

**Recreation Authority Board****Thursday, December 11, 2025 – 2:00pm**Innovation Square – Conference Room 108  
446 West Crogan, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046**Present: Samia Abdulle, Iris Hamilton, Eric Thigpen, Pam Cox, Rashida Wilson,  
Kyle VanNus, Bruce Johnson****Not present: Tanjina Islam, Norman Carter**

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome/Announcements
3. Approval of Agenda  
{Action: Approved; Motion: Abdulle; Second: Johnson; {Vote: (7-0) Abdulle-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Hamilton-Yes; Cox-Yes; Thigpen-Yes, Wilson-Yes; VanNus-Yes}
4. Approval of Minutes: June 12, 2025  
{Action: Approved; Motion: Wilson; Second: Thigpen; {Vote: (7-0) Abdulle-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Hamilton-Yes; Cox-Yes; Thigpen-Yes, Wilson-Yes; VanNus-Yes}
5. Simpsonwood Master Plan Presentation
6. Staff Updates
7. 2026 Meeting Dates/Times  
Motion was made to hold the 2026 meetings on the following dates: January 14, 2026, March 12, 2026, May 14, 2026, July 9, 2026, September 10, 2026, November 12, 2026  
{Action: Approved; Motion: Cox; Second: Johnson; {Vote: (7-0) Abdulle-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Hamilton-Yes; Cox-Yes; Thigpen-Yes, Wilson-Yes; VanNus-Yes}
8. Comments from Audience
9. Adjournment  
{Action: Approved; Motion: Abdulle; Second: Wilson {Vote: (7-0) Abdulle-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Hamilton-Yes; Cox-Yes; Thigpen-Yes, Wilson-Yes; VanNus-Yes}



# Simpsonwood Park Master Plan Update

**Recreation Authority Board  
December 11, 2025**



# Agenda

- Team Overview and Project Background
- Review of Project Process
- Presentation of Final Master Plan and Proposed Phasing Strategy
- Discussion



# Team

Citizen  
Steering  
Committee  
(CSC)



PEREZ PLANNING + DESIGN, LLC



EXUM ASSOCIATES, INC.



# Why did we update the plan?

- Since the completion of the 2016 Simpsonwood Park Master Plan, there have been:
  - New guiding documents
  - Ongoing changes and opportunities at the site



# New Park Classifications and Experiences

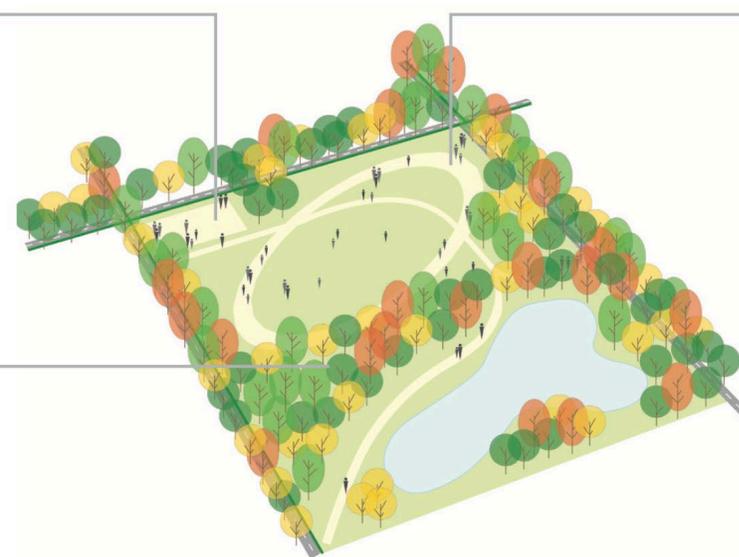
## 2020 Gwinnett Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Department of Community Services  
**2020 GWINNETT  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PARKS & RECREATION  
MASTER PLAN**  
Executive Summary



**Recreation amenities**  
such as playgrounds,  
courts, athletic fields,  
indoor centers, etc.

**Resource areas**  
such as natural  
and cultural  
resources areas.



**Trails**  
such as paved or natural  
trails, which may extend  
outside of parks and also  
contain recreation ame-  
nities such as play areas,  
exercise stations, and  
community gardens.



Relax in the park



Enjoy a walk in a  
forested natural area



Learn in a computer lab



# Focus on Natural Resource Management

## 2022 Simpsonwood Park Natural Resource Assessment



### Simpsonwood Park Natural Resource Assessment

**FINAL REPORT**  
DECEMBER 2022



# Conservation Easement

- Established December 17, 2020
- Property preserved in perpetuity to protect and preserve Open Space Values
- Impervious surfaces on the site, not to exceed 15%
- Limits the development of parks and recreation facilities

## List of Allowable Facilities\*

- Geographic Features
- Trail Systems
- Fishing Facilities
- Playgrounds/ Pavilion Picnic Facilities
- Unstructured Play Courts and Zones (unlighted)
- Site Furnishings
- Signage
- Maintenance Compound Facilities
- Restroom Facilities
- Parking Facilities and Driveways
- Fencing
- Lighting
- Other Buildings

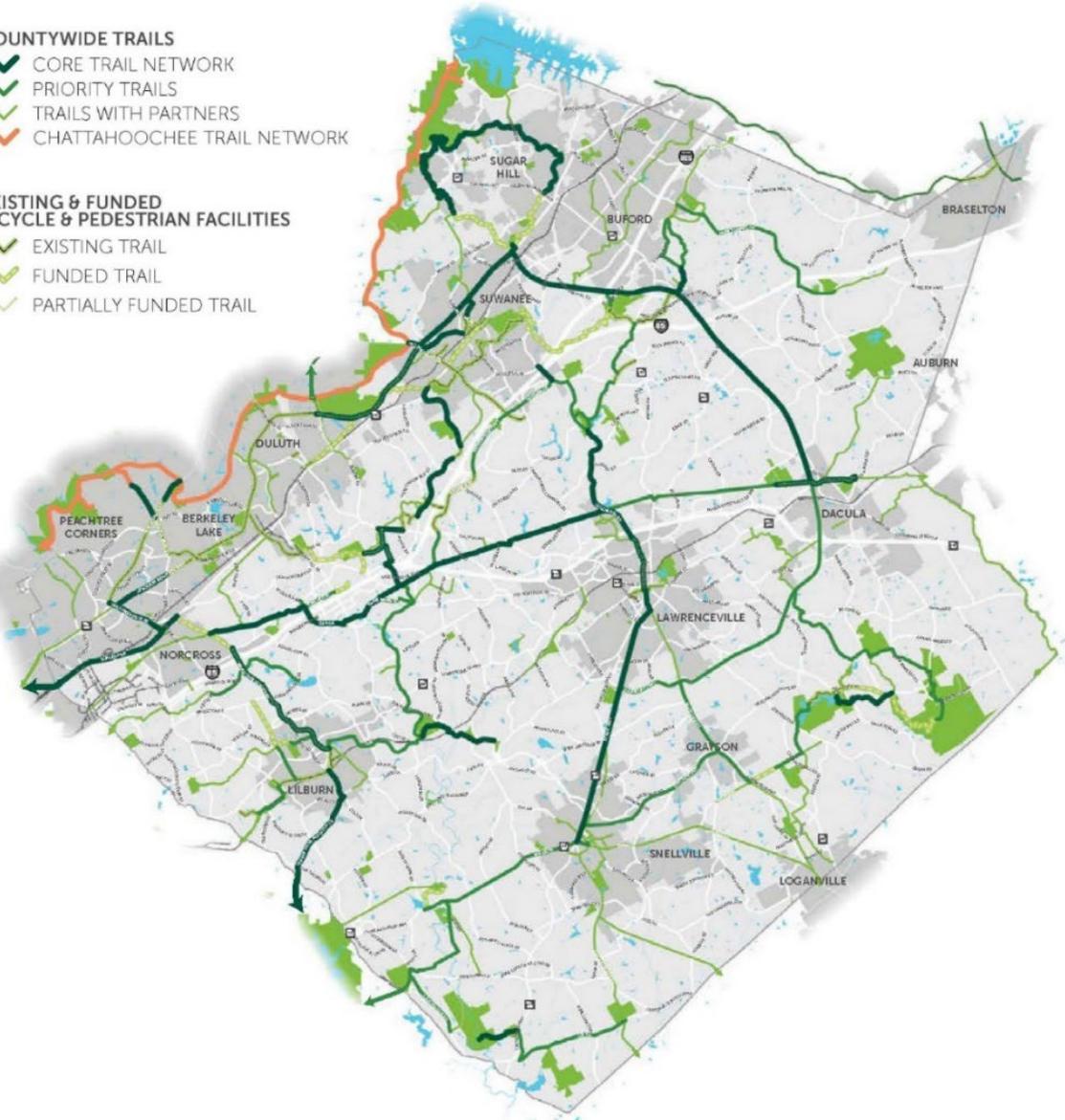
# Opportunities for Regional Connectivity

2018 Gwinnett Trails Master Plan  
*(Currently Being Updated)*



**COUNTYWIDE TRAILS**  
CORE TRAIL NETWORK  
PRIORITY TRAILS  
TRAILS WITH PARTNERS  
CHATTAHOOCHEE TRAIL NETWORK

**EXISTING & FUNDED BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**  
EXISTING TRAIL  
FUNDED TRAIL  
PARTIALLY FUNDED TRAIL



# On-going changes and opportunities in the Park

- Gwinnett Department of Water Resources site improvements
- Larger deer population in the Park
- On-going uses in the Park
- Connectivity, access to nature, age friendly, intergenerational spaces, and placemaking



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- Presentation of Final Master Plan and Proposed Phasing Strategy
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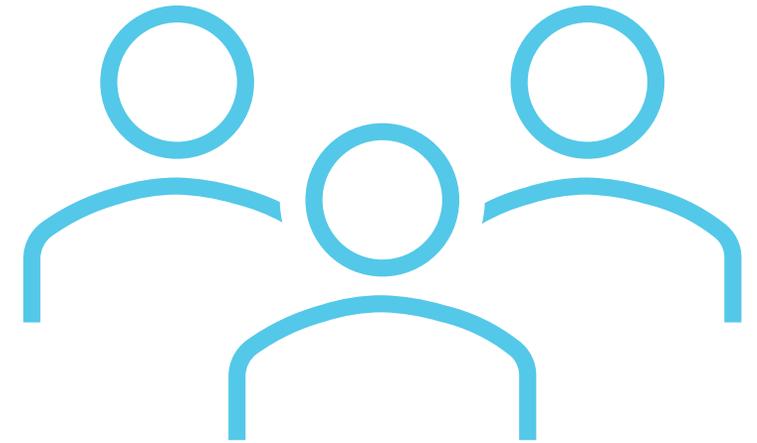


# Citizen Steering Committee (CSC) Selection

- Previous Citizen Steering Committee (CSC) Members
- Appointments from specific organizations (e.g., Recreation Authority Board, City of Peachtree Corners, and United Methodist Church).
- Supplement CSC based on applications received from the September 24, 2024 Public Meeting:
  - Geographic location
  - Demographics
  - Recreational interest and activities
  - Community involvement
  - Community mindedness

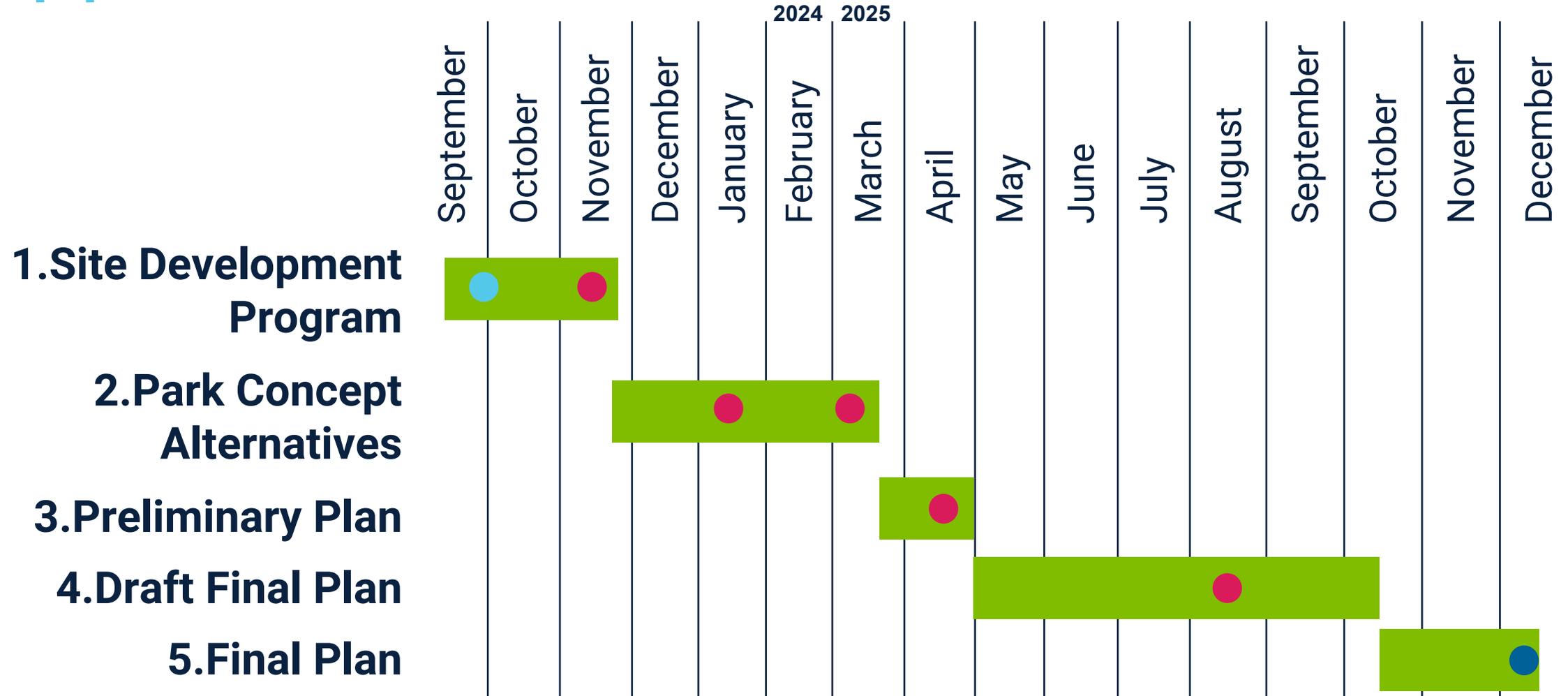
# Public's Role Attending the CSC Meetings

- Passively attend CSC Meetings as desired.
- Sign-up to provide comments during the last 10-minutes of the meeting (5-slots; 2-minutes each).
- Provide input to CSC Members for their consideration to share with the CSC.



If you believe you are unable to participate accordingly, please take this opportunity to recuse yourself from this process.

# Approach and Schedule



## Schedule Legend

Task

Public Kickoff Meeting

Citizen Steering Committee Meeting

Recreation Authority Board Meeting



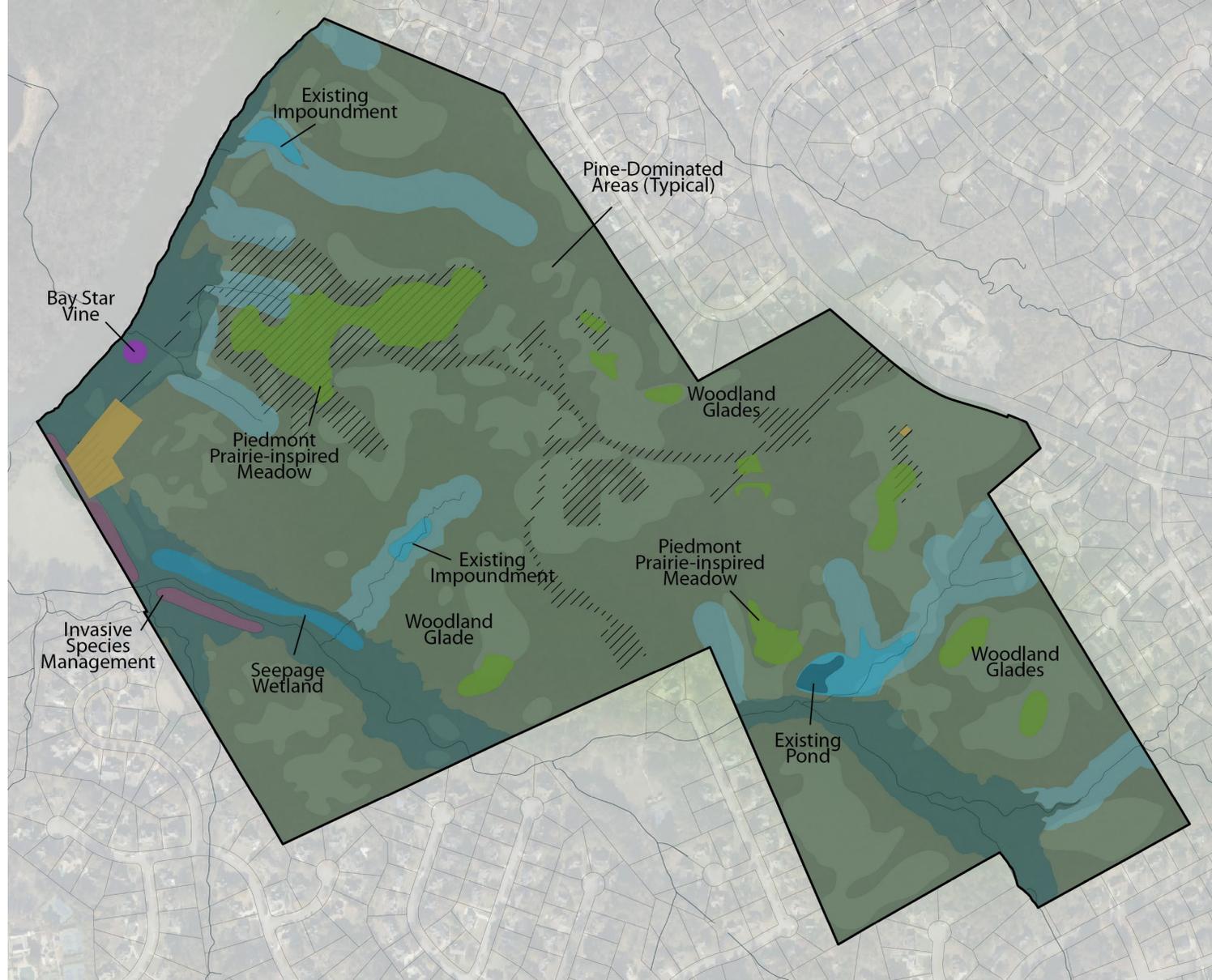
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# Simpsonwood Park Master Plan Guiding Principles

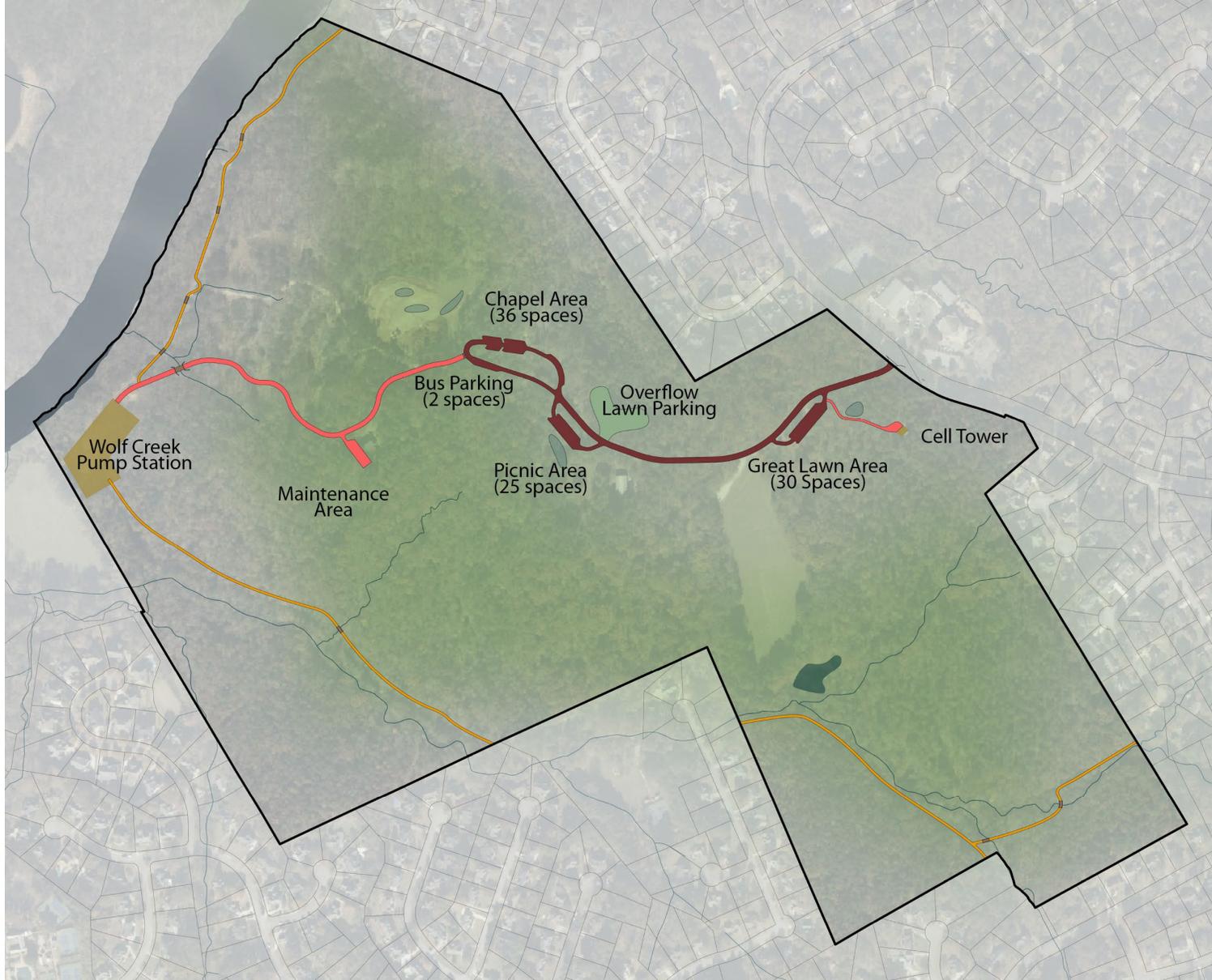
- 1. Natural Resource Protection:** Protect, enhance, and interpret natural resources to increase biodiversity, provide increased resistance to natural hazards, help mitigate the impacts of extreme weather, and inform and educate residents and visitors.
- 2. Negative Impacts to the Neighborhoods:** Avoid or minimize negative impacts to neighborhoods such as intrusive noise, lighting, traffic congestion, or others.
- 3. Cultural Resource Protection:** Protect, enhance, and interpret cultural resources to preserve significant sites and artifacts, create a unique sense of place, and inform and educate residents and visitors.



# ECOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES

- Bottomlands, Floodplains, and Riparian Zones
- Creek Flow-ways
- Disturbed Areas
- Oak-Pine-Hickory Forest





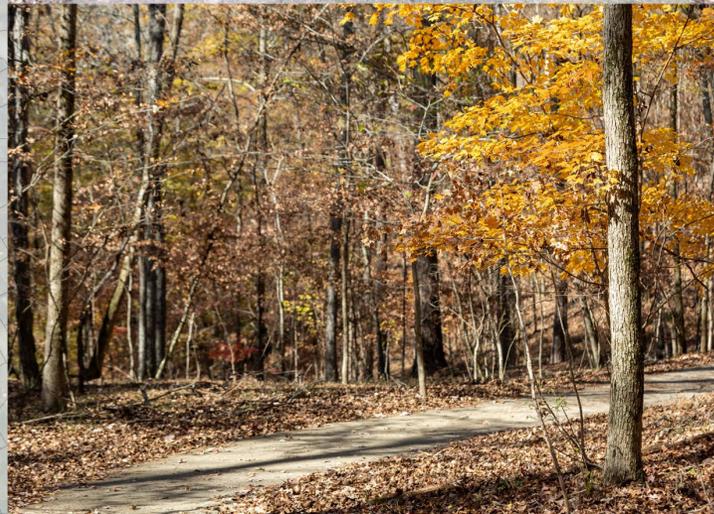
**Improved Parking**



**Overflow Parking**

# VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

-  Public Drive
-  Gated DWR / Maintenance Access Drive
-  Unimproved Sewer Line Access
-  Stormwater Wetlands



Little Mulberry Park  
Typical Path Scenes

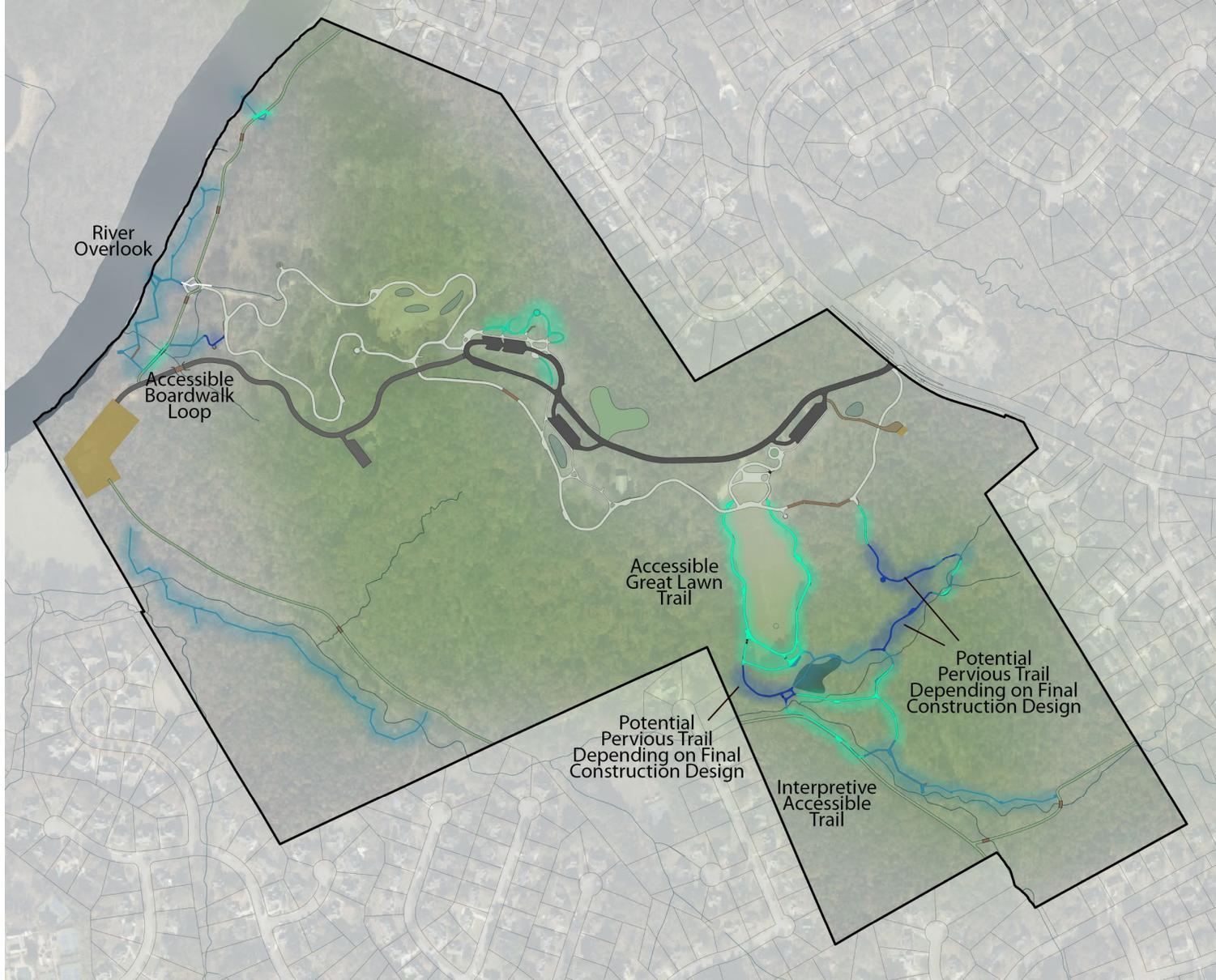
# PRIMARY MULTI-USE PATH

- Impervious Path (1.3 Miles)
- Boardwalk Path (Pervious) (.07 Miles)

# Multi-Use Paths

- Designed for a range of users, including pedestrians and cyclists
- Paved in asphalt or concrete
- 12' standard width to support safety – Site requires tighter turn radii which reduce visibility
- 5% maximum slope to support accessibility





# Accessible Paths and Trails

- Designed for pedestrians, strollers, and wheelchairs
- Stabilized surface varies depending on context and slope
- 5-8' width depending on level of use
- 5% or less slope preferred, 8% maximum with landings and railings





# STRUCTURES

- Existing Structures
- Proposed Structures

**Structure Quantity**

1	Large Pavilion
2	Small Picnic Shelters
2	Restrooms
1	Maintenance Building
1	Existing Chapel



# PASSIVE PROGRAM AREAS

 Lawn

 Meadows and Glades



Picnic Lawn



Informal Boulder Seating

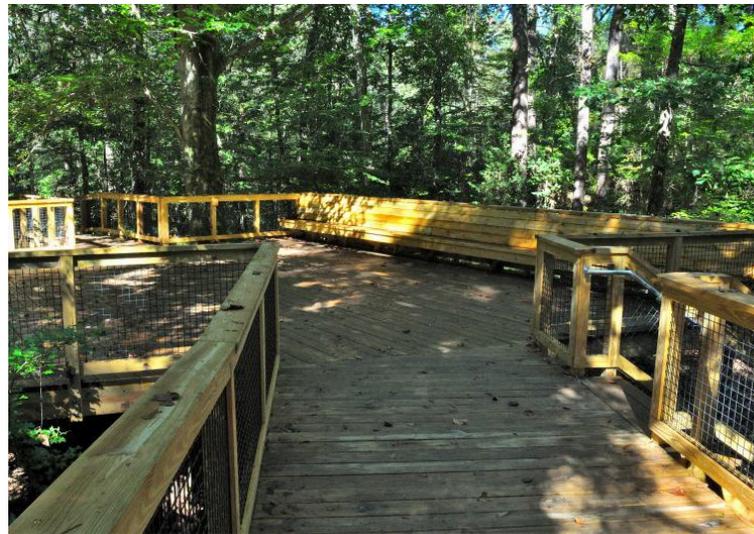


Outdoor Classroom

# Overlooks and Contemplative Spaces

- Sites along trails and paths that support individual or small group gathering
- Utilize contextually appropriate materials such as timber and stone
- Sited based on unique views, interpretive opportunities, trailheads and intersections
- Could include artistic elements that blend in with and interpret the landscape







# Outdoor Classroom

- Utilize contextually appropriate materials such as stone and timber
- Utilizing existing topography and vegetation to greatest extent possible
- Seating and presenter space for small gatherings; 500 – 1,000 SF in size.





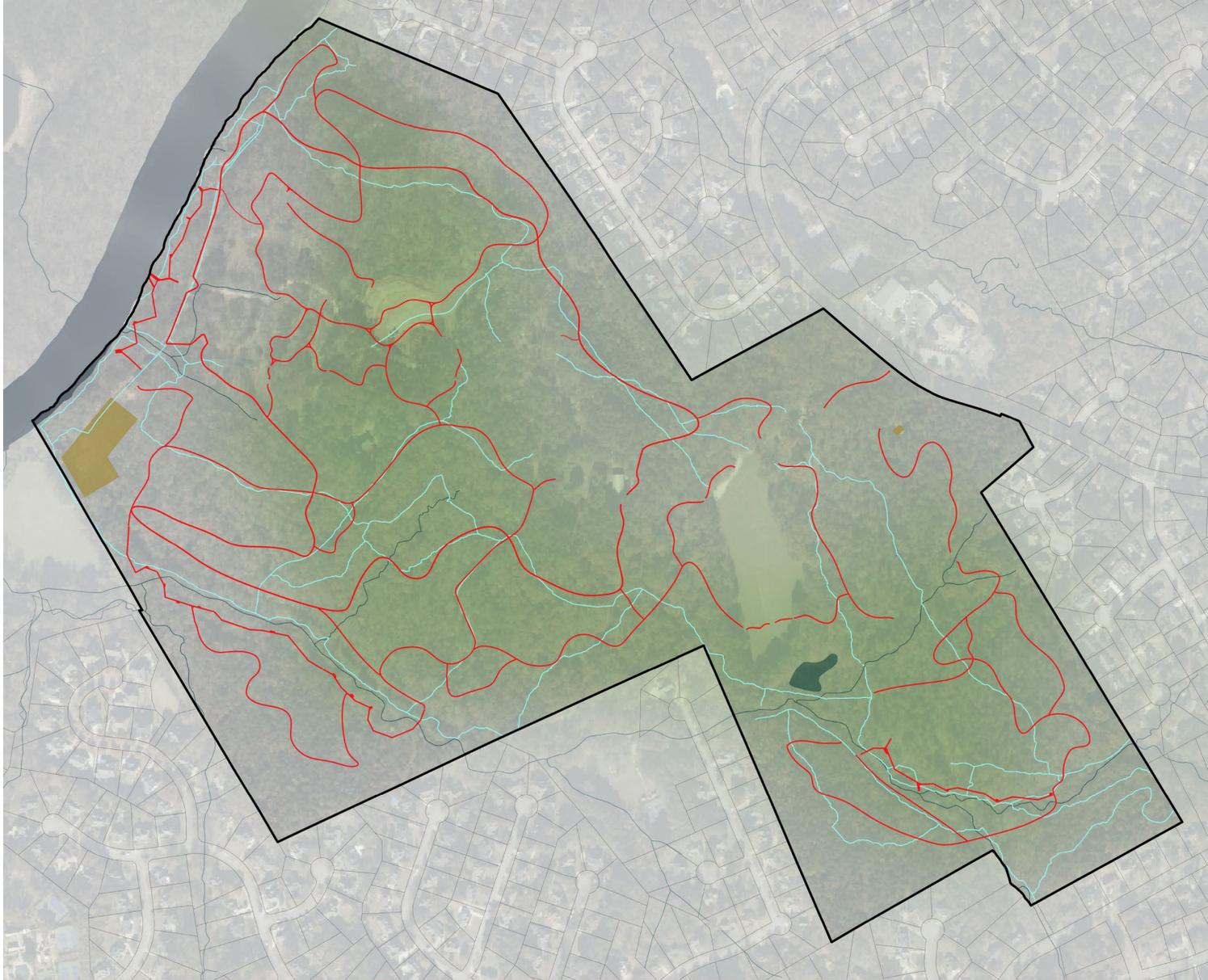
# HIKING TRAILS

 Hiking Trails (7.2 Miles)



# Hiking Trails

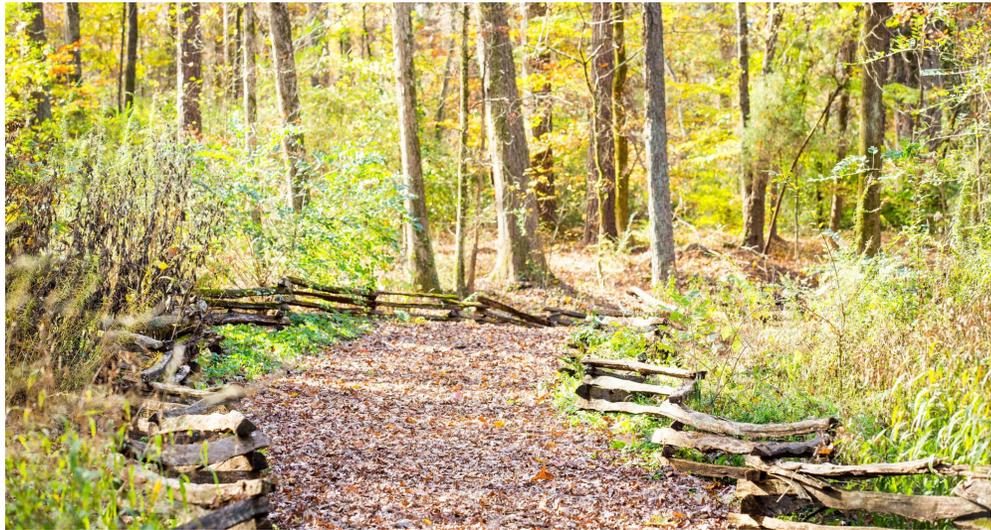
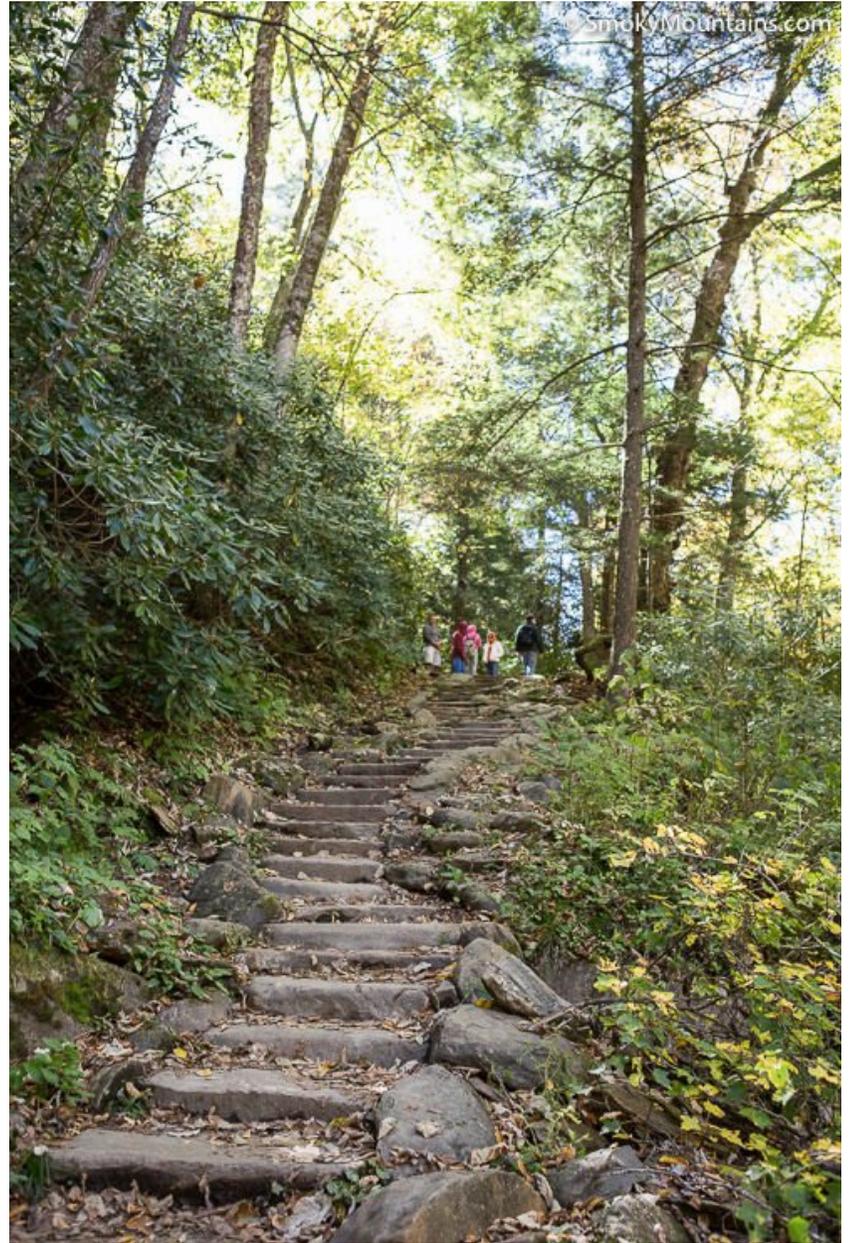
- Trails routed to avoid sensitive resource areas; used existing trails where appropriate
- Trails appropriately graded to ensure proper drainage and prevent erosion
- Edge controls such as rustic fencing and rails in sensitive areas
- Improved stairs with stone or timber at steeper slopes



# HIKING TRAILS

- Proposed Hiking Trails (7.2)
- Existing Hiking Trails (6.5)
- Creeks







## LEGEND

- A. River Overlook
- B. Chapel
- C. Maintenance Building
- D. Large Pavilion
- E. Restroom
- F. Small Pavilion
- G. Great Lawn
- H. Meadow Trail
- I. Stormwater Wetland
- J. Picnic Lawn
- K. Outdoor Classroom
- L. Meadow
- M. Labyrinth
- N. Multi-Use Path
- O. Hiking Trail
- P. Accessible Trail
- Q1. Chapel Area Parking (38 spaces)
- Q2. Picnic Area Parking (25 spaces)
- Q3. Great Lawn Area Parking (30 spaces)
- R. Overflow Parking
- S. Wolf Creek Pump Station
- T. Cell Tower

## STATISTICS

Parking Spaces:	93 Paved ~65 Overflow
Paved Path:	1.3 Miles
Accessible Trails:	1.35 Miles
Hiking Trails:	7.2 Miles
Impervious Area:	7 Acres

# COMPOSITE PLAN (Preferred)

# Phasing

Elements	Ranking
• Restore areas of DWR construction	Preliminary Phase
• Eliminate/control invasive plants	Preliminary Phase
• Replant native species	Preliminary Phase
• Develop a comprehensive deer management strategy	Preliminary Phase
• Stabilize/close eroded trails	Preliminary Phase
• Thin dense forest stands	Preliminary Phase
S. Wolf Creek Pump Station (Landscape Improvements)	Preliminary Phase
<b>E1. Restroom (Near Great Lawn)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>E2. Restroom (Near Chapel)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. Stormwater Wetlands (Associated with Parking Improvements)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q. Main Entry Drive</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q1. Chapel Area Parking (38 spaces)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q2. Picnic Area Parking (25 spaces)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Q3. Great Lawn Parking (30 spaces)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B. Chapel (ADA Access Improvements)</b>	<b>1</b>

# Phasing

Elements	Ranking
O. Hiking Trails	2
A. River Overlooks	2
N. Multi-Use Path	2
P. Accessible Trails	2
L. Meadow	2
G. Great Lawn (Accessible Trail Improvements)	3
J. Picnic Lawn	3
F2. Small Pavilion (Near Chapel)	3
F1. Small Pavilion (Near Outdoor Classroom)	3
D. Large Pavilion (Near Great Lawn)	3
M. Labyrinth	3
K. Outdoor Classroom	3
R. Overflow Parking (~65 spaces)	4
C. Maintenance Area Improvements.	4

# Conceptual Master Plan Opinion of Probable Costs

Preliminary Phase	\$ 225,000
Phase 1	\$ 16,296,000
Phase 2	\$ 3,380,000
Phase 3	\$ 2,130,000
<u>Phase 4</u>	<u>\$ 798,000</u>
Total	\$ 22,829,000

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# Project Updates

**December 11, 2025**

**Recreation Authority Board**



# Singleton Park and Greenway





Singleton Park



# DISCOVERY PARK

*Coming Soon*

This park will feature a playground, an interactive fountain, a court complex, a multipurpose sports field, a 1.5 mile paved trail, and restrooms.



**YOUR SALES TAX DOLLARS AT WORK**



# Discovery Park





# DACULA PARK ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS

*Coming Soon*

This facility will feature a new Community Recreation Center, Senior Wing, and renovations to the existing activity building and parking lot.



**YOUR SALES TAX DOLLARS AT WORK**

Dacula Park Activity Building





Dacula Park Activity Building



Gwinnett

# BEAVER RUIN WETLAND PARK



Coming  
Soon



TETRA TECH



# Beaver Ruin Wetland Park







# LENORA PARK ADDITIONS AND RENOVATIONS

*Coming Soon*

New Community Recreation Center and renovations to the gym and parking lot.



YOUR **SALES TAX DOLLARS** AT WORK

# Lenora Park Recreation Center



# 2025 Synthetic & Natural Turf Fields

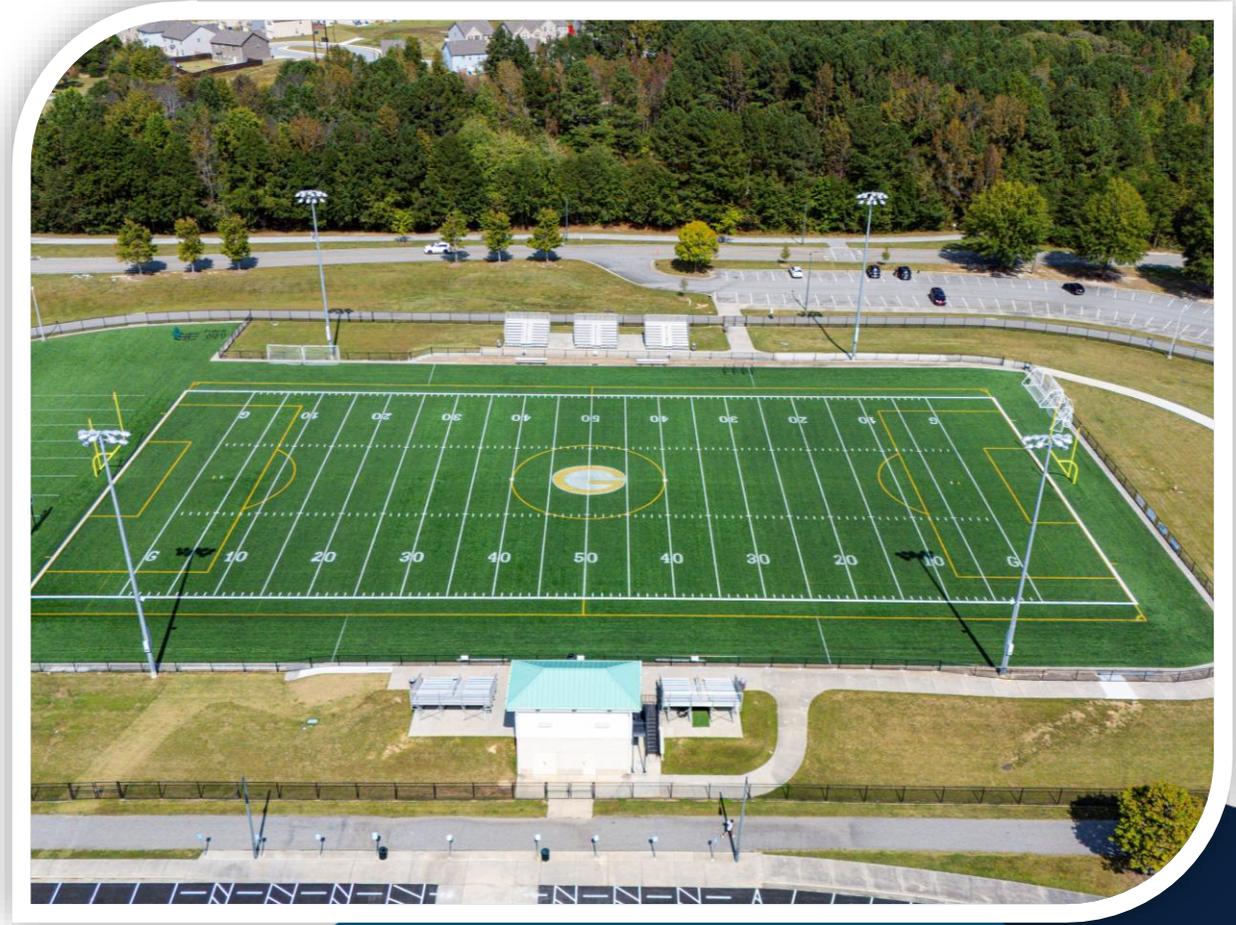
Bay Creek Park

## Complete

- Bay Creek Park Multi-Purpose Field
- Bryson Park Multi-Purpose Field
- Bethesda Park Multi-Purpose Field
- Rabbit Hill Park Field #7
- Rabbit Hill Park Soccer Fields #1 and #2

## In Design

- Rabbit Hill Park Multi-Purpose Field
- Harbins Park Multi-Purpose Field
- South Gwinnett Park Baseball Field #3



# Bryson Park



# Bethesda Park



Rabbit Hill Park Field #7



# 2025 Playground Renovations

Duncan Creek Park

## Complete

Dacula Park (Baseball)  
Club Drive Park  
Deshong Park (Kids and Teen Area)  
Shorty Howell Park (Pavilion)  
Best Friend Park

## Under Construction

Duncan Creek Park  
Shorty Howell (Baseball 2-5 and 5-12)  
Graves Park





**Dacula Park**



Club Drive Park



Deshong Park (Teen)



**Deshong Park**



Shorty Howell Park



Best Friend Park

# Sports Courts

## Under Construction

West Gwinnett Park Pickleball  
Lenora Park Pickleball

## In Procurement

Bethesda Park Pickleball

West Gwinnett Park



# Gwinnett Trails Master Plan

## Update

Public Outreach is complete  
Consultant is working with staff to begin preparation of the draft master plan.  
Draft delivery anticipated in early Q1 2026



# Other Project Updates

## Under Construction

Ivy Creek Greenway 1-4 Boardwalk and Bridge Replacement

Lenora Park Pressbox and Maintenance Building

Pool Pak Replacements at Bogan Aquatic, Mountain Park Aquatic, and West Gwinnett Aquatic

Parking lot paving at Bay Creek Park and Mountain Park Aquatic

Aquatic Playstructure Replacements at Collins Hill, Best Friend, and West Gwinnett Aquatic

## Procurement

EHC Greenroof Replacement (Due 12/15)

## Planning and Design

McDaniel Farm Park- Trail connection to Commerce Drive in 2026

EHC Sensory Treehouse A/V

Lenora Park- Outdoor Basketball Court Addition after CRC project

Centerville Park

Sweetwater Park Phase II

Vines Park Phase II

Maguire-Livsey Family Big House Community Involvement Plan

# Parks & Recreation 2025 Recap





# 2025 Accomplishments

- New Department!
- Simpsonwood Park Master Plan
- GRPA staff awards
- Rabbit Hill Park baseball field
- Singleton Park and Greenway

# Parks Maintenance

- GRPA Outdoors Professional-District 7
- City of Atlanta field trip
- Roving crews
- 2 Additional Certified Playground Inspectors



# Aquatics

- Runner Up in GRPA Lifeguard Games
- Multiple cardiac events
- Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator



# Meal Program Superheroes

- 215,313 Meals served
- 20 Meal sites
- October-December assistance
- 6 local Co-ops



# Recreation

- GRPA Facilities and Grounds Professional-District 7
- Dacula and Lenora!!
- Outdoor Recreation Coordinator
- New Programs and Events: goat yoga, World Coffee & Tea Festival, Buddy Hikes, fishing derbies, campouts



# Environmental Stewardship



- UGA Wildlife students
- GGC Partnerships: fish, birds, crayfish, trees
- Invasive species removal
- The Wolf Center



# Filming and Marketing

- Multi-day filming at Tribble Mill Park, Simpsonwood Park, Mountain Park Activity Building
- Economic impacts of over \$20,000 since August
- Social media engagement

Questions?

