the areas that are already in use and paved could be utilized with no further destruction of trees and natural habitat.

Please choose Concept 3. We feel that the playground / dog Park features are already covered in other nearby parks (Jones Bridge and Pinckneyville) and that what we need is wild green space – that is what is missing. Thank you!

**Julie Korvakin**

Please consider the least invasive plan for Simpsonwood. We have plenty of "built" environments nearby. There are plenty of parks with paved paths and playgrounds that are underutilized. We understand the need to be ADA compliant but consider limited paving and minimal disruption to the natural landscape. People need access to natural spaces. Kids suffer from nature deficit disorder because they do not have access to and do not spend time in nature. Nature is not about playgrounds and pavement. We have plenty of this but we do not have large open, natural spaces to enjoy the outdoors the way God intended us to. Please minimize the destruction of the wonderful nature preserve. Many Thanks!

**Tom Williams**

Please don't put entrance and parking off Jones Bridge Circle. Put it in the interior of the park away from the houses.

**Rosa Brinkman**

Please preserve the natural beauty of Simpsonwood Park. It has been a beloved part of our community. I treasure the natural beauty and peaceful atmosphere of the land in its current state. To add another playground or parking lot in our community does not benefit those who treasure trees and natural setting to relax and enjoy the beauty of the birds, deer, and various other animals that have made their home here. Please do not make us drive hours outside of our community to find a natural preserve to enjoy.

**Scott Walch**

Lillian Webb once said that this property was a "treasure" to behold. In my opinion we need to keep this property as natural as humanly possible. Green space, not man made concrete.

**Michele Walch**

Please save Simpsonwood as it is now, we don't need any more concrete in our neighborhood. I moved here for the woods and beautiful space, please stop tearing down the trees in our beautiful neighborhood.

**Anonymous**

We do not need another Jones Bridge Park!! Ludie Simpson wanted this retreat to stay natural and unchanged. Please honor her wishes. No more concrete!

**Roby Kerr**

Keep concrete parking located to interior zones. Allow access for the public. Try to keep trail natural.

**Yu-Sheng Hsu**

Anyone who wants paved road should go to McDaniel Farm instead of destroying the nature of Simpsonwood. No trees should be removed, it looks to me that we already come in this too late because they want to decide which plan to use. None of the plans really are what we like. Can we object to all plans?

**Dana Dominy**

My house is the tan one with hunter green shutters on Jones Bridge. My house will be affected definitely. The original plan is to leave the park alone like Miss Ludie wanted. Why can't they use all existing space in the park? No building anything along Jones Bridge Circle. I don't want my property value to decrease. I think there is plenty of space to use with the existing land in the park.



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Preliminary Master Plan Meeting**

**Minutes from:** 06.16.16 Meeting

**Attendees:** Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder

jB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

**Steering Committee Participants:** Gray Terry, Robert Gates, Pat O'Leary, Mike Verna, Renee Morehouse, Rodney Ho, Joyce Teel, David Jones, Steve Ratchford, Anne Sheffield, Brad Reid, Nancy Geigler, Michelle Wehreim, Eric Christ, Preston Chappell, Lorrie Christopher, Linda Hostinsky, Cindy Waldo, Matt Houser.

**Location:** Simpsonwood United Methodist Church, Building C

**Time:** 7:00 – 10:00pm

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Grant Guess welcomes the Steering Committee Members to the meeting and makes opening comments. Reiterates that this is a Committee Meeting, not an open forum and would appreciate no interruptions. Committee Members will only be allowed to vote.

Grant mentioned that several people had asked for a visual regarding the size of a 10,000sf playground and said that playground that size occupied less space than the fenced enclosure of a pair of tennis courts.

The Consulting Team, jB+a, inc. is then introduced.

Steve Provost, jB+a, reviews the steps taken thus far in the design process for those in the audience that have not been part of the project since its commencement.

- Public Input Meeting (11.12.15) – Asked public to provide input as far as interests and concerns. Apply for position on Steering Committee if interested.
- Steering Committee toured select Gwinnett County Parks to gain understanding of Open Space Park Elements, and then toured Simpsonwood Park to gain understanding of the site.
- Site analysis graphics presented by Consultants and park program developed based on input from Steering Committee
- Concept drawings (Three) developed and presented to Steering Committee. Comments received from Concept meeting are the basis for the Preliminary Master Plan.

Steve then reviewed the format of the meeting; will have a discussion period where everyone individually will get a chance to voice their opinions on the preliminary master plan.

### **Presents PowerPoint Presentation**

- Impervious surface slide – prior to demolition 8.5 acres of impervious surface. Preliminary Master Plan reduces the impervious surface by 5%.
- Preliminary Master Plan Baseline elements (Concept Meeting 04.28.16).
  - Optimize central area of park (Pavilion, Playground, Parking)
  - Include some parking at chapel
  - Camping zone near maintenance
  - Some parking at front of park for trail users
  - Utilize existing entrance (refine)
  - Great lawn area is to be retained
  - Utilize cleared area for meadow
  - Include 1 or 2 structures on river (If possible include ADA access to at least 1 overlook structure.

## Preliminary Master Plan

- Entrance relocated to align with curb cut at Simpsonwood UMC per County DOT requirements.
  - Utilizes former exit lane as new entrance lane. New exit, with left turn lane, to be constructed to align with Simpsonwood UMC curb cut.
  - Former entrance lane utilized as multi use trail spur connector; allowing for connection from the frontage sidewalk to the multi-use trail loop within the park.
  - Deceleration lane provide per County DOT requirements
  - Left turn lane into park from Jones Bridge Circle Provided per County DOT requirements. (Potential to utilize existing road shoulder to minimize encroachment into wooded area)
  - Park drive utilizes existing alignment to terminate at chapel area.
  - DWR access road relocated to edge of meadow area to allow for uninterrupted views of meadow area.
- Development limited at the front of the Park
  - 44 space parking area for immediate access to natural surface trail.
  - New restroom building provided
  - Provides parking area for group camping
- Group Camping provided near cell tower
  - 10 tent sites provided for primitive camping
  - Field located in pine woods near cell tower – preserves hardwoods
  - Amphitheater seating with fire pit for classroom type instruction
  - Proximate to natural trails, boardwalk for educational opportunities
- Open space lawn retained
  - 1 20x20 shelter provided at meadow edge
  - Existing gravel lot retained but improved
  - Pedestrian bridge provided to connect open lawn with camping area by spanning ravine.
- Central Core Development
  - Pavilion / Playground Complex located on demo-ed tennis / pool area; utilizes existing open space.
  - Parking provided for 106 cars.
  - Pavilion utilizes area where court currently resides
  - Restroom building provided proximate to pavilion / playground
  - Access to Multi-use trail
  - ½ acre lawn separates pavilion and playground; unstructured play.

### Playground Option – 10,000 sf

- Roughly the size of 2 tennis courts
- Natural toned play equipment to blend into surroundings
- Equipment may include more contemporary play equipment that encourages more physical movement (slack lines, climbing nets, swings, etc.)
- Equipment clustered together within a single area

### Playground Option – 35,000 sf Natural Learning Playground

- Utilizes same mix of playground equipment as 10,000sf option
- Equipment distributed throughout highly landscaped areas
- Over time, will “blend” into natural surroundings
- Encourages interaction with nature
- Requires additional land disturbance due to size, but offers interesting grading options due to playground equipment being distributed throughout.
- Requires slightly longer multi-use trail length.
- 
- 49 parking spaces proximate to chapel for event parking (one-way, 45° parking)

- 12 parking spaces (4 HC) to east of chapel (Existing parking removed to provide ADA compliance and better access to HC ramp at chapel)
- Provides fire truck access to chapel via negotiable loops
- Signage and striping to designate access; gated access for DWR and maintenance access.
- Public vehicular access terminates at chapel.
- Restroom building provided
- Access to Multi-use trail
- Multi-use trail
  - ADA compliant (<3.5%) 1.5 mile loop
  - ADA compliant sub loop .75 Mile
  - Located on plan to minimize grading / impact. Will be field located at time of construction to avoid trees, etc.
  - Accessible trail route to one overlook at the river
  - Two river overlooks provided.
- Open Space / Meadow
  - Utilize existing / remnant open space
  - Fine graded to even out slopes
  - Intended to be reseeded with native grasses and wildflowers to increase bio diversity and habitats.
  - Retains some trees from existing parking islands to add interest.
  - Removes existing impervious surfaces.
- Natural Surface Trail
  - Retains majority of existing 2 mile marked loop.
  - Relocates trail in two areas to either add distance between multi-use trail and natural surface trail, or relocates trail out of regulatory buffer at river to allow for the healing of river banks.
  - .2 mile elevated boardwalk structure provided in south eastern sector to provide a more sustainable connection across wet/ low lands. Provides for educational opportunities.
  - At time of construction all trails and bridges will be reevaluated in field and adjusted as necessary for sustainability.
- Existing location for Maintenance building retained (building updated, access updated)
- Total parking provided in Preliminary Master Plan – 211 parking spaces
- Sanitary sewer easements / access are to receive appropriate native re-vegetation plantings.

### Clarification Questions

1. David Jones - How far to the river is it from the HC parking spaces at the river to the overlook?  
*Approximately ½ mile.*
2. Mike Verna - Could there be HC parking spaces nearer to the river? *The intent is to limit vehicular access to go no further than the central portion of the site. By minimizing vehicular access we hope to limit the problems associated with large groups on the river's edge, which we are experiencing at another park. The trail is intended to be the experience.*
3. Rodney Ho - Are you going to plant some trees in the meadow? *There may be some planted but the purpose of the meadow is to increase the biodiversity of the site. So by having different habits you increase the diversity of the park site. Intended to be mown twice a year. Native grasses and wildflowers.*
4. Brad Reid - Does the maintenance facility service just this park? *Potential for roving crews to service Jones Bridge and Holcomb Bridge Parks as well.*
5. Anne Sheffield - What type of gate structure will ensure that people (in cars) don't go down to the river? We will need to substantially increase the security gate, right now people can just drive around it.
  - Preston Chappell – second gate has been down since March

6. Pat O'Leary - Are you going to remove invasive species – for instance, move the trail back at the river and open the views up, might to help keep people at bay. *Will include a line item in the cost estimate for invasive removal.*
7. Preston Chappell – Would it be possible to shift the event parking area away from the property line? *We will look at it; will need to maintain the required dimensions for emergency vehicles. Also by shortening the centerline of the road it reduces the amount of available parking.*

#### **Discussion**

Gray Terry –

Question is the playgrounds uniqueness to Simpsonwood; do we have more details to what that might include? Will it be cookie cutter playground – *No fits specifically to the playground area, it will be a custom design.*

What is the formula for the parking spaces – is there anything that dictates that? *We know how much we need based on history.*

Robert Gates – I like the plan; it keeps the historical elements, looks very much like it does now. Can we put a frost free hydrant near camping? (Valve box by Restroom) Looks good, I think the elements to address wetlands are good.

Pat O'Leary –

Looks good, it's what we talked about last time. I would move the restroom nearer to the end of the parking lot. Not enamored to keep the gravel parking area on the lawn. More people use the lawn than they would the front parking area. Lean toward the special playground. At the chapel, the parking is only 75' from end of driveway. *(Will investigate further)*

Would it be better to put the parking at the edge of the meadow? Can we get a large pavilion near the meadow? *(Steering Committee opted no)*

Is the Architecture of park the same as Little Mulberry? *Yes*

Mike Verna –

The pavilion, is that roughly where the existing one is? *Yes.*

Is the maintenance building going to be improved to look like a building that belongs in a park? *It will be updated / improved.*

Agree with Pat about the parking would like to see the parking moved down to meadow.

Like the boardwalk in the wetlands.

The existing trails - would those be planned or improved? *Not at masterplan level, during construction all trails and bridges will be assessed and field located for sustainability. All bridges in the park are being assessed and an assessment of the existing bridges will be included in the project document.*

I like the natural playground

Renee Morehouse – Nice job addressing the collective feedback. Speak directly about the playground. Several parks in the surrounding area that lend toward blending play features to nature. I did an informal survey that described the two playground options. Majority liked the natural playground for a variety of reasons. Person who liked the traditional playground was concerned about keeping an eye on kids. Request logical placement and adequate shade, proximate uses for ease in entertaining child.

Rodney Ho –

I assume we are not at the budget level. Pedestrian bridge off great lawn, don't understand the purpose. *It connects the camping area to lawn across the ravine (Natural surface trail would pass under the pedestrian bridge.)*

Interested to see what the meadow will be like.

Joyce Teel –

I love the idea of a learning playground my question is whether it could be funded. *(Vote for SPLOST this November, recreation will be included. Commissioners need to decide on an amount, a lot of major maintenance that needs to be included in that funding. Not a lot of open space parks currently included in that funding so Simpsonwood could be high priority.)*

I like the parking being up front. In terms of the natural playground, would it be HC accessible *(it would have both elements- certain percentage of it will be accessible)*

I think that you have done a wonderful job incorporating all the ideas.

David Jones – There are aspects of this plan that will thrill some and some that will anger some. Glad to see the attention given to the gradient. People don't seem to understand that by leaving the park the way it is, that it is going to erode and we will be spending all the money to maintain it. One concern I do have is to be sure about the width of the multi-use trail; it is essential that the width be 10-12' just for safety reasons. Often times you get one chance to get it right and this is our chance. I want my children and grandchildren to be able to get to the river without being covered in mud.

Steve Ratchford – Very pleased with what you came up with, I like the idea of keeping the parking up front. I think the natural playground is fitting this park. I'm not sure we need two overlooks.

Anne Sheffield - I've been anti playground from the start. Most moms want traditional playground to keep eye on children. I am for the smaller playground because it takes up less space. I like the gravel parking lot at the lawn. Overall I think it looks good.

Brad Reid –

Looks good. I was a proponent for reducing the parking; I'm still proponent for reducing the parking. I would like to see a smaller group pavilion if we can reduce the parking even more. Not sure about the picnic shelter on the big lawn. *(County keeps hearing about the events that happen at the park – these shelters end up being a marshalling area for the events.) Are there grills at the shelter? Yes, there is normally a grill near the shelter. It's fixed to the ground with a grate below and an ash box with shovel to get rid of the ashes. This shelter is located in an open area; not in a wooded area)*

Can we have an opinion on the grills? *Yes, you can have an opinion.*

I'm a proponent of natural playground if it can be made smaller to minimize the footprint, cut back on parking – make it feel like you aren't pulling up into a big parking lot of asphalt – something other than asphalt. Holcomb Bridge Park parking lot is very ugly.

Nancy Geigler – I commend you on an amazing job – very thoughtful. Excited about people being able to get down to the river in wheelchairs and strollers without having to worry about tripping over tree roots. Love the pedestrian entrance into the park. The boardwalks is cool, I'm a proponent of natural playground. I'd like to see the natural trail near Revington moved (away from the property line).

Michelle Wehreim – Ditto what everyone else has said. I think what is confusing to a lot of people is their view of a passive park and what Gwinnett County defines as passive. Need to be respectful of people's views but encourage them to research the County definition. I like the natural learning playground. I am

going with the trust and faith of Gwinnett County (Staff and parks people). It's nice to know that there are people out there that care about the preservation (trail at the river, protect). I want to keep the parking away from the meadow. I like it where it is but maybe move it closer to the road. Good job.

Eric Christ – I'm sitting in for Jay Lowe so I am just listening today. (Soon to be new Councilman)

Preston Chappell –

Really glad to move things back into the park and consolidate it; made people happier. I would still like to use permeable asphalt (at least in parking lots). *Noted, and we still can within the parking areas. One thing that we have to be considerate to is that the DWR access road must remain as real asphalt. We can consider it for the trails as well, but with the permeable asphalt along the trails you need to have piping under the asphalt which can potentially impact surrounding trees (trenching for piping).*

I still have a concern about soft surface trail system, fairly primitive trail are going to be 6' wide, and why they haven't been addressed in the master plan. *As we have mentioned previously, this is a much more detailed process that cannot be done at the master plan level, trails can be represented in plan view but will need to be physically laid out in the field to minimize disturbance. All the trails will be evaluated in the field prior to construction and will be adjusted in the field for sustainability. In addition, detailed descriptions of how the trails are to be constructed will be included in the project report.*

Pedestrian Bridges need to be moved away from the residential areas on the natural surface trail. Bay Star Vine exists along the river and I would like to see the boardwalk in this area. *Noted, will include in graphic and will provide description in project report.*

Would like to solicit naturalists to locate plant materials (*This is something that is not done at the master plan level, it would be done under a separate contract prior to construction documentation.*) Area where the old moonshine stills are would like to put a fence around.

Commissioners have voted down the Conservation easement on property. *No formal recommendation from the committee has been given to the Commissioners at this time, not sure how it could be voted down. Process is to submit a formal recommendation with the master plan to the Recreation Authority from the Steering Committee first. The Recreation Authority would then bring the recommendation to the Commissioners. We are not complete with the master planning process so the formal recommendation has not been submitted as of yet.*

Majority of the concerns with the problems at Jones Bridge Park carrying over to Simpsonwood Park – irritated that it took me getting up at 6am to go photograph everything. If Jones Bridge Park was more under control you might have more proponents for Simpsonwood.

Lorrie Christopher - Very grateful for the design you have done. I like the natural playground, increase in greenspace in the park, like the trails, I like the redesign of the entrance, excited that we will have something that everyone can enjoy.

Linda Hostinsky –

Do the soft surface trails have to be 6' wide. *They have not been designed. We cannot design them at the master plan level, we include a graphic representation on the plan to show that there will be natural surface trails. . Again it is a much more detailed process that cannot be done at the master plan level, trails can be represented in plan view but will need to be physically laid out in the field to minimize disturbance. All the trails will be evaluated in the field prior to construction and will be adjusted in the field for sustainability. In addition, detailed descriptions of how the trails are to be constructed will be included in the project report.*

Natural playground – is that the kind that looks like logs? *No it's different. The equipment is distributed within a landscaped environment (Native plants). Interpretive signage can be included to encourage learning experiences. This would be a custom playground and we would hope to have the designer who is the authority of these types of playgrounds on the design team when construction documents are prepared.* Can that equipment be used though? *It can have a specific theme.*

I think you all have done a fabulous job. Outstanding!

Cindy Waldo –

Can you define what the different types of trail – will the existing trail stay? *We are only showing where the marked trail has been modified to keep some distance from multi-use trail.* Would prefer one overlook.

Restroom by the chapel – can it move to far side of the chapel. *No, there are some significant sized white oaks in that area, one heritage oak, and the remnants of the old chimney is in that area. We don't want to disturb those elements.*

I'm curious when it comes to the budget, are we going to prioritize the park elements? *Yes, you will see the Preliminary Cost Estimate tonight, we will not discuss it. At the next meeting we will focus on the cost estimate and have a prioritization discussion.*

Playground – I prefer smaller

Matt Houser – Congratulations on job well done. I would like to emphasize things said around the table. I like the restoration of the river bank and getting the exotics out to open up the view. Meadowland – would be great with native grasses and wildflowers. Parking – too many. I do like keeping the vehicular traffic where it is but would like to see more refinement to the parking area to make it fit in better. Would like to see more general statement of exotics and replanting to regenerate the natural condition throughout the park. Appreciate the clarity of the ADA within the park as sensitively as possible; with limited amount of disturbance of trees.

#### **Emailed Comments from Steering Committee Members that were not in attendance**

Lorraine Backer –

Meadowland on former built site is good if truly “returned to nature.” Restroom building and parking near Chapel OK (better than having the auxiliary parking across the street). Parking southeast of Chapel may be a bit of overkill—the Chapel only seats about 75 people, so maybe 30 spaces would suffice. ADA multi-use trail: required.

Parking Entrance: There is a 6-foot sidewalk along frontage—how will that tie into the existing sidewalk (I'm not sure that is 6 feet wide, but maybe so). *Existing sidewalk will be impacted by the required decel lane and left turn lane so a new sidewalk will be constructed per County requirements.*

Parking Area (44 spaces): Please make sure it is shaded. *Indeed.*

Cell Tower: future plans? What happens if the lease is not renewed? Restroom building: OK

Group camping: I can't get a good sense of what is where, also, I think the area south of the cell tower is hardwoods—what are your plans to preserve the tree canopy above the camping? *Camping area sited within the pine zone. All camping sites will be field located to minimize disturbance. Minimal grading is intended.*

Pedestrian bridge, boardwalk, trails, new pedestrian bridge are OK providing that the placement makes sense with the woods and topography. *Trail location is a much more detailed process that cannot be done at the master plan level, trails can be represented in plan view but will need to be physically laid out in the field to minimize disturbance. All the trails and bridges will be evaluated in the field prior to construction and will be adjusted in the field for sustainability. In addition, detailed descriptions of how the trails and bridges are to be constructed will be included in the project report.*

Existing great lawn: will this be mowed? *Yes as necessary. The meadowlands, however, are intended to be mowed twice a year.*

Existing gravel parking: I assume "improved" means that it will look like the new parking areas. *The gravel area will remain the same, improved means that it will be accessed for drainage issues and new gravel will be laid down.*

Sewer easement/access stays. *Yes, sewer easements can be revegetated with appropriate native vegetation though to increase biodiversity. While this can't be shown on the master plan graphic, a line item with associated costs has been included in the cost estimate and verbiage will be provided in the master plan document addressing the revegetation.*

Pavilion/playground complex: 106 parking spaces seem like a lot for this area—can it be reduced by 25-30%? I think that would be more like what is near the pavilions at Pinckneyville. Much as I would like to see the "Natural Learning Playground," I will vote against it. Given that the County really can't enforce existing regulations because they don't have enough resources, minimal development is better. If a playground is required, I vote for the standard playground with equipment that blends in to the natural surroundings.

Maintenance building OK since it won't be moved and as long as the updating doesn't increase the footprint.

Gate access: As we have seen, various visitors to Simpsonwood have blithely ignored the gates and signs prohibiting vehicle access. How will you address this? *Improved security gates and fencing to discourage people driving around the gates, with additional signage.*

Existing lift station, Maintenance access are needed.

Accessible connection to river overlook via access road: Can someone in a wheelchair really get there? Won't that mean bikers will also be able to access the connection, Riverside path, and overlooks—or is that intended? *Yes, the path is ADA compliant. It is a multi-use trail which means bikers will be able to use it.*

Could you mark the areas where trails, paths would intersect existing or planned trails outside Simpsonwood? *If a connection to Simpsonwood park is desired from a subdivision or residential area a letter will need to be submitted to the County. The only connection this master plan shows is the connection to the surrounding community via the frontage sidewalk – which goes no further than the property corners and a pedestrian connection from the frontage sidewalk into the park.*

Mark Thornell – I love the new master plan and support it. You guys did a great job incorporating all suggestions.

Brett Wylie –

I would suggest going with the plan which has the smaller footprint playground.

The parking solutions shown seem reasonable.

No notes of fixed grills are suggested that I could see – so I'm assuming none are proposed; I would suggest none be proposed. (*Grills are proposed at both the group pavilion and shelter, cost is covered as a line item in the cost estimate*).

I'm not crazy about the rework of the entrance – doesn't seem necessary to me as no more traffic will be generated in the new park vs. traffic generated at the UMC conference center. Over the years of walking / driving past this entrance, I've never seen any hint of a problem here. Given projected visitation, I would expect no problems in the future. I understand there are requirements from Traffic which must be followed, but it seems like overkill to me. Other than that .....looks good.

I would say that I am pleased to see that you and the jB+a team have really tried to listed and propose sensitive solutions. Thank you for listening and earnestly working to find appropriate solutions.

### **Voting**

Steering Committee members were asked to vote on the following refinements to the master plan. Majority rule applied.

Playground –      Natural Learning Playground (15 Votes)  
Traditional Smaller Playground (5 Votes) NOTE: Two votes were submitted via email by Steering Committee members that were not able to attend the meeting.

Overlook – (Overlooks are approximately 20' river frontage with integral benches for seating)  
2 Overlooks – (11 Votes)  
1 Overlook – (7 Votes)

Preliminary Master Plan advancement - Vote to advance the preliminary Master plan with the aforementioned refinements and the proviso that the parking area near the chapel area be moved forward and away from the Revington Subdivision. (Unanimous approval)

### **Comments**

Rex Schuder – Presentation on June 30<sup>th</sup> to the public needs to be YOUR Preliminary Master Plan. We would like for as many Steering Committee members as possible to come to the meeting to help answer questions from the public. We will have comment forms for the public to fill out, which will be collated. If there are any major refinements that need to be made we will revisit with the Steering Committee before finalizing the master plan.

Steve Provost – We would like to hear from you what else you would like for us to include in the master plan or master plan document so that we have it on record.

Preston Chappell – The area between the cell tower and the creek has been sprayed with herbicide. I contacted the mark Patterson and he said it was not them. A whole area where wildflowers were present has been sprayed as has an area of river cane. Tell maintenance to stop spraying!

Pat O' Leary - Is there something in the master planning process that tells exactly what needs to be done for the trails; details or something? *It can be done in the project report in verbiage. There is also a line item in the cost estimate that allows for the revegetation and special treatment of the trails. We can increase the biodiversity by reintroducing native plants. This would be done under a separate landscaping contract that would extend over several years. The Department is interested in increasing the biodiversity throughout the park.*

Lorrie Christopher - one of the things we are hearing comments about is policing in the park . I think it is important to include funding for policing of the park.

Nancy Geigler – Would it help our community to consider and 8' wide trail? *An 8' wide trail does not meet AASHTO regulations, which is what the County follows. The County is self-insured AASHTO guidelines helps to keep liability out of court (i.e. tax payers). If we eliminate bicycles you can go down to 8'.*

Michelle Wehreim – I know you say that say playgrounds are designed after the masterplan. Can people email the County and say I want to be on that committee? Does the community get to give input or is it only Staff? *The designer who is known for Natural Learning Playgrounds (he is out of North Carolina) encourages citizen input. We would very much like to have him on the design team when construction documents are being developed.*

Michelle Wehreim – The meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup>, is it going to be advertised? *Press release will go out through County and the City of Peachtree Corners will also send out press releases.* Is there a need to have a police officer here to direct traffic? *No.* Because people are coming, I think it would be nice to have committee members show up early to help setup and organize.

David Jones – We need name tags so that people know who they are addressing.

David Jones – 2016 SPLOST in November is essential. How essential to this park project is this 2016 vote. *Very essential, there are not a lot of open space parks on the docket for the 2016 vote, so Simpsonwood would be a prime candidate.* Need to promote the vote for the welfare of the City and / or County.

Nancy Geigler – We have the vision of Mulberry Park that the public does not, could we have a rotating slide show that shows images of Mulberry Park? *Absolutely, excellent suggestion.*

Preston Chappell – Policing effort should address adjacent neighbors throwing their trash onto the park site needs attention. I can send pictures. I have picture of deer poaching, deer stands...I have all kinds of pictures. Also, if you are taking down stuff you need to make sure that it is done correctly. I (received) a report two weeks ago that someone was injured because they leaned up against two screws where a sign had been taken down but the screws were still exposed. I contacted the County, screws are still there.

Lorrie Christopher – SPLOST issue, everyone needs to be out talking about it. County gets SPLOST, City gets SPLOST and over 1.9 billion dollars has gone into the County since it started. Cooperative efforts.

Brad Reid – I really think what you have done around the chapel is really nice, but what is going on at the front of the park (chapel sign) needs to come down. Front of the park is kind of junky looking think we could dress it up a bit.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm

**Next Meeting: June 30<sup>th</sup> 2016 – Public Viewing - Preliminary Master Plan**

*(Thursday, 6:30 -8:00 pm, Simpsonwood United Methodist Church – Family Life Center, Building C. Gym)*  
The Preliminary Master Plan for Simpsonwood Park will be on display for the public to review and comment. Steering Committee members, Consultants and County Staff will be available to answer questions.

## SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Preliminary Master Plan Meeting

June 16, 2016

Public Audience Comments as taken from distributed forms

Public responders include: Joe Griggs, Bo Reddic, Lorrie Thomas, Chris Hayes

### **Joe Griggs**

I like the preliminary Master Plan with the Natural playground. You all have done a great job! Need rules to prevent bicycle riders with dog on leash on multi-purpose trail; my cousin was killed by a rider whose dog ran behind her and flipped her on her head.

### **Bo Reddic**

- Prefer no playground.
- If there is a playground – smaller natural footprint preferred
- 2 or 3 river observation decks
- Permeable asphalt if possible
- Please keep trails away from neighborhoods
- Whatever we can do to reduce the number of parking spaces.
- What (type) of buffer will be present long term?

### **Lorrie Thomas**

It is already nature's playground. Leave it natural. We don't need another playground! The kids need to learn to use their imaginations and also learn about the plants and animals of the park in its natural state. These plants and animals should not be disturbed. We should respect them. We don't need paved wide trail either. Mud is fine for kids to play in, leave the trail natural. We don't need an overabundance of asphalt for parking spaces.

Regarding handicap parking spaces closer to river access....there are other parks that have better points of access to the river (less Steep) so it doesn't matter if the handicap spaces are closer to the river access or not. Even if you park closer, the steepness would still be an issue at this park. Closer parking will not help.

Leave the campground where it currently is, as not to disturb more areas. Water and power is already there.

Less disturbing! Protect the animals and plants! Keep it natural! No grills needed! Conservation!?, Protect its natural state! Don't make Mrs. Simpson roll over in her grave!

### **Chris Hayes**

Thank you for providing this platform to share my thoughts. I'm trying to listen here with an open mind, though there is a lot of information to take in as to the planned changes for the park, and I think that is part of the problem.

I am not inherently against change and progressive development. We live in it, surrounded by it, our communities are built on it. There was a time where every road, every neighborhood, every business was a Simpsonwood, natural and undeveloped and we gained our communities from it. But there are not a lot of Simpsonwoods left in the metro / post metro Atlanta area, and even still, for being one of the largest, Simpsonwood is still only going back to nature, it is far rarer and more unique than the myriad of multi-use parks that currently exist here. Multi-use parks with their planned capacity planning, designated "x" use area, coordinated and planned 'nature' experiences, 'modernized paths and trails, interpretive experience, and other nature development commonalities. There is not a lot left around here in this area to develop, to change and that is what makes Simpsonwood unique, but I understand also valuable to you.

## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Preliminary Master Plan**

### **PUBLIC REVIEW COMMENTS**

**Minutes from:** 06.30.16

**Attendees:** Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder

jB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

**Steering Committee Participants:** Michelle Wehrheim, Lorrie Christopher, Lorrie Backer, Robert Gates, Rodney Ho, Matt Houser, David Jones, David Sprinkle, Joyce Teel, Mike Verna, Cindy Waldo, Brett Wylie

**Public Respondents:** Lynne Bruce, Michael Corkum, Pat Corkum, Rick Rogers, Debbie Tronnes, Carol MacGregor, Russell Wolfe, Missy Woolever, John Leonard, Patty Merson, Ray and Betsy Miklethun, Bill and Kathy Russo, R.W. Johns, Tracy Shell, Michelle Wilson, Paula Berry, Robin Lunese, Charles Franck, Lisa Grogin, David French, Judy Griggs, Mary Beth Duty, Carl McIntosh, Bob Shepard, Jim Sellmansberger, Kristy Parent, William J. Brown, Barbara Snider, Hilary Wilson, Irving Eichel, Bo Reddic, Steven Keck, Jim Freeman, Sally Falkowski, Mary Beth Stickney, Judy Quigley, JoAnn Warner, Jane Lu, Scott Mullennix, Bill Russo, John Harris, Tracie Payne, Mickey Dubois, Richard Lenahan, Ed Frayer, Chris Adams, Andrew Penniman, L. Jones Jr., Frank Brandt, Rich Young, Tim Kelly, Anne Marie Kelly, Sarah Fervie, Cynthia Brant, Laura Gardini, Alfonso Moreira, Marilyn Tarantino, Mike Shue, Scott Hilton, Bill Huber, James Gawlas, Donna Gawlas, Etta Miller, Jim Miller, Theresa Frayer, Jon Yost, Debbie Mitchell, Augustin Hador, Taylor Sword, Liz and Rich Gembeck, Wulf Kuehmstedt, Susi Kuehmstedt, Dave Adleman, Rebecca Kelly, Harry Johnson, Jenny Freeman, Chris George, Judy Schilling, Mim Harris, Tom and Sandra Hering, Cindy Sheldon, David Schilling, Janice Scott, Bob Scott, S. Fishman, Tom and Katie Bates, Tom Williams, Pat and Judy Quigley, Renee Reddic, Mr. & Mrs. Caldwell, Chris Sheldon, Dan Sperling, Jim Winters, Ellen Berman, Shana Eichel, Linda Goodiel, Jeff Goodiel, Jennifer Keck, Richard Kuhne, Michael Thompson, Andy Sword, Eric Sinclair, Jillian Tuten, Vernon Duty, Sara Miller, Haita, Jon Fischer, Linda Edwards, Stephen Warner, Gain Lenahan, Joseph Summerour, Kelli Clay, Mimi Anderson, Joe Griggs.

**Location:** Simpsonwood United Methodist Church, Building C - GYM

**Time:** 6:30-8:30pm

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The revised preliminary master plan was on display at the Simpsonwood United Methodist Church Gym for public comment. Steering Committee Members, Gwinnett County Staff and Consultants from jB+a, inc. were available to answer questions. Forms were available to the public to list their comments and concerns; 121 forms were filled out and submitted. The following comments are taken directly from the submitted comment forms.

#### **Anonymous**

Thank you for your time as a committee member, your efforts to preserve nature are appreciated!

#### **Lynne Bruce**

I think you have tried to meet as many needs as possible. I will be a user of the paved surface so I appreciate the 1.5 mile length. This will provide me with a scenic area in which to exercise. Thumbs up!

#### **Michael Corkum**

A well thought out plan with minimum invasion of the property. I support the committee's proposal.

#### **Pat Corkum**

Like the proposal. Thanks to the committee for all your work!

**Rick Rogers**

We don't want this to be another Jones Bridge Park. How much is it going to cost the tax payers to cut down trees and build multi-use paths as well as maintenance compared to leaving it natural? Additional impact on area and streets, leave it natural.

**Debbie Tronnes**

First I want to say that I have no problems with Simpsonwood being a public park. However I am concerned about direction the park committee wants to take.

We in Gwinnett have been given such a gift! I don't know of anywhere else in Gwinnett where the public can go to immerse themselves in nature. We have been given a slice of paradise with Simpsonwood. Gwinnett does not need another cookie-cutter park with large paved hiking paths. The beauty of Simpsonwood is its quiet, its natural beauty, its wildlife. One reason so many of us go to Simpsonwood to hike is because of the natural paths, which are much easier on aging body joints! If I wanted to walk on pavement, I can walk through my neighborhood. But I go to Simpsonwood for the quiet, to listen to the birds, the frogs, the owls, see the deer and I feel totally safe walking there. If we pave those paths, the paving process alone will be destructive to the natural environment. Most likely we will never hear the owls or see the deer again.

Gwinnett has so many parks that have paved paths, playgrounds, etc. for those who want that. We're blessed to have so many. But we're also blessed to have something different available to us. Why can't Gwinnett offer its public a new type of park – one of natural hiking trails, untouched by machinery? There is a huge sector of people who want this type of park, where we can lose ourselves in the quiet. We have Jones Bridge Park and Pinckneyville Park close by for those who want paved paths, playgrounds, picnic and other facilities. But there is nothing in Gwinnett that offers what Simpsonwood has to offer. Plus it will involve little maintenance / clean-up for the County.

If any of you have spent an hour hiking the trails, you would understand why we feel so vehemently about saving Simpsonwood as it is. If you haven't spent any time on the trails, please do before making your decision.

We invite anyone in the County who wants natural walking trails and who wants to experience nature to come to Simpsonwood. We in Peachtree Corners feel that the County is not hearing our voice. We are the ones who live here and know and appreciate what we have. We're not trying to keep it for ourselves, but to give Gwinnett a unique park where nature is center, not man.

**William Tucker**

I love the plan and very much appreciate the attention the steering committee, county and designers gave to using areas of the park that had been previously developed. It will be nice to see more usable park space out there instead of buildings and asphalt. I appreciate the "reclaiming" of nature by removing the parking areas closer to the river and returning it to open meadow. As an avid bird watcher I will be excited to see which birds move into this "new" habitat! I like how very little of the park has changed and I was told (by a committee member) that even the amount of hard surface has been reduced from what is out there, even with the paved trail. YES! To more greenspace. Thank you for all your hard work!

**Carol MacGregor**

Multi-use Trail – please use tested methods to minimize "hard surface". I'm referring to permeable roads and path systems developed by Texas A&M among other universities.

Do like the campsites for youth (organized) camping.

Please minimize building along the river; limited access only. People who want to get really close to the water can go to nearby Jones Bridge Park.

Given all this and after the presentation I retain the perspective that the value proposition for the community is simply not there. Ideally, the level of development should not be entirely non-existent, but it should be limited to a minimum level that is far beyond what has been presented here, not based on presumptive models of capacity that 'fit' the scope of development, as was provided. A minimized development model that resists change to its natural state with a retained focus on some discussed accessibility, but with development considerations for preservation of the natural state of the park along with.

There is a different value in providing an interpretive nature experience verses having a more genuine experience of minimally disturbed ecosystem as we have now.

Your presentation was smart and well-presented but in the end is missing or otherwise trading one 'value' for another, one of another managed and everyday experience against a rare and truer natural state. I expect change but I hope for both consideration and compromise.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this comment.

**Anonymous**

Campgrounds sound like they are too close to cellphone tower?

How will open playing field be uses – free to all, or organized reservation system; like for use of pavilions?

**Russell Wolfe**

The plan has really headed in the right direction. Overall, the trail system and the fact that so much has remained untouched, is the biggest plus. My only concerns are somewhat minor in the grand scheme of it all. My concerns:

- 12' wide paved paths is fine, but I would recommend eliminating the loop on the west side. That beautiful ridge with the path along the ridge will be somewhat ruined.
- The pedestrian bridge, although interesting is a waste of funds. It is hidden in the woods and is not really aligned I a direction of travel.
- The boardwalk system seems to only make sense along the south and east side of the marsh (not shown on the usually soggy south side).
- Rebuilding the pavilion would only make sense if the current one is faulty in some way.
- I am a proponent of having no leash rule for all trails away from the paved and overlooks.

**Missy Woolever**

Please leave our park wild! If you have to abide by ADA laws then I understand that then please add a paved trail with the least amount of disruption. I like the idea of a deck area on the river. We have a playground and river view 5 minutes away at Jones Bridge. Why do we need 100 parking spaces?? We do not. I can't imagine how many trees mush be cut to add 2 more trails. We live here, please listen to us. Thank you! Our animals need a place to be minimally disturbed. Please keep it undeveloped!

**John Leonard**

I hate the plan. I want minimal changes to Simpsonwood Park and no paved roads over 1 mile long cutting through the middle.

**Patty Merson**

There are things to like about the plan: keeping traffic away from the river, utilizing former swim/ tennis for playground and keeping the existing field. I understand the desire to have an ADA trail – the nearby Jones Bridge Park would be an excellent site – it is nearly flat and a good circuitous route could be designed and even give river views. I object to a paved trail through the woods (I run /walk the trails weekly and it will be less secure) to bring parking for 200+ cares in – meaning @ peak there could be 400+ people there @ anytime is damaging to the serenity of the site. I am disappointed that from the start the Park Dept. had an agenda. It would be amazing for the County to offer a different kind of park – especially since Jones Bridge Park and Holcomb Bridge River Park are nearby and have similar playgrounds, etc. I do appreciate the good park system in Gwinnett, but think a non-developed park has its place in the County as well.

**Ray and Betsy Miklethun**

We would like to see the space left as natural as possible. There are many other parks with developed paths. This is a one-time opportunity to preserve maximum forest and wooded space. Please eliminate 12' wide paths. Keep them all natural as they are.

**Bill and Kathy Russo**

Thank you for all your hard work! We LOVE the plans! Question, who enforces the rules? I walk in Simpsonwood daily and 5/7 days there are dogs off leash! This happens in spite of the posted rules. So, who, specifically, enforces these rules?

**R.W. Johns**

Too many new parking spots. There are 225 existing parking spots within 100 yards of the park entrance that on most occasions could be shared. (At Simpsonwood UMC – 175, Revington pool / pool across street from Revington – 50)

**Tracy Shell**

I am disappointed in the plan. Gwinnett Co. has an opportunity to maintain a unique passive park. The parking spots are too numerous for the area. It looks more than Jones Bridge. The playground is unnecessary – JB Park is 1 mile away. I'm a parent with young kids – we love playgrounds, but this park has a special purpose – passive and full of nature. A playground will detract from that and we won't be able to pull our kids away for a hike. The multiuse trail is excessive. It will damage existing natural trails with the development alone. It will also remove valuable trees. The County has plenty of parks like this. Please don't waste this opportunity to keep this park wild and free. Many state parks don't have paved trails. There is no real need to pave such a large trail in Simpsonwood.

**Michelle Wilson**

I fail to see the point in taking a beautiful, historical piece of land and turning it into another "assembly-line park. Gwinnett is full of these types of parks already, including one right around the corner. Why not do something different? Something revolutionary, not to mention forward-thinking and less expensive. This is the perfect opportunity to preserve instead of develop. Many state parks and federal recreation areas get plenty of usage and enjoyment without the 12' wide asphalt trails proposed here. I visit Simpsonwood several times per week and every time I am in awe of the natural beauty. Please don't take that away. Kids don't need another playground they need to see and experience the natural beauty of God's playground before it's all gone. Playgrounds are everywhere trees and other parts of the natural habitat are not!

**Paula Berry**

Not sure if we need another playground area. I like the walking paths! I think we should keep as much natural as possible.

**Robin Lunese**

My concerns are for the residential neighborhoods which will be drive-throughs to access the park. These areas would suffer in property values – especially if traffic lights would need to be installed. What would be the fail-safe for future improvements such as soccer fields and basketball courts? Cost for maintenance is passed to the Peachtree Corners residential – since we are now a city.

**Charles Franc**

I support fully the Committee's recommendations! The majority of residents of the City of Norcross (where we have developed a number of parks since 2007) would support the committee. I resided behind Simpsonwood Methodist Church for 11 years (1996-2007) and I am very happy Gwinnett will preserve and enable use of Simpsonwood. I ask the Gwinnett County Commission and Parks Division to support this development initiative as outlined by the Citizens Committee.

**Lisa Grogan**

I LOVE the plan! The camping area must have a direct path to the bathroom that is walkable by 2-3<sup>rd</sup> graders at night. Should also have a permanent concrete fire circle with permanent grates for cooking and hot boxes for coals with rocks around to make a safe area.

**David French**

Will the Boy Scouts be allowed to have an opportunity to make park improvements through "Eagle Scout" service projects?

**Judy Griggs**

I so love the plan! I'm especially impressed with the balance you have achieved between preserving nature and creating an environment that people of all abilities and ages can use. Thank you so much!

**Mary Beth Duty**

Although County governments are by their nature, quick to do things as they have been done for years, there are those who are visionaries and are willing to work outside the box. This is one of those times when someone with a creative and forward thinking mindset could make a positive statement that would move Gwinnett County forward.

It is ok to have a park without a paved trail and without a playground. It is, in fact highly desirable to have a habitat that is undisturbed. Why is the County so threatened by the idea of not developing something? Let's take this opportunity to do something amazing for Gwinnett County and protect this lovely habitat.

**Carol McIntosh**

Please, please, please leave Simpsonwood as it. We don't need more "parks" destroying natural habitat, native plants, polluting the soil and water. We don't need more animals forced out of their areas into the streets causing accidents. Simpsonwood is amazing as it is. Do not destroy it.

**Bob Shepard**

I would prefer as little development as possible. A natural setting is more peaceful. That being said, I realize that some development will be necessary. Please limit paved trails to less than are shown on the current plan. Please insist on a no amplified sound policy. Please initiate a "Conservation Policy" as soon as possible. We love our natural area. It's one of the reasons we moved here. There are very few natural areas left. "You don't know what you've got until it's gone"

**Jim Sellmansberger**

Please put paved trails where no trees exist presently. Please do not put paved trails where the natural trails are now. I would prefer no playground. Keep the park more natural.

**Kristy Parent**

Thank you for saving Simpsonwood per Miss Ludie Simpson's wishes!

- Conservation Easement to protect the future
- Natural Elements Playground
- Placards to educate on plant and animal species
- SPLOST money to help fund the development
- Have a wildlife person there to make sure as development occurs- the trees and animals and plants are ok.
- Allow bike riders on soft trails please

**William J Brown**

Please retain Simpson woods green / natural space. No other park sports are needed. Simpson woods are a treasure for Gwinnett County and should be kept as is.

**Barbara Snider**

My hope is that this piece of virgin land be kept as natural as possible. There is such great beauty with the fauna and flora that disappears with too much pavement and man-made structures.

**Hilary Wilson**

Focus on maintaining the native plants. Try to work around these plant communities. I like the boardwalks to keep people from making too many informal pathways.

**Irving Eichel**

Crushed granite not asphalt trails. No barbecue grills. Small playground.

**Bo Reddic**

Wish we did not have a playground. We should consider an additional observation deck. Wish we had different material for the paved trail other than asphalt.

**Steven Keck**

ADA Compliance trail is not required. ADA trail does not need to cut into the forest on the Southwest side. No playground – stick to the green space. ADA Trail should not be 12' wide; limit the impact of any paved

area. Treating this like the unique natural space that it is. There are no birch trees like the ones in this park in the entire city.

**Jim Freeman**

Overall plan not bad – prefer less pavement and to save as many trees as possible. Don't think you need as much parking as proposed – reduce by 50 spaces – would be good- camping area should be by permit only.

**Sally Falkowski**

Keep the park natural; no Jones Bridge Park, we do not need that. 12' wide trails may be too wide. Please listen to what the people want.

**Mary Beth Stickney**

I've walked through Simpsonwood from my home for almost 20 years. I enjoy the nature. That being said I realize it is a public park now, and I can appreciate much of the plan. The one aspect that I do not approve of, however, is the length and placement of the paved path. I understand the need for it, just wonder why it has to be so long and why it cuts through the beautiful new meadow! When the buildings came down nature took over the landscape is just so nice and natural. I would hate to see an asphalt trail run through that!

**Judy Quigley**

Plan looks good! No ball fields and passive parks! Thanks!

**JoAnn Warner**

Please keep Simpsonwood retreat as "natural" as possible. Removing as few trees as possible, more like a nature preserve Public Park than a Jones Bridge Park.

**Jane Lu**

Allow bee hives. Pollinator friendly. Swarm traps. Walking/ biking trails. Restrooms spread throughout. Allow fishing, archery, ADA compliant. Safe. Kayak Access.

**Scott Mullennix**

Keep it as native as possible. Like the trails; 12' wide and elevated area over wetlands. Develop as little as possible.

**Bill Russo**

If trees are cut it would be nice if County would make firewood available to residents. This is a popular program in places like New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, etc.

**John Harris**

Why pave 12' side. Seems 4' is sufficient.

**Tracie Payne**

Please add water fountains at the bathrooms. Please!! Please provide maps at beginning of trails. Please make it mandatory that all dogs are on leashes! I frequent the park and notice unleashed dogs every time I am there. I have 2 dogs so not hate here just courtesy expected!

**Anonymous**

Plan looks fantastic! Thank you to Gwinnett County for saving Simpsonwood Park from what could have been a 200+housing development! Love that the plans utilize, for the most part, areas of the park that had been previously developed! Well done! Love that the park isn't changing all that much and that MORE green is actually being replaced.

**Mickey DuBois**

I was hoping for something a little more formal with someone speaking to the group. Overheard something about a 12' paved path; too large if that is the case. Need to keep it as it is- or little change. Many people use the park- always people walking. Be a shame to ruin what we have. Already a playground at Jones Bridge Park – Neighborhoods don't need more traffic. Not many places like this park.

**Richard Lenahan**

The park should be kept as natural as possible. Maintain the trails, repair the bridges, and build the overlook on the river. Build the playground; add the grills and campground and multi-use trails over at Jones Bridge Park. Thank you for the opportunity to give our opinions.

**Ed Frayer**

FYI the weir box at existing detention is undermined. Oh and I don't think a 12' wide path is needed at all.

**Chris Adams**

Simpsonwood is a different kind of greenspace and it deserves a different kind of master plan. The current Simpsonwood master Plan includes some interesting and well thought out improvements. However, I feel there are still some adjustments that could be made to improve the ecological sensitivity of the plan.

I oppose paved trails in the forest which fracture habitat and put animals in harm's way and require extensive tree removal.

I oppose the playground feature. I feel there are enough playgrounds to serve the County and a kid's nature trail would be better for kids and more fitting in Simpsonwood.

I agree with the Meadowland habitat, the boardwalks over sensitive areas such as the swamp; where currently the soft surface trails run and the restoration / erosion adjustments where needed on the soft trail system.

**Andrew Penniman**

I have looked at the plan presented tonight and talked to several neighbors, some I know, some I don't. I hear from them a lot of fear (yes, fear) that this will become another Jones Bridge Park. I agree we don't want that. BUT the plan presented appears to me to maintain the natural condition of this land.

Simpsonwood is certainly not pristine. I have no objection to a 12' paved path through areas that were formerly or near a parking lot. I am a PHD Zoologist (Entomology, Ornithology, Mammalogy) and Professor of Biology at Perimeter College of GSU. I am ready and willing to donate my time for the improvement of Simpsonwood.

**L. Jones Jr.**

Cannot wait for the park to be built! Love the plan! Thank you!

**Frank Brandt**

Please just leave Simpsonwood as it is, anything you do to alter this beautiful natural area will spoil the whole area. Please take into account that if the current plans are implemented the local people (the people who paid the taxes) will not utilize the park. It will be taken over by people outside the area (the people who do not pay taxes to Peachtree Corners) just the same as the other parks in Peachtree Corners.

**Rich Young**

You would think that the County was going to bulldoze the entire site based on the comments I've been overhearing tonight. I don't live in Peachtree Corners, but I do live in Gwinnett County and I ALSO pay taxes, taxes which helped purchase this park! I come to this park several times a month to walk the trails, trails that are in horrible shape, I might add. This park is just as much mine as the folks here in Peachtree Corners but they are acting like it's a local park, it's not! It's a County Park! The master plan looks great and is a far better idea than what is out there now; at least it takes into consideration some sustainability! Thank you to the County for attempting to SAVE SIMPSONWOOD! My advice to the County given the "Entitled" attitude

I have heard tonight – get out while you can, sell the property to a developer and then see whose idea was better – a County Park or cleared 222 acres of McMansions! Good luck!

**Tim Kelly**

I like the current master plan but I do want to make sure we limit the number of trees cut down for the ADA trail.

**Anne Marie Kelly**

I am pleased that the natural trails are being kept on the master plan.

**Sarah Fervie**

I would like to see the park remain in as natural state as possible. I am firmly against any asphalt trails being built which would result in the cutting of thousands of trees. Any development that is done I would like to see limited to the area where the previous buildings were.

**Cynthia Brant**

The playground you want to put in is too close to the subdivision. We don't need a playground most subdivisions have their own. Don't waste our money. We don't need to cut trees down to put in path ways. Leave the park as it is. Natural.

**Laura Gardini**

How can you make this park not be another Jones Bridge Park? No, no, no, playground – go to Jones Bridge. No Asphalt – make natural trail, no need for 12'. No grills, less parking. Who is going to police or monitor the horrible behavior and uncleanliness of the people who frequent Jones Bridge? Who will come here? Spend money on Jones Bridge Park instead of SPLOST \$ on this one.

**Alfonso Moreira**

Residents and visitors have been riding bikes on the trails for years. There is no other close by park in Gwinnett that offers trails open to bikes. I propose that biking on trails is permitted with a special permit, requiring to follow some training on 'trail etiquette' respecting bikers, not damaging the trails, staying on the trails. It is unfair to have this activity cut altogether just because the committee does not practice it.

I agree with the design otherwise; I believe it accommodates all needs and activities but feel that biking on the trails is a healthy and sustainable way to enjoy the forest.

If this occurs and biking on trails is prohibited, it forces us to go to Fulton, where shared trails (even some bike dedicated) exist.

**Marilyn Tarantino**

The paved use trail- is it needed? I would like to see this deleted from the master plan. Runners can use existing non-paved trail. I don't know many mothers with strollers who walk 1.5 miles with babies. Please consider modifying this paved trail. This property is my lifeline. I have lived here for 14 years and go to Simpsonwood to enjoy peace and solitude. I am a Senior citizen approaching retirement. Can we prioritize the needs of wildlife first?

**Mike Shue**

- Place entire park in a "conservation Easement" to preserve for future generations.
- Reduce new parking at playground, minimize playground as much as possible
- Reduce amount of paved trails and increase natural trails – less paved trail through meadow, more permeable
- All trail improvements and bridge improvements at stream crossing should be top priority in funding for immediate benefits and expansion of usable trails.
- Boardwalk at existing wetland/ swamp should be very low on funding priority-lot of cost and minimal benefits.

- Camping area should be low priority, since so close to road and cell tower it is not very primitive
- Pedestrian bridge near campground and great lawn seems unnecessary and should be eliminated.

**Scott Hilton**

Love the plan – keep up the great work! Please advocate Gwinnett County to have conservation easement put in place.

**Bill Huber**

I am against the inclusion of paved paths through the forest. I would prefer that they playground and paved paths (aka Multi-use trail) be located at Jones Bridge Park which is already developed. Keep Simpsonwood natural so visitors can enjoy a truly special experience which is all too rare in our ever expanding concrete covered city (Metro Atlanta as well as Norcross / Peachtree Corners / Gwinnett County). I don't feel the public was very well informed about the process of deciding the future of Simpsonwood nor the ramifications of the various aspects of the park plan.

**James Gawlas**

- Minimize the paved trails. When Berkeley Lake purchased their greenspace (72 acres) they took a survey that was overwhelming in favor of doing nothing to it. I can provide a copy of the survey. I am a board member of Berkeley Lake Conservancy. Today, the greenspace has only casual unmaintained paths that are enjoyed by many.
- Post signs prohibiting loud music in the pavilions, which would sport the peacefulness of Simpsonwood. Or eliminate pavilions.
- Place adequate trash bins (like McDaniel Farm Park)
- Provide online printable map showing all the natural trails.

**Donna Gawlas**

Consider this: nearby Gwinnett City of Berkeley Lake has 2 recreational areas: a playground next-door to City Hall and a separate 72 acre greenspace. Multiple votes were put to the city residents regarding what was desired for the greenspace. Every vote showed that the citizens wanted to leave the green space intact, with no parking, no formal trails, not even any signs, and certainly not any picnic areas or ball fields or playground. The citizens wanted this wooded tract to remain untouched. Fortunately, the wonderful mayor and city council listened and agreed. In addition, to protect the greenspace forever, the land was placed under a conservation easement (with GA Piedmont Land Trust) and inspectors come to walk the property every year to insure that it remains untouched. The only work done on it is to remove invasive plants such as privet and to watch for erosion. This precious forest is a jewel and brings solace to all.

So, please learn from Berkeley Lake's example. It is not unusual for people to want an untouched forest. Wildness is a spiritual necessity. Leaving Simpsonwood wild would please Gwinnett citizens and conform to the wishes of the owner who donated it to the Methodist Church. Give us at least one wild forest. Who know, you might win another "best in the country" award with this concept: I believe that you would!

We, in Gwinnett do not want cookie-cutter parks...all with wide, paved trails. We want undisturbed forest....with volunteer days to remove the invasive plants. Please listen and learn from Berkeley Lake. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**Etta Miller**

We have been residents for 29 years with our neighborhood adjoining Simpsonwood. It's our preference that this property remain as intended by Mrs. Simpson when she gave it to the church to steward, natural and undeveloped. We use mulberry Park also for walking but do not feel Simson is large enough to create the same amount of trails. Also adamantly against installing cooking grills along the river. Keep Simpson natural and pristine.

**Jim Miller**

Keep Simpsonwood a nature preserve. Do not cut trees for extended parking lots. Use park for an open area nature experience. Leve SW as intended by Mrs. Simpson as a contemplation nature retreat for self-reflection.

**Theresa Frayer**

Thank you for buying it and it not becoming a development! 12' wide is too wide – please reduce to 4-6', change asphalt to pervious surface. Make playground a REAL natural playground- not just natural toned – (Google natural playscapes / playground) Campsite reservation control please. I've emailed GCP, Rex, Mike Mayson, etc. so I hope my emails are read. I do really appreciate all of the work the steering committee has done. I like the meadows and the boardwalk!

**Jon Yost**

My first idea would be to leave it alone. We have plenty of full service parks around. We do not have many "natural" parks. Why does the paved trail need to be 12' – narrower would be better. My favorite aspect of the current Simpsonwood is the animals. I think many species will leave permanently if most of the planned features are built. Crowds bring crime, noise, trash, etc. How many people do you plan on having here? Lighting? Night hours?

**Debbie Mitchell**

Pollinator friendly, Nature friendly, leave it natural, no new construction, do not sell in the park, no food trucks, no concerts, a gun free zone, no loud noise, no theater, no bikes, no lights, no water sports, no fishing, no killing anything – ok to remove dead trees, bird houses, bat houses, bees, butterflies, remove existing pavilion, just leave it alone.

**Augustine Hador**

You have the opportunity to preserve in accordance with the wishes of Ms. Simpson, the most pristine large tract in Gwinnett County. You have a playground without having to spend a dollar if you leave it natural and open to the public. A 12' paved road through the center will be expensive and will alter the character of the natural area. Habitat will be disturbed. Every park does not have to meet the needs of every segment of the population. Let the land dictate. The Jones Bridge Park is close and will meet the needs a natural park may not. Every park does not have to be reduced to the lowest common denominator. I came expecting there to be a discussion of the plan but it appears you have no serious interest in considering input. That's not the democratic way.

**Taylor Sword**

Change is hard. In an ideal world Simpsonwood would remain as Mrs. Simpson intended. Since that is not feasible or logical, it would be nice /good, show of good faith / a show of understanding community to change as little as possible.

My 2 biggest concerns are the large number of additional parking spaces being added. If parking is needed, why can't it be natural gravel rather than paved. A natural parking area would preserve as many trees as possible. Reserving as many trees as possible would hold true to the original intent of a passive park. 2) The installation of a playground. An open play space and pavilion area beds for lots of peoples and traffic. As a 15 year resident on Jones Bridge Circle I do not want my home, family and quality of life disrupted by the influx of traffic that a playground and pavilion will bring.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss traffic flow solutions with someone. Who will protect / secure the park? How will you ensure that our neighborhood stays safe? How will you maintain the integrity of the land? What measures are the County willing to put into place once the construction is done? Can this truly be a change for the good of the community? Yes, if the committee, architects and government official will take into consideration desires/ wants wishes of the community. Thank you!

**Liz and Rich Gembeck**

No playground needed – we have 16 grandkids, no need for a playground. No grills. Who will monitor the rules?

**Wulf Kuehmstedt**

I have been a grateful user of Simpsonwood trails for the last 20 years. I have enjoyed the natural beauty, wildlife and flora of this mostly natural park immensely (deer, raccoon, coyote, turtles, snakes, frogs, lizards, heron, ducks, geese, bluebirds, osprey, mayflower, orchid, trillium, foxglove and many, many more. I say no to asphalted ADA compliant trail. Leave the park the way it is.

**Susi Kuehmstedt**

Simpsonwood is the biggest jewel in the Metro area. It should not be disturbed. There is no need for a 12' wide street going through this nature paradise. Leave it alone! No, no, no! The variety of wildlife is amazing, the flora is gorgeous. No playground. All of your offerings mean cars, cars, cars. Think and leave it alone.

**David Adleman**

Way too much asphalt; way too much. Does every park have to have a "multiuse" trail? The term, by the way is very misleading. I believe if you said 12' wide asphalt trail you would get a much lower positive response. I'm ok with a smaller loop, maybe using current roads, but every park does not have to be the same! No to playground! I absolutely reject the idea of cutting down trees to help children "interact" with nature – how stupid. Really. No to grills. This is not a party place, it is a forest. Can't the parking be more permeable than asphalt? Maybe there's a place for a jewel of a park that really celebrates the quiet of the forest instead of the lowest common denominator of leisure uses?

**Rebecca Kelly**

Concern about parking space? Looks like too many. Concern about grills - who will be accountable for grills and waste products – will people bring in their own grills? Concern about paved trails – maybe great in 2 years but up keep? Cost to repair paved trails? Why do we need paved travel paths? What about natural bark or something that will not require pavement? People fishing over overlook? People falling over – safety? Do we need to be concerned about people falling? Maybe Jones Bridge Park is great for the overlook opportunities.

**Harry Johnson**

This is a very special piece of property that remains basically undisturbed by human intrusion, at least a large part. It is a shame that the County Parks Department is hell bent to make this into a playground regardless of the consequences (of) its natural state. I feel the Department needs to justify its status by making it what they feel is best regardless of the wishes of the local residents. Why can't the park remain in a natural state? The best parks in the US are the truly natural parks no the man-made parks. Been here for 30 years and this is sad and what I see as a miscarriage of what is best for the future-nature does the best job.

**Jenny Freeman**

Cut down on the number of parking spaces. Do the paved pathways need to be 12' wide? It would be better if they were 8-10' so as to not take away from the nature aspect of Simpsonwood. Simpsonwood is a beautiful place I enjoy walking in. Please do not destroy the beauty that is Simpsonwood.

**Chris George**

I support keeping the park as it. The park is now fairly devoid of development distinguishing it from most other County parks. The 1.5 miles of paved road is the most objectionable item of the plan. The less done to the park, the better. Also too much pavement in the meadow.

**Judy Schilling**

- Move group camping area further away from Barrick Subdivision homes.
- Too much paved asphalt trail- reduce to .5 mile
- Do not need more playgrounds are for children considering Jones Bridge Park in close proximity. First told it would remain a "passive park" now seems to be "active" with camping area, promoted chapel activities and playground.
- Reduce parking areas to 1/2 of proposed plan

- Reduce the elimination of trees needed for paved trails, parking areas and playground.
- Too much money proposed for changes the majority of the community doesn't want.
- Allow community to vote on proposed changes before implementation.

**Mim Harris**

Please keep Simpsonwood natural! No playground or paved path! There are plenty of places in Gwinnet to walk on paved trails we need to keep it natural, there is a playground around the corner at Jones Bridge let kids learn about nature's playground they need a place to go that they can explore. Thank you. Please keep it natural no trails.

**Tom and Sandra Hering**

Concerns about biking, especially mountain bikes. Insufficient parking with majority for chapel. Two-way use of 12' wide trail includes walkers, strollers, children – an invite for disaster. As Jones Bridge Park has become, it will be an oasis for weekend, extensive reunions with grills and soiled diapers left behind. Who "polices" this wilderness area? SPLOST money is designated by City of PTC for "bridge" now park says they want it. Isn't there an end to this "endless" money pit?

**Cindy Sheldon**

Simpsonwood is special because of the nature, quiet and unspoiled beauty. As a person who walks the trails multiple times per week I feel strongly that any impact to the forest, eliminating more trees, and room for habitat is negative. This negatively impacts local property values as well as bringing in traffic and pollution for the area. Please strongly consider abandoning any plans to pave trails within Simpsonwood. Please save our park.

**David Schilling**

No paved trails – only natural. Camping site does not have to be moved from where it is now. This park is now active instead of passive. I understood the park was to be a passive park. Reduce parking by half the spaces.

**Janice Scott**

Too much 12' wide pave road – 1.5 mile? Jones Bridge Park is trashed every weekend. This will be similarly abused. You'll be asking for SPLOST dollars to fund. This is just more taxation. Which means we pay. From the onset, this land was given up contrary to the original (request?) of L. Simpson. It's wrong from the start. Land erosion from taking down so many trees for 12' wide asphalt paths. There's already a campground! Unnecessary! Let's see a plan with the least done, least expense, least negative impact on wildlife and trees.

**Bob Scott**

I feel like the ADA trails will ruin the character of the property, there is no need for a 12' wide path through the forest, and 1.5 miles long? The campground is an unnecessary expense; the infrastructure is already in place. There is no need for the long bridge from the campground to the great lawn. I like the idea of the bridges over the stream, but overall it seems like unnecessary expense paid for by my tax dollars. Do you have any wheelchair bound people on this committee?

**S. Fishman**

Kicking out Mountain Bikers is a petty action with no scientific basis for any of its claims inclusive of but not limited to environmental erosion, access to exercise, spiking drug addiction in our community. Legal challenges will come from a united local community to halt all development unless our voice are heard. We will align with the naturalists and push this through the court.

**Tom and Katie Bates**

We do not want any changes to the area (Simpsonwood Park) other than natural paths and identifying trees and plants. This is one of the few natural places remaining in this area of the County. It seems a shame to

add asphalt and buildings that in fact detract from the natural beauty. At the very least give this some years to "evolve" into a more demonstrable, compelling direction.

**Tom Williams**

I think that Simpsonwood is a "piece of paradise" that should be left alone for the local community to enjoy. It would save the County Millions of dollars t

**Pat and Judy Quigley**

Looks good as proposed!

**Renee Reddic**

Please keep the park as natural as possible. I really enjoy the natural aspect of the park. I love the walking trails and really do not understand to dump millions of dollars into a space that is beautiful as it is. No playground or Dog Park is needed since Jones Bridge Park is so close by and serves this need.

**Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell**

Reduce the length and extent of the ADA trail system. Reduce the width of the ADA trail system to 6'. Please keep the park as natural as possible.

**Chris Sheldon**

Being avid hikers and lovers of unmolested natural beauty, my wife and I would like to see the absolute minimal development within the old Simpsonwood retreat grounds. It is a very peaceful natural plot of property which is a joy to walk around and through. Not every park in Gwinnett needs to have picnic pavilions, dog parks and paving.

**Dan Sperling**

I am against: No kiosks, No pavilions

1. Cutting down a single tree more than absolutely need to be
2. Any paved trails – no paving
3. Any special provisions for the handicapped

I am for

1. Leaving the area as natural and primitive as possible
2. Minimum parking
3. Trails can be natural or wood chips
4. A bathroom is ok
5. A conservation easement is needed
6. Parking for chapel OK

**Jim Winters**

My name is Jim Winters and I live in North River Crossing. My wife, daughters, and granddaughter walk in Simpsonwood Park at least 3 times a week. I would like for the park to stay as it currently exists as a natural area to enjoy nature (plants and animals) and as a quiet place to let your mind calm. Please do not build the park out rather continue to maintain the park in its current environment. I encourage you to contact me if you would like additional thoughts. Parks and recreation is doing an excellent job maintaining the park. Thank you for all of your work.

Kathrine Sorensen

Please keep the park more natural, if you have ever been to Jones Bridge Park on the weekends it's awful – please do not turn this beautiful space into that. No need for a playground. Part of what my kids love best is walking on the natural trail, jumping rocks and exploring under logs, rocks. There should not be such a need to pave everything and have it so "Perfect" looking. Simpsonwood should be left as natural as possible so that kids and adults can enjoy it as it is and not need to go to North GA to actually hike. The Northpoint trail is close enough if you want paved or use the sidewalks all around the area.

**Ellen Berman**

1. You have already cut down numerous trees on the property; in its wake, less oxygen to cleanse the air, less shade to reduce global warming, more carbon dioxide that pollutes the air, less habitat for wildlife and less natural areas for kids, parents and future generations to enjoy therefore....
2. The most constructive plan is to cease and desist from cutting down any more trees, or paving g any of the property
3. The paths can be made of natural wood chips
4. Many people bought homes that back up to Simpsonwood for the sole reason that there are natural, untouched wooded areas behind their homes, now the current plan destroys natural wooded areas, destroys the environment, destroys hundred year old trees for no reason.
5. This park could be a stand-out among parks in metro Atlanta, one that invites quiet, serenity and a calm escape from the glass and cement and asphalt of our built urban surroundings. Instead, the current plan wrecks the park as an escape, as one where a human can truly commune with nature. Instead in the current plan we are invited to commune with more cement, more human destruction of the environment. You should be ashamed of this plan! It is soul-less.

**Shana Eichel**

1. Conservation Easement
2. Multi-use should not be as wide as to not allow, bikes, skateboards, wheelchairs, walkers, stroller simultaneously, this is an accident waiting to happen
  - MU trail should be shorter as to not alter terrain
  - No asphalt trail
3. No additional pavilion, no grills
4. 10,000sf playground since equipment is the same as 35,000sf
5. Reduce parking spaces
6. Need to have traffic, environmental, archaeological studies.
7. In the survey that was taken in Nov. 2015, majority asked for the park to stay natural. My request is for the County to think outside the box and create a unique natural park.

**Linda Goodiel**

I completely disagree that our neighborhood had enough of a voice in the decisions. This impacts us more than residents living further away. Our voices should count for more because we are the ones losing our greenspace.

Do not develop this jewel of nature. It is too precious. Protect instead of destroying it. Reduce the size of the playground. Don't cut any trees. Don't pave the paths. Cut way back on the parking spaces. Preserve the forest floor and canopy. The wildlife depends on it. Put conservation first. Your survey is wrong. Residents want unspoiled green space. We need a conservation easement. Moving forward is a mistake you can't reverse. Please stop what you are considering. You are ruining it.

**Jeff Goodiel**

As a resident I don't feel I had a voice in this plan. The county had their mind made up before requesting input. They never intended to listen. The playground is too large which makes the parking spaces too numerous. We value our greenspace and prefer a 'natural' park. Please reduce the manmade footprint for our park. I'd prefer a dog park.

**Jennifer Keck**

This pristine, wild park is unique to greater metro Atlanta. You can't find a park like this so close to the city. It's like a part of N. GA Mountains without the drive. Please leave this as wild as possible. I understand that to be ADA compliant there needs to be a paved MU trail, but it doesn't need to cut so far into the old forest. If people want paved roads/ trails, they can go to nearby Pinckneyville. If they want playgrounds they can also go to Pinckneyville. Gwinnett has a wonderful opportunity to preserve and save this unique gem. Please don't make it like every other park in Gwinnett and metro Atlanta. We have enough "parks"

**Richard Kuhne**

Your plan is to take a natural area which is available to everyone and destroy its nature and soul; to turn it into another concrete and pavement eye sore. In the 20 years I have live in PTC I have seen replacement of trees with shopping centers and high priced houses. Your plan is just to continue to destroy nature. We already have wonderful paved parks within a few miles of Simpsonwood. They provide playgrounds, soccer fields... We do not need another one.

**Robert Fugate**

Making this a major park will increase traffic on Jones Bridge Circle in front of our house, more noise! Multi-use trail is too intrusive. Start small with parking spaces increase as needed. Do we need overlooks? I agree to move camping area up to front. Pedestrian Bridge up front to access meadow, why? The park is a lovely place the way it is.

**Michael Thompson**

No multi-use trail please. There are plenty of parks with wide walking paths. We need a wilder park for those who like that. No more paved parking spaces; there are plenty around the old buildings. No more needed. Keep the park wild.

**Andy Sword**

It would have been better to limit the number of parking spaces to be fewer and do away with the playground altogether. The focus should be on hiking/ walking trails and not a place for kids to play. Ideally, I'd like to see it with as little alterations as possible.

**Eric Sinclair**

Don't think we need a playground and not to mess with the natural trails and other natural aspects of the park now. No needed for a paved path that is 12' wide. The amount of parking that is being talked about is not needed. It will bring too many people in.

**Jillian Tuten**

I do not think this is necessary or desired by the community. There are several other parks in the area with all the proposed features. What makes Simpsonwood unique is the lack of amenity. You can walk through the forest and hear owls and see deer. You can feel totally alone in a city of thousands. It's quiet, and peaceful and calm. I know a few teenagers in my neighborhood who go out there specifically to get away from the commotion of life. It's a retreat for so many of us and that 1.5 mile 12' wide trail will destroy that. There are so many more creative and imaginative design plans in the world. Don't be afraid of something that is different. Embrace another option.

**Vernon Duty**

In short, the less improvement and development the better in my opinion. With Jones Bridge Park so close and a system of parks through the county there is an opportunity to use this land in a unique manner. Unfortunately it appears the County, not the local citizens who predominantly use the park, wish to develop it into a 'passive' park creating way to much parking and disturbing the river edge with viewing platforms and putting a 12' wide "multi-purpose" trail.

The uniqueness of Simpsonwood is that it is not heavily used and in its undisturbed state it is different. Perhaps leaving it as is would be the best and most beneficial use. Other parks allow various uses and activities. Why not leave Simpsonwood alone for walkers and peaceful reflection.

When my parents died I walked to the river and spent time alone there remembering them surrounded by only the sound of the water. Soon I will need to compete with folks on platforms, fishing, picnicking, playing radios and leaving behind the litter so common with heavy use.

The proposed plans change Simpsonwood unique peace and beauty into another common park like so many others.

The "natural playground" and the viewing platforms will fill the quiet park with noise changing forever the retreat that has been for those of us who value nature in a natural state.

Please reconsider the current plans to add "features" to the park. The less changes from current state, the better. It will serve the County by being different from other parks.

**Sara Miller**

Please keep this park unpaved and undeveloped. As a native of Norcross / Peachtree Corners I spent several summers attending YMCA day camp at Simpsonwood. Playing capture the flag in the woods and learning about wildlife were fond memories of my childhood. I'd like my young niece and nephew to experience the same. As a teen, I was aware of the role Simpsonwood retreat center played in a classmate's mother's recovery from a devastating house fire that claimed the life of her 3 year old son. Please keep this resource pure! Displacing the wildlife through development will ruin the quality of the park. Please respect the communities desire to keep this park intact.

**Haitna**

Please no playgrounds. There is plenty of noise around. School, Jones Bridge Park etc. The noise for those who live next to the park will suffer.

**Jon Fischer**

I have walked in Simpsonwood Retreat Center for the past 10 years (5-6 days every week). I am delighted that Gwinnett County Parks were able to obtain the property. However, I am disappointed, though not surprised, that instead of building on the concept of a "passive" park the committee wants to knock down trees, put in 12' wide trails, build a big playground. We have Jones Bridge Park a mile away and they have a fairly new state-of-the-art playground. We also have Pinckneyville Park which features wide paved trails and several playgrounds. Why can't we let this park stand out as a natural park – a place to commune with nature and walk the trails? Why can't we let nature be the playground?

The committee has already made these decisions. The public were invited to one meeting and then not allowed to speak. The meeting tonight is basically just to tell the public what will be happening. How many people on this committee have actually walked the trails @ this park?

**Linda Edwards**

This latest plan is moving in the right direction. I am glad to see that the dog park and skate park has been deleted. However, I still think there is too much space for parking. Also, I would prefer to eliminate the paved trail I feel it will disturb the flora and fauna too much. There is much to preserve there; wildflowers, and rare native plants. If a paved trail is absolutely necessary it does not need to be 12' wide.

**Stephen Warner**

Let it alone – keep it natural, no paved paths. Children and adults benefit from the peaceful natural habitat to escape the city and learn about plants and animals they encounter – unstructured time in an unstructured environment.

**Gail Lenahan**

It has seemed that no matter how many times we say leave it natural it just proceeds as per the County plans. No matter what we say. Please leave the playgrounds to Jones Bridge Park. Develop the asphalt trail over there too. And the extra parking too. After all that is on the river too.

I would like to see the trails maintained, as is, bridges rebuilt. The only thing I like about the plan is the lookout over the river.

I am sorry to disagree with the planners but I believe we could have a truly unique attraction for our area if we left the area natural – thank you for the opportunity to voice our opinions.

**Joseph Summerour**

My background is: BS Geology, MS Geology, Geography Minor, Environmental Science Teaching experience.

I have been a user of Simpsonwood facilities for more than 10 years, with Boy Scouts and church activities. I also helped remove trash from along one of the creeks during the recent "Sweep the Hooch" cleanup. Other recent visits have been for the purpose of engaging in nature photography. My primary concern is the over development and disturbances in regard to the 12' wide paved trail. Why not 8' wide? As for playgrounds, perhaps scaled back from the 10,000sf – conventional or 35,000sf natural. Overuse (over-popularity) has harmed Jones Bridge Park (as far as environmental concerns go). Let's not make the same mistakes with Simpsonwood Park.

**Kelli Clay**

Gwinnett County has plenty of parks that have a lot of facilities such as playgrounds, multi-use paths, dog parks, playing fields, etc. Two are very close to Simpsonwood – Pinckneyville and Jones Bridge. I am against spending \$7 million to duplicate services. I would like to see Simpsonwood remain as it is. That said, I realize I'm fighting a losing battle. Although there are national parks similar to Simpsonwood, it appears Gwinnett County is closed to that idea. Therefore, if Gwinnett County insists on making changes – here is my order of preference:

1. Take down NO trees, unless they are diseased or dying. I would prefer none of the following be done but if you "must", the least of my concerns are listed first.
2. Add some parking in places where there are not trees
3. Add a small playground and bathroom facility
4. Maybe one small pavilion near the playground

Stop there. It will probably be a lot less than \$7 million. If you absolutely have to put in the multi-use path put it in at no more than 6-8', choose a path that takes down not trees. A 12' wide path with clearance on the sides will destroy a lot of vegetation.

Our County needs greenspace and money. This is a great opportunity for Gwinnett County to save some of both – Thank you for considering the tax paying citizens' concerns.

**Mimi Anderson**

Most concerns could be resolved with better, more frequent communications!!! There should have been a speaker / program tonight. People expected it when they came to the "meeting"

**Joe Griggs**

I like the plan. I like the paved trails 0 they are great for old folks who are not up to a scramble through the woods and they are usable immediately after wet weather – a great time to visit the woods. I think that the amplified sound restrictions that are in place for Holcomb Bridge Park would be good for Simpsonwood as well. GREAT JOB! (Additional notes / comments from Next-door online site:



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Final Master Plan & Prioritization Meeting**

**Minutes from:** 08.04.16 Meeting

**Attendees:** Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder

jB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

**Steering Committee Participants:** Gray Terry, Pat O’Leary, Cindy Waldo, Jody Meller, Rodney Ho, Joyce Teel, David Jones, Michelle Wehrheim, Julie Barnash, Nancy Geigler, David Sprinkle, Mark Thornell, Anne Sheffield, Eric Christ, Preston Chappell, Lorrie Christopher, Linda Hostinsky, Lorrie Backer, Matt Houser, Brett Wylie, Mike Verna, Robert Gates (In absentia / via email)

**Location:** Simpsonwood United Methodist Church, Building C

**Time:** 7:00 – 10:00pm

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Grant Guess welcomes the Steering Committee Members to the meeting and makes opening comments. Reiterates that this is a Committee Meeting, not an open forum and would appreciate no interruptions. Committee Members will only be allowed to vote.

The Consulting Team, jB+a, inc. is then introduced.

Each Steering Committee member was emailed the latest revised master plan graphic to review prior to this meeting. Steve Provost, jB+a, reviewed this latest graphic which included modifications that had been made based on comments from the Steering Committee at the June 16, 2016 meeting and comments received from the Public Viewing on June 30, 2016.

1. **Note the boardwalk restricted trail in the vicinity of the Bay Star Vine** on the natural surface trail flanking the Chattahoochee River. The intent here is to work out a route through the zone where the Bay Star Vine is growing that will avoid the plants, and then construct a slightly elevated boardwalk with railings through that zone in order to encourage hikers to stay on the trail in that particular area. Final routing of course depends on having qualified individuals note the locations of the plants.
2. Note the modifications to the route of both the orange Marked Natural Trail and the western end of the Perimeter Trail Loop paved trail. The natural surface trail is routed lower on the slope in a continuous descent that will allow a more sustainable earthen trail slope, while the paved trail is shifted towards the east. The **orange natural surface trail no longer has two crossings of the paved trail**, and the greatest part of the paved trail is shifted to the east side of the ridge. The effect of both modifications is a greater separation between the two trails in that zone.
3. Note the **western section of the multi-purpose trail** (lighter color gray on the plan labeled Perimeter Trail Loop) **has been reduced in width to 10' width**. Note the section of multi-purpose trail (darker gray labeled Interior Multi-Use Trail Loop) retains its 12' width. The intersections between the two trail sections have been changed to better facilitate children bicycling on the Interior Multi-Use Trail Loop. With fewer bicycles on the Perimeter Trail Loop, we feel we can reduce that section to 10' width. Both loops maintain their 3.5% slope for superior ADA access.
4. **Note that the area inside of the 1.5 mile Multi-Use Trail Perimeter Loop (Core Area)**, includes field, forest, Maintenance Compound, Chapel, Chapel Restroom, Chapel Drive and Parking,

Pavilion, Pavilion Parking, Pavilion Restroom, Natural Learning Playground, Parking for Natural Learning Playground and 1.5 mile total perimeter Multi-Use Trail, and the portion of service and park drives within that zone. The core area **occupies approximately 15% of the park site.**

5. **Note that the park area outside of the 1.5 mile Multi-Use Trail** including the Great Lawn, **6.9 miles of natural surface trails**, Parking and Restroom to serve Great Lawn and natural surface trail users, forest, fields, Existing Lift Station, Existing Cell Tower, River Overlooks, and the portion of the service and park drives within that zone **occupies approximately 85% of the park site.**

Each committee member was then asked to comment on the revised graphic. Their comments are as follows:

**Gray Terry** – The Natural learning playground is it still in the same context as it has been. Are we going to have any additional feedback on that tonight? *No*. There was a lot of discussion about that in June. Will we be talking about the conservation easement tonight? It came up a lot at the public meeting.

Grant Guess - The conservation easement is another thing we can vote on tonight. It would be a recommendation to the Recreation Authority. We did vote for it at an earlier meeting, but I think it would be important to vote on it again. There is a series of recommendations that will be presented to the Recreation Authority that can include the Master Plan graphic, Priorities and the conservation easement.

Thank you for the work you have done and for making the changes. And for keeping it as natural as it is.

**Pat O'Leary** – I think it looks fine. I am curious as to why you think there will be less bike traffic on the multi-use trail. *10' is typical is smallest cyclists use, and as we have adjusted the intersections between the 12' wide path and the 10' path with 90° tie in's we anticipate that the majority of bike traffic will stay on the 12' wide trail loop and not venture deeper into the park site.* I have no problem making the trails 10' I just don't want them to come back and add 2' additional. I think the plan looks great, did a good job, I think the board should be proud.

**Cindy Waldo** – How does the boardwalk work? *Elevated, will have railings to control pedestrian traffic to keep them from mistakenly impacting a rare plant. How do they maintain underneath? It would be kept natural below. Does it have to be 6' wide? Two way loop so people are walking side by side and there will be railings on the sides, 6' would be the narrowest we would want to go to keep it from feeling tunnel-like. 10' path – can we make it 8' so we can dissuade bikers from riding on them? We spoke with the trails specialist 10' would be the narrowest County wants to go to limit liability. Compromise and protects liability to county, and protects users.* Playground – my understanding is that the land will be clear cut. *It may not be. When construction documents are produced the site arrangement will be determined and then again modified as necessary during construction.* Can we work around the trees? *Yes! The designer we want to have build the playground has worked with committees before with similar interests.* Why is the natural surface trail dashed? *Because it has been realigned (example – trail to the north is moved away from the property line at Revington).*

**Jody Meller** – Picking up on the playground –can we have a representative on site that will determine which trees will be cut down? *This kind of playground will be a first for the parks department. Dr. Robin Moore (NC State University) is the national authority on this type of playground. He enjoys working with committees and we would like to bring him in to design the playground. This would be a more intensive progress than what we would typically use. There is possibly an opportunity for community members to be on the committee.* Committee is concerned about the trees. This playground is 3 1/2 times the size of the conventional playground, there may be flora and fauna that we would like to preserve.

You mention liability for the County in relation to the bike trails - if you have a path that says "no bikes" wouldn't that relieve the County from liability? *No.* The purpose of the trail is for seniors and moms with

strollers – could the community take some responsibility to keep them off? Just because the path is 2' narrower is that really going to keep the bikers off the path? *No, the alignment will. It is much harder to navigate 90° turns on a bike; most cyclists prefer smooth transitions.*

My impression is that we have feedback from the community that we have people who do not want to walk on the trail with bikers. I'd like to reduce as much of the clearing as possible, I understand how the trials will be laid out in the field to minimize this but I still think this trail could be narrower.

**Rodney Ho** – (Playground) What type of trees are in there now? *Pine hardwood mix a young forest which is good news because a young forest adapts to changes better than an older forest, so we can go in with the expectation that any impacted trees will stay round longer. Also, the landscaping that we are talking about in the playground area includes both trees and shrubs. We plant more trees because we have room to.* I'm a regular natural trail walker so I am happy that the trails were separated. I like the narrower trail. In essence, this park is too small to have mountain bikers and regular bikers; is that correct? Yes.

**Joyce Teel** – You have been very accommodating adjusting the plan so that there is something for everyone. I have had the opportunity to review Dr. Moore's Work. I visited the park he designed in Cary, NC, the work at the Airport and Durham NC. He is all over the internet and I think we would be very lucky to have a natural learning playground designed by this man; he's internationally renowned.

**David Jones** – I have been working on improving this area (Peachtree Corners); improving it for everyone. I expend about 3 times as much effort to get here as anyone. I don't whine. I am delighted to be in County that has the number one park system in the Country. We've come a long way and we are doing it right for the future of our community because of the County and the consultants. I am glad to see what I see and that we have had the opportunity to share views and compromise. I think this plan is about as close to being good and excellent as it can be. I pay taxes and I want to be included. I would like to see more paved trails, of course, but I am happy to compromise. Hard surface trails will be needed everyone at some point, or you'd be dead. I am glad to be able to have a voice to be able to share for people like me.

**Michelle Werheim**- The main road ends at the chapel. Will the access road be the same width? *No, the minimum width of the access road is 15', which is what is shown on the plan and priced in the cost estimate. The access road will be gated for maintenance and DWR access only.* Do we know what type of gate it will be? *Not at this time.* Can the committee recommend? *The gate could potentially be a rolling gate with barriers at the sides to minimize people going around – something more robust than just a wood arm.* I like the changes. I would like to see more policing. I want to protect the right trees and right foliage and have information / knowledgeable people there to share it with community – signage (interpretive signage) educate the community. Not many people know the different types of flora and fauna we have on the site, it would be nice to share.

**Julie Barnash** – I am happy with the changes. I like that we have thought of everyone and not just ourselves.

**Nancy Geigler** – I think it's amazing that the majority of the elements are within only 15% of the park. The fact that you can get on the natural trail and not see any of the multi-use paved trail is great. I'm really happy with it! We bought our house because it backs up to the property. Thank you!

**David Sprinkle**- I wanted to continue with what Nancy was saying about the 15%. That 15% includes everything on the verges of the trail. Within that 15% the majority of that space is forest. Outside of that 15% interior at least 50% of the paved trail is running through the previously developed sites. So there is even less impervious surface than the previous plan.

**Mark Thornell** – You have told us that you will mark the trees (prior to construction). *That is correct; a tree survey that locates the trees is produced prior to construction documents being developed. The tree survey is part of the base document information of the CD's.* In addition tree protection fencing is the very first thing

*that is erected on site prior to ANY construction commencing. During construction the tree protection fencing is routinely checked to make sure there are no violations. As part of the bid package there is a whole section of fines that can be assessed if there are violations. Do want to acknowledge that what we have created impacts the site far less than it was in the past. We did a great job! When I leave here I vote I want to make sure our wishes are met.*

**Anne Sheffield** - I like that the majority of the development is hugged in a little closer. I was at the park last week someone was flying something loud; a drone or a model plane, what can we as local residents do to stop that sort of thing? *If there is a blatant violation you should report it to the police. There is also a number on the park sign for non-emergency instances.* I'm happy that everything shrunk in. Policing – Jones Bridge Park rules are not being followed – rules are all being broken.

Mark Thornell - What do we need to do? Grills everywhere nowhere to park. Do we call the city?  
*Call the police – they will respond but they respond based on priority.*

**Eric Christ** – I've reviewed the collated comments from the Public Meeting. I like the changes I see here. Boardwalk – would be field located just like the trails. I think there should be a representative of the group for the learning playground. I would like to see the Historic site (questionable moonshine stills) marked / located. 211 parking spaces represented on the plan are still fewer than what was there at the time of purchase. Post recreation authority approval, can the community still be involved and post construction – is there opportunity for Friends of Simpsonwood? *Everyone could contribute to park – native plant master gardeners group focuses on the goal of reintroducing natives. Master gardeners act as conduit. Anticipate having an ongoing relationship with this church and continued participation with the chapel and the programs that already go on in the park.*

**Preston Chappell** – I highly suggest that the exterior loop be only pedestrian-no bikes. Playground – I want to save as many trees as possible; incorporating them into the play area or work around the trees. I need to really know that the conservation easement will be considered. From what I know the Commissioners have already shot it down and aren't considering it at all. I need to leave here today with a firm idea of what the next steps are to get a conservation easement.

Grant – Part of our job is to do a little education with our Commissioners. Charlotte Nash knows about conservation easements intimately. We need to put together an information package for our Commissioners since some of them don't really know much about them or the process behind placing a conservation easement on a park site.

I have more photos of Jones Bridge Park. Until someone puts boots on the ground out there nothing will change. Deer season opens on September 10<sup>th</sup> – I have photos now of poaching on Simpsonwood. I've seen trail cans for baiting deer; I've met with the GA DNR to walk the site. Gate at the river is still down at the river – cars parked at the river, driving along the river. We need to address this now since we don't know when the park will be constructed, this type of behavior but can cause degradation of the park. What is the County going to do? *Not sure a that fixing the existing gate will work right now because it's not the right type of gate, but we will talk to maintenance and see what we can do.* The suspension foot bridge at the river has been condemned but there is no bypass. You walk along the trail, come to the bridge and you have nowhere to go! *There was supposed to have been a detour put in place when the bridge was condemned. We will talk to maintenance and see what is going on.*

**Lorrie Christopher** – I'm so pleased with the updates you have done. I'm still very concerned about the enforcement issue and the potential for spillover from Jones Bridge Park. Thank you for all the work that has been done, all the revisions and all the attention you have given to our issues and concerns.

**Linda Hostinsky** – The plan is excellent – I have only two concerns

1. The lack of conservation easement
2. Policing of the park.

Pat O'Leary – Can the neighborhoods raise money to have off duty police officers police the park?  
*Grant – It is possible to work something like that out – especially if they are off duty deputized police officers.*

Jody – We have 2 City Council members on the committee is this something the City would consider? *It is a County Park.*

The Community needs to come together to promote the idea.

Gray Terry – Is there any video surveillance that could be done at the entrance? *There is a system of fiber optics that the County has – through DOT. There have been times when the County has been able to tap into that. Anything that would deter crime or misconduct would be a help. Video is a good option because it can be reviewed remotely.*

**Lorrie Backer** – Thank you for all the hard work. I was at the public meeting and it was even uncomfortable at times, so I appreciate what you have done to try to consider everyone. If you aren't familiar with Autry Mill you should see it. I like what they did for the playground. If we need money we could sell Simpsonwood moonshine.

**Matt Houser** – I continue to think that as the plan evolves it becomes better. The comment about including the community master gardeners is very good. Ecology continues to remain at the top of the list. Why can't we have one of the priorities be nature?

Lorrie Backer – Mark Patterson (Gwinnett County) says he has plant material he just needs labor.

I know the layout is conceptual but with bikes on trails is there a minimal radius for biking? *For recreational trails there is not minimal radius.* To your knowledge has the County ever been sued for what they have in parks? *Yes and no. When talking specifically about the recreational elements - Playgrounds yes. The County has also been sued for an accident on a trail due to a drainage structure.* I think you keep moving in the right direction.

**Brett Wylie** – Lighting what is the strategy? I know it is not to be used after sunset. *There will be some use in the evening – rentals (chapel) special events. Some pedestrian lighting that will be on county timer that they can be turned on or off – only where there is an event.*

Jody Meller – When you say street lights do you mean. *Lights that line the park drive and parking lots. Unless there is an even that extends after dark it will be a dark park at night.*

Construction - monitoring? First thing that occurs is an existing conditions survey, then CDS' are produced, bid selection, pre-construction meeting on site – setting tree protection first is by law the first thing that has to happen on site prior to construction. Do you have someone monitoring the site during construction? *There is an on-site person or third party that monitors, plus staff that comes out fairly regularly. In addition we have a schedule of fines and penalties for damaging trees to discourage impact on trees. Number of different measures to discourage negligent work.*

**Mike Verna** – The trail that leads to the group camping, what type of material? *Natural surface.* What is up with the labyrinth that exists, what happens to it? *It becomes just a remnant of the site – we aren't showing any construction through that zone.* Did not know you could close a park to film a movie. *Yes, with a permit and large fee.* Pavilion – is it in the location where the existing pavilion is? *Yes.* I am an avid bike rider, I advocate for 12' and not just for the bike riders -12' is more comfortable for everyone on a shared trail. Great job! My parents live in PA with a park nearby; the park was planned with no steering committee. It was an interesting process, my parents were furious at first but then they were shocked at how great it turned out.

**Robert Gates (in absentia / via email)** – I realize that voting is done by members in attendance, but at the last meeting a proxy was allowed as it was sent prior to the meeting. To that end and not sure I can forecast what may be voted on or the exact wording, here are some options.

- Concerning the petition forwarded: While respectful of their input, I would NOT be in favor of rescinding our prior votes to move the master plan forward.
- Concerning the revised Master Plan forwarded to the committee this week – I am in FAVOR of the plan as drafted and I am in FAVOR of forwarding this to the GCPRA for review and approval.

Steve Provost – I wanted to thank you. You are community volunteers and you have really done a lot of the work, we just put your ideas on paper. We appreciate your help, so thank you; it's been a tremendous and spirited effort!

Following the Steering Committee comments session, a vote to accept the Master Plan as the guiding document for development of Simpsonwood Park was taken. A majority vote passed the graphic for submission to the Recreation Authority. (17 approved 4 opposed, 1 in absentia).

#### **Capital Project Prioritization Exercise**

A consolidated costs handout was given to the steering committee which showed a breakout of the costs associated with the total development of the various park elements. A general overview of the breakout of costs was given and the steering committee was then asked to utilize the prioritization exercise to individually rate the priorities in order of preference for development.

Priorities are as follows:

NOTE: Elements were voted on and followed majority rules.

NOTE: Base infrastructure for the park was not voted on as these elements were deemed necessary for all other park element construction. The base infrastructure includes: entrance modifications, access drive, maintenance access, frontage sidewalk, utility provisions, site testing, entry signage, natural surface trail access (Parking / restroom facilities), Chapel facilities (parking, restroom).

1. Paved Trail System
2. Meadowland, Natural Surface Trails Remediation, Boardwalk @ the river
3. Group Camping Area
4. Pavilion/ Playground Complex
5. Removal of exotic invasives @ river, Revegetation of Sewer Easements
6. Overlooks @ the River (2 Total)
7. Boardwalk @ wetlands
8. Main Lawn Area / Parking
9. Pedestrian Bridge Connecting Camping and Great Lawn

The Steering Committee and community repeatedly expressed interest in having a conservation easement placed on the Simpsonwood Park property. Following the prioritization of park elements the Steering Committee took a vote which requested that the Recreation Authority and Board of Commissioners consider placing Simpsonwood Park under conservation easement. The vote passed unanimously.

As a follow up to the Master Plan Design Development process, Rex requested feedback from the steering committee in reference to the process taken to derive the master plan: did the process you went through adequately prepare you for the decision you needed to make?

- Yes. We have all put in hours because we see other communities that have absolutely no input.

What suggestions would you make to improve the process?

- More time for understanding what we were supposed to be doing prior to the first vote. More explanation as to what that initial vote would mean and having the ability to get more input prior to that vote.
- If, while doing the park tour we had pointed out that you needed to get more input because “this might be in the park”.
- I did not feel like I was educated enough.
- I do not understand the confusion here – it was all explained at the beginning of the process.
- The County has parameters of the park that you don’t understand – passive park definitions. I think there was a lot of confusion as to the definition of a passive park. Park Typology should have been explained better.
- I was confused as to when I should poll my neighbors and community – plus the importance of the surveys. I did not realize that the public input meeting was so important.
- Being on the committee, we were able to decide every single solitary thing for the park, but for the people who didn’t attend the meeting it felt like it was being pushed down their throat. I was very unhappy with the opposition by the committee. I think there were people on the committee that were actually working against the goals set forth. We didn’t need that.
- Most people at the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting thought there was going to be a presentation at the meeting. It was interpreted as a public meeting, so the verbiage needs to be consistent. I think if you do that again there should be a presentation and schedule it earlier in the design process.
- I am impressed with the amount of man hours that went in to the project.
- The conservation easement is integral to the park. When presented to the BOC will they be separate? What is the mechanism that makes the conservation easement viable?

*If the BOC authorizes the department to prepare documents for a conservation easement – special survey that will go into the deed permanently (Meets and Bounds). This survey will cut out the area with the cell tower. Department needs to be authorized to prepare those documents / exhibits. Introductions – what is a conservation easement? Why does the committee want it? Get the “OK” from the BOC in a work session. Then bring it as an action item to the BOC. It’s not a trivial thing because it decreases the value of the property to just park property – will never be able to develop.*

- On the community interest forms there were baseline amenities that were never voted on. There was never a repository for these plans for the public to be directed to. They should have been on the City / County website from the very beginning. I can play devil’s advocate – just like putting the plan up at the meeting if you put it up on the website there is nothing that explains the plan and a lot of people have trouble reading plans. I still continue to bump into people who don’t know who their steering committee member is.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42pm

#### **Next Meeting:**

#### **August 11, 2016 - Recreation Authority Presentation**

*(Thursday, 3:00pm, Shorty Howell Park Activities Building)*

jB+a will present a graphic of the Final Master Plan for Simpsonwood Park and the Steering Committees prioritization recommendations to the Recreation Authority for review and comment. A request for a conservation easement will also be brought forth for consideration,



## **SIMPSONWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN – Recreation Authority Meeting**

**Minutes from:** 08.11.16 Meeting

**Attendees:** Gwinnett County Recreation Authority Members

Gwinnett County Department of Community Services – Grant Guess, Rex Schuder

jB+a, inc. – Steve Provost, Raigan Carr

Steering Committee participants – Joyce Teel, Mike Varga, Jody Meller, Lorrie Backer, Preston Chappell, Lorrie Christopher

Interested public – Joe Griggs

**Location:** Shorty Howell Park Activities Building

**Time:** 7:30:00-4:00pm

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Steve Provost of jB+a presented the Steering Committees Master Plan graphic and development priorities for Simpsonwood Park to the Gwinnett County Recreation Authority.

Following the presentation, there were no additional questions from the Recreation Authority.

Grant Guess presented a recommendation from the Steering Committee for a Conservation Easement for Simpsonwood Park. Several Steering Committee members were present in the audience. Preston Chappell spoke for the group indicating that the primary reason they were at the meeting was to show support for a conservation easement, mentioning that there was unanimous support for the easement amongst committee members and huge support within the community.

Steve Flynt, (RA Chair) thanked the committee members for showing their support for the park and for coming to the meeting.

A vote was taken to accept the plan for Simpsonwood Park as presented – it was accepted and passed unanimously.

Jack Bolton (District 2) made a motion for the conservation easement process for both Simpsonwood Park and Alexander Park to commence, it was seconded by Robert Gates. The process for the conservation easement to commence and be presented to the Board of Commissioners passed.



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