

**APPENDIX G:**

**NOTES FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**Public Meeting Notes**  
**Gwinnett County Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

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**September 10, 2003, 7-9 PM - Grayson High School**

- Quality of county parks has improved
  - For a 45 year-old interests have changed
  - 15 year old son
  - big interest in this area in radio-controlled vehicles / planes, which are currently not allowed in Gwinnett Parks
  
- Overcrowding at Dacula Soccer Complex
  - Nice facility but too crowded / dangerous
  - Are there plans for expansion at that site?
    - *County Staff: Expansion will have to take place at another site*
  
- County website with information on parks is out of date
  
- What is happening at Little Mulberry Park site?
  - *County Staff: Construction for parking, pavilion, trails (natural and paved) is underway. Will open in Spring 2004. Equestrian trails to be added in the future.*
  
- Will there be mountain bike trails at Little Mulberry?
  - *County Staff: No*
  
- Will there be soccer fields at Alexander Park or Bay Creek Park? There are no soccer fields in the Grayson area.
  - *Consultant: There is a general shortage of soccer; was identified in needs assessment.*
  - *County Staff: No at Bay Creek. Alexander has not been Master Planned but is intended to be an active recreation park.*
  
- What percentage of park money is from General Funds vs. SPLOST?
  - *County Staff: Don't know exact numbers but SPLOST only pays for capital projects, not operations.*
  
- Large Hispanic population in Gwinnett - discrepancies in population vs. voters/taxpayers. What does ethnicity matter in park facilities?
  - *Consultant: Certain cultures have different expectations. Ex: Hispanic > more socializing, informal sports than organized sports.*

- Who is paying taxes and who is enjoying the free ride? SPLOST money vs. General Funds money
- Soccer Association representative:
  - Outdoor movie was great
  - New playground at Tribble Mill is great
  - Emphasis on Senior, Teen and Ethnic groups in presentation
  - Soccer interest is growing exponentially – current facilities are overused
  - Not enough facilities in Grayson and the D&E zones
- 72% of this subdivision near Tribble Mill is retired
  - Senior needs at Tribble Mill include pool and Senior Center
- Is there a skateboard facility at Bay Creek?
  - *County Staff: Not in Phase 1, but it is in Master Plan*
- Is there a plan for a stop light at Bay Creek?
  - *County Staff: Not currently*
- Supports idea of pool at Tribble Mill. Often too hot for trails in summer. Also local school swim teams don't have a facility. Competitive pool possibility?
- How many people rode bikes as kids? Anyone comfortable biking on Gwinnett roads? Need for mountain bike / other bike facilities. Yellow River Park trail length being cut. What is explanation? Trying to serve too many user groups at that site. Consider a specific mountain bike park or minimum of 10 mile trail at YRP or other site. Consider closing trails after big rains – better for maintenance of the trails.
- Commit more money for park acquisition in SE of county. Potential to link parks.
- How is funding for purchase vs. development of parks determined?
  - *County Staff: This process will help determine priorities. 80 million out of 2001 SPLOST (192 million total) was for acquisition.*
- An avid runner: no safe place for distance runners. Need 10 mile loop, currently 3 mile at Tribble Mill is the longest running trail.

- At Tribble Mill 11 miles of single track trail is of good use but was not developed by county. Need for running and mountain bike trails. Connect parks with bike lanes. SORBA (Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association) is volunteering to create and maintain trails. Why equestrian but no bike trails at Little Mulberry?
- Support for competitive swimming pool. Benefits seniors, disabled and kids.
- Why does county buy parkland close to county line when out of county residents will be significant amount of users?
  - *County Staff: Good point. Sometimes have to buy where available.*
  - *County Staff: Have many purchases out of general funds and often central locations; depends on availability and cost.*
- Why not put soccer fields at Tribble Mill?
  - *County Staff: Was purchased jointly with Soil Conservation Service for water based recreation and excluded active recreation as part of agreement.*
- Basketball facilities needed, both gym and outdoor. Will it be part of Bay Creek?
  - *County Staff: Part of plan, but not currently funded.*
- Would like volleyball courts for kids. Also basketball.
- Swimming – have to go outside of county for school swim meets.
- Concern about spending too much money just on facilities. Also need coaching clinics and training for parents. Impacts safety and coaching availability for youngest kids.
- Hwy 78 improvement district. Trying to enhance surrounding environment. Thinks county is doing an excellent job acquiring park land. Large tracks of land near Yellow River and Hwy 78 that would be good acquisition and it could fit into Greenway plan. Also Path Foundation has trail from Atlanta to Stone Mountain, could connect to Gwinnett Parks.
- Regarding mountain bike trails: Little Mulberry had been compared to Yellow River Park on web site and other sources. Disappointed that mountain bike trails not part of Little Mulberry.
- Question about Greenways and specific linkages.
  - *County Staff: Report is available in all libraries. (County Staff mentions some specific links)*
- Rabbit Hill Park was supposed to have soccer as well as numerous other facilities for kids (playgrounds, etc). Can any of this (the facilities other than soccer) be fast tracked?

- *County Staff: Part of this process to determine those priorities.*
- Can local communities raise money to fund projects within the parks?
  - *County Staff: The new parks foundation is looking at those possibilities/opportunities.*
- Small copies of Bay Creek plan available?
  - *County Staff: Will try to provide a copy to the Grayson Athletic Association.*

### **September 12, 2003, 7-9 PM - Norcross High School**

- Swimming – have to go outside of county for school swim meets.
  - What's planned for west district aquatic center?
  - no place close by for high school teams to practice at
  - area needs more facilities for competitions
  - need a ten-meter course (competition standard facility) for competitions
    - *County Staff – We are planning for a facility in this area - land has been purchased, no money for development, likely will be modeled after Mountain Park aquatic facility*
- Swimming - senior citizens have to drive to far to use aquatic facilities.
  - need a facility closer to Norcross area
- What is timetable for development of purchased land for aquatic facility?
  - *County Staff – funding for capital development from SPLOST funds- possible development by 2005*
- Meadowcreek cluster representative
  - Supports county's wonderful facilities
  - Sees need for facilities that are easily accessible to this community, but recognizes that space is at a premium
  - Community wants equity in development of parks
    - *Consultant - Yes this area has need – as density map indicates*
- What's the schedule for opening Holcomb Bridge and Jones Bridge Parks?
  - *County Staff – rain delays held up Jones Bridge; Holcomb Bridge will not be open for almost two years – Master Plan will be developed soon*
- Young male (skateboarder) - Will there be any more skate parks – like Pinckneyville?

- Design and construction problems at Pinckneyville (stormwater comes into area)-
- Design creates dangerous conditions– designer had no experience with skate parks – there is a big need for better constructed parks
  - *County Staff – Skate parks proposed at Lenora, Bay Creek, and Graves Park - Five Forks is under construction. There are limited funds for skate parks right now.*
- Are there agreements with athletic associations to use facilities (in regards to safety concerns)?
  - *County Staff – Yes, there are agreements and these associations have injury insurance, as well as safety training for coaches.*
- Aquatic facilities – expresses concern about very long drives to get to a swimming pool
  - Existing swim parks are great but they are located only in peripheral areas
  - Inferior facilities in center of county – Duluth area
    - *County Staff – Land has been purchased on Peachtree Industrial Park (Berkeley Lake Area) and an aquatic facility will be built here. However, because of limited funds will not be developed right now. Facility will be developed in future with more funds.*
- We need extensive bike paths (like Silver Comet) so kids can bike places
  - no safe areas to ride bikes in county
    - *County Staff – We have countywide plan for greenways and bike trails, but we don't have an abandoned rail line for a bike trail like the Silver Comet.*
    - *County Staff- We do have some places for safe bike riding such as: Tribble Mill Park has 3 mile trail (suitable for biking); Bethesda Park – 1.5 mile trail; Lenora Trail – 1.5 mile trail*
- There is a lack of summer camp facilities in Duluth area.
- Fishing opportunities?
  - Lack of safe fishing areas in county for kids – Jones Bridge is too dangerous
  - Need docks, safe areas to fish
    - *County Staff – There are some facilities where people can safely fish, such as: Tribble Mill Park- 100 acre and 40 acre with docks and safe banks – but small fish because of heavy fishing on banks; Little Mulberry Park – will have 45-acre lake –will have docks only and no bank fishing; National Park Properties – 700 acres along Chattahoochee but difficult access*
    - *County Staff – Jones Bridge Park will be upgraded with steam bank stabilization to facilitate fishing opportunities. You should also look at National Park website for fishing opportunities*
- Bike trials - need protected area for biking, greenways needed not bike lanes

- Extensive greenway could be a tourist draw (Silver Comet is a good example)
- What about the Northern Arc property for a bike lane?
  - *County Staff – yes a bike greenway is under discussion for that property, but no money is currently available for development of a bike trail there.*
  - *County Staff – Gwinnett County does not have abandoned rail lines for conversion to bike trail. Instead, county will pursue greenways. But greenways are much more expensive than rail lines because they are located in stream corridor.*
- We need better public transportation to parks in less dense areas.
  - *County Staff- That is a great idea, do need bus stops at parks.*
- Resident of Peachtree corners – You are doing a great job here with recreation facilities in Gwinnett County. However, there are problems with swimming facilities.
  - Swimming program in the county is the second largest program in nation. There is an opportunity for state of the art facility that can have a dramatic economic impact. This could be a tourist draw. The Savannah facility demonstrates that a lot of revenue is generated by these facilities.
  - New facilities should be able to accommodate big competitions.
  - Look at Mountain View aquatic facility in Cobb County as a model for an aquatic facility.

**September 16, 2003, 10 AM -12 PM - Bethesda Park**

- Concern about Meadow Creek cluster growing larger in population and not enough facilities for kids in the area. Therefore, kids are getting involved in gangs and other dangerous activities. Addition of boys and girls clubs was suggested.
- How can we keep generating master plans when previous master plans were not utilized?
- Concerns surrounding the Hispanic population in the Meadow Creek cluster are being alienated and in result, kids are becoming involved with gangs due to the lack of extracurricular activities.
- Senior citizen:
  - not enough horseshoe, shuffleboard. Currently, not enough facilities to hold tournaments. Presently using Mountain Park, Cobb Co., Paulding Co. 257 seniors on Olympic team. Addition of a facility will allow tournaments to be held at one venue.
- Senior citizen:
  - not enough adult ball fields for seniors

- Harold Carlson:
  - Great job with parks! Supports youth sports, but feels there is need for additional senior softball. Feels the addition of adult softball facilities will bring in revenue by traveling teams. Feels seniors are being underserved .
- Andy Johnston, cyclist:
  - Enjoys cycling at Yellow River and Tribble Mill. Would like to see additional park space dedicated to off-road mountain biking.
- Steven Johnston, 13:
  - Would like to see more trials and safe, unstructured “hang out” places for kids.
- Horse rider:
  - Lives in area “D”. Enjoys riding at Yellow River and Tribble Mill Park. Would like to see equestrian trials at Little Mulberry Park site. Also, would like county to purchase additional land adjacent to Little Mulberry site to preserve American Indian artifacts and burial grounds. Also, to preserve open space from being developed.
- Hiker:
  - Enjoys walking at Stone Mountain. Concerned about additional loss of wooded areas in Gwinnett County due to development.
- A long distance runner:
  - needs 26 miles for a good workout. Would like to see the parks connected somehow to one another via a trail network.
- Patty Herr:
  - Lives behind Lucky Shoals Park and is unhappy with recent improvements Gwinnett County has made in the past. Improvements such as cutting trees, paving nature trails. Park needs additional facilities for kids.
- Annie Mae Thomas, Senior Aquatics Assoc.:
  - Would like to see a senior aquatic center at Bogan Park, Collins Hill, or Bethesda Church Park. Enjoys swimming at Mountain Park facility, but is too far away.
- When is 1 mile paved trail going in at Yellow River Park?
  - *County Staff: Sometime next year.*
- What is planned for the Brookwood Football facility? When will be built?



- *County Staff: Pool, football field, parking, concession. In the process of design.*
- Are there plans for any handicap facilities such as ball fields, trails, etc.?
  - *County Staff: Bay Creek will have a field that is handicap accessible.*
- Chris Culpepper, Meadow Creek High School AD:
  - Feels County is making good progress. Would like the county to explore the use artificial turf in future parks so fields can be used longer and reduce maintenance. Culpepper is interested in becoming involved with helping this idea happen.
- What is planned for Lucky Shoals Park?
  - *County Staff: Hired consultant for the master plan. Park will be a passive park with tennis courts and skate park in later phases.*
- Is another passive park really needed in that area?
  - *County Staff: The land was bought from SPLOST as a passive park. Also, the terrain is fairly severe and would be costly to do earthwork for an active rec. park. Site has historical value.*
- What is the schedule for Best Friend Park? Any soccer fields?
  - *County Staff: No soccer fields at Best Friend, but a large open play field. 2 existing fields lengthened, upgrades to trails, picnic areas. The existing lap pool will come out and the outdoor pool will be expanded with addition of a slide.*
  - *County Staff: County is in the permitting stages and expected to be in bidding phase within the next 2-3 weeks.*
- What amenities will be at the Kanoheda Park site?
  - *County Staff: The site is 25 acres. Planned for passive recreation with playgrounds, paved trails, outdoor basketball, and tennis and skate park. Park will not be developed for another 2-3 years.*
- What is the Singleton Road site being used for? Does not seem to be used a lot.
  - *County Staff: The site is 2 acres with an activity building.*
  - *County Staff: Singleton Road is a rental facility for birthdays, family reunions, receptions, etc. Also, the center is used as a senior center and holds many community classes.*
- Is it true there will be football fields at Lenora Park?
  - *County Staff: Yes, football fields will be added to Lenora Park and is the design phase.*

## September 16, 2003, 7-9 PM - Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce

- Running concerns expressed by a high school cross-country coach
  - wants a park that could host a cross-country meet (1.5 mile non asphalt trail needed)
  - there are no facilities now and meets have to be held at Gainesville College
  - huge demand for this – 400 runners in just two local high schools
- Running concerns expressed by another high school cross-country coach
  - need more soft surfaces in county parks
  - paved surfaces in county parks lead to injuries
  - recommends returning some asphalt surfaces to unpaved surfaces
- Bicycling and skateboarding concerns expressed by a bike and skate shop storeowner
  - need BMX track – this is a family oriented sport that is suitable for individual sport competition. Furthermore, this could be installed at a low cost for the county. Sanctioning organizations will sponsor the construction of these parks and will insure them.
  - need Mountain Bike Trails – the trails at Tribble Mill and Yellow River are ragged out
  - need bike lanes – road cycling is dangerous. Existing bike lanes need to be better maintained (they need to be swept periodically)
  - need skate parks – skateboarders are disappointed with Pinckneyville Park – design for new parks should involve more input from skateboarders and bicyclists
  - points out that BMX and mountain bike trails are low cost and can be done with little impact to the environment.
- Website - wants more time for input on Plan on web – please leave this website open longer
- Greenspace concerns expressed by the Gwinnett Open Land Trust (nonprofit dedicated to preserving greenspace)
  - greenspace should be preserved in all parks
  - connectivity between public parks needed – greenways should be pursued while still possible
  - there are no public parks in the Steeple Chase neighborhood area (a triangular area bounded by George Pierce Park and McDaniel Farm Park
  - pocket parks would be useful given the limited land availability – these would be 5 acre passive parks
- Definition clarification – What do you mean by underserved?
  - *Consultant: This was determined by looking at the ratio of facilities to population*
  - *County Staff: Demographic analysis is involved with this definition*
- Will county be allocating funds commensurate with needs illustrated in survey?

- *County Staff: No, because land acquisition costs vary between various athletic activities.*
  - *Consultant: It's difficult to proportion demand with services. For example, given that walking is by far the most requested service, we would spend most of our money on installing sidewalks. While the third most requested activity of swimming is the most expensive service to provide for per square foot.*
- Disproportionate allocation of resources observed in park.
  - For example in an informal survey of a local park 2,200 children played soccer and 600 played football. Despite the larger demand, the soccer fields are in poor repair while the football fields are in excellent condition.
    - *Consultant: Our preliminary survey has identified the need for more soccer facilities.*
- Greenspace
  - greenspace and greenways are strongly encouraged
  - greenways need to be wide enough to accommodate multi-use trails
- Competitive swimming concerns
  - recreation swim needs in the county – there is a huge demand with 10,400 swimmers in the summer recreational program
  - space has to be rented at Emory University for competitions
  - need a swim venue that can accommodate large crowds (up to 500 seats needed)
  - need electronic touch pads, sounds systems with a pool so that competitions can be held in county
- How does one get on a steering committee?
  - *County Staff: For individual park design we have a public meeting where we solicit for membership on a committee. We then choose a cross-section of the people that apply.*
  - Could money be saved in the construction of aquatic facilities by using a template, as school construction projects have demonstrated?
    - *County Staff: No, we don't have as much experience and the unique conditions at each site preclude the use of a template.*
- Summer camp facilities
  - summer camp should be expanded, both in amount of camps and the duration they are held.
- BMX park for youth is needed
- Swimming concerns expressed by Berkeley Lake resident
  - deeper pools needed for competitions

- 2003 goals should be followed as blueprint in development of Comprehensive Plan
- Public/private deals should be pursued
  - waste management companies could be worked with to reuse abandoned landfills
- LEED certified building should be constructed
  - this building could house an environmental education facility
- Gardening programs needed
- Wetland corridors need to be protected
- Emphasis on second-tier sports needed – such as canoeing, kayaking, racquetball, handball, and disc golf.
- Soccer concerns expressed by a soccer organization representative
  - What is the timetable for the improvements at Harmony Grove and Bethesda Park?
    - *County Staff: the bids will open soon so we should know in a few weeks.*
  - Need to develop an adult soccer league. They could help pay for improvements to fields
  - Are there any plans for an exclusive soccer or football park? This would facilitate the running of tournaments
- Improvements to Gwinnett Life needed
  - a better map should be included that shows sizes of parks
  - a list of parks and the features they offer should be included- this would help advertise the parks better

**September 17, 2003, 7-9 PM - Bethesda Park**

- Jim Yieght Cross-Country Coach, North Gwinnett: Lack of facilities makes meets outside of County. Wants more trails to hold meets for cross-country. Wants more nature trails, passive recreation parks. Always having to look for areas to run. Will help with trail development and maintenance of trails. Would like a park with open field, ample parking, mile and half loop, natural trail. Like Shorty Howell Park
- Lynn Maloardo: Supports passive parks. Area is growing very fast and wants county to purchase open space. Purchase land adjacent to Little Mulberry for historical value. Many Native American artifacts, rock outcroppings, native plants, serves as a continental divide. Currently owned by developer who wants to develop into residential neighborhood.

- Mark Fine, Buford: Have a backboard or wall to practice tennis (20'x60'). Very inexpensive to do now. Give opportunity for people to practice alone.
- Kevin Ridder: Knows it is hard to purchase land. Will parks and recreation ever purchase vacant strip malls for indoor sports? Would like to see areas for mountain bikes. Visited area in Peachtree City for BMX bikers.
- Ron Wheeler, Lawrenceville: Sons does not play organized sports. Major sport of choice is BMX racing. Son is state champion. Whenever they want to practice they have to go to Cobb Co. Other parks in Newnan, Calhoun and Macon. Most races are over 50 miles away. Sugar Hill facility was demolished. Not asking for a facility at a park site. Tribble Mill would be a great place this type of sport.
- Member of Gwinnett/Dekalb Senior Softball League: Seniors are becoming more active in Senior softball, basketball. Feels county is behind in supporting for seniors. Suggestions: Improvements to Best Friend Park. Need to consider Senior fields in future planning.
  - *County Staff: Best Friend Park is currently being planned for renovation for adult activities.*
- Gail Barhree: Sons play soccer and are certified referees. Physical education in County schools has been dwindling. Kids get no cardio workout at school. More parents are turning towards competitive sports to fill this void. Wants to see additional soccer facilities and parking. Gwinnett has the best soccer associations in the state. Need more parks, parking, and lighting. George Pierce Park is embarrassing to visitors from other counties. Facilities are run down or some don't work at all.
- Dan, 16: Only one park with skate boarding facilities. Hit by a car and feels the County needs more safe areas with ramps, rails.
- Don, Buford-Senior Citizen: Visits Bogan Park and wants a water aerobics class for seniors.
- Dr. Grangey, Chiropractor in Dacula: Lives on Gwinnett/Barrow line and feels Gwinnett is far more advanced than Barrow. Request: save Poole Mountain (land adjacent to little mulberry), would like additional horse trails. Offers help with wellness programs or as a speaker.
- Are any parks open after dusk (passive)?
  - *County Staff: Only for special events.*
- Ron Buckley: Concerned about cost of sports programs. 2 daughters and a son. Daughters play softball and son plays basketball. Paid over \$300 for registering kids for sports. Ron is from New York and was paying \$15-20 for sports and now is paying over \$300. Has to deny kids opportunity to play sports. Feels cost of sports need to be brought down

- Kim Kimble: 3 ½ year old twins: How much land is little mulberry? Would like to see additional handicapped facilities at playgrounds. Additional bucket seats in the swings. Daughter has cerebral palsy, can't walk, but enjoys swinging.
  - *County Staff: 830 acres. Bought in two pieces. Planned the first while acquiring the second piece. Little portion will be set aside for reserve.*
  
- Laurie, Sugar Hill resident: Has four dogs and would like a dog park closer to her house. Ex. Bogan Park. Additional racquetball courts. Will greenways become more a part of future parks?
  - *County Staff: yes, trying to connect land with F.Wayne Hill Site (water treatment facility and future environmental & heritage center) and future plans to take it up to Bogan Park.*
  
- Swimmer: Interested in swimming venues. How do I get on a steering committee?
  - *County Staff: Committee formed after a public meeting. Residents apply for committee and county picks 12 to 20 people with a different needs. May go to certain user groups for certain committees.*
    - Are there opportunities for west district?
      - *County Staff: Should start Feb next year with selection.*
    - Will people who use west venue, be able to help with design?
      - *County Staff: Yes there will be opportunities for people to help.*
  
- Quentin Trailer: Wants additional trials. Would like info on Hogg Mountain Park?
  - *County Staff: Over 100 acres, wraps around fire training center. Planning to begin in Nov-Dec. will be an active park. Baseball, football, soccer. Terrain is a factor. Trails picnic pavilions. 4.5 million dollars associated with the park to do Phase I. 2.5 – 3 yrs.*
  
- Little Mulberry, When is phase one to open? Could Little Mulberry support Cross Country?
  - *County Staff: The park will open second quarter of next year. Site is not set up for cross county because of terrain issues.*
  
- Will addition of basketball gym at Bogan Park be used for basketball programs from Suwannee?
  - *County Staff: yes, one full-sized gym and 2 smaller courts are planned here at Bogan and basketball programs from Suwannee will use this facility*
  
- Will Bogan offer adult volleyball?
  - *County Staff: Yes*
  
- What is in the expansion at Rabbit Hill Park?
  - *County Staff: Expansion is limited. Areas used for tennis courts, skate park, trials, playground, picnic pavilion.*

- *County Staff: No opportunity for a continuous mile and a half loop for cross- country at Rabbit Hill. If a chance came up anywhere in county for a cross-country facility, would that be better than nothing? YES!*
- Concerns about not having enough land for parks. Land acquisition is the key. Need to do anything you can do to get money to purchase land. Pressure developers to set aside land for park space. Member of softball league and wants additional fields, only 6 in the county.
- Can people turn their dogs loose on athletic fields when not in use?
  - *County Staff: No*
- 60-year resident of Gwinnett County: Is impressed with Gwinnett Parks, especially Bogan Park. Feels the County is doing everything they can to meet the needs of its citizens.