



Park Facility Master Plan Updates

final report

OCTOBER 2016



Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Purpose of This Plan

The purpose of this plan is to update the Master Plans for each of the County’s parks: The American Tobacco Trail, Blue Jay Point County Park, North Wake Landfill District Park, Lake Crabtree County Park, Historic Oak View County Park, Historic Yates Mill County Park, Crowder District Park, and Harris Lake County Park. Each Master Plan Update will provide analysis and recommendations that will elevate the park’s ability to serve citizens and visitors who travel to the area to enjoy the natural and cultural resources of Wake County. To achieve this, the consultants, staff, steering committee, stakeholders, and public examined the layers of information identified in the discovery process to provide guidance for implementation.

Study Area

Each of the eight County Parks is comprised of unique features, programs, facilities, challenges, and opportunities. Existing conditions profile sheets for each park are located in Chapter Two: Existing Conditions. Profile sheets illustrate the size of the park, facilities within the park, and activities offered. While each park is the subject of the study, the overall county was analyzed to understand demographic composition, demand, adjacent facilities, connectivity, and community characteristics.

Continuing the Vision

The Parks and Recreation Division’s vision from the 2008 Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan continues today. Each activity, improvement, facility, and park is developed with this vision as a guiding principle:

Wake County will be a great place to live, work, learn and play. It will be a place where people are self-sufficient, enrich their lives, respect the environment, appreciate their heritage, participate in government, and plan for a better tomorrow.

Seven goals were identified to target the efforts needed by the Parks and Recreation Division to achieve this vision. The following goals acted as the pillars of the 2008 plan and guide this process to update each Master Plan.

Goal #1 – To position the Division of Parks, Recreation and Open Space (the Division) as a valued partner in the vision of Wake County.

Goal #2 – To maintain and enhance the core services of Wake County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.

Goal #3 – To be proactive with initiatives that result in long-term sustainability of the Division and the environment.

Goal #4 – To market the benefits and services of the Division of Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

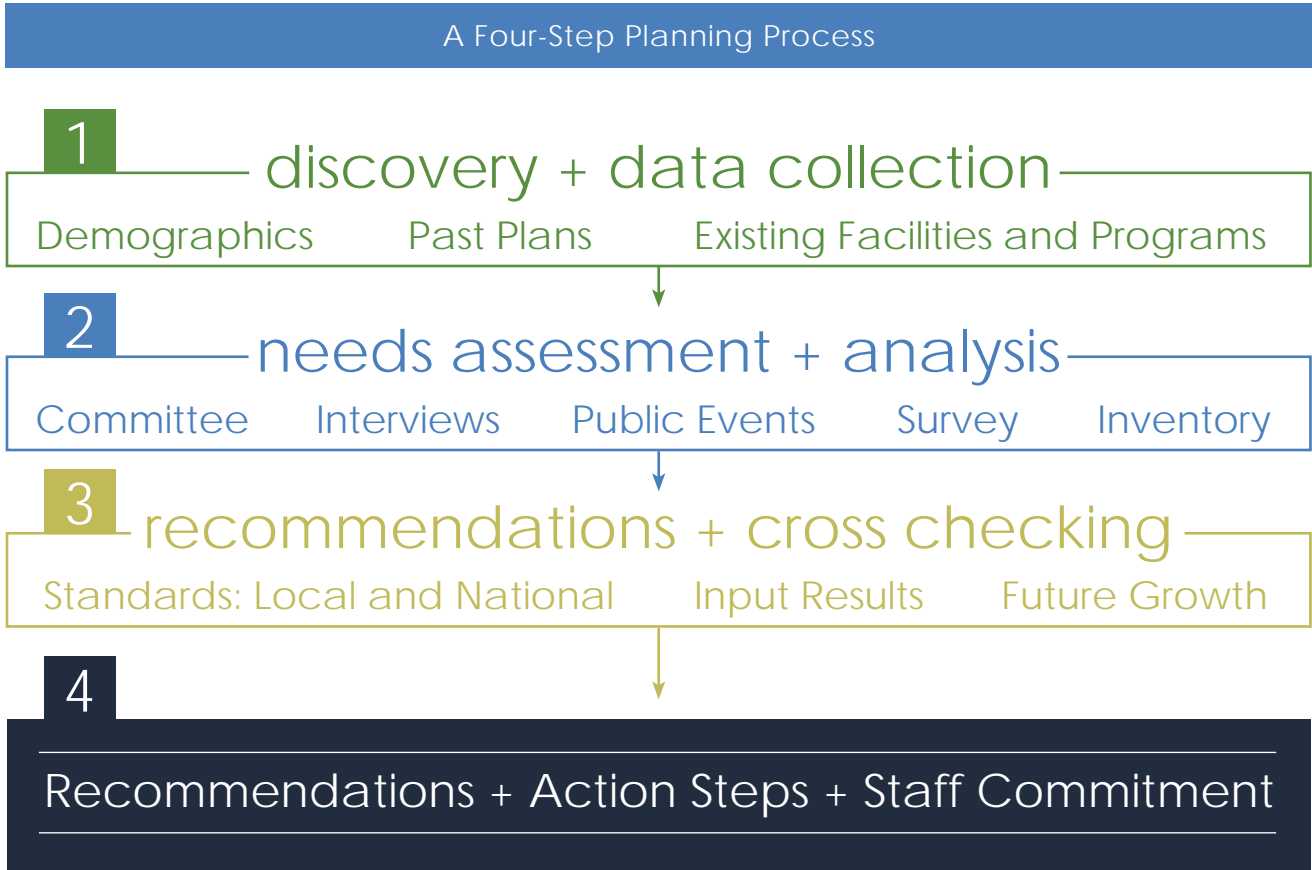
Goal #5 – To continue to serve the citizens of Wake County in our three core service areas and develop performance measures to track and report our success.

Goal #6 – To create a regional park land acquisition and development plan.

Goal #7 – To participate in the planning and collaboration of municipal and regional trail and greenway plans.

Planning Process

The planning process began with a period of Discovery and Data Collection. During this stage, data collection, review of past planning efforts, GIS analysis, a review of leases and memoranda of understanding, on-site evaluation, and inventory set the stage for analysis. Previous citizen surveys, park satisfaction surveys, focus groups, and site visits fueled the Needs Assessment and Analysis Stage where community needs and site improvements begin to surface. All of these items were overlapped to provided the inspiration for recommendations, which were vetted by the public through a series of workshops. The final recommendations and action steps for each park site will provide the staff of Wake County with actions items to achieve the goals and implementation strategies of the final plans.



Existing Conditions

County-wide data was evaluated to determine if current facilities were appropriately serving the diverse and growing populations in the county. An Equity Analysis evaluated concentrations of traditionally underserved populations to suggest specific program or equipment needs. In addition to demographic profiles, the Live, Work, Play Analysis used geospatial representation to show where there are high demand for park facilities and programs throughout the county by assessing factors such as where people live, work, play, learn, and ride transit.

The consultant team conducted a thorough field inventory and evaluation of each county park site. The profile helped frame the existing facilities, accessibility, and user information identified, summarized in a Park Profile for each of the existing sites.

Public Input

To complement the analyses and field work, a public input process was used to quantify the wants and needs of residents in Wake County. For the 2016 Update to the County Park Master Plans, several avenues of public input were merged to assess the needs for the system as a whole and each individual park. Community needs and desires were extracted from the 2008 PROS Comprehensive Master Plan, the 2014 Community Interest and Opinion Survey, Individual Park Customer Satisfaction Surveys, North Carolina’s Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan, national trends in parks and recreation, focus groups, steering committee input, and staff interviews. After a solid foundation of needs, opportunities, and current challenges were established, recommendations were vetted via an online public survey, booths at public events, the steering committee, and park staff. During a final Steering Committee Meeting, members representing the public’s interest and future vision of the parks determined which recommendations would be presented in the final Master Plans Updates.

Recommendations

The recommendations of this plan have been vetted through several perspectives via a robust process of engagement and cross-checking. Each touchpoint of discovering need and determining appropriate action was considered through the lenses of staff, management, citizens, visitors, users, and non-users of all ages and abilities. The purpose of these recommendations is to guide management and staff toward a new vision for each park that complements the context, advances trends in recreation, and focuses on conservation, health and wellness, and social equity.

The recommended improvements are presented at the master planning level, with representative photos, narrative, action steps, funding targets, and conceptual renderings. The division mission and goal is to ensure parks, programs, and resources are accessible all users. Recommendations for the department establish a baseline for each park to provide consistency of information across all communication platforms and a comprehensive wayfinding package to and around each park. Clarity will be critical to encourage new use and provide confidence while navigating each of the parks. Access emerged as the pinnacle to success for the department and each park. This can be defined as access via public transit, access in a sense of approachability, access for users with special needs, and access in the realm of connectivity throughout each programmed space. Together, the overall recommendations and each individual park improvement will result in increased awareness, user experience, environmental health, and social unity for users now and into the next decade.

Note: The following pages contain images of 24” x 36” summary boards of each park’s recommendations which are available at full size upon request.



TRAILHEAD RECOMMENDATIONS

ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKING: provide accessible parking spaces and route to the primary trail from existing trailheads.

LIGHTING: provide additional lighting (consider Solar / LED fixtures) at trailheads for improved visibility at dawn and dusk as facilities are closing.



PARKING SPACES: expand parking areas to accommodate additional car and horse trailer parking. Provide bicycle parking and horse hitch near restrooms and trail entrances.

BICYCLE REPAIR: provide bicycle repair stations at each trailhead.

STRETCHING STATIONS: add stretching stations and outdoor fitness equipment at each trailhead.

ART AND INTERPRETATION: add artifacts and art for historic and environmental interpretation along the trail.

ACCESS TO FOOD AND WATER: allow mobile food vendors at trailheads and food truck or farmer stands for special events. Provide picnic tables and shelters to facilitate event programming and family picnicking. Provide signage to comfort stations and water access and add water bottle, ADA, and pet-friendly water filling stations.



HORSE WASTE: explore opportunities to add composting stations at trailheads.



BICYCLE AND HORSE RENTAL: research potential mobile vendors to provide bicycles and horses for rent.

SMALL SHELTERS WITH STORAGE AND CABOOSE KIOSK: add shelters with storage areas at each trailhead. Select a key location to add a caboose that will serve as a shelter and information kiosk.

TRAILWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

WAYFINDING: develop a cohesive wayfinding package using the brand of the ATT. Provide kiosks at each trailhead and at key intersections that illustrate the length of the trail, key destinations, trailheads, restrooms, **access to water**, and the distances and timing via walking and bicycling to arrive at select places along the trail. Coordinate with municipalities for opportunities to co-brand. Use symbols in lieu of language when possible.



BOLLARDS AND FENCES: ensure fence and bollard spacing allows for wheelchair, stroller, and bike carriage accessibility.

PULL OFFS AND RESTING PLACES: explore opportunities to create pull offs for resting and bicycle repair. Install benches every half to quarter mile.

TRAIL INTERSECTIONS AND SPURS: provide standards and guidelines to municipalities and neighborhoods to indicate how to properly tie into the trail with signage, trail width, and wayfinding.

GAP CLOSURE AND NOVELTY

ATTRACTION: work with New Hope Valley rail line to provide a stop at the east end of their passenger line that could close a critical gap in the ATT and become a major bike to train destination.



EXPLORE THE POTENTIAL FOR A TEMPORARY TRAIL LINK WHEN THE RAIL LINE IS NOT IN USE. USE PASSENGER RAIL LINE TO CARRY TRAIL USERS AND BICYCLES.

FUTURE CONNECTIONS: extend greenway from passenger rail line to Harris Lake County Park.



ART ALONG THE TRAIL: Identify key locations along the trail (like the Hwy 64 underpass) to include murals, public art, and relics that tell the story of the American Tobacco Trail, history of the area, importance of watersheds, connectivity of the East Coast Greenway and future of transportation.

FUTURE CONNECTIONS: as connections to points east are completed, indicate on wayfinding signage the time and distance to the Neuse River Greenway, Downtown Cary, Downtown Apex, and Downtown Raleigh.

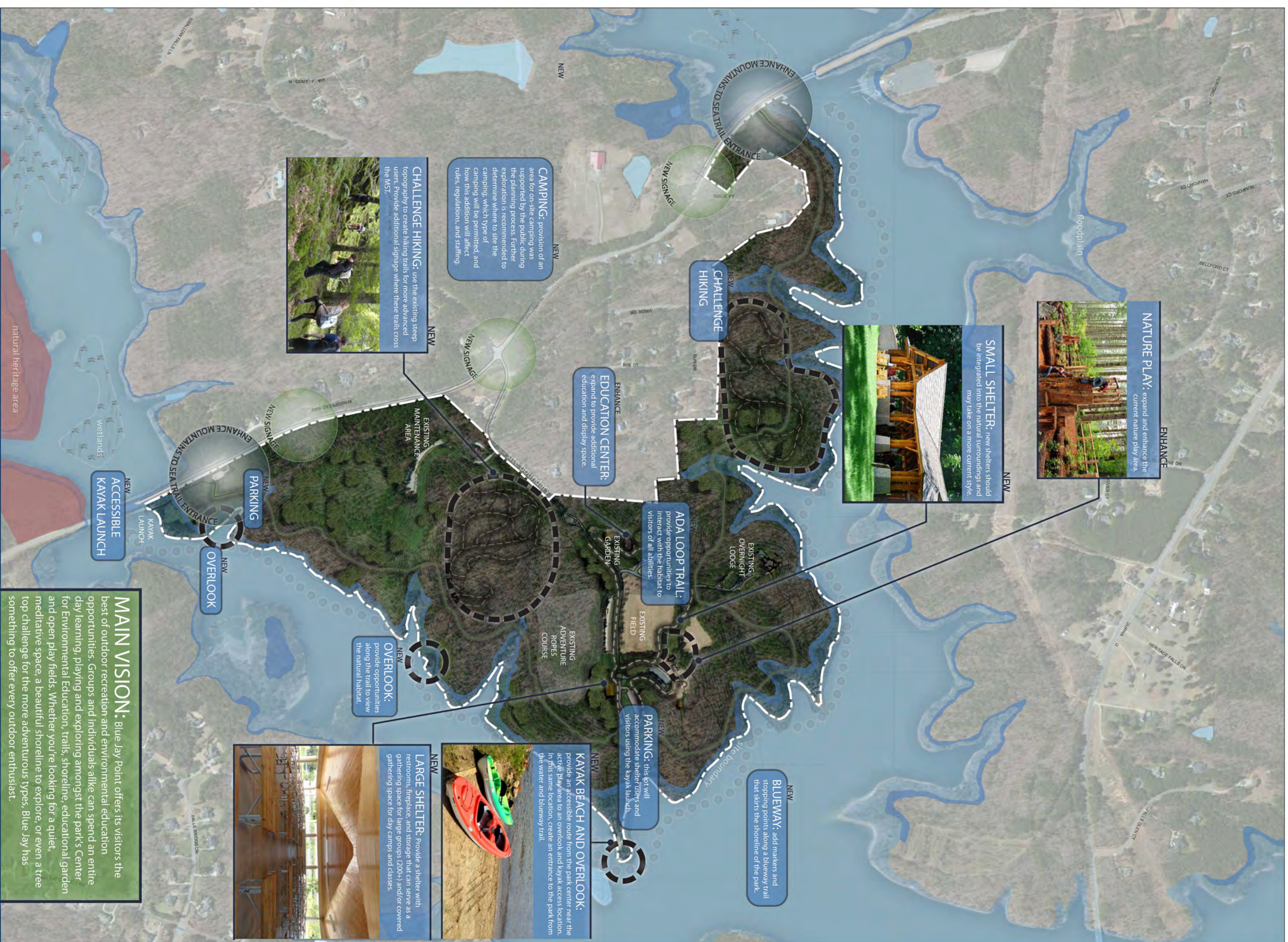
MAIN VISION: The American Tobacco Trail is not just a local trail but a component of an evolving regional system. The trail is a fitness venue for hikers, bikers, and equestrians. It connects urban and rural communities along with corporate and local businesses. Mindful future connections will enhance the natural essence of the trail while expanding educational opportunities about conservation, locomotion, history, and health.



AMERICAN TOBACCO TRAIL recommendations

- Open Space
- Park
- Wake County Park Facility
- School
- Planned/Proposed Greenway
- Transit Route
- Future Trailhead
- TH
- TH





NATURE PLAY: expand and enhance the current nature play area.



SMALL SHELTER: new shelters should be integrated into the natural surroundings and may take on a more current style.



CHALLENGE HIKING

ADA LOOP TRAIL: provide opportunities to interact with the habitat to visitors of all abilities.

EDUCATION CENTER: expand to provide additional education and display space.

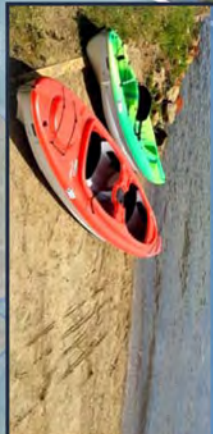
CAMPING: provision of an area for on-site camping was supported by the public during the planning process. Further exploration is recommended to determine where to site the camping, which type of camping will be permitted, and how this addition will affect rules, regulations, and staffing.

CHALLENGE HIKING: use the existing steep topography to create hiking trails for more advanced users. Provide additional signage where these trails cross the MST.



OVERLOOK: provide opportunities along the trail to view the natural habitat.

KAYAK BEACH AND OVERLOOK: provide an accessible route from the park center near the active play area to an overlook and kayak access location. In this same location, create an entrance to the park from the water and blueway trail.



LARGE SHELTER: Provide a shelter with restrooms, fireplace, and storage that can serve as a gathering space for large groups (200+) and/or covered gathering space for day camps and classes.



ACCESSIBLE KAYAK LAUNCH

MAIN VISION: Blue Jay Point offers its visitors the best of outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities. Groups and individuals alike can spend an entire day learning, playing and exploring amongst the park's Center for Environmental Education, trails, shoreline, educational garden and open play fields. Whether you're looking for a quiet, meditative space, a beautiful shoreline to explore, or even a tree top challenge for the more adventurous types, Blue Jay has something to offer every outdoor enthusiast.

BLUE JAY POINT COUNTY PARK recommendations

0 600 1200
1 inch = 300 feet



NEW HEALING GARDEN: provide a quiet respite for self reflection, yoga, stretching, and connecting with self and nature.



ENHANCE GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY: expand the trail system in the park to connect to regional greenway systems.

NATURE PLAY: a new nature play area will support daily use and can be designed to support park programming.




NEW BACK PORCH: add classroom space in the form of a large screened-in back porch similar to the classroom space at Prairie Ridge.



NEW BOARDWALK: add boardwalk to link new "back porch" with existing boardwalk. Include kayak and water education access for staff access during programs and creative platforms for water interaction.



ENHANCE BIRD GARDEN: provide opportunities for learning more about the connection between plants and birds and add a "nest" outdoor classroom.

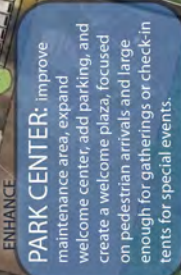


ENHANCE RAIN GARDEN: enhance the garden by adding interpretive signage and improving the conveyance and storage functions.

NEW HEALTH & WELLNESS GARDEN: replace existing playground equipment and add multi-generational exercise equipment at this location and along the primary greenway trail.



ENHANCE PARK CENTER: improve maintenance area, expand welcome center, add parking, and create a welcome plaza, focused on pedestrian arrivals and large enough for gatherings or check-in tents for special events.



ENHANCE BUTTERFLY GARDEN: expand the garden and add interpretive signage.

NEW DOG AMENITIES: add dog water fountains and additional waste stations along the trail to serve the large population of dogs in the park.



ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND VISIBILITY: support installation of a sidewalk along Ten-Ten Road for pedestrian access and the exploration of a Complete Streets study to provide equity in transportation. Clear vegetation to improve visibility of existing entrance sign. Add a park sign at each property corner to indicate park entrance ahead. Work with NCDOT on adding sidewalks and fully controlled pedestrian crosswalks at Ten-Ten Road and Holly Springs Road to connect nearby neighborhoods and improve pedestrian access to the park.

ENHANCE PARK ENTRANCE: explore realigning the entrance with Cortland Dr. during Ten-Ten Road Improvement Project.

MAIN VISION: Crowder District Park provides a sense of community in a suburban area. The park is a destination for daily health and physical activities, and serves as a place for family/group gatherings and education programming. Utilizing the natural and built elements, themed gardens and plantings, the park hopes to improve the connection between visitors and the environment. Connectivity to existing/future greenways and parks and the acquisition of surrounding property will allow Crowder District Park to expand its programs, facilities, services, and overall community presence.

Crowder District Park recommendations



MAIN VISION: Harris Lake is the "Destination for the Day," a place to reconnect with nature through recreational and educational opportunities. There is something here for each family member to enjoy—be it fitness and health-related activities or just back to the simple things in life like fishing and family picnicking. It is nature that connects play, education, and overall human development together.

NEW CAMPING: provision of an area for on-site camping was supported by the public during the planning process. Further exploration is recommended to determine where to site the camping, which type of camping will be permitted, and how this addition will affect rules, regulations, and staffing.

ENHANCE HIKING TRAILS: add wayfinding, mile markers, and interpretive signage to help navigate and celebrate the mission of the park.

NEW LOOP ROAD AND GREENWAY: use the service road to expand vehicular circulation toward the point and bring users to additional places within the park. Create a minimum 10' wide ADA greenway loop to enhance access and serve users who prefer this surface type to soft surface trails.

NEW NAME EACH POND: mark each pond with a naming sign and add names of the ponds to the trail maps to aid in navigation.

ENHANCE TRAIL SYSTEM: add connector trails to shorten loops and enhance access for users.

NEW BLUEWAY: create a blueway trail along the shoreline using floating mile markers and interpretive signage.

ENHANCE DISC GOLF: create courses that are ADA accessible and youth friendly.

ENHANCE MAINTENANCE AREA: expand the maintenance area to better suit the needs of the grounds, programming, and staff.

NEW PARKING AND COMFORT STATION: to accommodate disc golf and tree top trail users.

NEW PARK CENTER: design a new solar-powered, energy efficient park center to become the official arrival point for visitors. Include offices, indoor classrooms, display areas, restrooms, and storage. Add sufficient parking to accommodate events and groups using the new center.

ENHANCE PLAYGROUNDS AND WATER ACCESS: expand the natural play area and upgrade the existing playground. Enhance water access by creating a kayak/paddleboard/canoe launch with ADA accessibility. Explore the potential of adding a vendor to rent human powered watercraft.

NEW GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY: expand the trail system in the park to connect to regional greenway systems.

NEW TREE TOP TRAIL: create an elevated trail in the tree canopy that is ADA accessible with several overlooks, hammocks, and spaces that can serve as an outdoor classroom.



Harris Lake County Park recommendations





FARM TO TABLE: look for opportunities that teach about farm-to-table methods using local farmers and food grown at Oak View.

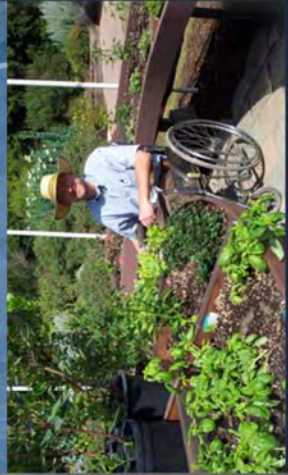


PARK EXPANSION AREA: offer additional park features including a playground, walking and hiking paths, and fishing platform.

NEW
SOUND WALL

ENHANCE
CROPS: expand opportunities to cultivate food on the farm and use for educational purposes.

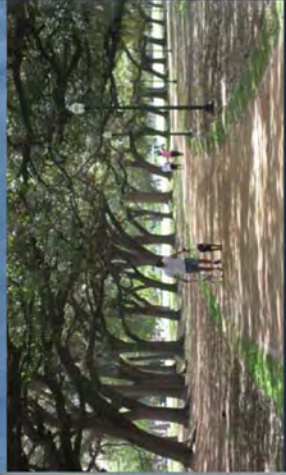
ACCESSIBLE GARDEN: allow all users to experience the garden plots by widening the walking aisles and raising the garden beds to easier access.



ENHANCE
MAIN FARMHOUSE: complete permanent exhibits.



NEW
PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS: create a primary loop trail around the park and additional ADA accessible pathways to connect each park feature.



MAIN VISION: Historic Oak View County Park interprets North Carolina's diverse agrarian past and invites families to explore and connect with daily farm life. Expanding the park's educational and recreational opportunities will enhance the visitor experience and broaden its role in the community.

ENHANCE
CONNECTIVITY: expand the trail system in the park to connect to Wake County office park and facilities.

NEW
FISHING PLATFORM

NEW
PLAYGROUND

ENHANCE
REAL ANIMALS: Add more live animals to the farm to allow for enhanced interaction with farm life, an opportunity to learn about historic and present day practices, improved user experience, and expansion of the attractions on the farm.



ENHANCE
PARKING AREA: add additional parking spaces.

ENHANCE
PARKING AREA: add additional parking spaces.

ENHANCE
FORMAL ENTRY: provide designated entry into historic building.

ENHANCE
FISHING ACCESS: improve access near the existing ponds for viewing and fishing while maintaining the natural "farm feel" of the edge of the lake.



NEW
INTERPRETIVE PLAY: create and enhance interpretive play spaces throughout the park that allow for interactive learning and user activities that simulate life on the farm.



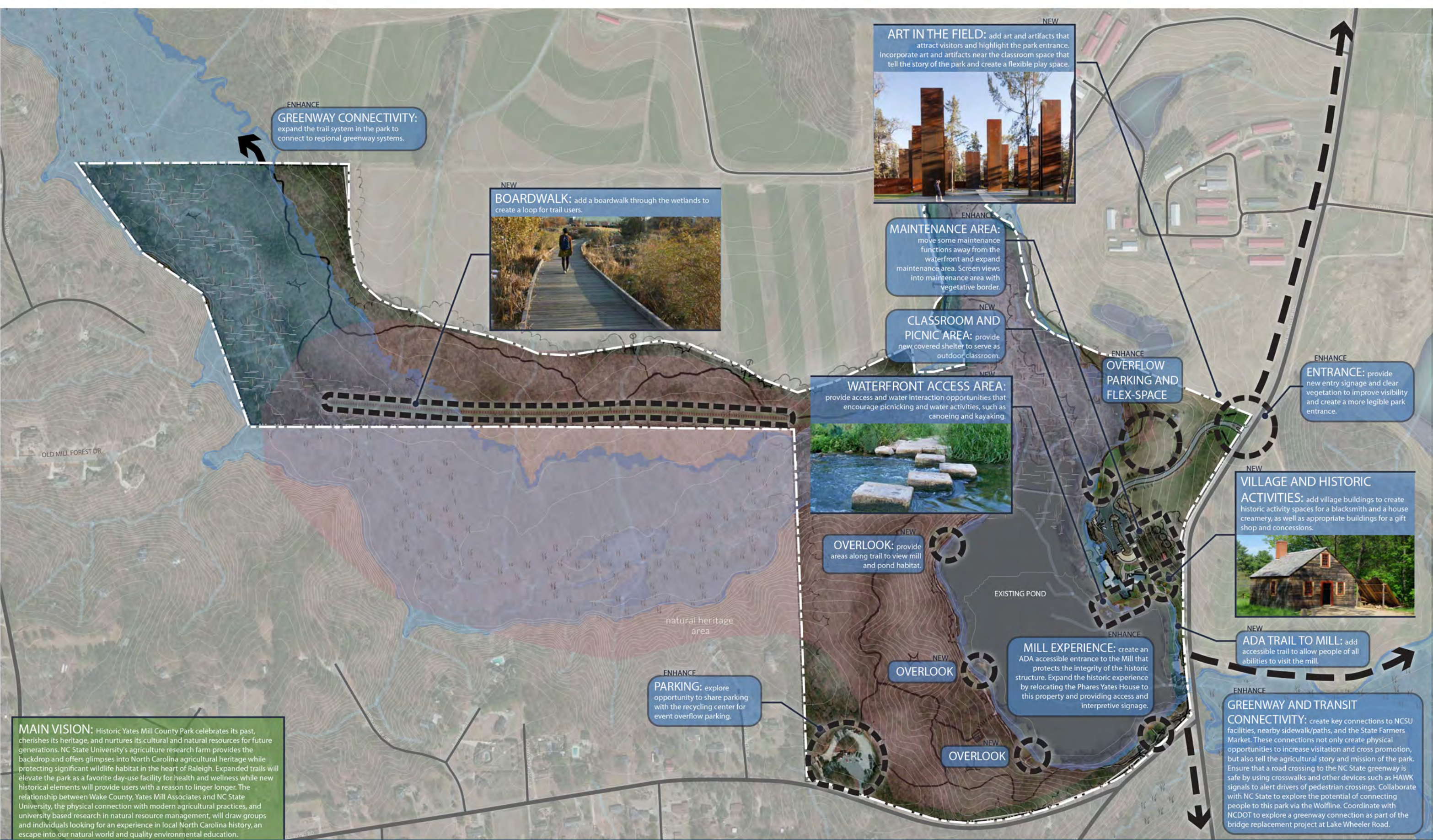
ENHANCE
SIDEWALK AND TRANSIT CONNECTIVITY: expand the trail system in the park to connect to proposed sidewalk facilities, public transit systems, and other recreational amenities, such as the Neuse River Trail.



Historic Oak View County Park recommendations

two foot contours





MAIN VISION: Historic Yates Mill County Park celebrates its past, cherishes its heritage, and nurtures its cultural and natural resources for future generations. NC State University's agriculture research farm provides the backdrop and offers glimpses into North Carolina agricultural heritage while protecting significant wildlife habitat in the heart of Raleigh. Expanded trails will elevate the park as a favorite day-use facility for health and wellness while new historical elements will provide users with a reason to linger longer. The relationship between Wake County, Yates Mill Associates and NC State University, the physical connection with modern agricultural practices, and university based research in natural resource management, will draw groups and individuals looking for an experience in local North Carolina history, an escape into our natural world and quality environmental education.

CONNECTIVITY: improve connectivity with crosswalks, links to existing greenways, sidewalk connections to RDU, and coordination with area transit for stop locations and wayfinding. Extend trails across Aviation Parkway to increase total trail length.



ACCESSIBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKING: provide accessible parking spaces to all use areas and the primary loop trail.

ADA ACCESSIBLE TRAIL LOOP: enhance the existing loop trail to provide equality in mobility and access for all park users.

PARK CONNECTIVITY ACCESSIBILITY: renovate park trails and sidewalks to create ADA accessible paths connecting each use area in the park.

natural heritage area

SIDEWALK: to complete the pedestrian connection from the entrance and tie into the new park loop.

TRAIL EXPANSION AREA

BOARDWALK: constructed in conjunction with future roadway improvements.

TRAILHEAD: provide a trailhead near the mountain biking trails that has a shelter, bike "fix it" station, restrooms, first aid station, and changing area.



GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY: collaborate with municipalities and the office parks to complete a loop around the lake.

PARK CENTER: create a new Park Center with an iconic building that provides an educational setting, a place for rest and relaxation, observation of the waterfront, and park support facilities. The iconic tower will be re-imagined to preserve the overlook while enhancing safety and accessibility.



BLUEWAY: add mile markers and resting places along a blueway trail that skirts the shoreline.

PARKING: expand existing parking areas.

GATHERING SPACE: provide a new picnic shelter and restrooms for large groups (over 100 people), new playground, and multi-generational park activities suitable for varied ages and abilities.



LOOP TRAIL: enhance the existing loop trail to become an ADA accessible Lake Loop. The route would improve connectivity throughout the park and provide new connections to the Cary and Morrisville greenway systems.



MAIN VISION: this park is truly "everyone's park." From the ADA accessible trails to the new accessible kayak launches, and connections with trails and transit—equity in recreation, leisure, and wellness is the focus. Multi-generational spaces create opportunities for the whole family to enjoy an hour or a whole day at the park. Water activities, peaceful trails, picnic shelters, and multi-use trails provide opportunities for enjoyment for daily activities and special events for all ages and abilities.



Lake Crabtree County Park recommendations



NEW
INTERPRETIVE VEGETATION:
plant bands of native vegetation in colored patterns around the hill to illustrate the height the landfill grew over a period of time. Pair the plantings with interpretive signage around the park.

NEW
ART ON THE HILL: provide a setting for student/community developed art to be placed on the mound.

NEW
ART LOOP TRAIL + STORY FENCE:
create a loop trail around the northern mound to link with Abbotts Creek Trail. To prevent access to the mound, install a story fence to educate visitors about waste, recycling, and re-use.

NEW
TRAIL: to connect with Abbotts Creek Trail.

NEW
TRAIL: to connect with Abbotts Creek Trail.

NEW
ART ON THE HILL
(Visitors will view the art from the trail and surrounding area)

NEW
RECYCLE PLAY: a different take on nature play using recycled materials instead of natural elements to coincide with the theme of the park.

NEW
PLAYGROUND:
to provide shade for youth and adults.

NEW
LOOP TRAIL: create a greenway trail that loops the perimeter of the road and connects uses throughout the park with dog support facilities including fountains and waste stations.

NEW
PARKING: this lot will accommodate visitors to the skate trails and art loop.

NEW
ADA ACCESSIBLE TRAIL: a new trail leading to the top of the main hill will be manageable for those with limited physical abilities with gradual slopes, landings, benches, and shade.

NEW
TOP OF THE HILL:
to provide shade while preserving views.

NEW
PARKING: to serve top of the hill trail.

NEW
MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS:
expand the trail network as planned in the previous master plan.

EXISTING
PARKING
WELCOME KIOSK AND ARRIVAL SEQUENCE

NEW
TRANSIT CONNECTION:
work with CAT to create a stop near the park entrance.

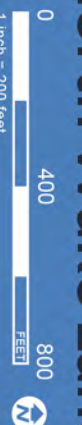
NEW
CHANGE THE NAME: create a committee or hold a contest to create a new name better aligned with the main vision.

NEW
DUMPSITER PLANTERS: up-cycle dumpsters as planters to provide shade without penetrating the mound. Enlist artists to design each dumpster to tell a story of energy, consumption, and human impacts on the earth.

NEW
SKATE TRAIL: create a trail system with below-ground level and above-ground ramps, plazas, railings, and jumps will be created specifically for tricks and challenges for multiple levels. The loop trail will continue on the outside of the skate trail to provide connectivity and observation.

MAIN VISION: this park brings waste, conservation, recycling, and re-use to the forefront of visitor experience. Opportunities will be created throughout the park to reflect on the importance of conscious use of materials, human effects on the earth, and how re-thinking materials—which some consider trash—can become beautiful art and vehicles for creativity and recreation.

North Wake Landfill District Park recommendations



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1. Introduction

Overview

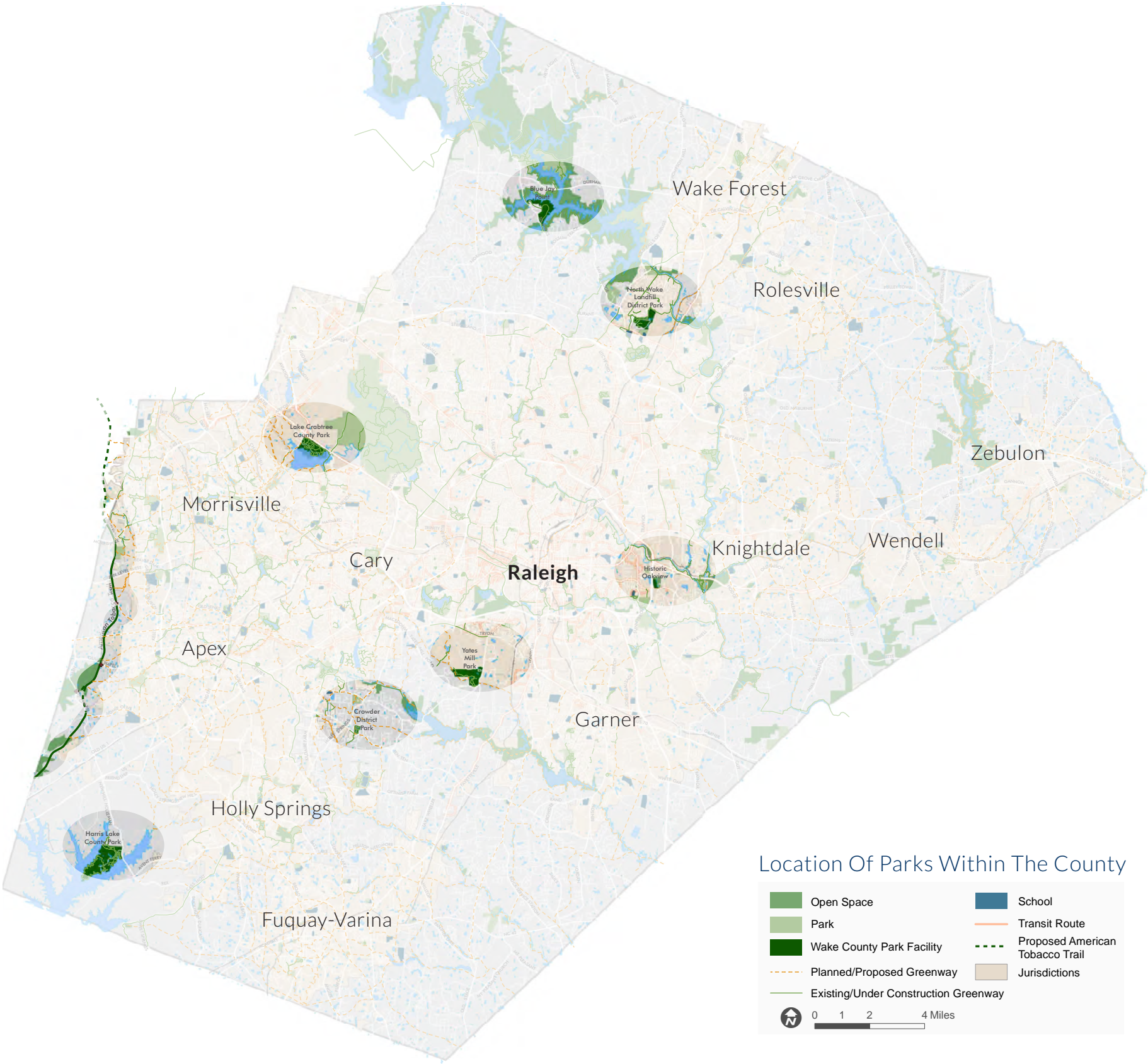
Wake County is located in northeast North Carolina featuring 548,480 acres of rolling hills, sloped towards the state’s flat coastal plain. Founded in 1771, it is home to the state capital Raleigh and named for Margaret Wake, wife of the Governor of the Province of North Carolina. Though originally inhabited by the Sissipahaw and Occaneechi Tribe, it was quickly colonized and become primarily an agriculture-based county until the Civil War changed the economy. With the development of the railroad came new people and businesses. It was at the end of the Second World War that the county changed into an urban and industrial center that shaped the areas present outlook. Today, Wake County is the fifth fastest growing county over 500,000 people in the United States. It houses the North Carolina State Fair and is home to such higher education institutions as North Carolina State University, Meredith, Peace, St. Augustine’s, and Shaw University.



The Wake County Parks and Recreation and Open Space Division currently operates eight county parks focused on the core service areas of **open space, recreation and leisure, and environmental and cultural education**. The Division’s mission is:

To provide outdoor recreation and educational opportunities while promoting environmental and cultural stewardship through a managed system of parks and open spaces.

In 2014, these facilities had a combined visitation of 1,187,986 people—experiencing exhilarating mountain biking, sailing across Lake Crabtree, picnicking with family, and horseback riding along the American Tobacco Trail. The Division has recently received numerous environmental preservation awards at both the local and national level.



Location Of Parks Within The County



Purpose of This Plan

The purpose of this plan is to update the Master Plans for each of the County's parks: The American Tobacco Trail, Blue Jay Point County Park, North Wake Landfill District Park, Lake Crabtree County Park, Historic Oak View County Park, Historic Yates Mill County Park, Crowder District Park, and Harris Lake County Park. Each Master Plan Update will provide analysis and recommendations that will elevate the park's ability to serve citizens and visitors who travel to the area to enjoy the natural and cultural resources of Wake County. To achieve this, the consultants, staff, steering committee, stakeholders, and public examined the layers of information identified in the discovery process to provide guidance for implementation.

STUDY AREA

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CONTINUING THE VISION

The Parks and Recreation Division's vision from the 2008 *Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan* continues today. Each activity, improvement, facility, and park is developed with this vision as a guiding principle:

Wake County will be a great place to live, work, learn and play. It will be a place where people are self-sufficient, enrich their lives, respect the environment, appreciate their heritage, participate in government, and plan for a better tomorrow.

Seven goals were identified to target the efforts needed by the Parks and Recreation Division to achieve this vision. The following goals acted as the pillars of the 2008 plan and guide this process to update each Master Plan.

Goal 1 – To position the Division of Parks, Recreation and Open Space (the Division) as a valued partner in the vision of Wake County.

Goal 2 – To maintain and enhance the core services of Wake County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space.

Goal 3 – To be proactive with initiatives, that result in long-term sustainability of the Division and the environment.

Goal 4 – To market the benefits and services of the Division of Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

Goal 5 – To continue to serve the citizens of Wake County in our three core service areas and develop performance measures to track and report our success.

Goal 6 – To create a regional park land acquisition and development plan.

Goal 7 – To participate in the planning and collaboration of municipal and regional trail and greenway plans.

These goals will guide this planning process to update the eight master plans.

National Standards and Trends

All parks and recreation divisions (or departments) observe the standards and guiding principles of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). This group provides countless resources for divisions to plan, implement, and document progress. Understanding history, learning from other communities, and identifying future focus areas are critical to serving diverse populations.

Originally preserved for their aesthetic beauty, parks have evolved into critical public spaces that enable communities to become healthier, more prosperous, and socially connected. Careful management and planned activities have positioned local parks and recreation departments as essential components of modern life by helping mitigate the growing trend of obesity, improving the economy, and providing environmental benefits through conservation. By following the NRPA's three pillars of

Conservation, Health and Wellness, and Social Equity, Wake County can continue to provide resources and services that create quality of life improvements for its residents.

CONSERVATION

Parks and public lands serve an essential role in the preservation of natural resources and wildlife habitat, the protection of clean water and air, and the provision of green spaces for current and future generations to enjoy. The ability to preserve these essential connections is critical to the quality of life for Americans, and as such, the mission of parks and recreation departments at all levels should support the conservation of our natural resources. Clean, green, and accessible parks and open spaces benefit everyone in the community.

Parks and recreation professionals are the champions in protecting and managing open space for the common good. The preservation of our national resources not only improves the quality of life in our communities, but also provides substantial economic benefits such as reducing healthcare costs, cleansing air and water pollution, and improving social equity. Park and recreation facilities and programs also enhance the value of conservation by educating the public about their values, connecting young people to nature and the outdoors, and coordinating environmental stewardship with other public and nonprofit entities. Through careful planning, stewardship, and public engagement, Wake County can continue to be a leader in conservation and build upon the benefits of its parks and open spaces. These benefits include:

- Providing carbon-reducing sustainable landscapes that cleanse air and water, replenish aquifers, reduce stormwater runoff, and protect wildlife habitat;
- Offering the public access to safe, affordable, and healthy ways to experience and appreciate nature; and
- Contributing significantly to the economic wellbeing of communities through energy and resource conservation and providing many economic benefits to communities derived from outdoor recreation.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Due in large part to a growing trend of poor nutrition, sedentary lifestyles, and overall unhealthy habits, America is in the midst of a serious health crisis that is affecting adults and children. Parks and recreation agencies have become leaders in fighting many of these challenges by enhancing the physical environments in which we live and improving the overall health and wellness of our communities. More and more evidence has shown that parks and recreation actively contribute to healthier communities and are a critical solution for our nation’s health epidemic. Through facilities, natural amenities, and programs, they encourage and promote healthy habits for people of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ethnicities. Wake County can work toward improving the health and wellness of its community by offering collaborative programs and policies that:

- Help reduce obesity and incidence of chronic disease by providing opportunities to increase rigorous physical activity in a variety of forms
- Provide a connection to nature which studies demonstrate relieves stress levels, tightens interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health
- Aid in reducing hunger in America and increasing access to nutritious food options
- Foster overall wellness and healthful habits, such as becoming tobacco-free and engaging in enrichment opportunities that add balance to life

SOCIAL EQUITY

The philosophy of social equity and access is a core pillar of every parks and recreation department. Having access to programs, facilities, places, and spaces—regardless of skin color, age, income level or ability—is a right, not a privilege, for people nationwide. Social equity is a critical responsibility of every public park and recreation agency and the professionals who operate them. The inclusive nature of parks and recreation cultivates community ties through programs and services that connect people more deeply to the community. This sense of community connection improves quality of life and makes our communities more livable and desirable for residents and businesses.

Social equality is expressed through more than the physical environment. While ADA access is critical, other equitable attributes should be addressed in public parks. Access via public transportation and greenway trails enables youth, seniors who no longer drive, and those without personal vehicles to partake in programs and park activities. Cost to participate in programs or gain access to certain amenities is also essential to equitable offerings. In addition, language barriers sometimes deter non-English speaking residents and visitors from enjoying facilities and events at programs in their communities.

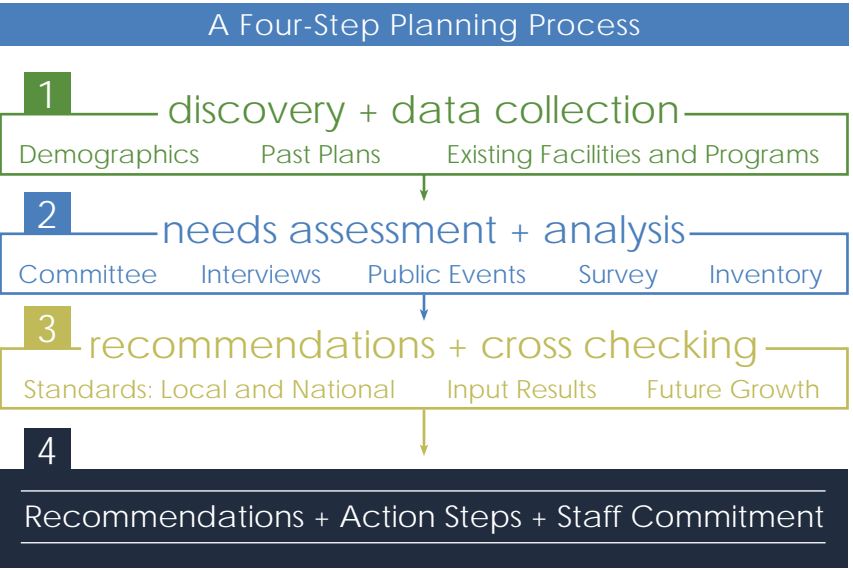
Physical, sensory, economic, and cultural considerations should be analyzed to provide services and facilities that pair well with the demographic composition of residents and visitors to each park.

Upholding social equity is one of the core means of assuring the value of parks and recreation for future generations. By continuing to improve upon the social equity and universal access to its parks and recreation opportunities, Wake County will enjoy many benefits, including:

- Public enjoyment and engagement. Where parks and open space are plentiful and recreation services strong, residents enjoy the closest attachment and engagement within their communities; and studies indicate higher levels of local gross domestic product and economic well being;
- Quality recreation time with family and friends. Parks and recreation services provide a space and a reason to partake in enjoying quality time, relaxation, and fun among family members and friends, thus strengthening the social and familial bonds that provide balance and satisfaction in life;
- Improvement of mental and physical health. Parks and recreation can reduce the impacts of chronic diseases, especially in such vulnerable populations as children, seniors, and the underserved; and
- Measurable decreases in rates of crime and other detrimental activities. Communities are safer as a result of a wholesome atmosphere created by well managed parks and recreation services in communities through healthy activities and programming for all people.

Planning Process

The planning process began with a period of Discovery and Data Collection. During this stage, data collection, review of past planning efforts, GIS analysis, a review of leases and memoranda of understanding, on-site evaluation, and inventory set the stage for analysis. Previous citizen surveys, park satisfaction surveys, focus groups, and site visits fueled the Needs Assessment and Analysis Stage where community needs and site improvements begin to surface. All of these items were overlapped to provided the inspiration for recommendations, which were vetted by the public through a series of workshops. The final recommendations and action steps for each park site will provide the staff of Wake County with actions items to achieve the goals and implementation strategies of the final plans.





2. Existing Conditions

Overview

Parks, greenways, and open space play a key role in the quality of life in an area. They can provide residents and visitors the opportunity to be physically active, can improve nearby property value, and can offer locations for relaxation and social interactions. As Wake County continues to experience tremendous population growth, it is necessary to assess existing conditions and demographic trends to forecast park needs.

The following chapter establishes an existing conditions profile for Wake County through the culmination of demographic analyses and fieldwork evaluation. Due to the large service area of county parks, a comprehensive understanding of county-wide trends is critical to understanding the current and future needs of the community. The data outlined in the composition section helps show whether current facilities are appropriately serving the diverse and growing populations in the county, and the Equity Analysis displays concentrations of traditionally underserved populations to suggest specific program or equipment needs. In addition to demographic profiles, the Live, Work, Play Analysis uses geospatial representation to show where there are high demand for park facilities and programs throughout the county by assessing factors such as where people live, work, play, learn, and ride transit. To complement this analysis, public input from a recent planning endeavor was used to quantify the wants and needs of residents in Wake County.

The resulting existing conditions profile of Wake County was used to guide the consultant team as they conducted a through field inventory and evaluation of each county park site. The profile helped frame the existing facilities, accessibility, and user information identified in each of the Park Profiles.

Composition of the Community

GENERAL STATISTICS

The Parks and Recreation facilities of Wake County are often used regionally and service a diverse assortment of individuals. The following demographic, composition, and equity data and analyses were completed to better understand municipality and county constituents.

AGE

Wake County has a relatively uneven distribution of its population, with the 18 to 64 age bracket having the largest percentage of the population at 65 percent while the 65 and over age bracket has the second lowest percentage at 9.7 percent followed by persons under 5 years at 6.7 percent.

Characteristic	Percent of Population
Persons under 5 years, percent 2013	6.7%
Persons under 18 years, percent 2013	25.3%
Persons 65 years and over, percent 2013	9.7%
Female persons, percent 2013	51.3%
White alone, percent 2013	69.3%
Black or African American alone, percent 2013	21.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent 2013	0.8%
Asian alone, percent 2013	6.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent 2013	0.1%
Two or More Races, Percent 2013	2.3%
Hispanic or Latino, percent 2013	10.0%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent 2013	61.3%

Based on their average ages, the three youngest places in Wake County are Knightdale, Raleigh, and Morrisville, and the three oldest communities are Garner, Wendell, and Zebulon. To better understand this distribution, the Equity Analysis on page 2-6 visualizes the concentration of the under 18 and the 65 and older age groups throughout the County. It is important to understand the distribution of these groups as they are often key users of Parks and Recreation programs and facilities. Identifying the geographic concentrations of these ages will help tailor recommendations to specific geographic areas to best serve the community.

POPULATION DENSITY

According to Wake County Planning Board’s *Demographic Trends 2014*, Wake County’s density is constantly growing, with a county wide average population density of 1,140 persons per square mile. The least dense areas in Wake County exist mostly on the outer edges of the county, with the 3 least densely populated areas being Wendell, Zebulon, and Rolesville.

More densely populated areas, with densities from 2,500 to 2,939 persons per square, are located in the central and western areas of the county. The three most densely populated areas in Wake County consist of Raleigh, Cary, and Apex.

HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS

In keeping with the pillar of Health and Wellness, it was imperative to understand any overarching themes in health risk behaviors. According to the Wake County Community Health Needs Assessment, two in three adults in Wake County, or 59.9%, are classified as either overweight or obese. Additionally, only 29.18% of the population was reported to use any of the parks for exercise. The high obesity and overweight percentage and low physical inactivity rates have become common themes in the U.S., and parks and programs will be a significant component to improving these unhealthy trends.

Equity Analysis

PROCESS

An Equity Analysis was conducted to assess traditionally underserved populations and special groups in Wake County. The eight equity factors are shown individually and then aggregated into a composite equity map to display the overall equity score across the county. The Equity Analysis and the resulting spatial location of the equity factors can be used to help identify potential facility and program recommendations.

This section summarizes the method and results of the Equity Analysis for Wake County. The analyses were tied to the project study area using the available data from the Wake County GIS website and from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Methodology

The analysis uses census tract data to display the relative percentage of the equity factor as it relates to the county-wide data. Each census tract is displayed using a score of 1-5, or lightest to darkest blue. The composite equity map was created using an average score threshold for each equity factor. Such that if a census tract had a greater value than the mean for any specific indicator, it was given a factor of one.

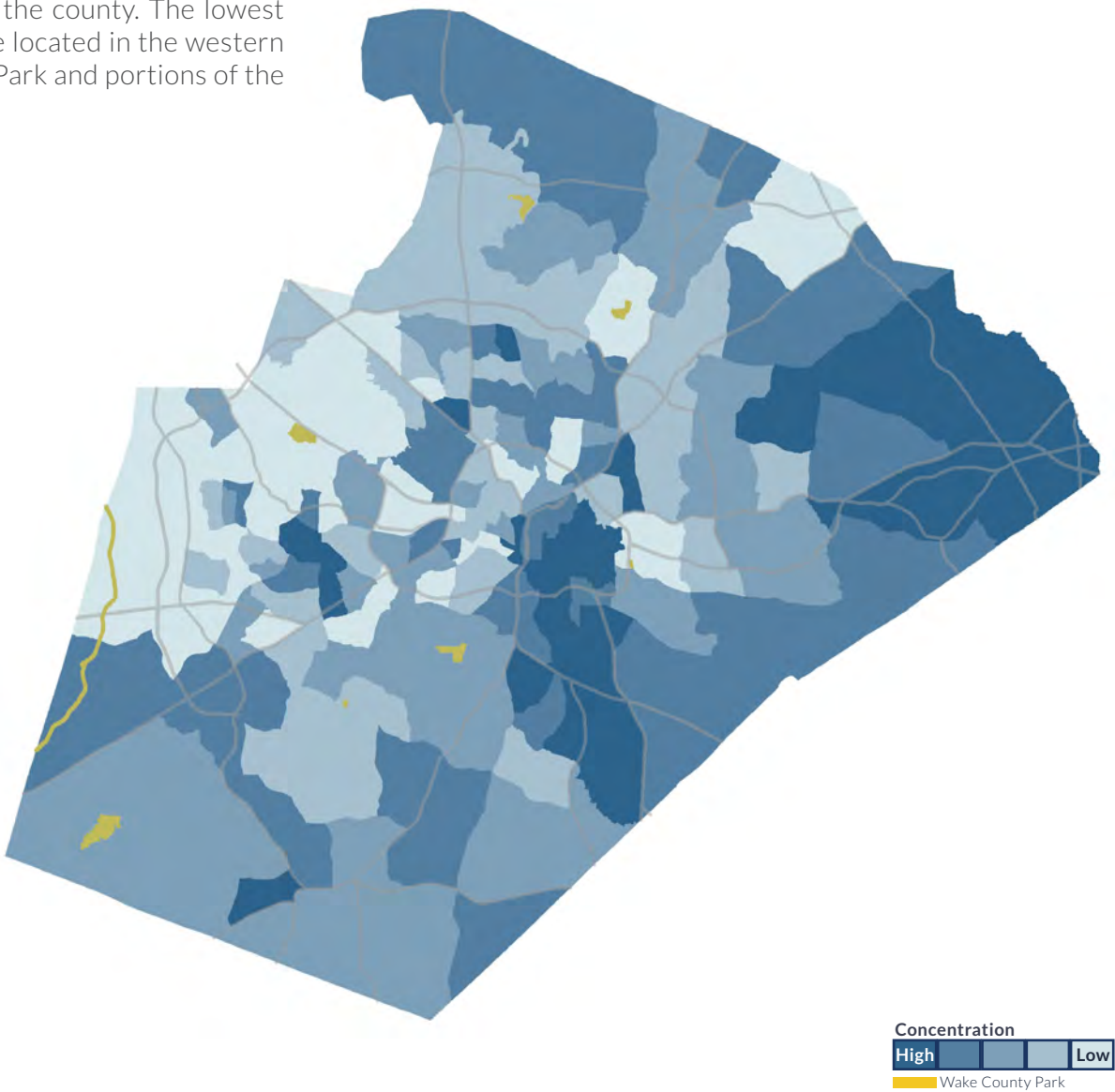
Data Sources

Variable	Source	Description
Special Needs	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of population that classify as having a hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living disability
Diversity	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of residents that identify themselves as "non-white"
Language	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of residents that speak a language other than English at home and classify their English speaking ability as "not well" or "not at all"
Youth Population	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of residents that are under 18
Retirement Age	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of residents that are 65 and older
Poverty	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of residents that are classified as 200% below the national poverty level
Unemployment	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of residents 16 and older that classify as unemployed (determined by work status, layoff, job search, and availability for work factors).
Vehicular Access	2013 ACS; 5-Year	Percentage of households that do not have access to a private motor vehicle

EQUITY ANALYSIS RESULTS

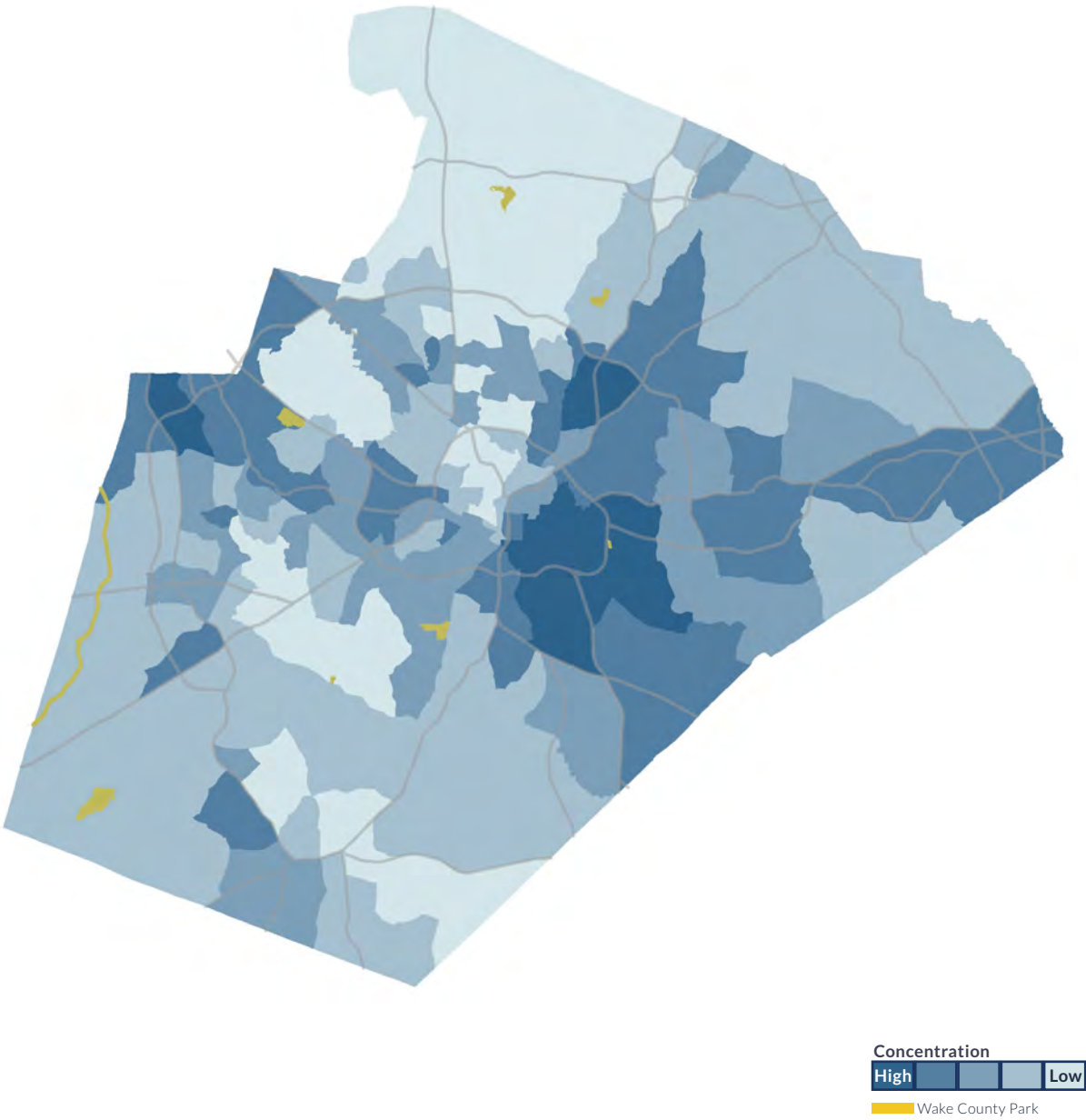
Special Needs

This map shows the percentage of Wake County residents that classify as having a hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living disability. The analysis reveals that the average composition of special needs residents per census tract is 7.6 percent, with large portions of Wake County having a 12 percent or greater composition. The highest concentrations of residents (12 to 22 percent) are located in the southeast portion of Raleigh near Historic Oakview Park, throughout the majority of Garner, and in the northeast quadrant of the county. The lowest percentages of special needs residents are located in the western portion of the county near Lake Crabtree Park and portions of the American Tobacco Trail.



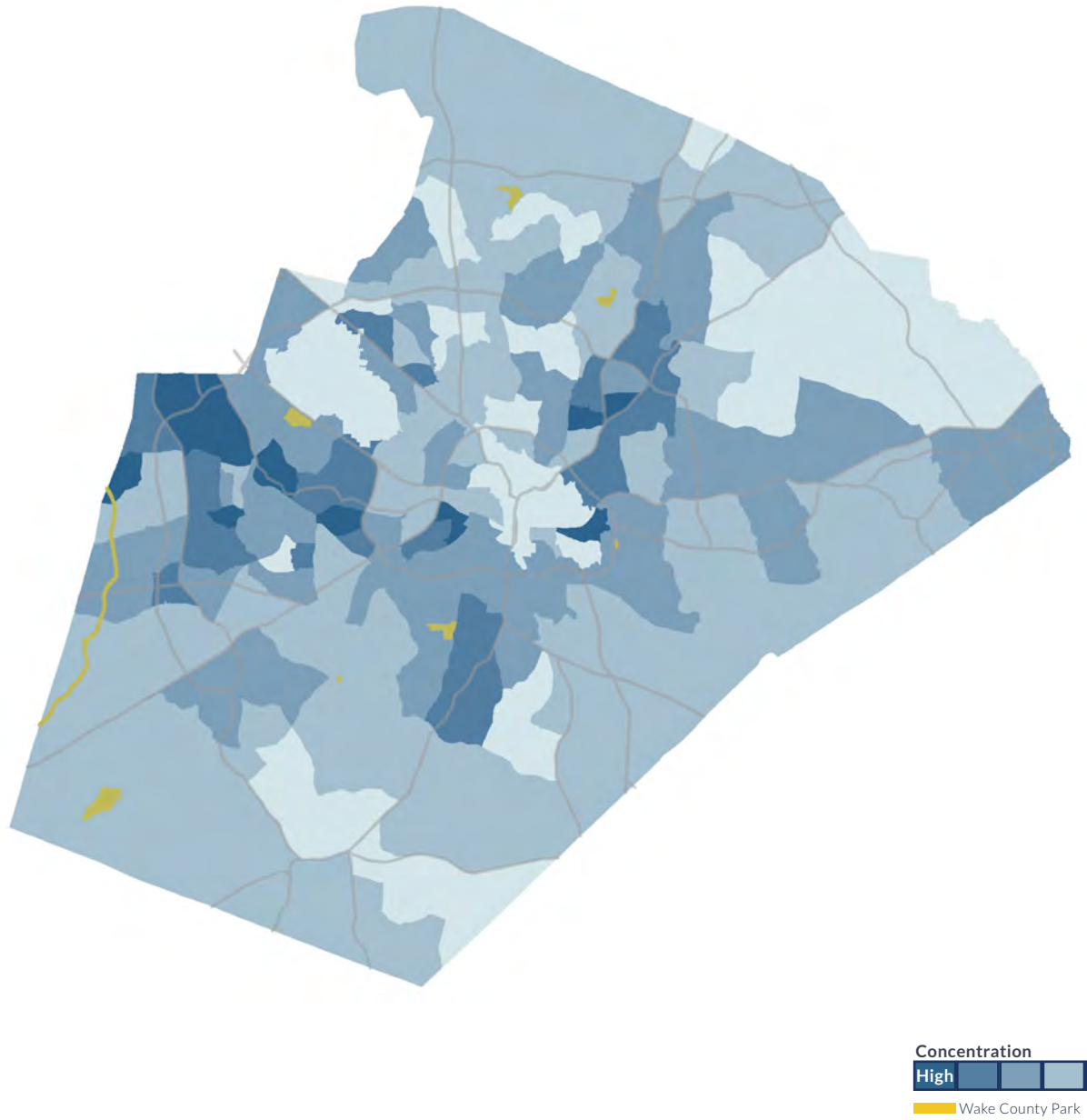
Diversity

The following map shows the percentage of Wake County residents who identified themselves as “non-white” in the 2013 American Community Survey. The map indicates that the highest percentages of non-white residents (57 to 88 percent) are located in the southeast portion of Raleigh near Historic Oakview Park. Moderate to moderate-high percentages of non-white residents (25 to 36 and 36 to 57 percent) are located near Yates Mill Park, Lake Crabtree County Park. The highest percentages of “white” residents (0 to 14 percent non-white) are located near Blue Jay Point and the Crowder District Park.



Language

The analysis shows the percentage of Wake County residents that speak a language other than English at home and classify their English speaking ability as “not well” or “not at all.” The analysis reveals that, on average, 74 percent of Wake County residents primarily speak English at home and can speak English “well” or better. The highest concentrations of non-English speakers are located in portions of Cary and Morrisville near Lake Crabtree County Park.

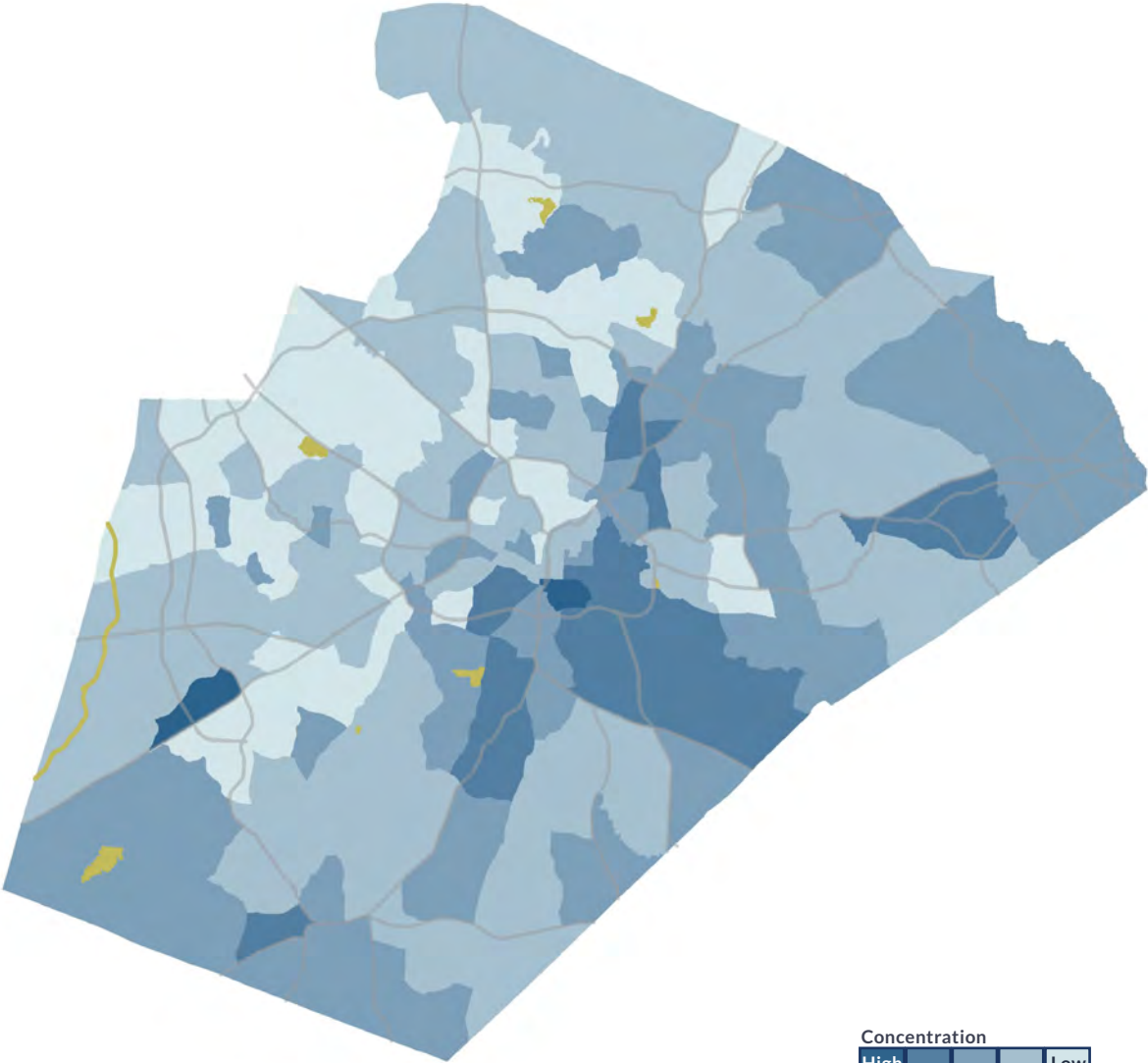


Age Distribution:

The following age distribution maps show the percentage of Wake County residents that are younger than 18 and those who are 65 and older. These two groups constitute the “youth” and the “retirement age” population demographics in the county and are an important consideration due to their specialized park and recreation needs.

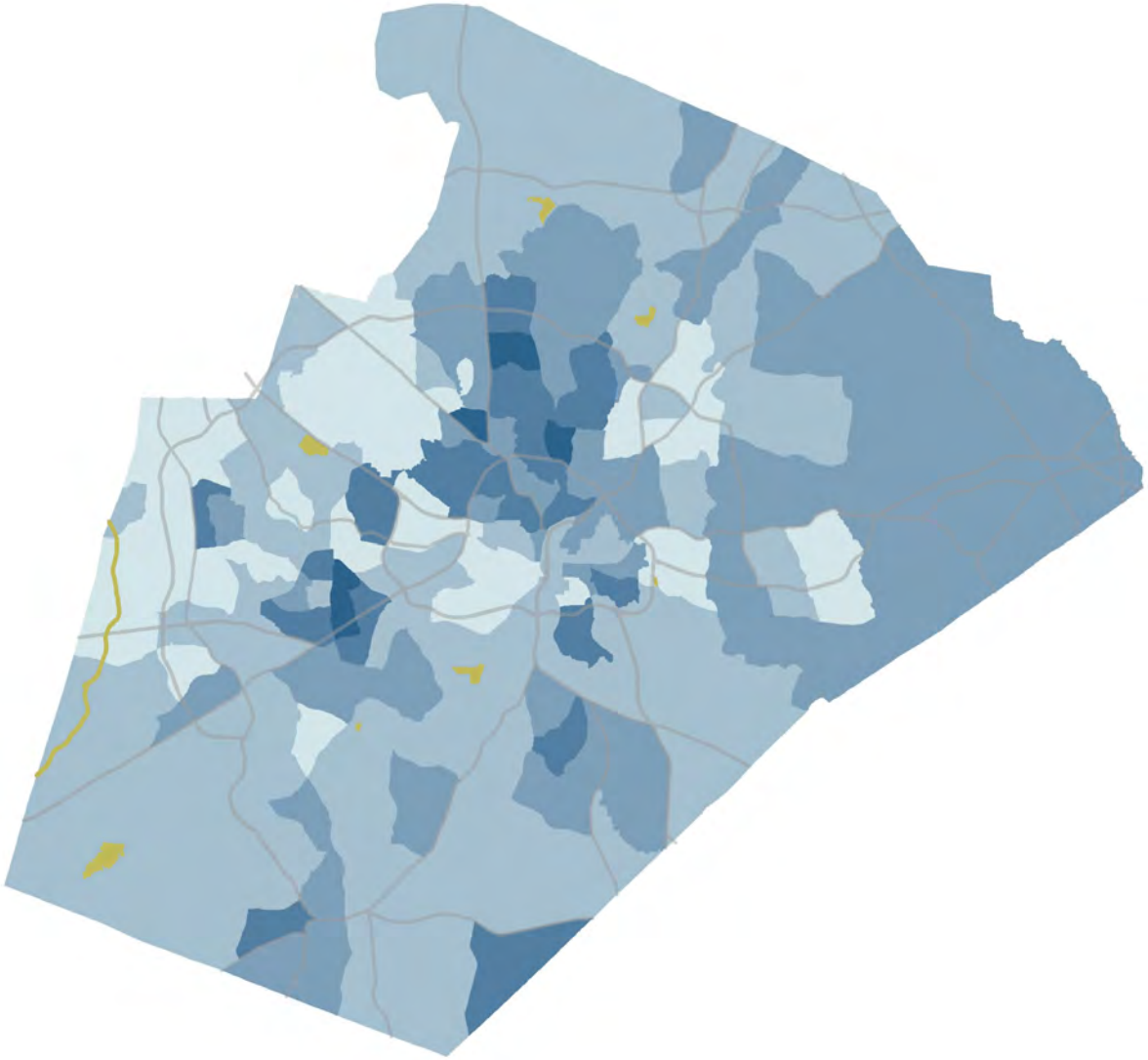
Youth Population

The highest percentages of under 18 residents (29 to 37 percent) are located throughout the county, with high concentrations in Apex, Holly Springs, and Cary. North Wake Landfill District Park, Yates Mill Park, Harris Lake County Park, Historic Oakview, Crowder District Park, Blue Jay Point, and the American Tobacco Trail are all located within close proximity to high concentrations of the youth population.



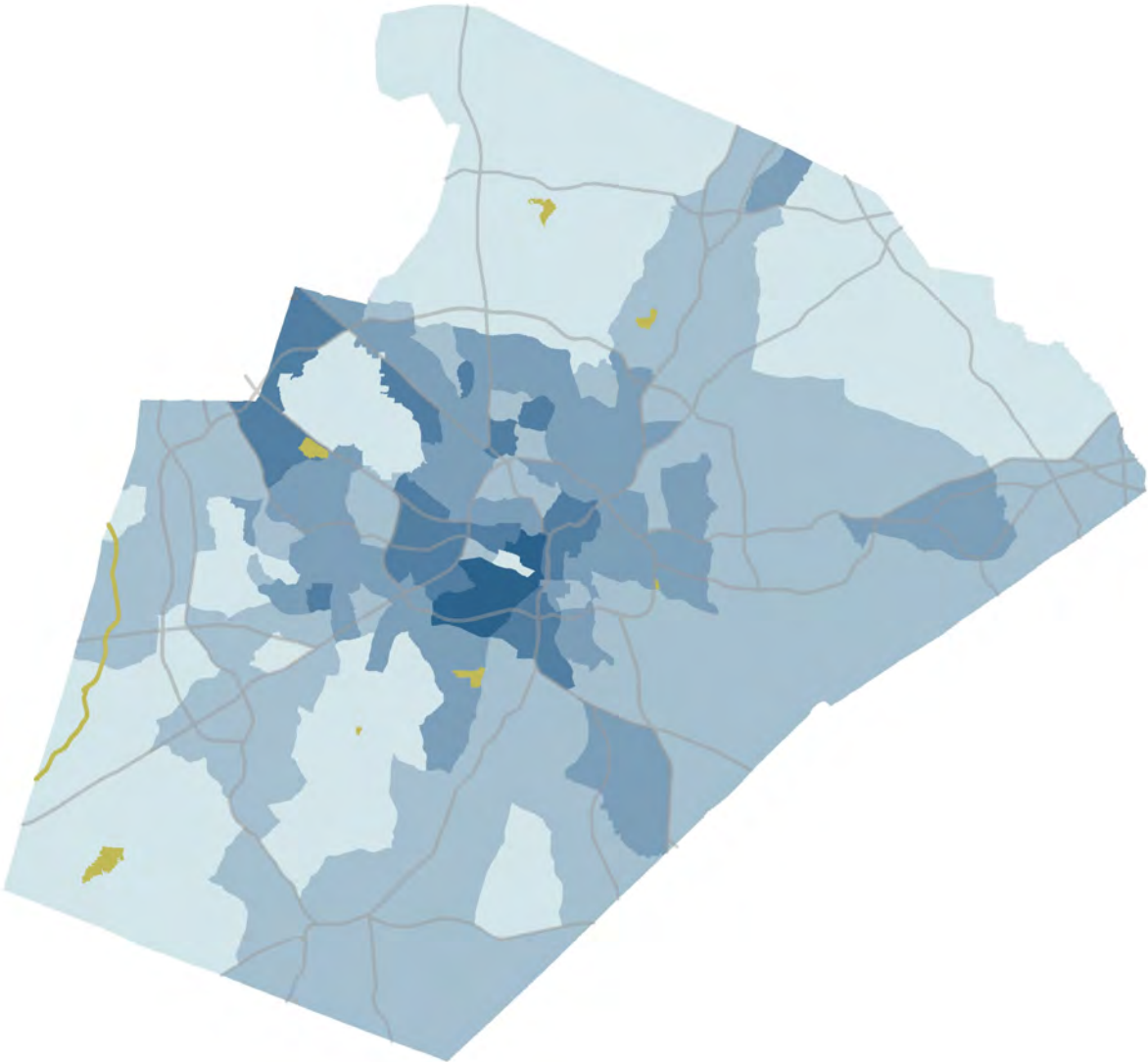
Retirement Age Population

The over 65 analysis revealed that Wake County has very few areas with high concentrations of retirement residents. The highest percentages (20 to 30 percent) are located in northern Raleigh, with no nearby county parks or greenways. The closest Wake County facility is the North Wake Landfill District Park.



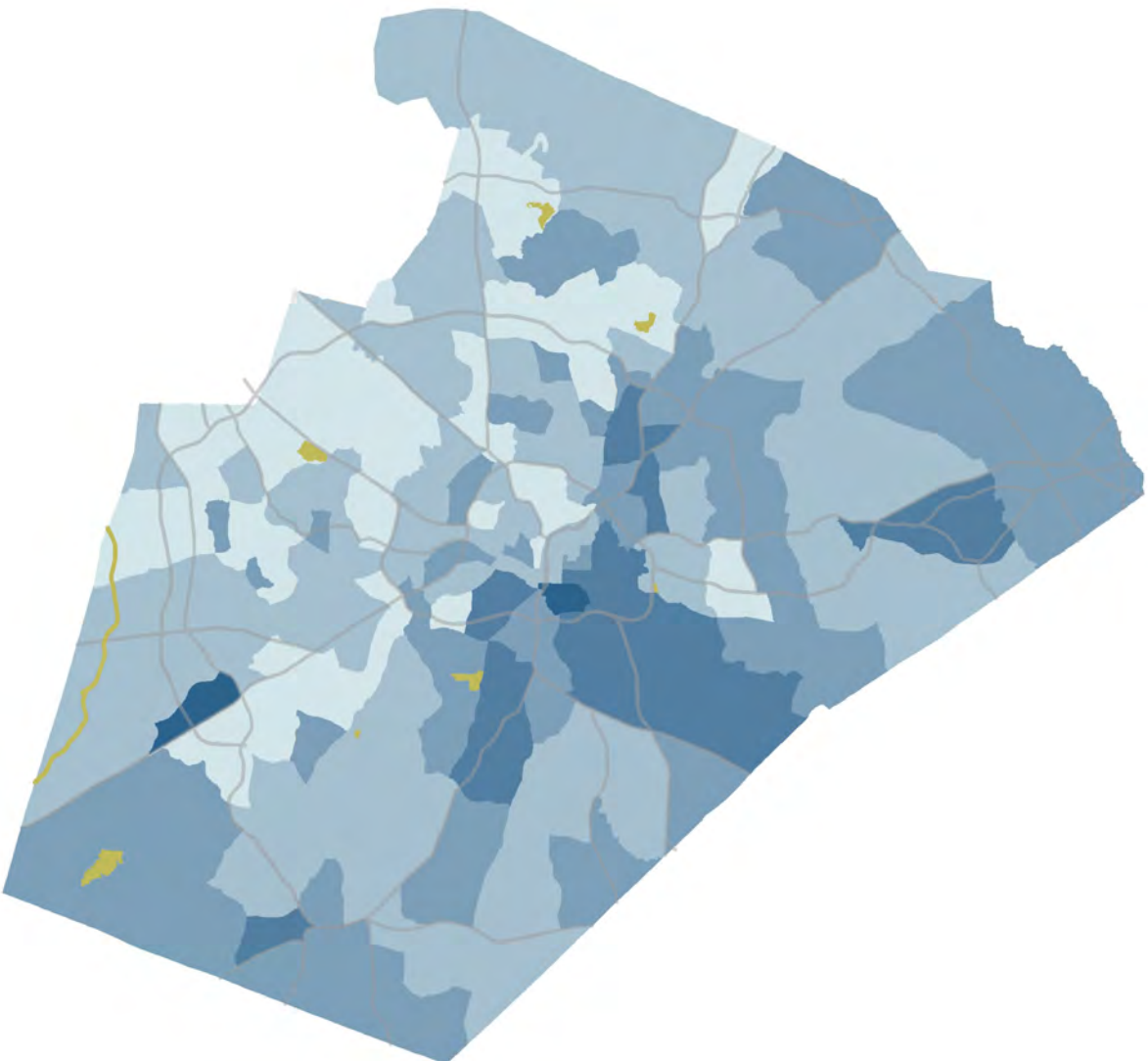
Poverty

This map indicates the percentage of Wake County residents that are classified in the 2013 American Community Survey as being at or below 200 percent of the nation poverty level (the national poverty level for one persons in family/household was \$11,490). The analysis reveals that there are a small number of census tracts that are classified as having a high poverty level. The highest concentrations of poverty (47 to 70 percent) are located to the west and southwest of downtown Raleigh. All Wake County park and greenway facilities, besides Lake Crabtree County Park (31 to 47 percent), are located in low and moderate poverty locations (0 to 31 percent).



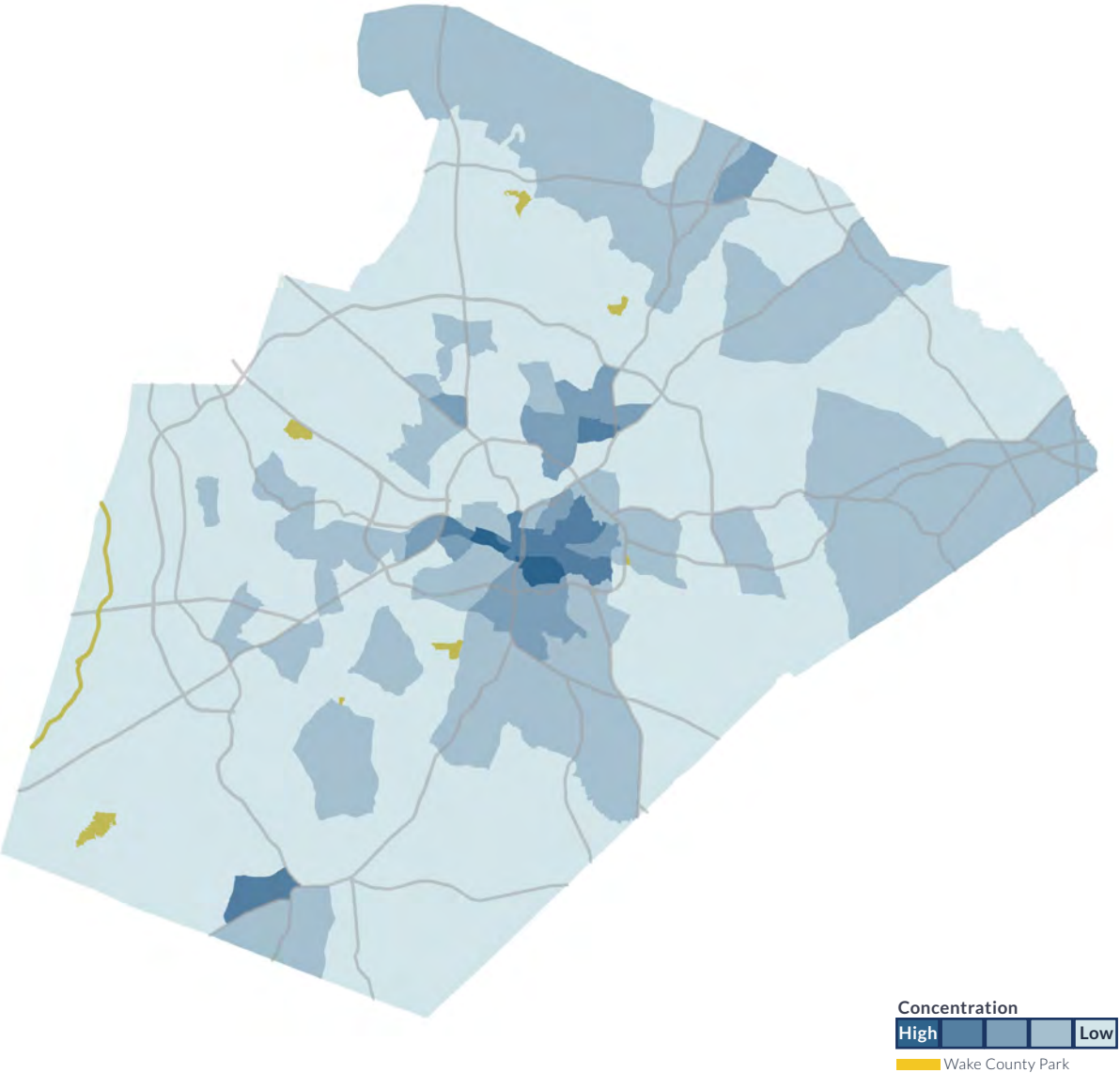
Unemployment

This map indicates the percentage of Wake County residents that classify as being unemployed per the 2013 American Community Survey. The dataset is composed of Wake County residents that are 16 and older and are considered unemployed due to work status, layoff, job search, and availability for work factors determined by the U.S. Census. The analysis reveals that the concentration of unemployment is relatively distributed throughout the county. The highest concentration of unemployment status (20 to 28 percent) is located directly southeast of downtown Raleigh. All Wake County parks and greenway facilities are located in low to moderate locations of unemployment (0 to 13 percent).



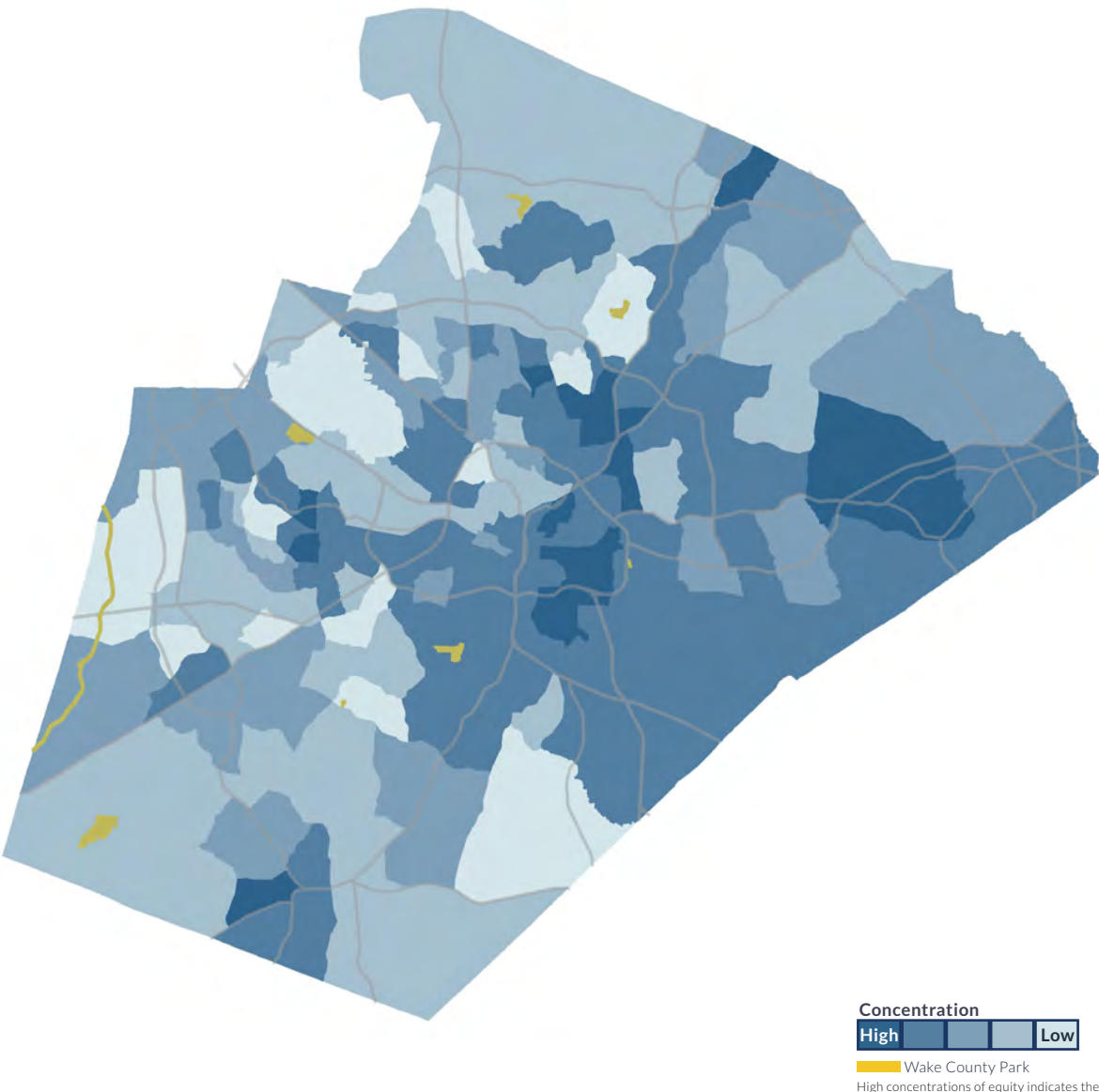
Vehicular Access

The following map shows the percentage of households without access to a private motor vehicle. On average, 5.2 percent of Wake County households do not have access to a car. The highest concentrations of these households (31 to 47 percent) are located to the south and west of downtown Raleigh, with zero vehicle access dissipating as you move away from downtown Raleigh. All Wake County parks and greenway facilities are located in areas with low to low-moderate concentrations (0 to 3 and 3 to 9 percent) of households that do not have access to a private vehicle.



Composite Equity Analysis

The Composite Equity Analysis map shows the aggregate equity score based on the Special Needs, Diversity, Language, Age Distribution, Poverty, Unemployment, and Vehicular Access factors. The analysis effectively shows the “least equitable” locations of Wake County determined by the previous eight analyses. As it relates to Wake County parks and greenways, only Yates Mill Park and Historic Oakview are located in areas with moderately-high and high composite equity scores (4 and 5). North Wake Landfill Park, Blue Jay Point, Harris Lake County Park, Lake Crabtree County Park, Crowder District Park, and the American Tobacco Trail are located in areas with a composite equity score of moderate or lower (1, 2, and 3). This is due to a majority of the census tracts with a high composite equity score being located in Raleigh and in the east portion of Wake County where there are few County facilities.



Demand for Parks and Recreation

LIVE, WORK, PLAY PROCESS

The consultant team conducted a Live, Work, Play Analysis for the Wake County, NC Park Facilities Master Plan. The Live, Work, Play model identifies expected demand for parks, greenways, and programs by overlaying the locations where people live, work, play, go to school, and ride transit into a composite sketch of regional demand. The results can be used to help identify areas in need of improvement and where there is high demand for parks and recreation facilities.

This section summarizes the method and results of the Live, Work, Play Analysis for the project study area. The models were tailored to Wake County using the available data from the Wake County GIS website and from the U.S. Census.

DATA SOURCES

The following data inputs were incorporated into the Live, Work, Play model. Table 1 displays each variable, its source, and notes on limitations of the available data and assumptions that were made.

Table 1. Data Inputs

Model Input	Source	Notes
Total Population	2010 U.S. Census	Summarized by census block
Total Employment	2010 U.S. Census	Summarized by census block
School Location	Wake County	Includes elementary, middle, and high schools
Parks & Greenway Locations	Wake County	
Commercial Destinations	2010 U.S. Census	Commercial destinations are approximated by service sector jobs (Retail trade; arts, entertainment, recreation; accommodation and food services; other services)
Transit Routes	Triangle Transit System, Capital Area Transit, C-Tran, and Wolfline Transit System	

METHODOLOGY

The Live, Work, Play Analysis is an objective, data-driven process to identify the demand for parks, greenways, and programs. The demand potential was measured based on the proximity and density of trip generators (such as homes and workplaces) and trip attractors (such as shopping centers, parks, and greenways) to establish potential for walking and bicycling trips. The resulting models represent “heat maps” that displays hot spots as a variable of hierarchy based on the Live, Work, Play Learn, and Transit factors and then as a heat map showing a composite of all the factors.

Approach

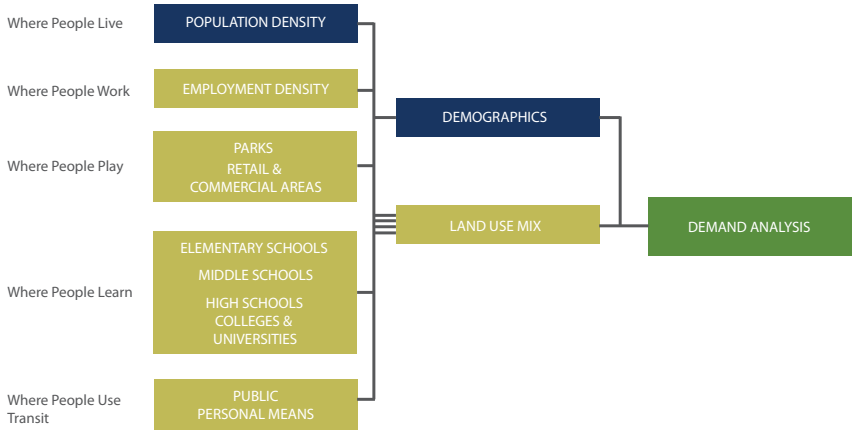
The demand model identifies expected pedestrian and bicycle activity by overlaying the locations where people live, work, play, go to school, and use transit into a composite sketch of regional demand.

Scale of Analysis

The demand model relies on spatial consistency in order to generate logical distance and density patterns. It is for this reason that all scores are aggregated to a central location at the census block level and then the census block corner. Census blocks closely represent the street network and therefore Census block corners closely represent street corners, where foot and bicycle traffic is prevalent. This method is based on the Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity report (Mineta Transportation Institute, May 2012). The report discusses the benefits of using a smaller geographic setting for pedestrian and bicycle demand analyses rather than using more traditional traffic model features such as census block groups, census tracts, or traffic analysis zones. Due to the low speed of pedestrian movement, a much smaller geographic unit of analysis is needed.

Scoring Method

The demand model’s scoring method is a function of density and proximity. Scores are a result of two complementing forces: distance decay – the effect of distance on spatial interactions yields lower scores for features farther away from other features; and spatial density – the effect of closely clustered features yields higher scores. Scores will increase in high feature density areas and if those features are close together. Scores will decrease in low feature density areas and if features are further apart.



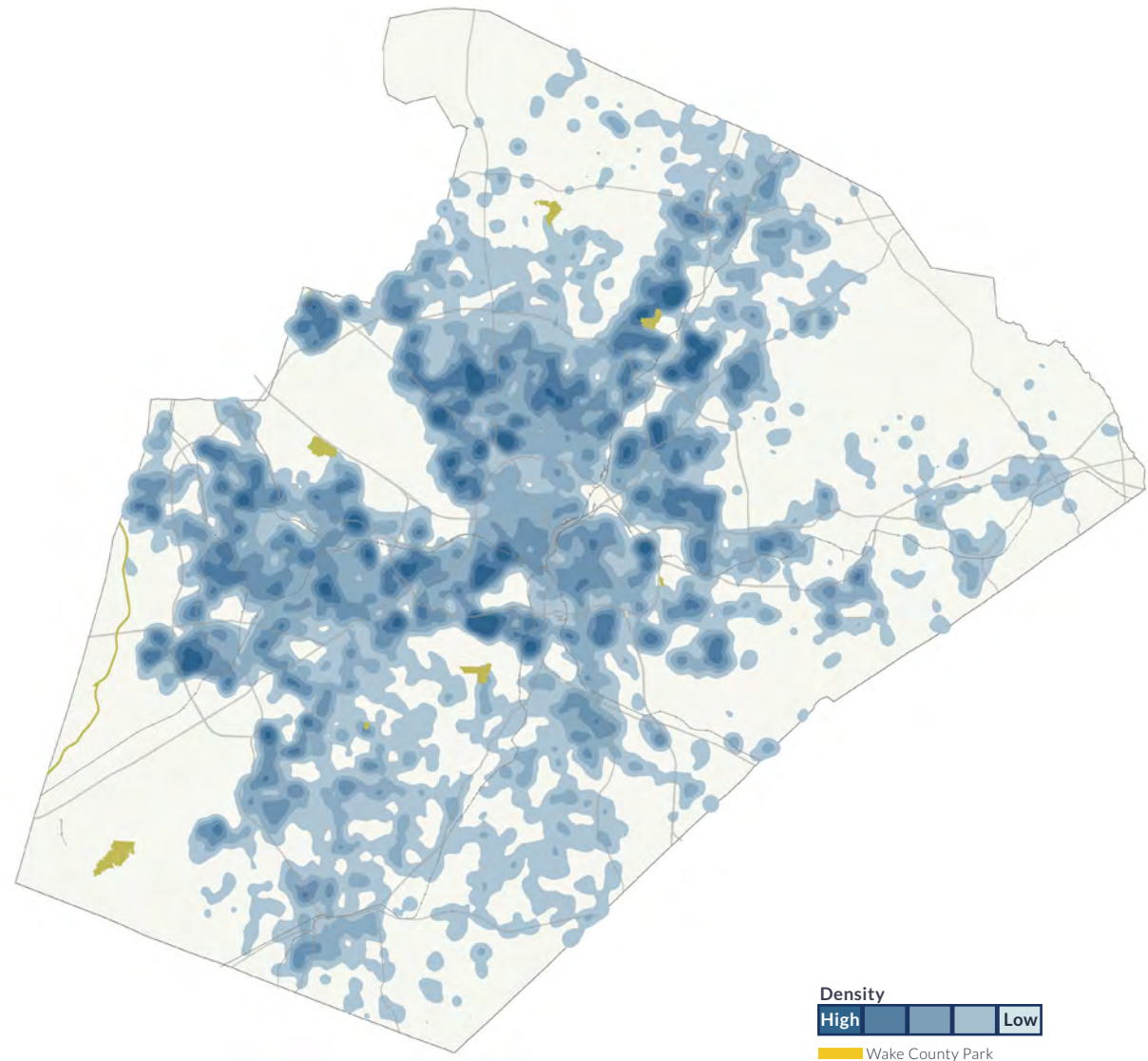
LIVE, WORK, PLAY ANALYSIS RESULTS

Demand Model

The results of the demand analysis are presented in the following map series. As for all maps, **the areas shaded more deeply in blue represent higher demand areas relative to other colors on the map.**

Where People Live

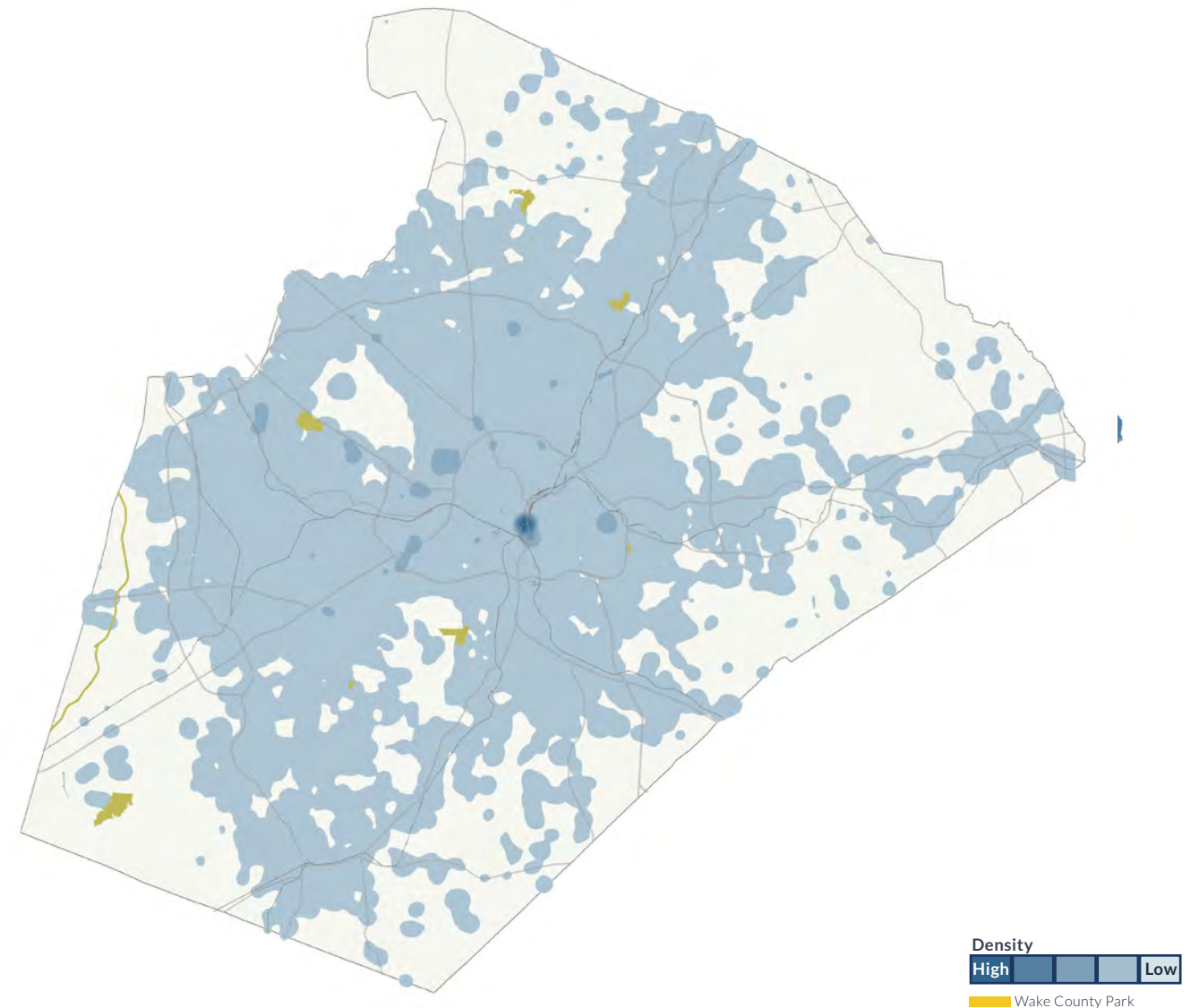
This category includes 2010 census block level population density. These locations represent potential trip origin locations. More trips can be made in areas with higher population density if conditions are right. A majority of the population density is located within municipality boundaries, with the highest density located in Raleigh and Cary. North Wake Landfill District Park, Lake Crabtree County Park, and Historic Oakview are located within close proximity to a high density of Wake County residents.



Where People Work

This category represents trip ends for people working throughout Wake County, regardless of residency. Its basis is 2010 total employment by census block. Depending on the type of job, employment can act as a trip attractor (i.e., retail stores or cafes) or trip generator (i.e., office parks and office buildings) or both. Specific employment types, such as retail, are therefore also used in the where people play category.

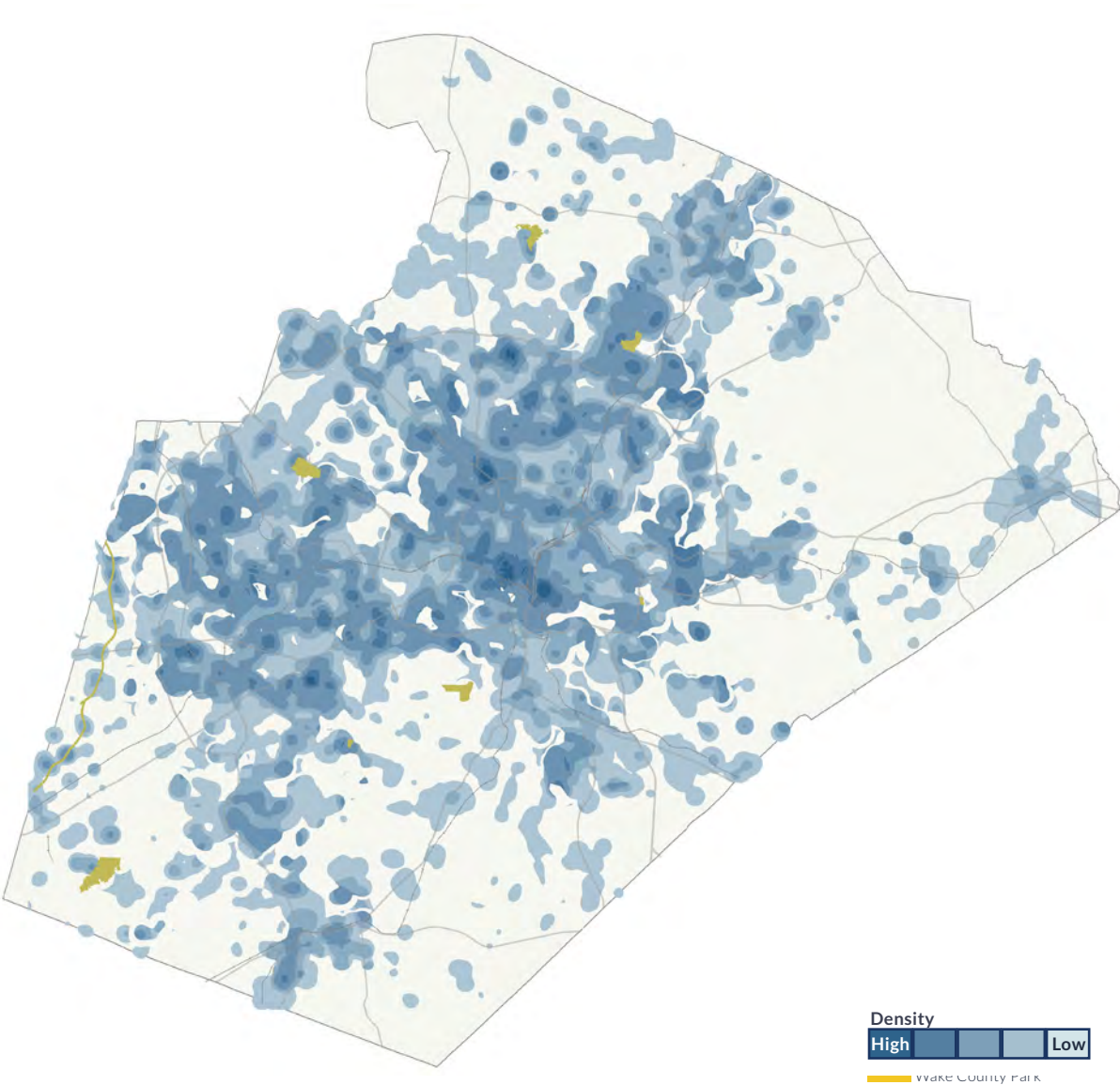
The analysis reveals high employment density in downtown Raleigh and a relative even distribution of employment throughout the rest of Wake County. Due to the relatively even distribution, most of the Wake County parks are located near a moderate amount of work locations.



Where People Play

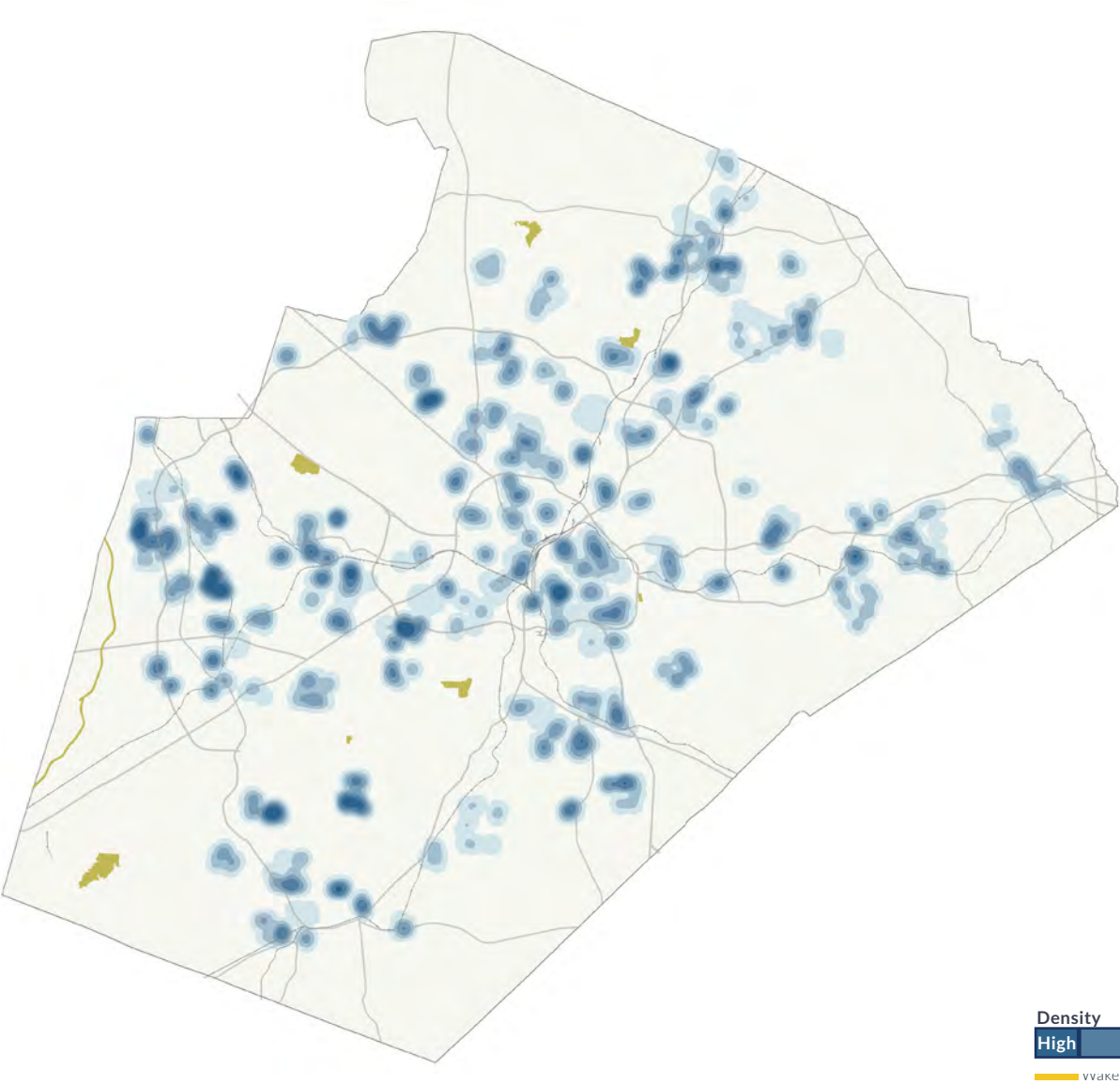
This category is a combination of varied land use types and destinations. Retail destinations, parks, and greenways were selected because they are land use types where people most often “play.” In addition to where residents often “play,” this layer is also a good predictor of where tourist will be attracted.

The combination of retail with parks and greenways reveals that North Wake Landfill District Park, Yates Mill Park, Historic Oakview, Lake Crabtree County Park, and Crowder District Park are located in areas that are complemented by retail attractors and thus have a stronger Play density. Conversely, Harris Lake County Park, Blue Jay Point, and sections of the American Tobacco Trail are more isolated from retail. It can be suggested that people will be attracted to these locations strictly for park and greenway use.



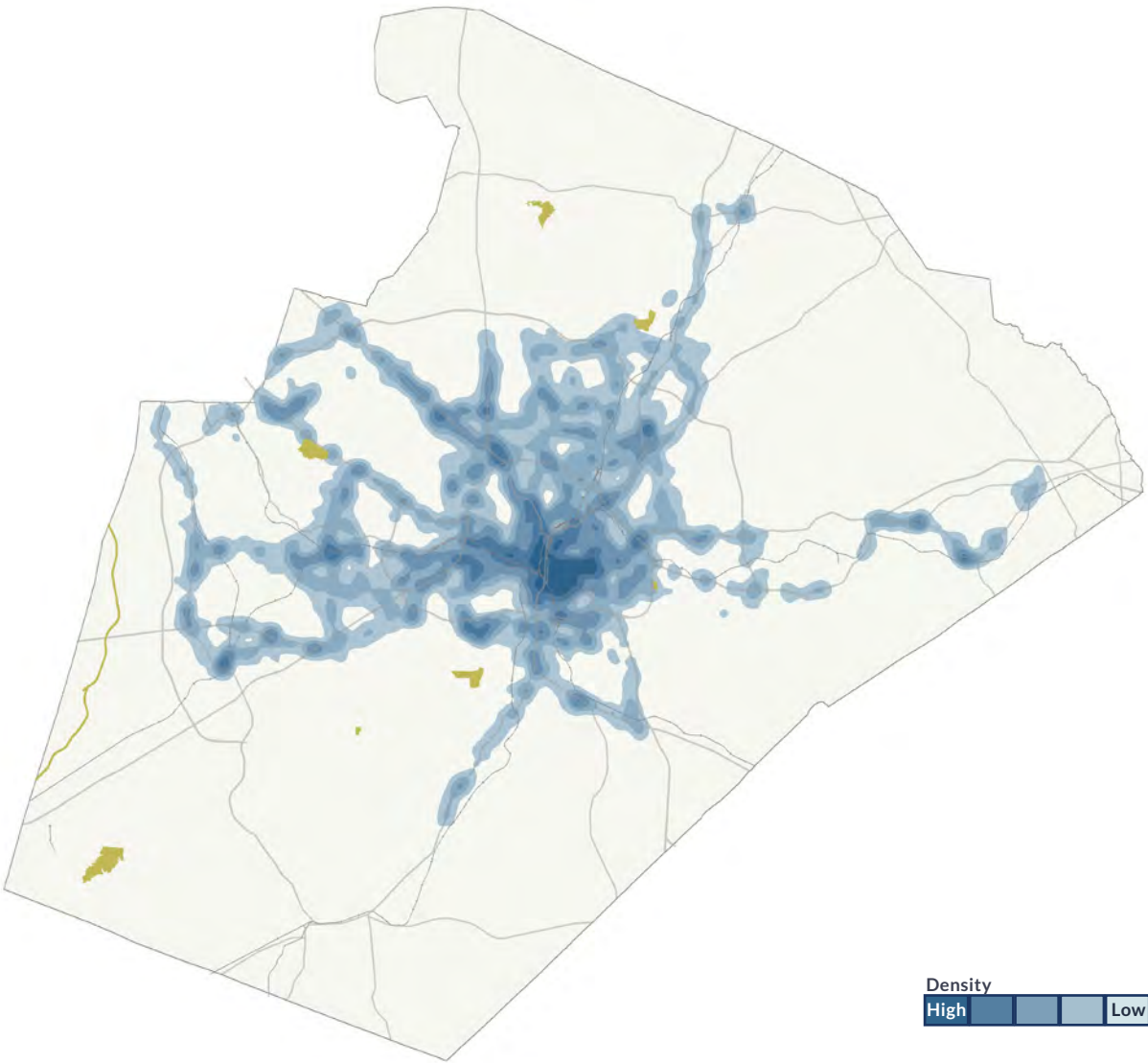
Where People Learn

This category shows the density of educational facilities, including elementary, middle, and high schools. As with most K-12 schools, they are scattered throughout the county and generally reflect population density. A majority of the schools are located within municipality boundaries, and with the exception of North Wake Landfill District Park, are all isolated from county parks and greenways.



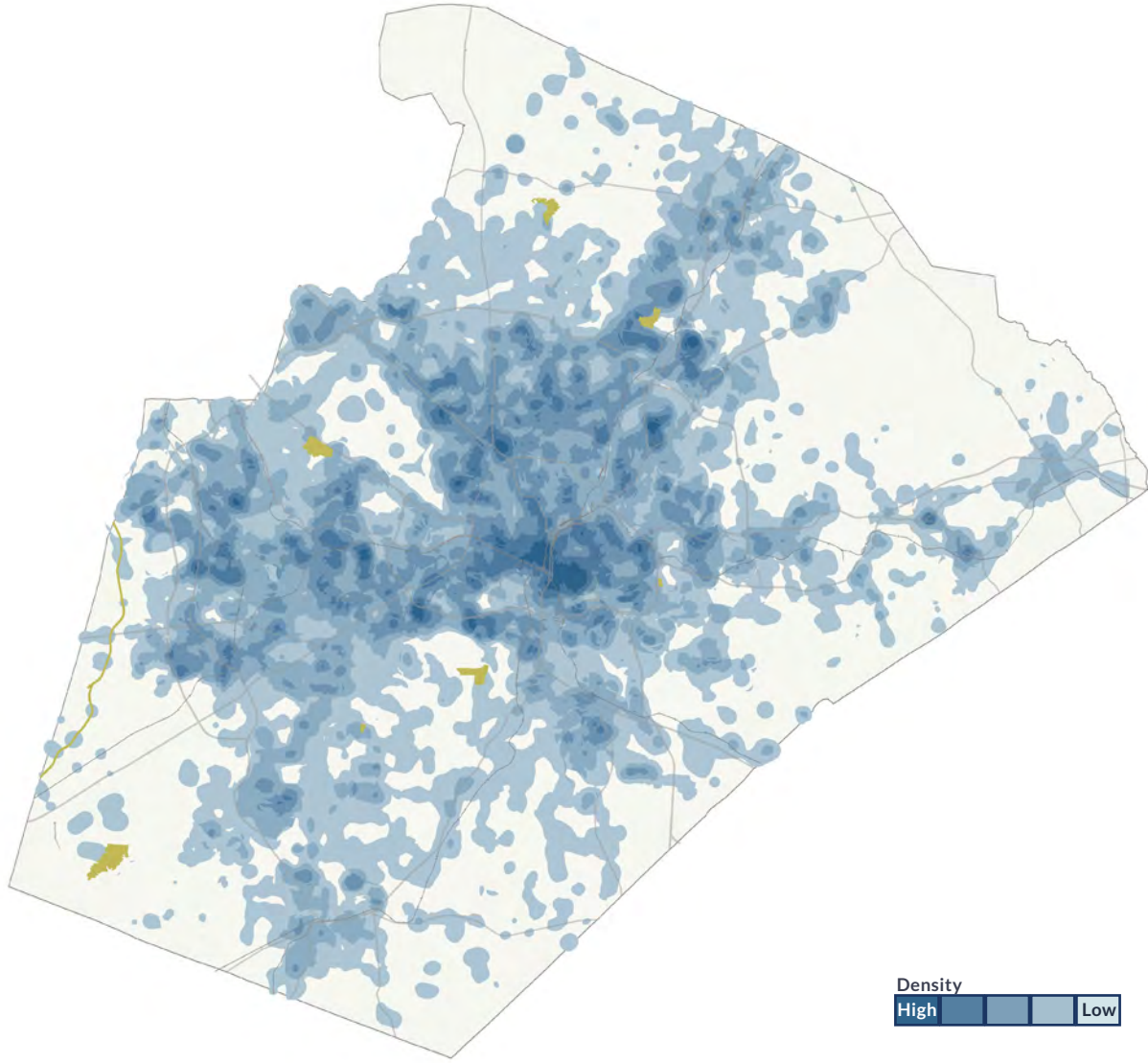
Where People Ride Transit

The Transit category displays the route density of Go Raleigh, C-Tran, Wolfline Transit, and Go Triangle that offer service in Wake County. The analysis reveals that North Wake Landfill District Park, Historic Oakview, and Lake Crabtree County Park are the only county parks that have direct or nearby transit routes. Yates Mill Park, Blue Jay Point, Harris Lake County Park, Crowder District Park, and the American Tobacco Trail have zero access to public transportation. A preliminary recommendation may be to extend transit service to the county parks and greenways that also have a high population density nearby.



Composite Demand

The map below displays the composite demand for the Live, Work, Play, Learn, and Transit factors, revealing the composite demand for parks, greenways, and programs in Wake County. Overall, the Composite Map displays demand throughout the urbanized areas of the county with high demand in large portions of Raleigh, Cary, Apex, and Wake Forest.



2014 Citizen Survey

Public involvement is imperative in parks and recreation planning as it directly asks users for their desires, opinions, and ideas. To include this key element to the plan, the results of the citizen survey from the recent Wake County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Division Community Interest and Opinion Survey was reviewed. A citizen survey was conducted for this study to assess thoughts on current facilities and what improvements could be made. In total, the survey collected responses from 852 residents through telephone and online mediums. Demographically, the cross-section of those surveyed is mostly consistent with the composition of the county. Trails and greenways ranked high in the interest of the residents in terms of things they would like to see more of or added. This was not only within the county parks themselves but also greenways and trails as a way to get to the parks.

Modeling And Survey Synthesis

After analyzing the Equity Model, Demand Model, and Citizen Survey, it was found that some parks within the Wake County system have different target audiences based on the facility, programming, or adjacent populations, which are listed below.

Blue Jay Point County Park: Youth

North Wake Landfill County Park: Youth; Over 65

Lake Crabtree County Park: Groups of racial or ethnic diversity; Groups that do not speak English as a first language

Historic Oak View County Park: Special Needs Populations (hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self care, or independent living disabilities); Groups of racial or ethnic diversity; Youth

Historic Yates Mill County Park: Groups of racial or ethnic diversity; Youth

Crowder District Park: Youth

American Tobacco Trail: Trail, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Advocacy Groups; Equestrian Groups/Users; Youth

Harris Lake County Park: Youth

Municipal Park Director Interviews

The Parks and Recreation Directors from Apex, Holly Springs, Raleigh, and Cary were contacted for an interview or involved on the Steering Committee for the Wake County Park Facilities Master Plan Update. Interviews were intended to elicit insights from the department heads regarding their ideas and suggestions on how Wake County can better serve their communities. Conversation topics ranged from funding opportunities to balancing open space and athletic facility needs. Feedback about particular parks are included in the park profile sheets.

Park Profiles

OVERVIEW

In order to understand the existing conditions present at each park facility, a thorough site inventory and field evaluation was conducted. In addition to assessing park and greenway facilities, existing marketing and educational literature was also reviewed to determine what information is publicly available to park users via printed brochures, personal visits (kiosks, signage, etc.), interactive opportunities, or online media. Assessing what information is available and how the public perceives and experiences each park facility is as important as the existing facilities and services present at each site. Overall, the inventory further confirmed that each site is unique and serves the County mission in specialized ways. However, several common trends were discovered throughout:

- A streamlined trail wayfinding system that addresses routes by color and skill level would improve navigation and overall experience.
- Some of the parks are difficult to locate due to a lack of signage or entrance visibility. A better use of system wide park entrance signage with more attention grabbing details would improve the visibility and branding of park entrances.
- Visitors have limited access to staff and park offices due to the locations of these buildings in relation to high use areas.
- Updated information on park facilities and maps are needed at several park sites. There also needs to be a greater level of continuity between brochures, website, and maps.

- Many parks are “drive to” only due to their lack of public transit and trail accessibility options. Car-only accessibility limits the amount of facilities offered to those that either don’t have access or prefer not to use a vehicle.
- Lack of connectivity to other county and local parks.
- Programs, facilities, and events would benefit from a dedicated marketing plan.
- Many features and facilities lack ADA accessibility. An internal ADA accessibility audit and the goal of more universal design would improve accessibility.





American Tobacco Trail

No current mission statement for this park.

Addresses: Wimberly Parking Area: 1017 Wimberly Rd, Apex, NC 27502			1309 New Hill-Olive Chapel Rd Apex, NC 27502	1305 White Oak Church Rd Apex, NC 27523
Unique Feature: Regional Connectivity		Size: 6.5 Miles	Hours: 8am to 1 hour before sunset	

ACCESS

Currently, the American Tobacco Trail is not accessible by public transit. Arriving by vehicle to a trailhead and connecting with the trail via a spur or roadway on foot or bicycle are the means by which most users access the trail. There are currently three separate public access points with available parking lots at the New Hill Trailhead, Wimberly Trailhead, and the White Oak Trailhead. Horse trailer parking is available as well at the New Hill-Olive Chapel Rd and White Oak Church Rd parking areas. Links and signed routes to public transit should be explored.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

There are several opportunities for the trail to connect to nearby neighborhoods, other trails, local parks, and services. Trail spurs, on-road facilities, and routing through neighborhoods can provide connections to other recreation facilities, food, water, and resting places. Exploring these connections is critical as there is no drinking water available along the trail. Further, a wayfinding system within the trail system and outside the trail system will improve orientation, awareness, and safety.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

Currently there are lease agreements with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Town of Cary. Sub leases exist with the State of North Carolina and Wake County for the trailheads within Jordan Lake gamelands (New Hill and Wimberly).



Wayfinding at road crossings can help trail users understand if they are near water sources and other services.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

Conveying information about a trail in print and online can be a challenge. Online interactive maps are increasing in popularity and help users with trip planning and gaining an understanding of amenities before they embark on their journey. Regulations and proper etiquette are strongly conveyed in terms of bicyclists, walkers, runners, and equestrians. However, the web, brochure, and trail could improve the historic and cultural importance of the trail. While the website gives a brief story of the American Tobacco Trail, there is a deeper lesson that could be expressed about the trail, its connection to Wake County, and its roll as a component of the East Coast Greenway.

Website

- Great information about trail use, etiquette, and safety.
- Clearly demonstrates need for water.
- Not many wayfinding icons.
- No map directly pictured on the site to help identify access points, parking etc.
- Good extent of equestrian information.

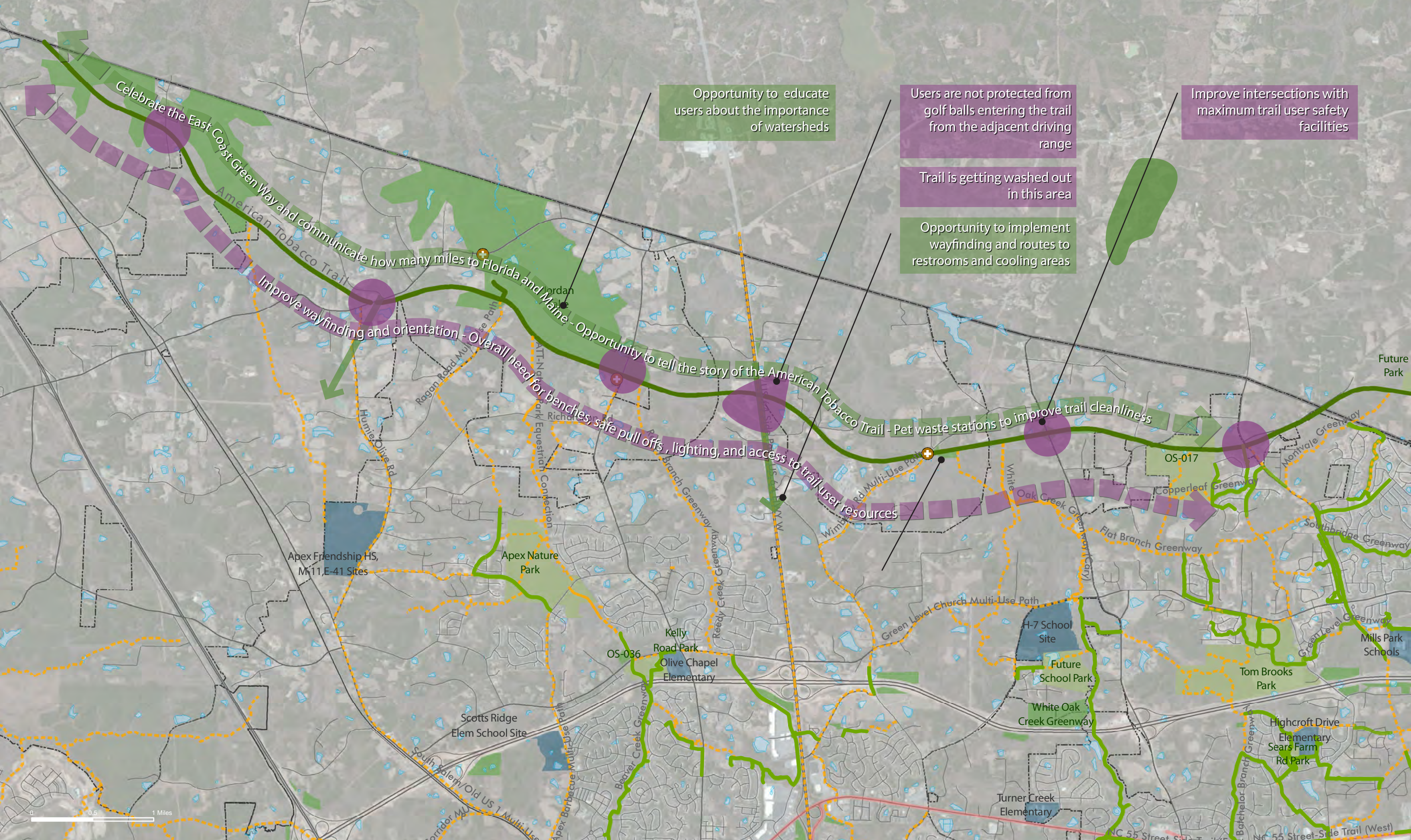
Brochure

- Rules and regulations clearly stated.
- Equestrian information is not as extensive as website.
- Better job of describing passing etiquette and trail user ethics.
- Maps could provide better contextual information and access points.
- Lack of educational program description and awareness.

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
6.5 Miles Built Trail	✓	✓
Biking	✓	✓
Equestrian	✓	✓
Picnic Area	✓	✓
Environmental Education	✓	✓
Cultural Exhibits	✓	
Educational Gardens	✓	



Story telling, access points, and nearby facilities can be conveyed on the existing kiosks.



American Tobacco Trail site analysis



American Tobacco Trail

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

The American Tobacco Trail has a number of strengths and provides a variety of benefits for Wake County. Core strengths include:

- The ATT serves as a regional connector and multi-use path which is almost entirely separated from vehicular traffic.
- The Trail has the opportunity to connect many communities within and outside of Wake County.
- There is potential for the Trail to serve as an opportunity to teach about the local environment, cultural, transportation, and scale.
- Ample shade along the trail helps keep users cool and rested.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

While there are great benefits to the American Tobacco Trail, there are also some challenges. With these challenges comes the opportunity to improve and transform them into strengths to further benefit the County. Currently several challenges include:

- No water, food, or support facilities for users along the trail.
- Limited pull offs for users to rest or repair outside of the travelway.



Simple, clear etiquette signage is well placed and essential for educating users. These signs should be placed along the entire alignment.

- Lack of interpretation along the trail to narrate and illustrate the history and story of the region, rail trails, local environment, and connectivity.
- Few regional trail connections to the ATT are constructed, forcing many people to drive to trailheads to gain access.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

After analysis of the trail and region there are many opportunities that were discovered that could enhance user experience and expand the benefits of the trail, including:

- Private nearby business “partners” could serve the trail by providing food, water, resting places, and repairs.
- Food and water could be brought to the trail through vendors, Saturday Farmers Markets, and carts.
- Create more pull offs and connections to local trails to make it more user friendly for varying skill levels.
- The Rail line that serves the American Tobacco Trail ends at the Shearon Harris Reactor. Continuing the Trail alignment to reach Harris Park should be explored.



The adjacent driving range can be a hazard for trail users.



Areas without steep drop-off are candidates for pull off areas and other trail amenities.



Transitions from the trail to trailhead areas are wide with adequate visibility for all users.



Additional locations for comfort station should be explored. The New Hill trailhead creates a precedent for developing other trailheads along the corridor.



Update and streamline signage for users to have continuity in message.



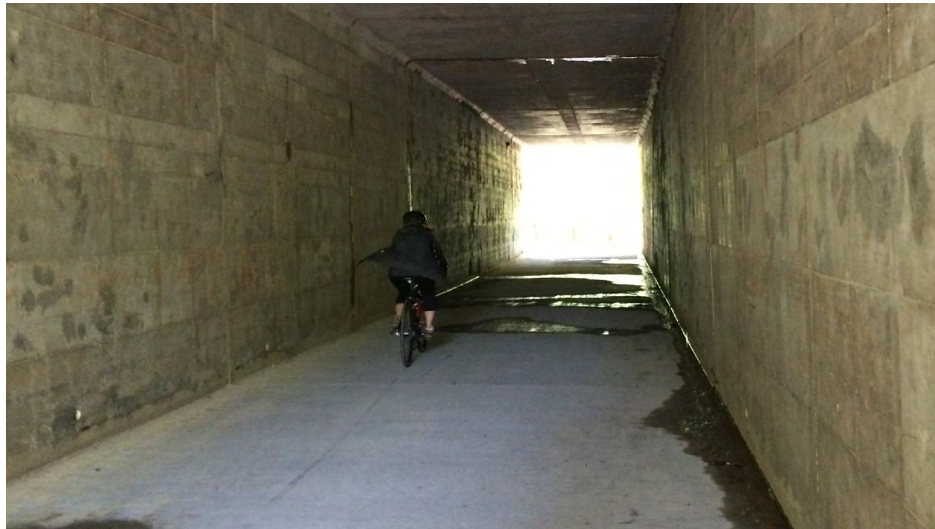
Incorporate more history and art along the trail.



Expand upon the signage for the ECG and celebrate the connection to Maine and Florida.



The story of the trail should be expanded beyond the existing signage.



Murals, art, and graphics can enhance the character of this space and provide an opportunity to tell the story of history and transportation.



Wonderful shade along the trail, however, limited areas for users to pull off for water breaks and rest.



Wayfinding signage with destinations and mileage will help trail users orient themselves within the community and find key resources.



Provide more information stations such as this one located at the White Oak Comfort Station.





Blue Jay Point County Park

The mission and focus of Blue Jay Point is to provide opportunities for Wake County's population to experience environmental education in a natural setting.

Address: 3200 Pleasant Union Church Road, Raleigh NC, 27614		
Unique Features: Adventure Recreation/Retreat Center	Size: 236 Acres	Hours: 8am-Sunset Exhibit Center 8am-5pm

ACCESS

Currently there is no access to Blue Jay Point County Park by public transit. This park is only reachable by vehicle or hiking along the Mountains-To-Sea Trail (MST). There is one point of access for cars into the park on Six Forks Road. Those hiking the Mountains-To-Sea Trail can access the park, however signage should be improved to indicate there is a park, and which amenities are available.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

The Lake Trail contains a section of the Mountains to Sea Trail - which connects across the State of North Carolina. This segment needs to be highlighted to bring more awareness to its purpose as a statewide trail. Blue Jay Point County Park has an expansive shoreline to Falls Lake. This could be an opportunity for blueway connectivity and waterfront park entrances. The termination of the existing lake trails could provide launch points, camping locations, and points of interest for canoeists, paddle boarders, and kayakers. Blueway access could also connect visitors to Falls Lake Boat Ramp and two nearby Fish and Wildlife Boat Ramp access locations along Six Forks Road.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

There is currently a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the NC Division of Parks and Recreation, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, and the Friends of the Mountains-To-Sea Trail. As part of this agreement it is understood the Lake Trail shall be promoted and identified as the MST along the Falls Lake shoreline. In addition, this agreement prohibits motorized, bike, and equestrian Traffic.

- The primary land lease agreement exists between the USACE and the State of NC for Blue Jay Point to serve as a recreational resource.
- A sub-lease exists between the State of North Carolina and Wake County to operate Blue Jay Point as a park; this lease runs until 2026 and outlines plans for active recreation park development.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS











This park website is a valuable resource to its visitors and provides information about many programs and facilities. In order to ensure visitors can plan their visit and fully utilize the park, informational resources need to clearly convey what is offered. For example, there is currently no reference to the Mountains-To-Sea Trail on any public information.



Website

- Generally outlines what is available in the narrative but does not discuss the outdoor classroom or t-ball field.
- Outlines natural history, park rules, regulations, and facility activities.
- Communicates more clearly than the brochure about additional information such as scouting opportunities and a calendar of events.

Brochure

- Outlines accessible facilities better than the information found on the website.
- Successfully discusses health and wellness and segments trails by distance, this is not done on the website description.
- Trail distances are found on the map, but walking times are not indicated.

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Outdoor Classroom		
 Hiking Trails	✓	✓
 Limited Paved Trails		✓
 Restrooms	✓	✓
 Picnic Area		
 Garden	✓	✓
 Open Play Area	✓	✓
 Natural Play Area	✓	✓
 Educational Center	✓	✓
 T-Ball	✓	✓

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Fishing along Shore Line	✓	
 Go Ape	✓	



Great opportunities and space for a Blueway trailhead.



Blue Jay Point County Park

site analysis

Two foot contours



Blue Jay Point County Park

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

Blue Jay Point County Park has a number of strengths and provides a variety of benefits for Wake County. Core strengths include:

- With leased land (Go Ape) this park has a great public and private partnership established. Three to eight percent of all private proceeds are returned back to Blue Jay Point Park Programs pending the success of Go Ape.
- The advertising from Go Ape draws people to the park who may not normally be users. It builds awareness of the park, healthy activities, and provides a multi generational experience.
- The playground is accessible with appropriate materials and entries to play areas.
- The park has multiple locations where visitors can access the water, but no formal overlook or fishing access for users to enjoy.
- The education center has a map on the building that clearly articulates what is there and offered to visitors. This information should be matched in the printed maps.
- The park has a great mix of shade, sun, and active and passive areas for users.
- There are great opportunities for hiking.
- There is nature-based education for all ages including beginner, intermediate, and more skilled visitors.
- The park successfully showcases several educational features such as the map overlay in the parking lot, bird boxes, and labeled plant species; these feature should be expanded.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

While there are great benefits to Blue Jay Point County Park, there are also some challenges. With these challenges comes the opportunity to improve and build new strengths. Currently several challenges include:

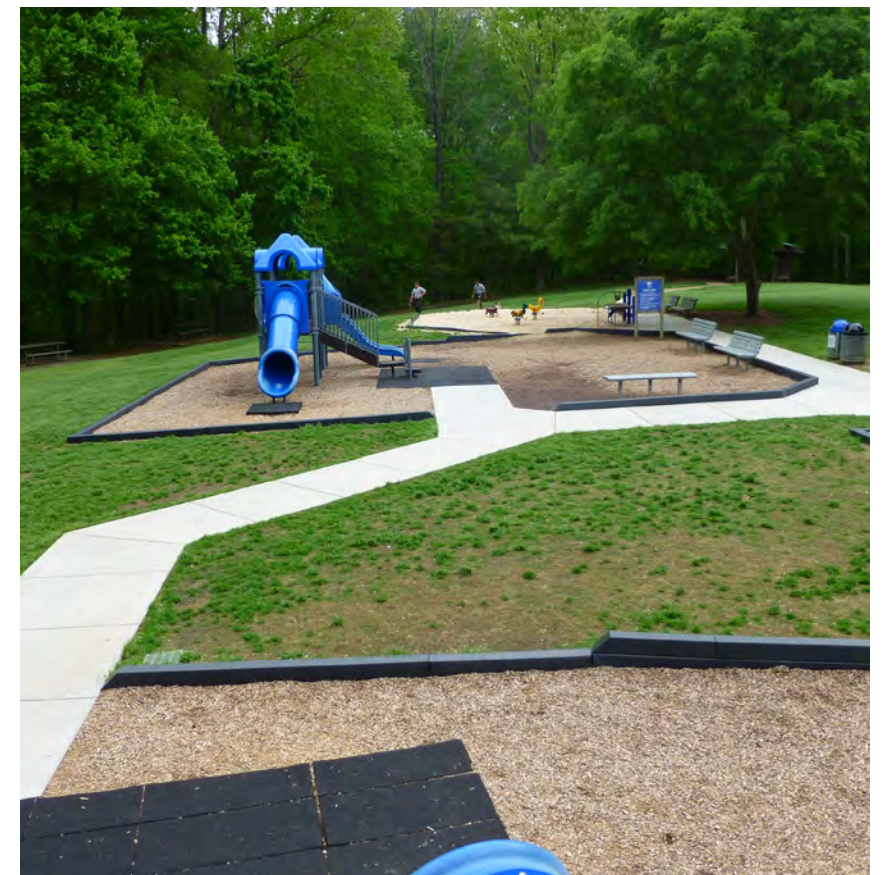
- Pedestrian wayfinding is needed to indicate how to circulate throughout the park on foot.
- Currently, there is no connection from the MST across the bridge immediately north of the park entrance. By connecting this MST section, users can enjoy longer hiking opportunities and be connected to support facilities at the Falls Lake Boat Ramp.
- To a new visitor, the park site is difficult to find due to limited wayfinding and entry signage from the primary roadway system. The Park entrance sign is set far into the access road and should be examined for placement and letter height.
- Some of the slopes and terrain on hiking trails may be too difficult for a beginner user. Signage should include distance, skill level, and approximate trip timing.
- There is currently no formal location or support facilities for kayak or canoe access to Falls Lake.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

After analysis of the park and region many opportunities were revealed that have the potential to increase usership and improve overall experience:

- The garden could serve as an accessible outdoor classroom since it is already shaded, is connected by an accessible path, and contains a large lawn area.
- There could be an opportunity to provide water access through public/private partnerships for kayak, canoe, and paddle board rentals. This resource would also complement the activities at the retreat.
- The west side of the park (near the maintenance area) is not in high use. Additional activities and other uses for this space could be implemented.
- Although fishing is allowed along the shoreline there are no piers or docks.
- Wayfinding and kiosk maps can expand access and awareness of the hiking trail system throughout the park.

- Potential new facilities include a dog park. These facilities types should include drinking water, shade, and areas for small and large dogs.
- There is an opportunity to create a paved beginner loop by linking the already built elements; this would not only improve access but also create a “hub” for the unpaved trail network.



Proper ADA materials, access points, and design are a strength of the playground at Blue Jay Point Park and should become a precedent for other County Parks.



Bicycle parking and signage should be updated to the latest standards established by the League of American Bicyclists.



The park map is one of the best resources available that displays which activities are available and how users circulate throughout the park.



Expand on layers of interpretation that already exist within the park. Let users know the opportunity for discovery during their visit.



Begin to identify areas marked as "Amphitheaters" as outdoor classrooms.



There is an opportunity to use the garden lawn as an accessible outdoor space.



Opportunity to provide more formal shoreline access for fishing, kayaking, and canoeing to minimize shoreline erosion.



Marketing and outreach for GO APE will help promote Blue Jay, and therefore Blue Jay can serve as a gateway for other parks.



Natural Play is a growing trend and the facility at Blue Jay should be widely marketed.



Improve trail wayfinding into a streamlined County Wide standard that depicts length, skill level, and travel time.





Crowder District Park

No current mission statement for this park.

Address: 4709 Ten Ten Road Apex NC, 27539		
Unique Features: Gardens/Environmental Programs	Size: 33 Acres	Hours: 8am - sunset 7 days a week

ACCESS

There is not currently access to Crowder District Park by public transit. This park is a traditional “drive to” park and is accessed from Ten Ten Road, which serves as the primary entrance for the park. The vehicular circulation reaches to several areas in the park that provide parking close to points of interest such as the shelters, play fields, and pond. There are several opportunities to connect the park via sidewalk, trail, or neighborhood path which would increase pedestrian and overall user access. Additionally, there may be opportunity to improve nearby controlled intersections with pedestrian improvements. Plenty of space is available in the park near current parking areas to add bus stops, etc. to make Crowder District Park more public transit friendly.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

The Park could connect to several nearby neighborhoods, trails, and the nearby YMCA, via sidewalk and crosswalk improvements. Points where existing sidewalks could connect include most corners of the park. These would help connect Crowder District Park to Dutchman’s Branch and the future Cary Park.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

This is a Wake County owned facility.



Playground material and equipment needs to be upgraded.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

Public knowledge of Crowder District Park on both the website and brochure generally consistent. While the physical information and awareness is prominent, graphic information (such as the maps) could be made more detailed and useful.

Website <ul style="list-style-type: none">Clearly outlines features and opportunities within the park.Great information regarding public event programing.Would benefit from a map.	Brochure <ul style="list-style-type: none">Excellent narrative detailing park features.The map lacks accurate trail details and could be made more useful to visitors.
--	--

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
Pond		✓
Trails	✓	✓
Fishing		
Shelters	✓	✓
Observation Deck of Pond		✓
Educational Gardens	✓	✓
Open Play Area	✓	✓
Sand Volleyball	✓	✓
Playground	✓	✓
Restrooms		✓
Little Free Library		

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
Park Office		✓
Environmental Education	✓	✓



One of the most beloved parks in the system, Crowder feels like “everyone’s back yard.”



Crowder District Park

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

Adjacency to residential areas, daily use facilities, and ample public event programming space are a just a few key features and benefits of Crowder District Park. Core strengths include:

- Crowder District Park is completely County owned.
- Special Events such as Frog Fest in spring and the Canine event in fall bring new people and a variety of users to the park.
- Environmental education and camps offered increases use and visitorship.
- The Park gives adjacent residential developments open green space to experience nature, and learn about the environment.
- This is an example of a site that addresses the national (NRPA) pillars of conservation, social equity, and health and wellness.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

While there are great benefits to Crowder District Park, there are also some challenges. Currently challenges include:

- The site is already fairly developed and heavily used. Additional features should be carefully placed to avoid habitat and environmental impacts. (Is expansion a possibility?)
- Due to heavy use, the park, trails, and equipment are beginning to show signs of wear and tear.
- There is a high amount of impervious coverage which increase stormwater runoff and sediment build up.
- You cannot easily walk or bike to the site even though it is surrounded by residential development.

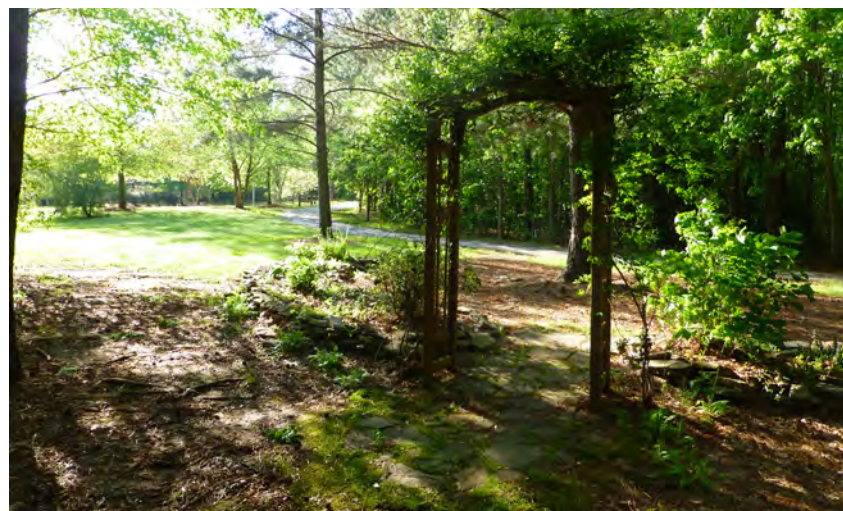
POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Due to its high use and great location there are many opportunities for this park to continue to be stimulating and inviting for the community. These opportunities include:

- More shelters and indoor spaces could be added to accommodate the growth of camps and programs.
- Opportunities to acquire adjacent land would allow for future park expansion.
- Visitors have stated a need for upgraded play equipment.
- Opportunities should be evaluated to connect to adjacent community greenway systems.
- A connection could be made from this park to the YMCA by constructing sidewalks along Ten Ten Road and connection through neighborhoods.



Mile markers could be improved to be more visible to trail users.



Small gardens throughout the park provide an intimate, personal experience.



The Little Free Library supports social equity and education in the park.



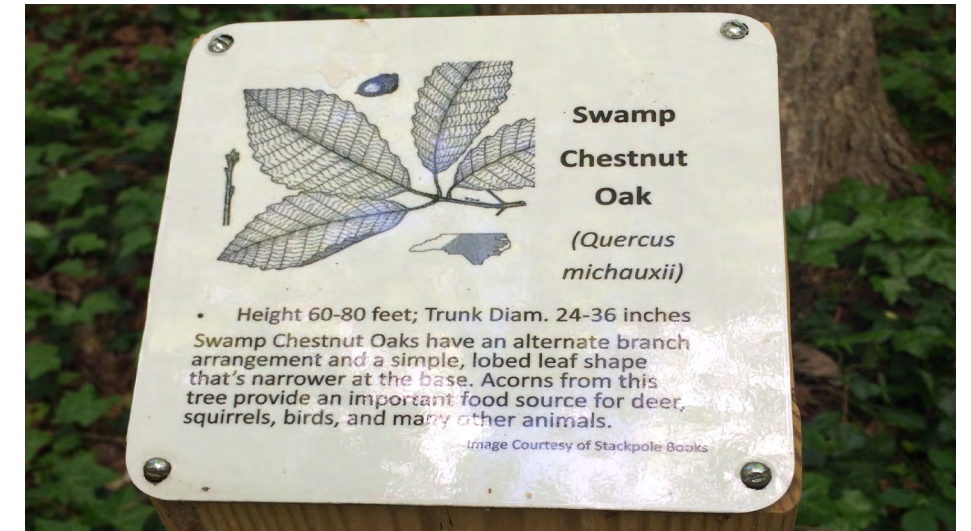
There is good outdoor classroom space - but more indoor space is needed.



Personalized park features create a neighborhood feel.



Several areas are present throughout the site for camps and outdoor classrooms, but no indoor space is available.



Expand on interpretive elements.



Great example of shoreline access for environmental education.



Expand on interpretive elements.



Several accessible shelters exist.



Great balance of shade, open space, and programmed and unprogrammed space in this park.



Look for community trail connections to make this a walk to and bike to park site, wear paths already exist.



This is a heavily used park, is there nearby adjacent land to expand?





Harris Lake County Park

No current mission statement for this park.

Address: 2112 County Park Drive, New Hill NC, 27562		
Unique Features: Hiking	Size: 680 Acres	Hours: 8am -sunset 7 days a week

ACCESS

There is not currently access to Harris Lake County Park by public transit. This park is only reachable by personal vehicles and serves primarily as a “drive to” park. The park is currently accessed from New Hill Holleman Road. The only other accessible points from outside the park are from the water off Harris Lake. There is potential to expand the trails and multiuse connections to the park to make it more user friendly. Added docks for boats can also create improved access.

The vehicular access point currently provides several parking areas throughout the site to reach the many park features available. There is space is available to provide public transit and bus stops.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

This site could greatly benefit from regional trail and greenway connectivity. There may opportunities for this to occur at the north end of Harris Lake County Park.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

The park land was leased from CP&L (now Duke Energy) to Wake County for use as a park beginning in 1986 for a period of 25 years and has subsequently been amended to 40 years (2026). Restriction include any septic and/or drain fields must be set above Elevation 243. Duke Energy may possibly expand their facilities in the future which would raise the elevation of the water level in Harris Lake and impact about 50 percent of the park site. Careful consideration should be give to the development below the anticipated flood line.



Thoughtfully designed railings allow users to sit on benches or in wheelchairs and enjoy the views.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS












The information accessible to the public for Harris Lake County Park is extensive and easy to get. The brochure clearly displays the offerings of the park. However, the map does not accurately portray trail alignments and can be confusing if using this as a tool to navigate in the park. Both the website and the brochure communicate the variety of trails available.






Website

- The website provides a good general description.
- If perception of Duke Energy is a challenge, this is a great place to learn about power (why it is necessary, types of energy, consumption patterns).

Brochure

- Use of color to indicate beginner, intermediate, and advanced trails are not consistent with other park maps.
- Map reflects facilities that are present, but may not be accurately placed on the map.

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Picnic Areas	✓	✓
 Playground	✓	✓
 Amphitheater		✓
 Picnic Shelters	✓	✓
 Restrooms		✓
 Educational Garden	✓	✓
 Hiking Trails (Natural Surface)	✓	✓
 Mountain Bike Trails	✓	✓
 Mountain Bike Skills Area		✓
 Open Play Field	✓	✓
 Boat Launch (Car Top)		✓

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Fishing Pier	✓	✓
 Park Office		✓
 Camping		✓
 Disc Golf	✓	✓
 Managed Forest Area (Long Leaf Pine)		✓



Family events are an excellent method for attracting new users to the park and becoming repeat visitors.



Harris Lake County Park

site analysis



Harris Lake County Park

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

Harris Lake County Park has many strengths - one being that it provides a resource to spend the entire day outside and learn about and experience nature. It serves as a host to area special events which bring people to the park who may not otherwise visit. Core strengths include:

- This park offers a cell phone tour, which can offer educational access to people who enjoy technology. This can reduce staff needs - but can also be seen as counterproductive to some users goals of being “disconnected” in the wilderness.
- Partnerships with outside organizations strengthen the quality of specialized facilities (ex. Triangle Off Road Cyclists and the Raleigh Area Disc League).
- Water access and view are abundant.
- Partnerships for events bring in people to the park that might not otherwise visit: triathlons, cross-country meets, mountain bike races, adventure races, Longleaf Festival, Haunting at Harris, 5k and 6k races, swim events, Raven Rock Road Bike Ride, and others.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

While there are great benefits to Harris Lake County Park, there are also some challenges. Currently several challenges include:

- The park map does not accurately reflect trail alignments. An example is the Peninsula Trail. The Womble House, primitive camping, etc. do not appear on site where they were indicated on the map. This can confuse trail users and cause anxiety - especially for visitors who are not well acclimated with navigating through woods. An updated trail map with improved way finding would improve site access and encourage repeat use.
- While the cell phone tour may be great for some users, not everyone wants to be “connected” while outdoors and some educational and interpretive signage would aid in expanding the experience of day users who do not wish to hike with a cell phone.

- There are many small ponds along the trails that should be named and properly located on maps to aid in navigation.
- The trail system needs to have improved identification, wayfinding, and naming for use and safety. There are a few kiosks that identify routes and safety, but they are not situated at all access points nor are they represented on the brochure.
- This site is such a valuable resource, but awareness has been identified as a challenge. Marketing to nearby neighborhoods and communities could increase park use.
- There are misconceptions about Duke Energy, this needs to be acknowledged and addressed; there is an opportunity to celebrate energy and educated the community about power and consumption.
- The park has been in use since 1999 and some of the facilities need to be upgraded.
- There is frequent off leash dog use on trails; there is an opportunity to address this by providing a facility or place where dogs are permitted to be off leash.
- A maintenance schedule should be created to monitor wear on trails from mountain bike use.
- The park office is removed from the main use areas of the park and is not currently serving as a visitor resource. This could be corrected with wayfinding signage and an arrival sequence for new visitors.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The Park office could be expanded to serve as a Nature center/Visitor/Environmental Education Center with classrooms; the park office does not experience much visitor interaction.
- The site is very large and could serve as a place for family camping/individual camping/special event camping.
- Because it is situated on Harris Lake, there is an opportunity to provide boat rentals and additional dock space.

- Larger shelters would be an appropriate addition to the park to accommodate some of the larger events.
- Providing Disc rental for the Disc Golf Course would encourage beginner users. This could be a function of the improved Visitor Center.



Kiosks should include information about trail safety including how long it takes to traverse the entire Peninsula Trail, the importance of trail navigation, and a suggestion to bring water.



Banners are a great method for advertising events to park users.



Celebrate and market natural play areas through outward awareness and by drawing visitors from the traditional playground to the natural play area.



Audio tours provide great self-guided activities, however, field interpretation should also be present for those who want to be 'disconnected.'



Several ponds are located throughout the site. They do not seem accessible to users. Ponds should also be used as wayfinding tools.



Improve wayfinding and trail user safety at all trail access locations. Signs should depict level of difficulty and time needed to complete a trail loop.



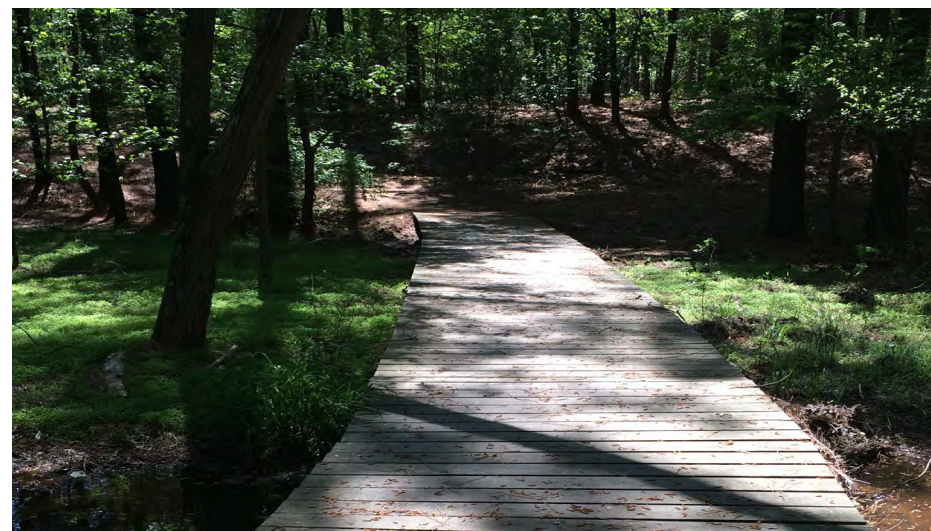
Provide more education and interaction about energy and power through fun and interactive activities. Use the challenges of the site as positive education tools.



Identify features with naming signage for non phone users.



The park office is disconnected from the rest of park and does not create a sense of being welcomed or helped.



A series of boardwalks provide access across low, wet areas.



The park is a perfect opportunity to make a connection between energy sources, transmission, and consumption.



Historic Oak View County Park

In the tradition of a great state which celebrates its past, cherishes its heritage, and nurtures its resources for future generations, Historic Oak View County Park interprets and preserves the agricultural heritage and rural farm life of North Carolina through educational programs, special events, and exhibits, and provides cultural enrichment and passive recreation opportunities for visitors.

Address:
4028 Carya Drive, Raleigh NC, 27610

Unique Features:
Historic Farm

Size: 27 Acres

Hours:
8am -sunset 7 days a week

ACCESS

The number 18 CAT bus provides public transit access to the park via a stop at Poole Road and Carya Drive. Pedestrian actuated signals exist to aid in crossing Poole Road; high visibility crosswalks would increase visibility of the presence of pedestrian across this wide road. While Carya Drive has a sidewalk connecting to the bus stop, the connectivity is fragmented throughout Wake County Office Park. Additional pedestrian wayfinding could indicate how to access the park through the entrance by the Library as well as the main entrance.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

The Park sits within a County complex of offices and municipal buildings where employees could use the park site for daily walks and walking office meetings if sidewalk connections were completed. Additionally, this site could connect to nearby greenways and Walnut Creek Park. For regional connectivity, less than two miles to the east is Anderson Point Park and Poole Road Park which serve as trailheads to the Neuse River Trail. Pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements along Poole Road and linking proximate park sites will join Historic Oak View Park to a series of local and regional recreation and transportation facilities.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

This is a Wake County owned facility.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

Historic Oak View County Park provides a number of exhibits, livestock encounters, and opportunities for cultural education. With all of these activities, it can be difficult to convey all the park offers on one web page and in a brochure. The website contains less information on park features than the brochure while the website is more informative about the history of the Park.

Website

- Clearly informs public about the history of the park.
- Needs to include more of the featured exhibits.
- Information on goats is present but is hard to find.

Brochure

- Several items clearly identified on the map that are not highlighted on the website.
- Map is clear and convey all the park has to offer.
- Needs to more deeply inform users of the sites historical background.

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Shelters		
 Barn		
 Cotton Gin House		
 Plank Kitchen		
 Garden		
 Carriage House		
 Fruit Orchard		
 Library		
 Main Farmhouse		
 Gazebo		

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Tenant House		
 Pecan Grove		
 Pic nicking		
 Fishing		
 Pond		
 Brick and Concrete Walkways		
 Goats		
 Farm History Center		
 Water Tower		
 Cemetery		



Historic Oak View County Park

site analysis

Two foot contours



Historic Oak View County Park

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

This park is a cultural gem for North Carolina, Wake County, and nearby cities and towns. The stories, potential for hands-on activities, and ability for this park to educate future generations about the importance of agricultural practices is an asset to the community. Other strengths include:

- This site is situated in a great location within the City and County. There are several neighborhoods along Poole Road that could access the site via sidewalks.
- The site serves many organized group programs and visitors each year which brings people to the site who might not otherwise visit.
- The park is used to host several special events: Antique Car Show, a Goat Birthday Party, a Storytelling Festival, Heritage Day, and an evening Christmas program which aid in creating awareness of the park.
- There is a self-guided cell phone tour for those who are not participants in an organized group.
- The facility is well maintained and the design fits the programming intent.
- The park draws high visitation numbers from school groups. These age groups are critical to reach as future generations become further removed from historic agricultural practices and need to develop an appreciation for where food originates.



Interpretive displays tell this story of North Carolina's agricultural history.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

While the park is a treasure for Wake County, the site is hidden within an office park. It is highly unlikely to draw vehicular, pedestrian, or bicycle passing traffic from Poole Road. Other challenges include:

- There are gaps in connectivity to nearby regional greenways, parks, and public sidewalks.
- Internal trails terminate without an opportunity to loop around the park, or loop around the office park via a sidewalk network.
- While interactive elements exist, many inside buildings and within the outside environment are “no touch”; teaching through interactive stations could heighten learning and improve access for young families and student groups.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities are bountiful to enhance Oak View. Many will increase daily use and some will heighten the participation of educational components. Opportunities include:

- Large title signage branded with the Wake County Park personality will help draw new users to the site and aid in navigation.
- A worn path along Poole Road is evidence that a sidewalk is needed. Contextual connectivity would improve access to Walnut Creek Park, Walnut Creek Greenway, Poole Road Park, the Neuse River Greenway, and Anderson Point Park.



School groups comprise one of the largest visiting populations to this park.

- Adding activities offered to the general public within the park would enhance the understanding of how people lived and worked in the period of time portrayed in the park outside of school groups. These activities should be multigenerational with opportunities for interaction at various skill levels - including mobility challenged.
- With the growth of breweries and wineries, and new trends in agriculture, this site could connect people to current day agricultural practices in addition to the historic culture.
- This site could increase participation from the adjacent business park by providing an outlet for lunch walks and walking meetings.
- A loop trail would enhance the experience and likely attract more people to the site.
- Sidewalks and an entry monument will welcome visitors and indicate the park is a public place.
- Public/private partnerships with the adjacent business park could be beneficial for special events, parking, and day use.
- Interactive and play space to engage young visitors would open the site to a wider variety of users. A playground has been identified as a need by users and is currently being designed.



Live animals would enhance user experience but also require additional staff and expertise.



Provide ADA connectivity to the picnic pad.



Rebuild lake bank and provide a path around the lake as well.



Paths through the garden are not ADA accessible.



Clarify the function of the space by renaming it "Outdoor Classroom"



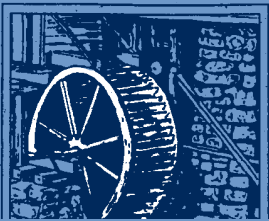
Ample space is available to provide pedestrian access into the park.



Extend the trail surface for pedestrian activity.



Circulation path around pecan grove can provide use for adjacent employees.



Historic Yates Mill County Park

"Escape the Daily Grind" through a variety of unique recreational, cultural, natural and agricultural experiences.

Address: 4620 Lake Wheeler Road, Raleigh NC, 27603		
Unique Features: Historic Mill	Size: 174 Acres	Hours: 8am -sunset 7 days a week

ACCESS

There is currently no access to Historic Yates Mill County Park by public transit. Access via walking and biking is also difficult as the park is located in a rural environment with no connecting greenways, sidewalks, or on-road facilities. Currently, this park is a "drive to park." However, the location near North Carolina State University's research property primes the park for future connectivity via campus or City transit.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

The site is situated within and adjacent to several NC State University agricultural buildings. Yates Mill County Park could partner with those facilities to support and/or fund trails and public transit to enhance local and regional access. There also may be an opportunity to connect to the Cary and Raleigh greenway system through the north west side of the park.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

- A Lease exists between the State of NC and Wake County for the property referred to as the "Ground Lease" which outlines what is permitted on the general property.
- An agreement exists between Wake County and Yates Mill Associates (with approval from the State) for the management, maintenance, upkeep, and operations of the historic Mill building.



The Finley Center provides restrooms, meeting rooms, and educational opportunities for visitors.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

Historic Yates Mill County Park offers unique features that make it a valuable addition to Wake County's Park System. Both the website and brochure clearly demonstrate why the park is unique and what the site offers. The Park is known for its public programs and the website effectively communicates these events. The brochure more clearly details trail uses and skill levels.

Website	Brochure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly outlines the history, but not public access features.• Provides updated information about upcoming public programs.• Does not clarify trail uses and skill levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illustrates a balance of education and features. The trail rating system could be used County wide on other park trails.• Needs to highlight photography rules, Mill Tour information, and pet restrictions.• Fishing locations should be clearly marked.

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
Water - powered Gristmill	✓	✓
Park Center for Education and Research	✓	✓
20 AC Pond with Boardwalk and fixed Dock	✓	✓
Wildlife Refuge	✓	
Picnic Areas	✓	✓
Amphitheater		
Field Classroom		✓
Research Site for NCSU	✓	
Hiking Trails	✓	✓
Fishing	✓	✓



A public private partnership is in place to guide tours of the mill.



Historic Yates Mill County Park

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

Historic Yates Mill County Park is surrounded by NC State research facilities. The rural character of the context and adjacent research farms preserve the original landscape surrounding the mill. This departure from the urban environment is an asset to residents living in Raleigh and is a short ten minute drive from downtown. The facilities are modern and new while successfully blending into the natural landscape. Additional strengths include:

- The trails elevate the Park from only a historic educational facilities to a daily use Park.
- Historic Yates Mill County Park’s signature event, the Annual Harvest Celebration (September) and the Mill As Muse Art and Photography event bring people to the site who may not otherwise visit.
- While much of the site focuses on agricultural history, it also serves as a wonderful setting for environmental education.
- Picnic areas are located away from the main building .
- The easy and moderate trail lengths are manageable for multigenerational hikers.
- Fishing and canoeing provide activities that attract all ages and generate repeat use of the park.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

While the site offers daily use and special uses, the accessibility of the site can be a challenge. Specific challenges include:

- As a unique County resource, accessibility is critical to key features. Access to the Mill is not ADA accessible and can be disappointing and embarrassing for physically challenged visitors, especially those in groups.
- Self-designated as a wildlife preserve, the park does not allow pets (such as dogs) except service animals. This is a difficult rule to enforce because many people assume dogs are permitted in parks. Historic Yates Mill County Park is the only park in the system that does not allow dogs. Additional commentary on the purpose of this rule will help visitors understand the importance of respecting this limitation.

- Mill tours are limited to specific days and times. This can be frustrating for visitors and staff.
- The park lacks traditional park facilities such as a playgrounds and picnic shelters that some visitors identify with a park facility.
- Park photography is very popular, specifically professional session photography. The park recently instituted a permitting process for session photography to monitor professional activity. This rule (posted on signs throughout the park) should be clarified to not dissuade visitors from taking non-professional photos.
- The investment in time to hike a trail should be posted for users - particularly those who may not be able to double back on the Creekside Trail.
- There is a need for more interactive elements within the park to offset the “No” signs posted throughout the park - specifically near the Mill.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Already, Historic Yates Mill County Park provides an unmatched amenity in the community. Some opportunities for improvement include:

- Adjacency with NC State University Agricultural Field Laboratories provide partnerships for trails and transit connections.
- Marketing the educational and recreation opportunities to schools will increase weekday use and expose the park to more families in Wake County.
- The restriction of shoreline fishing, additional opportunities may need to be explored to meet fishing demands
- The park could expand interpretation through the preservation of the Phares Yates House located off park property (¼ mile from the park).
- The park could expand by acquiring the property adjacent to the park and just downstream on Steep Hill Creek. This land would connect to the Phares Yates House.

- Plans are progressing to link the park with some of the University Field Laboratories including constructing a greenway trail from the Dairy Museum to the park. The plans exist conceptually and are not currently funded.



Fishing is a popular activity at Historic Yates Mill County Park.



Wayfinding and color coding can serve as a model for other County Parks.



Look for ways to make shoreline trail and features along it accessible.



Warning signs should be relocated to preserve views.



Example of appropriate reuse and interpretive of features.



Trails from the Finley Center to the Mill should be accessible.



Opportunities should be explored to link the park with adjacent agricultural fields.



Several views throughout the park are not ADA accessible. Improving access would enhance the experience for special populations.



This park has amazing features, yet must take care with human access.



Many restrictions are posted near the Mill.



Lake Crabtree County Park

To serve the growing needs of Wake County residents by having passive leisure and recreational opportunities available in a natural setting.

Address:
1400 Aviation Parkway, Morrisville NC, 27560

Unique Features:
Mountain Biking/Water Access

Size: 215 Acres

Hours: 8am-Sunset 7 days a week
Park office 8am- 1pm

ACCESS

Lake Crabtree does not currently have direct access to public transit. The closest bus stop is located at the intersection of Weston Parkway and Norwell Boulevard. Connectivity could be provided through Black Creek Greenway and supported by wayfinding signage.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

The park is situated in a highly populated area of Wake County in proximity to several key destinations such as the Raleigh Durham International Airport, William B. Umstead State Park, and the Research Triangle Park. The Black Creek Greenway provides bicycle and pedestrian access into the park, connecting the park with the Town of Cary’s greenway system. Interstate 40 provides easy vehicular access for residents across the County.

The opportunity to connect to Umstead State Park exists with improvements to Old Reedy Creek Road which would also connect the park to the City of Raleigh’s extensive greenway trail network. Improvements to Aviation Parkway could also provide better multi-modal access.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

- Lake Crabtree County Park leases the land from the Raleigh Durham Aiport Authority. Wake County owns the Flood Control Structure on the property.
- The lease stipulates that mountain bike trails and other special recreation areas be provided within the park and maintained by TORC.
- RDU recently hired a firm to evaluate all of their property leases, including Lake Crabtree County Park,with a focus on land use policy and revenue.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS












The website and brochure are both valuable marketing tools and provide users with a clear understanding of the amenities the park has to offer. The brochure map makes it easy for visitors to differentiate between types of trails and the skill levels needed.






Website

- Instead of linking to the brochure, language could be added to the “Park information” to showcase the amenities of the park and attract new users.
- The historic homesite is highlighted on the website, but not in the brochure.

Brochure

- Providing a legend of park amenities would clearly inform users of key park features.
- Successfully showcases the different types of trails and skill levels needed in an easy to understand map.
- Canoeing classes and boating activities are not indicated.

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Playgrounds	✓	
 Hiking Trails	✓	✓
 Mulit-Use Trails	✓	✓
 Mountain Biking	✓	✓
 Mountain Bike Skills Area	✓	✓
 Boat Launch	✓	✓
 Historic Home Site		
 WaterWise Garden	✓	
 Shelters	✓	✓
 Fishing	✓	
 Canoeing	✓	

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Volleyball	✓	✓
 Boating Rental	✓	✓
 Sailing	✓	✓
 Amphitheater		✓
 Maintenance and Managers Office		✓



Education and recreation are expertly woven together in this park.



Lake Crabtree County Park

Two foot contours

site analysis



Lake Crabtree County Park

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

Lake Crabtree County Park's greatest strength lies in its location. With easy access off of I-40, the park is very popular with County residents, especially as an event venue. The lake itself provides multiple recreation opportunities and the trail system offers some of the best beginner mountain biking. Additional strengths include:

- The existing mountain biking trails are well marked and provide opportunities for cyclists of all skill levels.
- The park offers residents of a highly dense area a chance to enjoy the outdoors and the serenity of the lake.
- The park offers a diverse menu of activities ensuring that there is "something for everyone."
- Some of the most popular activities are a result of the park's water access: kayaking, canoeing, row boating, fishing, and paddling.
- The rental business allows residents who do not have access to water sport equipment to enjoy Lake Crabtree.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

While there are many benefits of Lake Crabtree County Park, there are also some challenges including:

- ADA improvements are needed to ensure that users of all abilities can enjoy the various programming and recreational opportunities in the park.
- Public perception of the lake contamination may be preventing use of the park. Displays and kiosks educating users may reduce these concerns.
- The park has the potential to be the most well-linked County Park, and yet several of the streets bordering the park lack multimodal accommodations.
- Pedestrian wayfinding signs are needed to connect users to all of the features of the park - not just the trail system.

- While I-40 provides regional access, sound impacts of the interstate affect user experience along the Lake Trail.
- Due to flooding issues, the trail system can have several closures during wet periods, therefore limiting access to one of the most popular facilities in the park.
- Parking can be a challenge for large events as there is not a designated overflow parking area.
- There are many visitors that allow their dogs off leash even though it is prohibited.
- Due to the designed use of the trails, user conflicts exist. The trails are heavily used by cyclists, therefore there seems to be an unspoken expectation for pedestrians to yield to cyclists.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Lake Crabtree County Park truly has the opportunity to become a park for everyone. Some improvements include:

- The rental season could be expanded to meet the current user demand for water activities.
- The park currently serves many specialty groups, such as the Triangle Model Yacht Club and can continue to attract these niche groups by developing a formal process for using the property.
- With the addition of an educational classroom, users would have the opportunity to participate in expanded programming focusing on water quality, environmental protection, and wetland conservation.
- User feedback highlights the demand for a disc golf course in the area.
- Installing boardwalks along the Old Beech Trail would make it accessible to all users and also limit the number of trail closures due to flooding.



A variety of offerings activate this park during all hours and for all ages.



Mountain biking trails and skills areas draw area residents and visitors throughout the region.



Mountain biking and hiking trails are clearly marked throughout the park.



Overlooks and viewing areas should be added along the shoreline.



Formalize and improve trail connections to Umstead and the Cary Trail system.



Identifying all park features on maps will aid in navigation.



Celebrate and promote unique features like the waterwise Garden.



Explore the potential to add a boardwalk and/or make trail improvements so this section is accessible when wet.



Complete an internal hard surface trail system to create a more ADA accessible park experience.



Expand waterfront offerings from rental units to access into the park from across the Lake.



Accessibility is a huge challenge for this park that otherwise seems like the perfect opportunity to serve all users.





North Wake Landfill County Park

No current mission statement for this park.

Address:
9300 Deponie Drive Raleigh NC, 27614

Unique Features: Reuse/Viewshed	Size: N/A	Hours: 8am- Sunset 7 days a week
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ACCESS

The park is served by the City of Raleigh’s transit system, with a bus stop located near the the park entrance on Durrant Road. Sidewalk connectivity on Deponie Drive coupled with wayfinding would improve the safety and experience of arriving at the Park. Adding more stops along Durant Road will provide better access to the park from surrounding neighborhoods.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

The Abbotts Creek Trail connects the park to surrounding neighborhoods. Providing safe crossings of Durant Road would increase the bicycle and pedestrian access to the park. The addition of an elementary school and community center provides the opportunity for increased park usage.

DEED RESTRICTIONS

This is a Wake County owned facility.



Restroom facilities serve users of Abbotts Creek Trail and prepares the park for hosting events and expanding facilities that will lengthen visit times.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS









The North Wake Landfill County Park is unique in the fact that it was once a landfill. The story behind this conversion is made clear in the brochure, but is missing on the website and within the park itself. The mountain bike skills trails is a great asset to the park and should be highlighted on the website and brochure.

Website

- Relaying the story behind “the Big Hill” would provide context to the users unsure of what the park has to offer.
- Including maps of the trail system and park features on the website would easily display the various park amenities.
- The mountain bike skills course should be emphasized to attract more users.

Brochure

- Educational components of the history of the park are well explained and identified.
- Clearly outlines what facilities are available.
- The trail distances that are described in the pictures should also be conveyed on the map.

Existing Facility	Web	Brochure
 Paved Trails		✓
 Hiking Trails	✓	✓
 Mountain Biking Trail		✓
 Mountain Bike Skills Area	✓	✓
 Picnic Areas	✓	✓
 Playground	✓	✓
 Shelter	✓	✓
 Restroom		✓



Connectivity to Abbotts Creek Trail is a huge asset of this park.



North Wake Landfill County Park

STRENGTHS OF THE PARK

This park has the unique opportunity to educate and challenge citizens and visitors to contemplate their consumptive behavior and personal effects on the environment. The mission and educational opportunities can be linked to those of Harris Lake providing a deeper understanding of how our lifestyles impact the earth and reveal some of the more difficult visual reminders of how our society defines livability.

- Biking opportunities throughout the site are abundant, including the main road, mountain biking, and connections to neighborhoods.
- The location and access to the site avails the educational features to impact a large audience.
- The park site is new and has updated site furnishings and equipment.
- This park features one of the most incredible views in the County.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARK

Many challenges of the park are associated with perception and the lack of connection between what the site was before and how it has transformed into the park it is today.

- Many residents still consider the site a landfill and do not recognize the transformation as a county park.
- The presence of methane gases in the gas collection area can be intimidating to users and cause safety concerns.
- There is limited shading in the park, especially around the park loop road and the playground area.
- There is no signage leading pedestrians from the parking lot to the top of the hill trail. There is also no separation for cars and pedestrians along the road leading to the top of the hill trail.
- There are no interpretive signs or public art to link the transition from a dangerous, waste-filled site to a well-functioning park with opportunities to educate young generations about our behavioral impacts on the environment.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

This park is replete with opportunities to transform the way people think about their lifestyles. Some opportunities that can improve user experience and elevate the educational opportunities include:

- The view of the Raleigh skyline is an unique asset to the park and an accessible trail from the playground to the top of the hill would help to highlight this feature.
- Installing interpretive signage and educational kiosks throughout the park would highlight the history of the park and educate users on solid waste management and recycling.
- Adding shade trees to the Peak Trail would improve the user's experience.
- The interior road network provide opportunities to host events such as a criterion, looped running races and distance markers.
- The proximity of the recycling center provides educational opportunities within the park and can promote Wake County's 86ers campaign.
- Currently, the name of the park is creating a barrier to use. By modifying the name, it may remove the negative connotation of being a landfill and promote the site as a park - not a brownfield.



In addition to the skills area, mountain bike trails weave throughout the northern section of the site.



Views from the top of the hill are a reward for climbing the slope. A map depicting neighborhoods and downtown Raleigh will impress upon users how massive the trash pile is to create such a vast view.



The Mountain bike skills area can be marketed to help spread awareness of this park.



There is an opportunity to create shade and tell a story about waste as users ascend the hill and pass by the recycling center.



The recycling center should not be buffered from sight. This should be used as an opportunity for education.



Tell the story of how far visitors can see with maps. Add interpretive signage and information detailing how far the trash came from to form this hill.



Create awareness about site furnishings selections: recycled, LED, solar, and ways to reduce consumption.



Provide shade for exposed playground equipment.



Shade should be artfully incorporated at the top of the hill without blocking views.



Highlight the benefits of recycling versus mindlessly adding to the mound of trash.



The hill provides a great view for spectator sports and races: Runs, criterion, etc.



3. Public Input

Overview and Planning Process

Public involvement is imperative in parks and recreation planning. In addition to analyzing demographics and comparing trends, there is no better gauge for identifying needs than asking users for their desires, opinions, and ideas. For the 2016 Update to the County Park Master Plans, several avenues of public input were merged to assess the needs for the system as a whole and each individual park. Community needs and desires were extracted from the 2008 *PROS Comprehensive Master Plan*, the 2014 Community Interest and Opinion Survey, Individual Park Customer Satisfaction Surveys, North Carolina's *Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan*, national trends in parks and recreation, focus groups, steering committee input, and staff interviews. After a solid foundation of needs, opportunities, and current challenges were established, recommendations were vetted via an online public survey, booths at public events, the steering committee, and park staff. During a final Steering Committee Meeting, members representing the public's interest and future vision of the parks determined which recommendations would be presented in the final Master Plans Updates.

The following text describes each method of public input with a brief summary of key discoveries. Detailed outcomes are provided in an Appendix C of this Plan and within other documents as referenced below.

Previous Tactics and Data Analysis

2008 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Key survey findings from the 2008 *Comprehensive Plan* include:

- Lake Crabtree County Park is the most heavily used park.
- The physical condition of the park system is rated high, with 66 percent of respondents rating it as excellent or good.
- Marketing efforts need to be improved. For example, 25 percent of respondents do not know the locations of the County parks, in excess of a national benchmark of 13 percent.
- Support for the acquisition of open space is very high with 90 percent of respondents being in favor of it.

- Walking and hiking trails are the highest rated new facilities that citizens want.
- Citizens want the County to expend its resources on large regional parks and longer trails, in fact, 76 percent expressed their support for this choice for resource allocation.
- Citizens want the County to partner with municipalities to acquire open space for environmental purposes; 84 percent are supportive of this endeavor. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents are supportive of the County's effort to partner with the school district, cities and towns to co-locate parks and facilities adjacent to schools.
- Seventy-eight percent of the respondents are supportive of the County's effort to protect 30 percent of its land area for environmental stewardship, water quality, large parks and trails.
- Personal benefits of the County providing parks, recreation and open space services include health and wellness.
- Citizens expressed a priority for improvements and maintenance to existing County Parks followed by the acquisition of new parkland and open space.
- The 2008 *Comprehensive Plan* identified seven goals for the Division of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, which are listed in the Introduction section of this plan.

COMMUNITY INTEREST AND OPINION SURVEY 2014

This outreach method collected responses from 852 county residents through telephone and online surveys. Demographically, the cross-section of those surveyed is mostly consistent with the composition of the county. More women than men participated, which is typical and consistent with the slightly higher percentage of residents who are women (61.3 percent). While 71.7 percent of telephone respondents and 91.6 percent of online participants were white, that is similar to the 61.3 percent composition based on the 2013 US Census.

The methodology and sample appear to meet the definition of what is required from Recreation Resource Services for assessing recreational needs of residents. This can be done prior to master planning and not necessarily be park specific.

Highlights from the survey include:

Most Used Parks in Last 12 Months

- Lake Crabtree (70.6 percent)
- Harris Lake (66.5 percent)
- American Tobacco Trail (55.1 percent)
- Historic Yates Mill (53.2 percent)
- Crowder (40.4 percent)
- Blue Jay (35.9 percent)
- Historic Oak View (32.5 percent)
- N. Wake Landfill (24.2 percent)

Why Are They Not Using Parks

- Prefer to use City or State Parks
- Too Far/don't have transportation
- Not convenient
- Hours not convenient
- Time Constraints/Personal issues
- Didn't know

How Are They Using

- Walking/hiking/dog walking
- Cycling/mountain biking
- Viewing nature/wildlife
- Use of Playground
- Attending a program

Sources of Information

- E-mail Newsletter
- Website
- Brochure/Fliers
- Friends
- Conversations with Staff

Most Important Service

- Acquiring Open Space
- Expanding Greenway System
- Developing Large Regional Parks Nature
- Maintaining Improving Services
- Providing environmental Cultural Historic education



PARK SURVEYS

The park surveys were collected in 2014-2015. Results were analyzed in April 2015 to provide insight for the recommendation of this Plan. Key discoveries per park are as follows.

American Tobacco Trail

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Jogging/Running (47 percent)
- Bicycling (47 percent)
- Hiking/Walking/Trail Use (23 percent)

Respondents requested the addition of water fountains and noted a need for dog waste receptacles. Requests for 1/4 mile intervals for mile markers. Most visitors found out about the park via word of mouth (62 percent).

Blue Jay Point County Park

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Educational Program (54 percent)
- Hiking/Walking/Trail Use (49 percent)
- Nature Observation (36 percent)
- Playground (26 percent)

Survey respondents also had many positive comments about the staff. There was a request for another picnic shelter. Most visitors found out about the park via a field trip (32 percent).

Crowder District Park

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Hiking/Walking/Fitness (65 percent)
- Nature Observation (39 percent)
- Other/Self Guided Activity (22 percent)
- Playground (10 percent)

There was a request for sidewalks along Ten-Ten Road. One person noted the playground equipment can be hot and requested shade. Most visitors found out about the park from driving by (47 percent).

Harris Lake County Park

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Picnicking/Shelter Use (39 percent)
- Playground (36 percent)
- Other/Self Guided Activity (35 percent)
- Trail Use - Hiking/Running/Walking (26 percent)

Respondents requested camping, safe crossings of trails and vehicular paths, and additional trail connections. Most visitors found out about the park via word of mouth (53 percent).

Historic Oakview County Park

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Exhibits/Displays (41 percent)
- Educational Program (40 percent)
- Visiting Goats (35 percent)
- Farmer’s Corner (25 percent)
- Other (25 percent) which included field trips, pecan picking, boy scouts, and family outings

Most visitors found out about the park via word of mouth (37 percent) followed by field trips (22 percent).

Historic Yates Mill County Park

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Hiking/Walking/Trail Use (69 percent)
- Nature Observation (49 percent)
- Exhibits/Displays (39 percent)
- Visiting with Family/Friends (31 percent)

There were many comments about the friendliness of the staff and the beauty of the park.

Most visitors found out about the park via word of mouth (30 percent), followed by driving by (29 percent), and other (27 percent), which included knowing the park was there due to living close by or being in the area for years.

Lake Crabtree County Park

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Hiking/Walking/Trail Use (37 percent)
- Boating (36 percent)
- Bicycling/Biking (25 percent)
- Other/Self Guided Activities (22 percent) with some of the most popular activities listed as photography, sailing, kayaking, and paddleboarding

Most visitors found out about the park from other sources (35 percent) which ranged from living in the area and just knowing about the park to word of mouth and other groups. This was followed by word of mouth (27 percent) and driving by (24 percent).

North Wake Landfill County Park

Top activities identified by respondents included:

- Playground Use (95 percent)
- Picnicking/Shelter Use (26 percent)
- Bicycling/Biking (21 percent)
- Hiking/Walking/Trail Use (16 percent)

Several requests were made for shade. A request was made for swings for older kids, and a request was made for a dog park or dog run area. Most visitors found out about the park via word of mouth (68 percent).

NORTH CAROLINA’S COMPREHENSIVE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

North Carolina State Parks Division of Parks and Recreation revises The *North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan* every five years and submits findings to the National Park Service to remain eligible for LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) assistance. It is important to review and understand these findings to determine how Wake County Parks and Open Space is serving residents to help meet demand identified for Outdoor Recreation within the state.

In many cases, the desired activities are similar to activities identified by Wake County Residents in the 2013 survey findings. Below are the most popular outdoor recreation activities identified by residents in the 2015 plan.

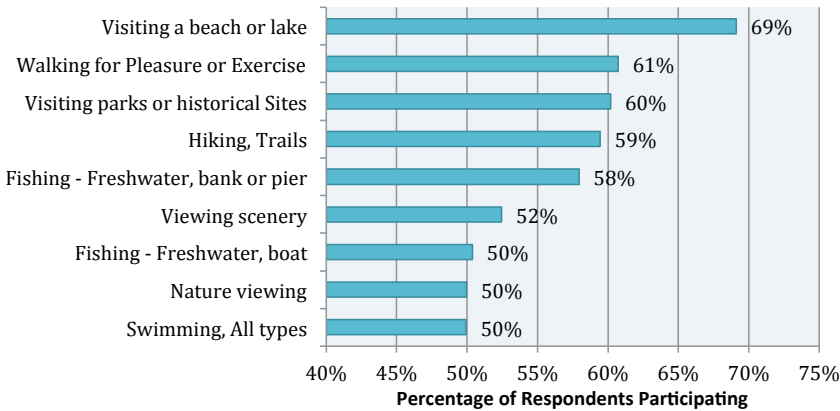


Figure showing most popular outdoor recreation activities reproduced from the 2015-2020 North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan

Another important finding in this state-wide study that may have influence on outdoor recreation in Wake County are the barriers for participation in outdoor recreation. The number one barrier to participation in the state is lack of time, or perceived lack of time. This may indicate a need to not only communicate offerings in a different way, but also provide recreation opportunities that allow for shorter amounts of participation time or scheduled at a variety of times.

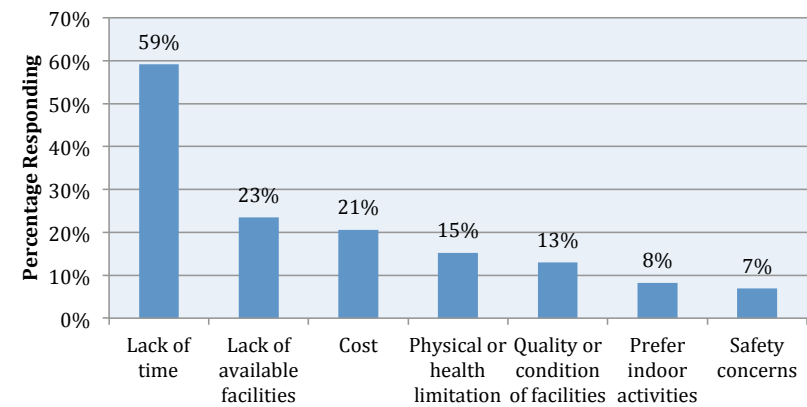


Figure showing barriers to outdoor recreation reproduced from the 2015-2020 North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Plan

In addition, there is a need to provide access to water and to facilities such as greenways and trails. It is noted that by providing greenways and trails within park facilities and linking local, state, and federal trails the state can meet 8 of the top 35 identified outdoor recreation activities.

The above statewide findings are consistent with findings from the Wake County 2013 survey and the individual park surveys conducted with this study.

National Trends in Parks and Recreation

The National Recreation and Park Association *2015 Field Report* outlines national trends in recreation affecting Parks and Recreation Service Providers.

- **Trend 1. Parks and recreation programs are key to great park attendance.**
- **Trend 2. The perceived value of distributed services results in agency functions assigned to various departments.**
- **Trend 3. Agencies are pioneering new funding methods**
- **Trend 4. The infrastructure deficit means parks will have to fight harder for public dollars.**
- **Trend 5. Walkable cities draw millennials, fueling a suburban exodus.**

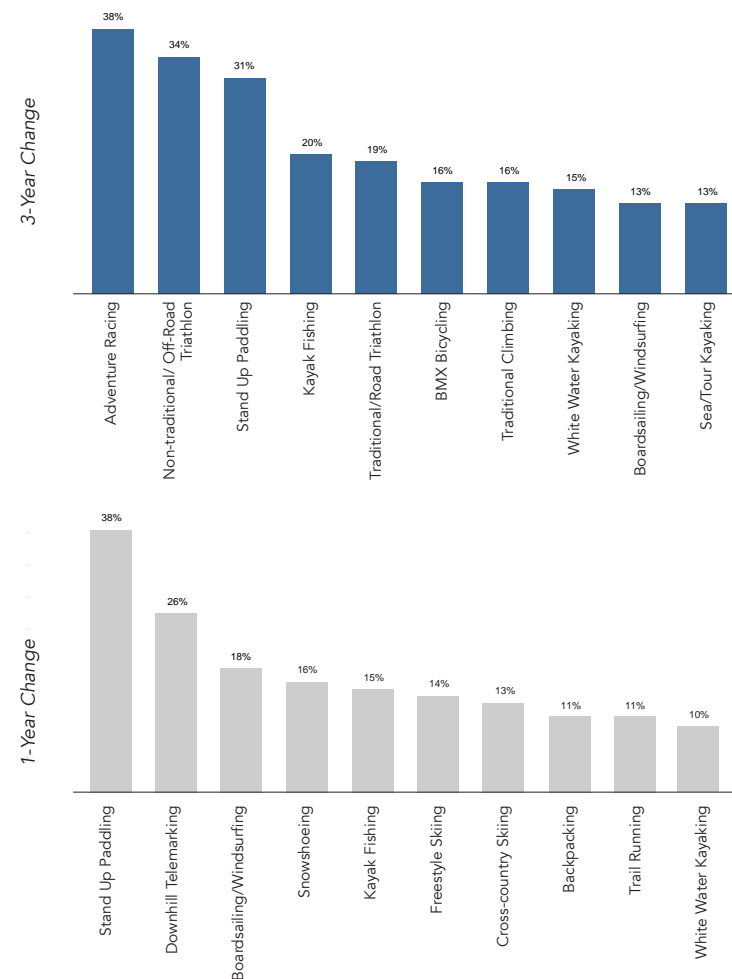
The 2015 *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report* provided by the Outdoor Foundation is a national look at the activity trends in recreation participation. While there are numerous reports by Fish and Wildlife, National Park Services, and NRPA, the Outdoor Foundation is the most recent look at activity trends and changes in outdoor recreation.

<http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/research.participation.2015.topline.html>

The survey outlines top activities and activity trends for youth and adult participants, with many of these trends aligning with findings within the Wake County 2014 citizen survey. Access to water, water-based activities, hiking and walking, and access to adventure sports ranked high among national recreation trends. One significant change since the study began in 2006, 2014 participation in outdoor recreation had a slight decrease for the first time.

While participation in activities such as running/jogging, bicycling (road/paved surface), fishing, hiking, camping and wildlife viewing ranked the highest from survey participants, several more non-traditional activities had significant participation increase of 20-30 percent over a three year period. Non-traditional activities such as adventure racing, triathlons (traditional and nontraditional/off-road), stand-up paddle boarding, and kayak fishing saw the greatest increase in participation numbers.

Top Outdoor Activities for Growth



Trends for outdoor recreation activities reproduced from the 2015-2020 North Carolina State Outdoor Recreation Plan

Public Input Phase One-Needs Assessment

STEERING COMMITTEE

During the kick-off meeting, held on March 4, 2015, members of the Steering Committee shared why they think this planning process is important and why they are interested in being involved. Common themes throughout the group include conservation and protection of the county's resources as well as a desire to understand how people are currently using the parks and how the County can match trends in recreation while maintaining the components of Wake County's parks that residents love. Critical outcomes of the plan were discussed with ADA accessibility, access via greenways and transit, and balancing offerings with local municipal parks surfacing as top priorities. Methods for reaching the public and what the Committee wanted to learn from the public fueled the beginnings of the public outreach plan later crafted by the project team.

It was agreed that the County Parks Recreation and Open Space mission and goals should drive the planning process, but that the mission statements for each of the parks should be vetted to determine if that statement was fitting for the current use and future vision for each park. The Committee also reviewed a draft site analysis matrix to provide direction for which items to explore during field visits. Demand for parks was illustrated by a series of maps depicting where citizens, live, work, play, learn, and access transit throughout the county. Equity was also mapped to learn which types of special populations may live close to certain parks. These populations include youth, over 65, English as a second language, no access to personal vehicles, and groups of racial or ethnic diversity as recorded in the US Census and ACS Community Survey.

The meeting closed with the group's first exposure to reviewing past planning efforts, previous master plans, and existing conditions in each park. Groups of four were asked to review materials and suggest opportunities and challenges for each park. These group discussions and feedback provided a foundation for the project team to formulate public input questions, understand important items to explore in the field, and begin to understand the future vision for each park.

The Steering Committee met with the project team to review the progress of analysis and discuss opportunities and constraints for each park. Working in groups, the Steering Committee reviewed information collected during Park Manager Interviews, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, and results of the 2008 Public Survey. Each group covered two of the eight parks and were responsible for presenting the three top opportunities/recommendations and top three concerns/constraints per park.

One key discovery of the group was the need to adjust the mission of each park to fit the growing need of Wake County citizens as well as how the park has evolved to date, and will continue to evolve as a result of this process.



The Steering Committee works in small groups during the project kick-off meeting.

PARK-SPECIFIC FOCUS GROUPS AND STAFF INTERVIEWS

The County Project Management Staff and Steering Committee developed a list of key stakeholders, users, and partners associated with each park. Invitations were distributed to each list to request participation in a focus group to determine existing challenges and future opportunities. Participants were provided with the County Parks Recreation and Open Space mission and core values, as well as the mission of the park (if the park had a separate mission).

The focus groups attendees were asked their opinions of the role of the county parks, each park’s mission statement, and their experience of the parks. Results of the focus groups were evaluated by the Steering Committee and project team to contribute to recommendations and key action steps.

Staff at each park were interviewed to gain their insight on the current usage and operations at their site. The discussion gave the consultant team an understanding of current operational challenges, typical usage at the park, and potential improvements.

Detailed notes from these meetings can be found in Appendix A. Key discoveries revealed per park were:

American Tobacco Trail

- More site furnishings, such as garbage cans, hitching posts, and access to water is desired.
- Parking access along the trail can be difficult, especially for horse trailers.

Blue Jay Point County Park

- Additional buildings to support events and operations were requested, especially a large picnic shelter and classroom space.
- Users wanted ways to use the site better with less impact on the environment. Suggestions to improve this included additional fishing piers, natural play areas, and maintenance of the short-leaf pine stand.

Crowder District Park

- Most concerns were about an already dense site; expansion was desired.
- Users want to maintain a mix of biking and walking trails and increase accessibility of trails.

Harris Lake County Park

- Active programming, such as a trail accommodations for hikers and bicyclists, horseback riding, boat rental, and camping, was desired.
- Additional facilities, such as an expansion of the maintenance yard and education center, were also requested.
- Parking was identified as a problem on weekends.

Historic Oakview County Park

- Adding more opportunities for interaction with animals by adding chickens, mules, and more goats was discussed.
- Users requested more farm exhibits, including finishing the permanent exhibits and adding more out buildings to the farm.
- Better wayfinding to and within the park was requested.

Historic Yates Mill County Park

- Accessibility on the site was difficult.
- A more dynamic trail system at the site, including better connection to the Park Center, was requested.
- Adding additional shelters to supplement the Mill was desired.

Lake Crabtree County Park

- Improving ways to access the water was requested. A planned accessible dock, in addition to dredging to improve rowing and maintaining a no motorboat policy, were identified.
- Users wanted trails of varying challenge.

North Wake Landfill County Park

- Users commented on the lack of entrance signage.
- Public art was identified as a way to improve the space and delineate secured areas.
- Additional connectivity to the neighborhood, including schools and existing trails, was desired.



The Lake Crabtree County Park focus group discusses existing conditions at the park and desired features.

Public Input Phase Two- Recommendations Review

STEERING COMMITTEE REVIEW

After developing recommendations based on the needs assessment and existing conditions phase, the consultant team met with County Project Management Staff and Steering Committee on January 14, 2016, to workshop the detailed recommendations for each park.

As during the kick-off meeting, the Steering Committee worked in small groups to evaluate the recommendations, identify any missing elements, and determine to what degree the recommendations were supported by the public. The consultant team then refined the recommendations for each park using this input.

PUBLIC SURVEY EVENTS AND DIGITAL SURVEY

The County Project Management Staff and consultant team presented the proposed recommendations, refined with the Steering Committee and to the public through an online survey and through on-site surveys at the parks.

On-site meetings at the park were held on the following dates:

- September 19, 2015 – Historic Yates Mill, Harvest Celebration
- September 26, 2015 – Historic Oak View, Storytelling Festival
- October 17, 2015 – Harris Lake, Haunting at Harris
- October 17, 2015 - American Tobacco Trail
- October 24, 2015 – Lake Crabtree, Creepy Crabtree

The boards from the on-site meetings can be found in Appendix B. Key discoveries revealed per park were:

American Tobacco Trail

- Ninety-four percent of survey respondents support the idea of having water stations for people and animals along the trail and specifically at the trailheads.
- Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents stated that user orientation, signage, and wayfinding improvements and consistency were needed.

- Respondents (86 percent) support the idea of additional lighting at the trailheads.
- Survey respondents stated several times that it would be beneficial for early morning exercise and commuting to open the trail access locations earlier.

Blue Jay Point County Park

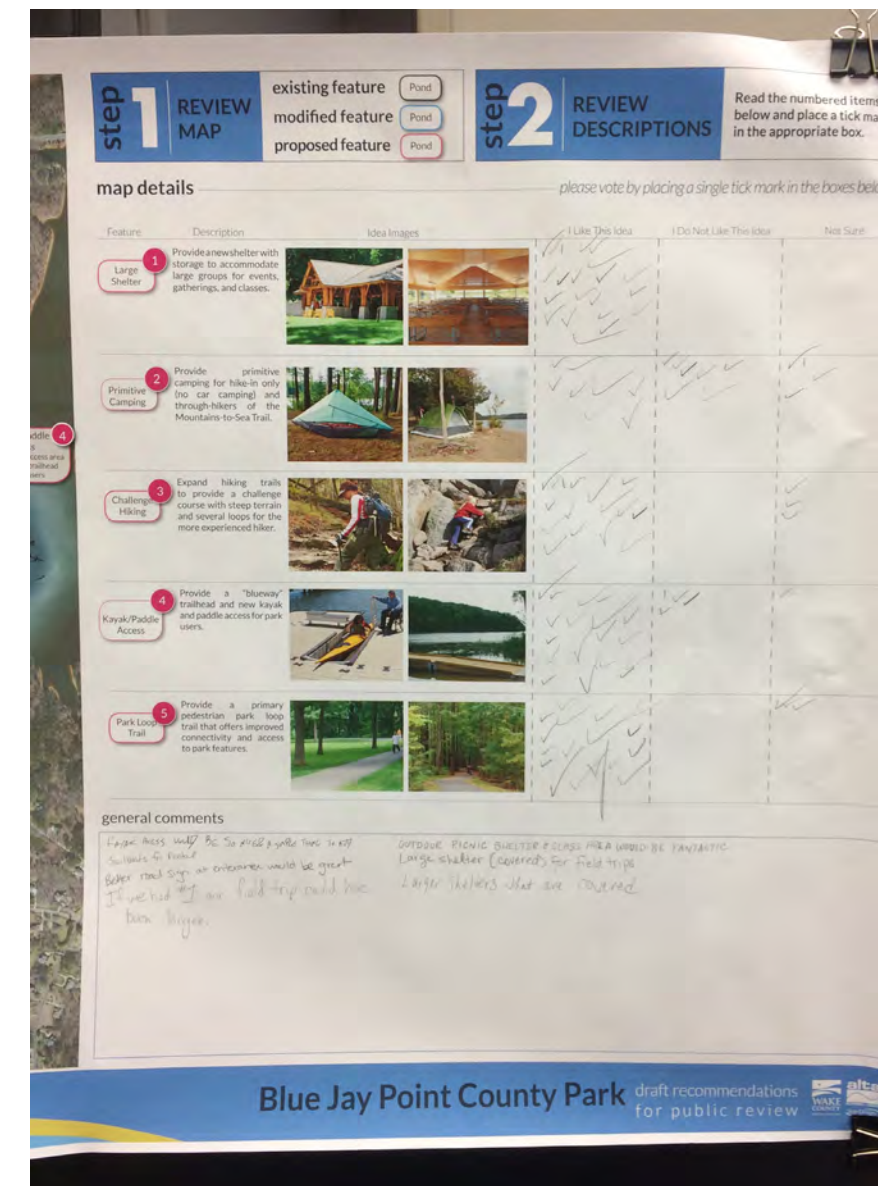
- Ninety-seven percent of survey respondents agreed with the addition of a large shelter and also stated the need for several additional shelters throughout the park.
- Eighty-one percent of respondents support the idea of introducing primitive camping. It was highlighted for through hikers and for people kayaking and using the blueway system.
- Respondents positively reacted to adding/expanding trails throughout the park with interpretive signage, adding an adventure hiking course, as well as connecting trails and park features to a primary loop trail system with improved wayfinding.

Crowder District Park






- Eighty percent of survey respondents supported the idea of expanding the parks garden themes and offerings .
- Survey participants would like to see additional trail and sidewalk connections to and from the park (87 percent).
- Ninety-five percent of respondents supported the idea of adding a nature-based play area in the park.
- Sixty-three percent supported the idea of expanding dog features and support facilities within the park.

Harris Lake County Park

- Ninety-five percent of respondents supported rentals of kayaks, canoes, and stand up paddleboards to provide an opportunity for visitors who do not own boats to be able to interact with the water.
- The improved boat launch providing an ADA accessible dock for personal water crafts and rental vessels was supported by 84 percent of respondents.



The image shows a public review board for Blue Jay Point County Park. It is divided into two main sections: 'step 1 REVIEW MAP' and 'step 2 REVIEW DESCRIPTIONS'. The 'step 1' section includes a 'map details' table with columns for 'Feature', 'Description', 'Idea Images', 'I Like This Idea', 'I Do Not Like This Idea', and 'Not Sure'. The 'step 2' section is for 'REVIEW DESCRIPTIONS' and includes a 'general comments' section. The board is filled with handwritten comments and checkmarks, indicating public input on various proposed features like shelters, camping, hiking trails, and kayaking access.

Feature	Description	Idea Images	I Like This Idea	I Do Not Like This Idea	Not Sure
1 Large Shelter	Provide a new shelter with storage to accommodate large groups for events, gatherings, and classes.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Primitive Camping	Provide primitive camping for hike-in only (no car camping) and through-hikers of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Challenge Hiking	Expand hiking trails to provide a challenge course with steep terrain and several loops for the more experienced hiker.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Kayak/Paddle Access	Provide a "blueway" trailhead and new kayak and paddle access for park users.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Park Loop Trail	Provide a primary pedestrian park loop trail that offers improved connectivity and access to park features.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

general comments

Large trees would be so great for shade in hot sun. To make a trail more scenic, an environment would be great. It would be a good trip could be. Blue Jay.

OUTDOOR PICNIC SHELTER PLEASE WOULD BE FANTASTIC. Large shelter (covered) for field trips. Larger shelters that are covered.

Blue Jay Point County Park draft recommendations for public review

Example of public review comments on draft recommendations at Blue Jay Point County Park

- Eighty-two percent supported the creation of an elevated treetop trail, while 80 percent liked a central loop trail that would be accessible and provide for family walking and biking.



Children review the recommendations for Harris Lake County Park during a public input meeting. Input from children was integral in the planning process.

Historic Oakview County Park

- Ninety-six percent of survey respondents would like to see a primary loop trail that is ADA accessible and links to each of the site features.
- Ninety percent of survey respondents would like to see an additional play space near the education building and user activities that simulate life on a farm. Ninety percent also supported the idea of adding additional livestock to the site.
- Survey respondents (89 percent) support the idea of expanding this park to the unused area to include walking, fishing, hiking, and outdoor education.

Historic Yates Mill County Park

- Adding additional trails throughout the park with interpretive signage and creating connections to regional greenways was supported by 91 percent of respondents.
- Eighty-three percent liked improved access to water with stepping stones, vegetation, and an ADA accessible trail.
- Seventy-six percent supported adding buildings in the same architectural style as the mill to provide spaces for historic activities (or to house concessions or a gift shop).

Lake Crabtree County Park

- Eighty-six percent support providing a trailhead near the multi-use trails that has a shelter, bike “fix it” station, restrooms, first aid station, and changing area.
- Creation of a new Park Center with an iconic building that provides an educational setting, a place for rest and relaxation, observation of the waterfront, and park support facilities was liked by 71 percent of respondents.
- Improved connectivity with crosswalks, links to existing greenways, coordination with area transit for stop locations and wayfinding, and extension of trails across Aviation Parkway to increase total trail length was supported by 82 percent of respondents.

North Wake Landfill County Park

- Ninety-three percent supported renaming the park.
- Seventy-six percent responded favorably to a new ADA accessible trail that will wrap around the large hill from the existing playground with up-cycled art and bands of colored vegetation marking the mound’s growth.
- Respondents liked greenway connections, with 81 percent supporting connection to Abbotts Creek.
- Seventy-six percent supported a ribbon of skate skill areas.
- Large art placed on the northern mound was supported by 69 percent of respondents.

Outcomes of the Public Process

In addition to the Steering Committee and general public, the management staff and park staff were heavily involved in the process of analyzing and vetting recommendations. As they lead programs, help people navigate the parks, and express the brand of Wake County Parks and Recreation, the staff see how people use the parks and understand how modifications will enhance user experience.

This multi-faceted input process drove the recommendations in an implementable direction. Input from all groups was balanced to craft recommendations that would be visionary, yet realistic, for the future populations of Wake County. The evolution of the recommendations, including feedback from each element of the engagement process, is included in the matrix in Appendix C.

A person wearing a white helmet and a grey t-shirt is riding a bicycle on a dirt path through a dense forest. The path is lined with tall, thin trees, and sunlight filters through the leaves, creating dappled shadows on the ground. In the distance, another person can be seen riding a bicycle. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

4. Recommendations

Overview

Wake County is a prime model for livability in North Carolina. Job opportunities, medical centers, education facilities, and inspiring outdoor experiences are among just a small sample of reasons why people choose to live in and visit the area. As growth continues, quality of life for all citizens—regardless of age, race, gender, or ability—is integral to maintaining healthy, well-balanced communities in rural, suburban, and urban environments. County Parks and Recreation facilities and programs are key contributors to the County’s mission to improve economic, social well-being, and physical quality of the community. This plan sets a course for how each facility can be enhanced to respond to the evolving needs of the community and provide quality experiences for generations to come.

The recommendations of this plan have been vetted through several perspectives via a robust process of engagement and cross-checking. Each touchpoint of discovering need and determining appropriate action was considered through the lenses of staff, management, citizens, visitors, users, and non-users of all ages and abilities. The purpose of these recommendations is to guide management and staff toward a new vision for each park that complements the context, advances trends in recreation, and focuses on conservation, health and wellness, and social equity.

The following pages illustrate improvements at the master planning level, with representative photos, narrative, action steps, funding targets, and conceptual renderings. The division mission and goal is to ensure parks, programs, and resources are accessible all users. Recommendations for the department establish a baseline for each park to provide consistency of information across all communication platforms and a comprehensive wayfinding package to and around each park. Clarity will be critical to encourage new use and provide confidence while navigating each of the parks. Access emerged as the pinnacle to success for the department and each park. This can be defined as access via public transit, access in a sense of approachability, access for users with special needs, and access in the realm of connectivity throughout each programmed space. Together, the overall recommendations and each individual park improvement will result in increased awareness, user experience, environmental health, and social unity for users now and into the next decade.

Systemwide Recommendations

Throughout the planning process, several recommendations emerged that either were suitable for all parks or were not specific to any one place but would benefit the entire system. These recommendations are outlined below and segmented into the categories of Access + Equity, Facilities, Programs, and Management. Access + Equity emerged as a key topic throughout all input stages, with a strong emphasis on physical, emotional, and social definitions of access from ADA standards to language barriers and public transportation. These recommendations should dovetail with those of the *Wake County Greenway System Plan*, as well as other countywide transportation and comprehensive planning efforts.

Access + Equity

Vehicular

- Improve title signage for visibility and to distinguish from other County facilities. Consider creating a park logo or color palette that distinguishes the parks from other County facilities.
- Improve welcome sequence. What signage do people see? Where are they directed? How can they access information that will inform a safe and enjoyable visit? Who are they greeted by?

Bicycle/Pedestrian

- Improve access to transit from each park and provide better awareness of each park at nearby transit stops.
- Connect to Countywide greenway system.
- Provide sidewalks, crosswalks, countdown signals and/or HAWK signals at major and (if applicable) minor park entrances.
- Improve welcome sequence. What signage do people see? Where are they directed? How can they access information that will inform a safe and enjoyable visit? Who are they greeted by?
- Create a trail rating system to help users understand skill level needed to use a trail. This includes indicating which trails are ADA accessible.
- Add bicycle parking that meets the requirements of the League of American Bicyclists’ standards for placement, spacing, and style (replace non-compliant parking).

Wayfinding

- Develop a master wayfinding sign family for the park system. Sign types shall include: title signage (vehicle), title signage (greenway), kiosks (pull up car and pedestrian), directionals (vehicle and bike/ped), loop maps, building/special feature signage, pavement markings, mile markers, and trail blazes. Create an acceptable color pallete and suite of symbols to improve access. Symbols should include a scale for trail difficulty, as well as symbols for park use areas and restrictions.
- Vehicular signage should indicate where to park, where a welcome center or “starting point” can be found and major nodes or attractors in the park.
- Pedestrian and bicycle signs should be placed to capture those arriving via transit and greenway/sidewalk, as well as provide information for those approaching from parking areas.
- Pedestrian and bicycle signage should, where applicable, indicate distance and time for travel as well as level of difficulty.
- All trailheads should have kiosks with accurate maps of the trail system, level of difficulty, time investment, and safety information including shade, carrying water, and potential hazards.
- All loop trails should include mile markers for fitness tracking and safety.

Transit Access, Connections, and Messaging

- Create awareness for transit to park and park to transit options within maps, brochures, and on the County website.

ADA

- Create primary path that links park features.
- Coordinate to make sure any programs offered are available for those with physical and mental limitations.

Language

- Provide symbology that is universal in lieu of single language narrative (maps, signs, wayfinding, brochures).

User Ability

- Indicate which facilities are available to persons of various physical and mental skill levels and what the time invested will be per activity.

Outreach and Awareness

- Coordinate website, kiosk, and brochures with same information. Reconcile what is actually offered in each park with outreach materials.
- Change “amphitheater” to outdoor classroom on outreach materials, maps, and signage.
- Create a chart of all activities offered at all facilities and categorize by those offered at each park. Include mileage of trails (multiuse and mountain bike) for user comparison.
- Facebook and social media are easy and inexpensive avenues for reaching families across the County. Increase the County’s presence by having a dedicated Wake County Parks and Recreation Page and consider a page for each park (some parks have a dedicated page). In addition to posting events and activities on the County pages, assign a staff member to monitor other groups, events, and municipal sites for cross posting, promotion, and support.
- Trail closures should be posted on Facebook, the County website and other social media to provide real-time trip planning. Consider a real-time trail update on the County website (much like how a ski resort indicates when trails are open).

Facilities

Structures

- Explore passive solar orientation for all new buildings.
- Research opportunities to add solar and wind power to all parks.
- Use LEED guidelines when designing new buildings.

Site Furnishings

- Consider user ability in selecting site furnishings (drinking fountains, signage, seating areas) - ADA accessible, seat level, backs, etc.
- Include recycling receptacles alongside trash receptacles in each park.

Specialty Facilities

- Consider implementing sustainable landscape programs such as SITES guidelines when making site improvements.
- Practice low-impact development and consider opportunities to add rain gardens, green roofs, and stormwater collection.

Programs

Mission and Education

Health Cards

- To coincide with the development of Park Rx Program, Wake County Parks should identify activities that can be accomplished by individuals in 10, 20, 30, 40, and 60 minute increments. These cards should be available in each park display, with information about time and health. The cards should be crafted of sturdy material to enable return and reuse. A marketing campaign should accompany this program and all cards should be visible for trip planning on the County website.
- In addition to the Health Cards, Wake County should enact a “Health and Energy” program. This program would have several components. Private partnerships should be explored with Duke Energy to fund personal health tracking devices in parks. These devices could be borrowed (or purchased) at each park to track activity while in the park. These would overcome barriers to health tracking devices for economically challenged individuals. Every person

would have the ability to enter a personal number or pin to activate the device and continue to build their personal profile of activity. The County would provide personal login credentials through a health portal on the website where each individual could monitor their steps, calories burned, miles walk/biked/hiked, etc. The park system can become a part of a Countywide media campaign “eye on health” where the county, in real time, tracks human power, calories burned, etc. as a way to monitor the need to increase physical activity and combat the obesity epidemic, cardiovascular health issues, and inactivity.

- Provide trip planning messages on brochures and include a trip planner on the website to help people understand how they can get to each park via car, walking, biking, or transit.

Management

Staff Needs

- Create a policy for staff to welcome and be accessible to users, especially in concert with improved facilities.
- Have a resource available in the County to coordinate with staff when developing programs and facilities to represent the needs of special populations (ability, culture, language, etc.).

Partnerships

- Seek a “Healthy Routes to Parks” partner. Execute a media campaign to link personal and public health to parks via transit and proximity to neighborhoods. Work with the County Health Department to share resources for existing and future initiatives.
- The County should work with municipal and state parks and recreation departments to connect with doctors and encourage them to begin a Park Rx Program. In this program, doctors will prescribe patients with time spent in parks.
- Consider local schools as partners. Educate schools about program offerings and facilities available for school classes, programs, and field trips.
- Develop of list of partners, vendors, and user groups (public, private, non-profit) for each of the parks. Cross promote availability of programs and facilities across the park system for each of these groups.

Park-Specific Recommendations

The following pages list and illustrate recommendations for each individual park. A master plan 24 by 36 inch map is also available as an attachment to this plan. Following each recommendation section is a prioritized cost estimate for each park. As funding becomes available and other projects are initiated by the department, County, and adjacent municipalities, Wake County may choose to change the order of implementing the items recommended in this plan. More detailed cost estimates have been provided to the Department to enable grouping projects to suit department and budgetary needs.

Prioritization

Each recommended improvement was ranked in order to prioritize projects. The criteria for scoring was as follows:

Improves equity and/or accessibility. The master plan project helps us reach an underserved population and/or makes our park facilities easier for people to use or physically access.

Aligns with mission and goals of the individual park and the Division as a whole. The master plan project aligns with the primary purpose and activities of the park without causing undue harm to natural or cultural resources.

Attracts new users or visitors. The master plan project expands the Division's reach in the community and appeals to additional users.

Maximizes benefit to existing users. The master plan project improves the experience of existing users and provides new attractions to increase duration and frequency of visits.

Maximizes the benefit of an improvement at a conservative capital cost. The master plan project fills an important need, or perhaps multiple needs/functions/activities, at a reasonable cost.

Scoring

- 1 – Very low, no significant improvement
- 2 – Somewhat low
- 3 – Moderate
- 4 – Somewhat high
- 5 – Extremely high, improvement would be dramatic

This scoring was used to organize the recommended projects into three tiers: top tier projects, second tier projects, and future projects.





American Tobacco Trail

No current mission statement for this park.

Addresses:

Wimberly Parking Area:
1017 Wimberly Rd, Apex, NC 27502

1309 New Hill-Olive Chapel Rd
Apex, NC 27502

1305 White Oak Church Rd
Apex, NC 27523

Unique Feature:

Regional Connectivity

Size:

6.5 Miles

Hours:

8 am to 1 hour before sunset

MAIN VISION

The American Tobacco Trail is not just a local trail but a component of an evolving regional system. The trail is a fitness venue for hikers, bikers, and equestrians. It connects urban and rural communities along with corporate and local businesses. Mindful future connections will enhance the natural essence of the trail while expanding educational opportunities about conservation, locomotion, history, and health.

TRAILHEAD RECOMMENDATIONS

ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKING

Provide accessible parking spaces and route to the primary trail from existing trailheads.

LIGHTING

Provide additional lighting (consider Solar/LED fixtures) at trailheads for improved visibility at dawn and dusk as facilities are opening and closing.

PARKING SPACES

Expand parking areas to accommodate additional car and horse trailer parking. Provide bicycle parking and horse hitches near restrooms and trail entrances.



BICYCLE REPAIR

Provide bicycle repair stations at each trailhead.

STRETCHING STATIONS

Add stretching stations and outdoor fitness equipment at each trailhead.

ART AND INTERPRETATION

Add artifacts and art for historic and environmental interpretation along the trail.

ACCESS TO FOOD AND WATER

Allow mobile food vendors at trailheads and food truck or farmer stands for special events. Provide picnic tables and shelters to facilitate event programming and family picnicking. Provide signage to comfort station and water access and add water bottle, ADA, and pet-friendly water-filling stations.



HORSE WASTE

Explore opportunities to add composting stations at trailheads.

BICYCLE AND HORSE RENTAL

Research potential mobile vendors to provide bicycles and horses for rent.



SMALL SHELTERS WITH STORAGE AND CABOOSE KIOSK

Add shelters with storage areas at each trailhead. Select a key location to add a caboose that will serve as a shelter and information kiosk.

TRAILWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

TRAIL INTERSECTIONS AND SPURS

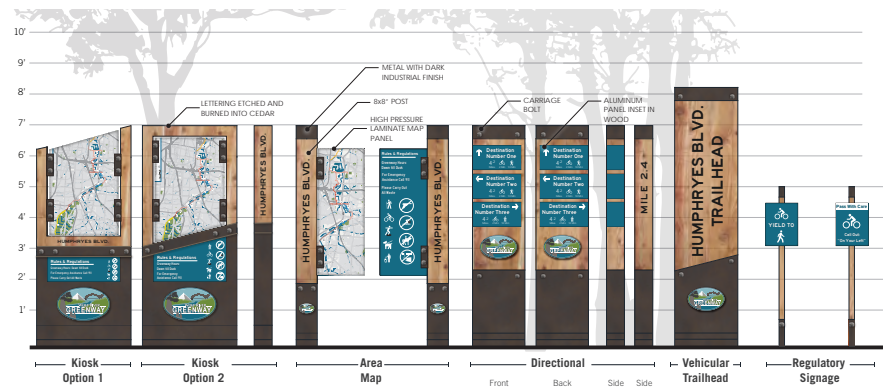
Provide standards and guidelines to municipalities and neighborhoods to indicate how to properly tie into the trail with signage, trail width, and wayfinding.

BOLLARDS AND FENCES

Ensure fence and bollard spacing allows for wheelchair, stroller, and bike carriage accessibility.

WAYFINDING

Develop a cohesive wayfinding package using the brand of the ATT. Provide kiosks at each trailhead and at key intersections that illustrate the length of the trail, key destinations, trailheads, restrooms, access to water, and the distances and timing via walking and bicycling to arrive at select places along the trail. Coordinate with municipalities for opportunities to co-brand. Use symbols in lieu of language when possible.



PULL-OFFS AND RESTING PLACES

Explore opportunities to create pull-offs for resting and bicycle repair. Install benches every half to quarter mile.

NEW FEATURES

1 GAP CLOSURE AND NOVELTY ATTRACTION

Work with New Hope Valley rail line to provide a stop at the east end of their passenger line that could close a critical gap in the ATT and become a major bike to train destination.



2 ART ALONG THE TRAIL

Identify key locations along the trail (like the Hwy 64 underpass) to include murals, public art, and relics that tell the story of the American Tobacco Trail, history of the area, importance of watersheds, connectivity of the East Coast Greenway, and future of transportation.



3 FUTURE CONNECTIONS

As connections to points east are completed, indicate on wayfinding signage the time and distance to the Neuse River Greenway, Downtown Cary, Downtown Apex, and Downtown Raleigh.

4 FUTURE CONNECTIONS

Extend greenway from passenger rail line to Harris Lake County Park.



PRIORITIZATION

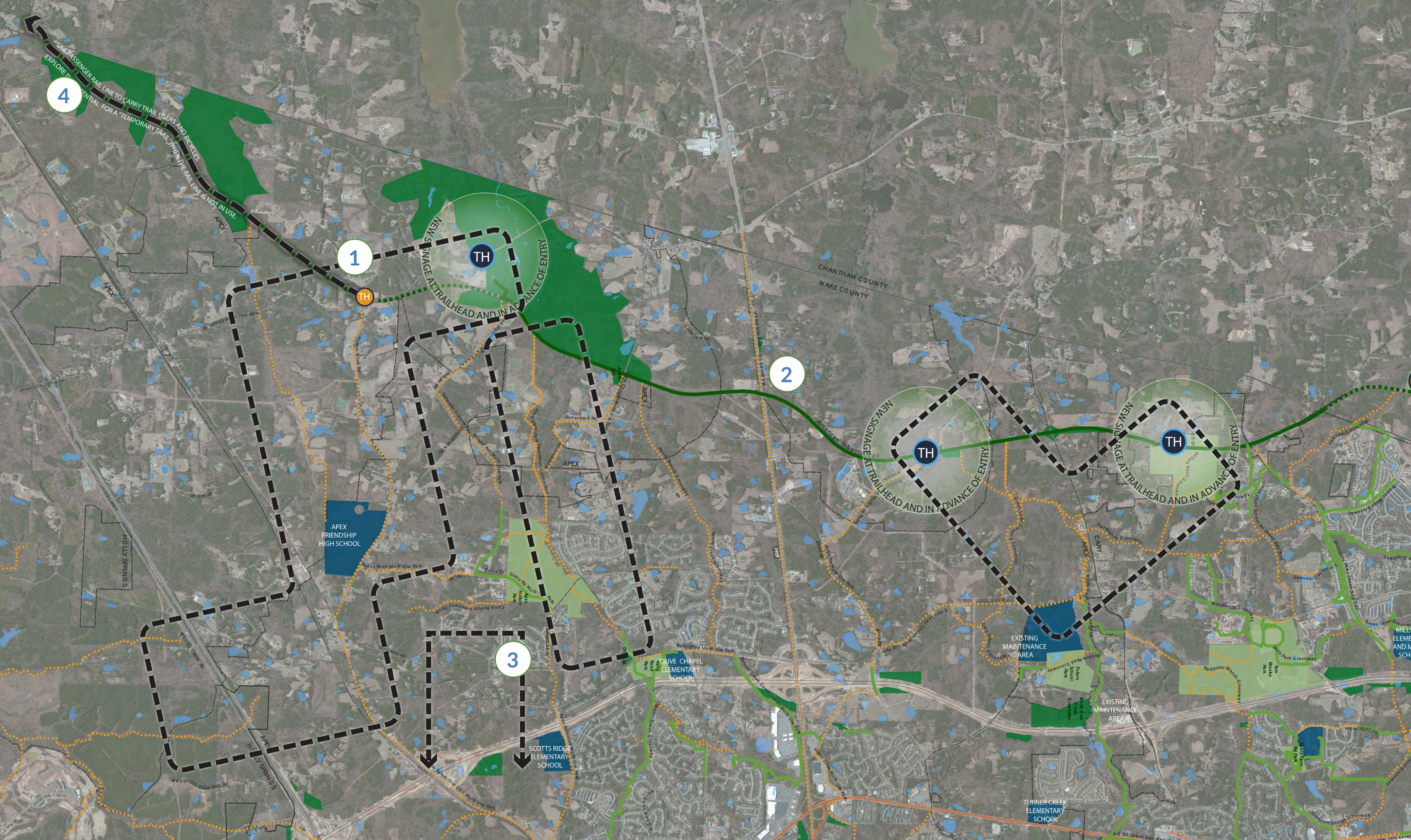
ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
Water Utility Connections / Fountains	200,000
Existing Parking Expansion/Improvements	450,000
Comfort Station / Restroom (1)	475,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,125,000
SECOND TIER	
ATT Extension to Hope Valley RR	3,000,000
Small connector trail	100,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	3,100,000
Total	4,225,000

BUDGET

In order to enhance the Amercian Tobacco Trail, we recommend the County seek funding of \$4,225,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill the trail’s vision include additional trail infrastructure and connections, general site and landscaping improvements, rest areas, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings along the trail and at trailheads.

Future Projects

- Trail overlooks and pull-offs
- Lighting
- New trailhead at Hope Valley RR
- Small shelters at trailheads
- Caboose kiosk at trailhead
- Signage and site furnishings







Blue Jay Point County Park

The mission and focus of Blue Jay Point is to provide opportunities for Wake County's population to experience environmental education in a natural setting.

Address: 3200 Pleasant Union Church Road, Raleigh NC, 27614		
Unique Features: Adventure Recreation/Retreat Center	Size: 236 Acres	Hours: 8 am-sunset Exhibit Center 8 am-5 pm

MAIN VISION

Blue Jay Point offers its visitors the best of outdoor recreation and environmental education opportunities. Groups and individuals alike can spend an entire day learning, playing and exploring amongst the park's Center for Environmental Education, trails, shoreline, educational garden and open play fields. Whether you're looking for a quiet, meditative space, a beautiful shoreline to explore, or even a treetop challenge for the more adventurous types, Blue Jay has something to offer every outdoor enthusiast.

NEW FEATURES

CAMPING

Provision of an area for on-site camping was supported by the public during the planning process. Further exploration is recommended to determine where to site the camping, which type of camping will be permitted, and how this addition will affect rules, regulations, and staffing.

- 1 ACCESSIBLE KAYAK LAUNCH**
Provide kayak launch for users of all abilities.
- 2 OVERLOOK**
Provide opportunities along the trail to view the natural habitat.
- 3 CHALLENGE HIKING**
Use the existing steep topography to create hiking trails for more advanced users. Provide additional signage where these trails cross the MST.



- 4 ADA LOOP TRAIL**
Provide opportunities to interact with the habitat to visitors of all abilities.
- 5 SMALL SHELTER**
New shelters should be integrated into the natural surroundings and may take on a more current style.



- 6

LARGE SHELTER

Provide a shelter with restrooms, fireplace, and storage that can serve as a gathering space for large groups (200+) and/or covered gathering space for day camps and classes.



- 7

KAYAK BEACH AND OVERLOOK

Provide an accessible route from the park center near the active play area to an overlook and kayak access location. In this same location, create an entrance to the park from the water and blueway trail.



- 8

BLUEWAY

Add markers and stopping points along a blueway trail that skirts the shoreline of the park.
- 9

PARKING

This lot will accommodate shelter users and visitors using the kayak launch.

ENHANCED FEATURES

- 10

EDUCATION CENTER

Expand to provide additional education and display space.
- 11

NATURE PLAY

Expand and enhance the current nature play area.



- 12

EXISTING RETREAT CENTER

Expand opportunity for a variety of organizations to make use of the center.



PRIORITIZATION

ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
Education Pavillion (inc. restrooms, parking, etc.)	1,600,000
ADA trail access to waterfront	250,000
Expansion of Nature Playground	95,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,945,000
SECOND TIER	
Kayak Beach	25,000
Waterfront overlooks (3)	190,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	215,000
Total	2,160,000

BUDGET

In order to make Blue Jay a destination for outdoor recreation and environmental education, we recommend the County seek funding of \$2,160,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill this park’s vision include general site and landscaping improvements, parking expansion, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings.

Future Projects

- ADA park loop trail
- Challenge hiking trails
- Park center expansion
- Small shelters
- Kayak launch at Six Forks
- Garden expansion
- Signage and site furnishings





Crowder District Park

No current mission statement for this park.

Address:

4709 Ten Ten Road Apex NC, 27539

Unique Features:

Gardens/Environmental Programs

Size: 33 Acres

Hours:

8 am-sunset, 7 days a week

MAIN VISION

Crowder District Park provides a sense of community in a suburban area. The park is a destination for daily health and physical activities and serves as a place for family/group gatherings and education programming. Utilizing the natural and built elements, themed gardens and plantings, the park hopes to improve the connection between visitors and the environment. Connectivity to existing/future greenways and parks and the acquisition of surrounding property will allow Crowder District Park to expand its programs, facilities, services, and overall community presence.

NEW FEATURES

1

BOG GARDEN

Create a garden with opportunities for play and water quality education.



2

NATURE PLAY

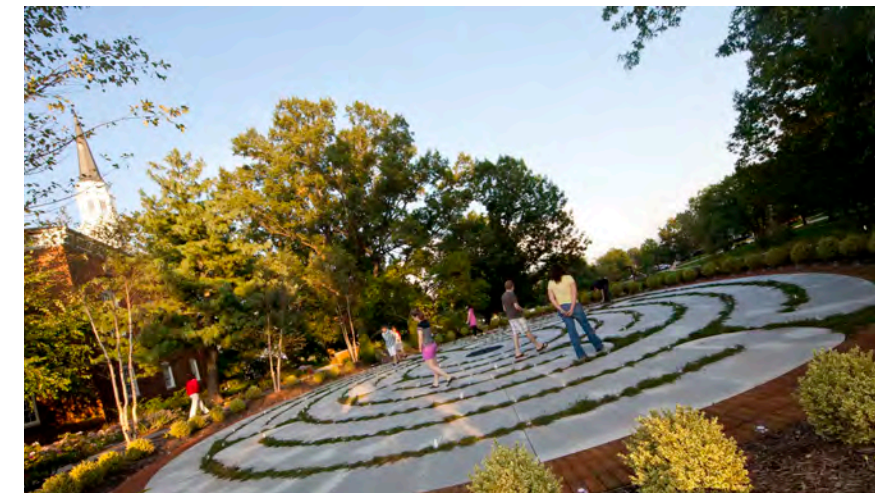
A new nature play area will support daily use and can be designed to support park programming.



3

HEALING GARDEN

Provide a quiet respite for self-reflection, yoga, stretching, and connecting with self and nature.



4

BACK PORCH

Add classroom space in the form of a large screened-in back porch similar to the classroom space at Prairie Ridge.



- 5

BOARDWALK
Add boardwalk to link new “back porch” with existing boardwalk. Include kayak and water education access for staff during programs and creative platforms for water interaction.



- 6

HEALTH & WELLNESS GARDEN
Replace existing playground equipment and add multi-generational exercise equipment at this location and along the primary greenway trail.



- 7

DOG AMENITIES
Add dog water fountains and additional waste stations along the trail to serve the large population of dogs in the park.



ENHANCED FEATURES

- 8

CONNECTIVITY AND VISIBILITY
Support installation of a sidewalk along Ten-Ten Road for pedestrian access and the exploration of a Complete Streets study to provide equity in transportation. Clear vegetation to improve visibility of existing entrance sign. Add a park sign at each property corner to indicate park entrance ahead. Work with NCDOT on adding sidewalks and fully controlled pedestrian crosswalks at Ten-Ten Road and Holly Springs Road to connect nearby neighborhoods and improve pedestrian access to the park.

- 9

PARK ENTRANCE
Explore realigning the entrance with Cortland Dr. during Ten-Ten Road Improvement Project.

- 10

PARK CENTER
Improve maintenance area, expand welcome center, add parking, and create a welcome plaza, focused on pedestrian arrivals and large enough for gatherings or check-in tents for special events.

- 11

BIRD GARDEN
Provide opportunities for learning more about the connection between plants and birds and add a “nest” outdoor classroom.



Crowder District Park

- 12

PRAIRIE GARDEN
Expand the garden by adding vegetation, interpretive signs, and seating areas.
- 13

GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY
Expand the trail system in the park to connect to regional greenway systems.
- 14

RAIN GARDEN
Enhance the garden by adding interpretive signage and improving the conveyance and storage functions.
- 15

BUTTERFLY GARDEN
Expand the garden and add interpretive signage.

PRIORITIZATION

ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
New Nature playground	275,000
Back Porch Classroom	600,000
Back Porch overlook / teaching platform	100,000
Park Center	795,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,770,000
SECOND TIER	
Fitness Equipment	35,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	35,000
Total	1,805,000

BUDGET

In order to make Crowder a park of gardens, we recommend the County seek funding of \$1,805,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill this park’s vision include general site and landscaping improvements, additional trail infrastructure, an expanded maintenance area, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings, including dog support areas.

Future Projects

- Natural surface trail improvements
- Trail access improvements
- Sidewalk along Ten-Ten road
- Boardwalk to backporch
- Staff kayak/canoe access
- Parking expansion in north
- Playground expansion
- Existing garden enhancements
- New healing garden
- Signage, site furnishings, and landscaping



Crowder District Park recommendations

Two foot contours



Harris Lake County Park

No current mission statement for this park.

Address:

2112 County Park Drive, New Hill NC, 27562

Unique Features:

Hiking

Size: 680 Acres

Hours:

8 am-sunset, 7 days a week

MAIN VISION

Harris Lake is the “Destination for the Day,” a place to reconnect with nature through recreational and educational opportunities. There is something here for each family member to enjoy—be it fitness and health-related activities or just back to the simple things in life like fishing and family picnicking. It is nature that connects play, education, and overall human development together.

NEW FEATURES

CAMPING

Provision of an area for on-site camping was supported by the public during the planning process. Further exploration is recommended to determine where to site the camping, which type of camping will be permitted, and how this addition will affect rules, regulations, and staffing.

NAME EACH POND

Mark each pond with a naming sign and add names of the ponds to the trail maps to aid in navigation.

1

LOOP ROAD AND GREENWAY

Use the service road to expand vehicular circulation toward the point and bring users to additional places within the park. Create a minimum 10 foot wide ADA greenway loop to enhance access and serve users who prefer this surface type to soft surface trails.

2

GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY

Expand the trail system in the park to connect to regional greenway systems.

3

PARKING AND COMFORT STATION

To accommodate disc golf and tree top trail users.

4

TREE TOP TRAIL

Create an elevated trail in the tree canopy that is ADA accessible with several overlooks, hammocks, and spaces that can serve as an outdoor classroom.



5

PARK CENTER

Design a new solar-powered, energy efficient park center to become the official arrival point for visitors. Include offices, indoor classrooms, display areas, restrooms, and storage. Add sufficient parking to accommodate events and groups using the new center.



6

BLUEWAY

Create a blueway trail along the shoreline using floating mile markers and interpretive signage.

ENHANCED FEATURES

7

HIKING TRAILS

Add wayfinding, mile markers, and interpretive signage to help navigate and celebrate the mission of the park.

8

TRAIL SYSTEM

Add connector trails to shorten loops and enhance access for users.

9

DISC GOLF

Create courses that are ADA accessible and youth friendly.

10

MAINTENANCE AREA

Expand the maintenance area to better suit the needs of the grounds, programming, and staff.

11

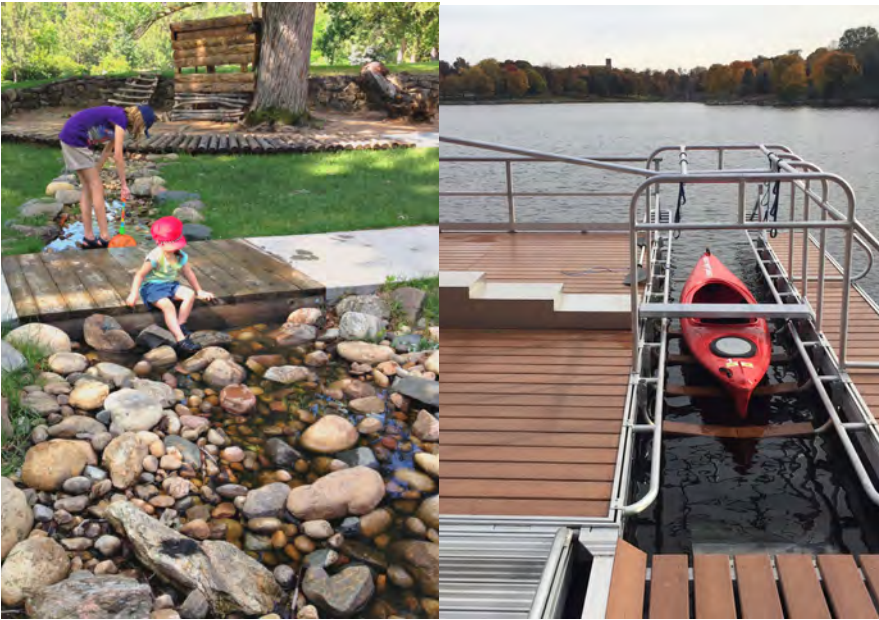
MOUNTAIN BIKING NETWORK

Create sustainable trails and improve rider experience to accommodate a wider variety of skill levels. Enhance the existing trails with signage.

12

PLAYGROUNDS AND WATER ACCESS

Expand the natural play area and upgrade the existing playground. Enhance water access by creating a kayak/paddleboard/canoe launch with ADA accessibility. Explore the potential of adding a vendor to rent human powered watercraft.





PRIORITIZATION

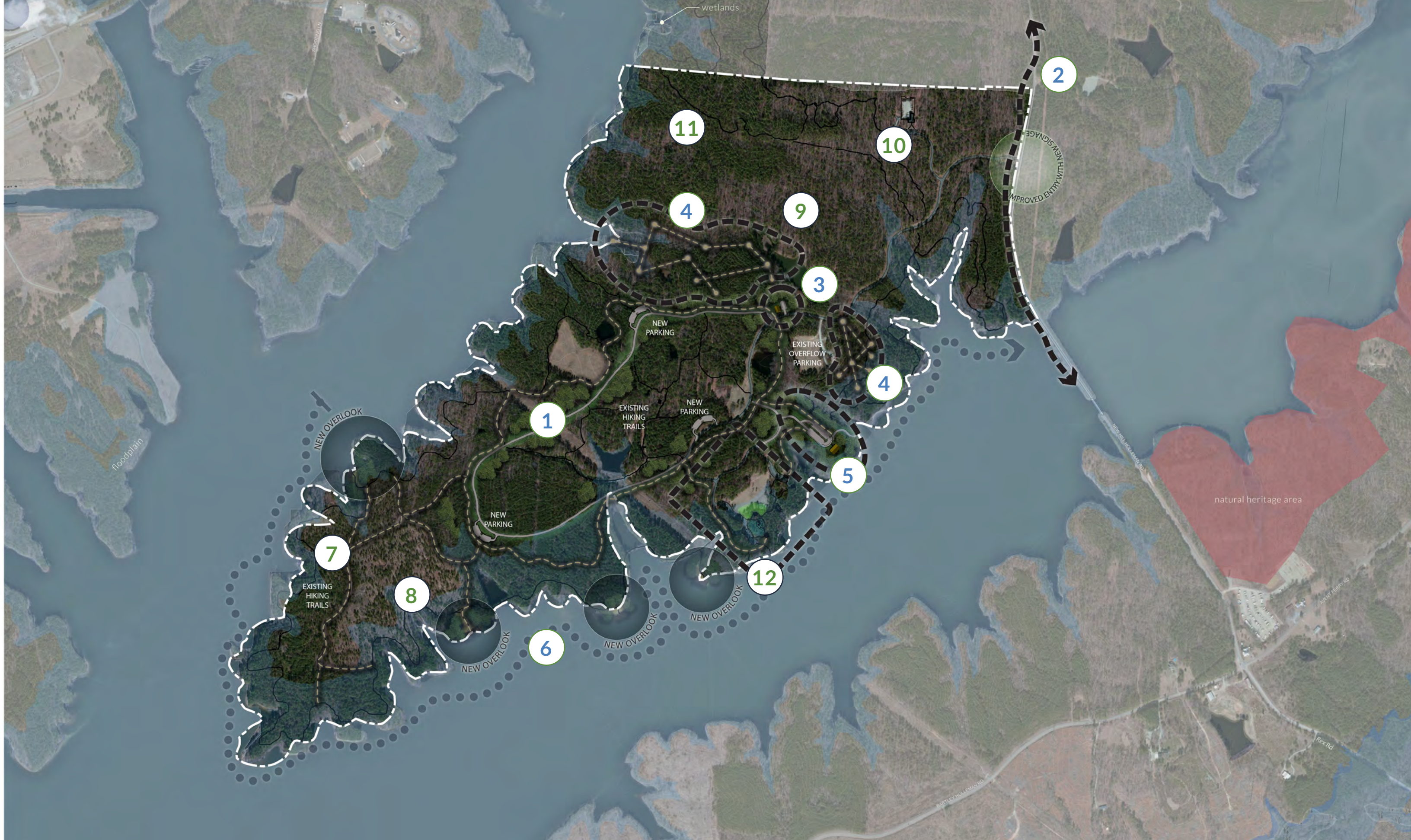
ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
New ADA kayak access and launch	550,000
ADA/Youth disc golf improvements	200,000
Comfort Station/RR (Disc golf)	350,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,100,000
SECOND TIER	
New Park Center	3,650,000
Tree Top Trail	750,000
New internal connector trails	350,000
Overlook decks (3)	275,000
Park loop greenway trail	1,100,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	6,125,000
Total	7,225,000

BUDGET

In order to make Harris Lake a destination for the County, we recommend the County seek funding of \$7,225,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill this park’s vision include general site and landscaping improvements, camping facilities, parking improvements, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings, including dog support areas.

Future Projects

- Mountain bike trail enhancements
- New shelter
- Existing maintenance area expansion
- Playground renovation
- Nature playground
- New loop road
- Parking area expansions
- Signage and site furnishings



Harris Lake County Park

recommendations





Historic Oak View County Park

In the tradition of a great state which celebrates its past, cherishes its heritage, and nurtures its resources for future generations, Historic Oak View County Park interprets and preserves the agricultural heritage and rural farm life of North Carolina through educational programs, special events, and exhibits, and provides cultural enrichment and passive recreation opportunities for visitors.

Address:

4028 Carya Drive, Raleigh NC, 27610

Unique Features:

Historic Farm

Size: 27 Acres

Hours:

8 am-sunset, 7 days a week

MAIN VISION

Historic Oak View County Park interprets North Carolina's diverse agrarian past and invites families to explore and connect with daily farm life. Expanding the park's educational and recreational opportunities will enhance the visitor experience and broaden its role in the community.

NEW FEATURES

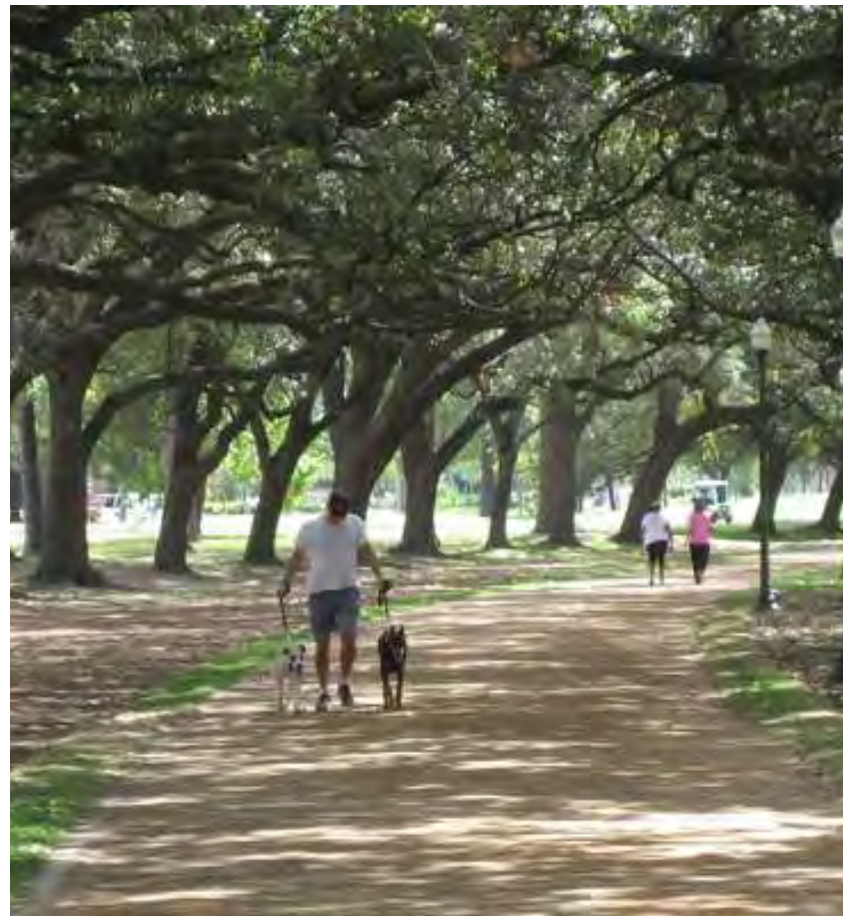
FARM TO TABLE

Look for opportunities that teach about farm-to-table methods using local farmers and food grown at Oak View.

1

PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS

Create a primary loop trail around the park and additional ADA accessible pathways to connect each park feature.



2

ACCESSIBLE GARDEN

Allow all users to experience the garden plots by widening the walking aisles and raising the garden beds to easier access.



3

PARK EXPANSION AREA

Offer additional park features including a playground, walking and hiking paths, and fishing platform.



- 4

INTERPRETIVE PLAY
Create and enhance interpretive play spaces throughout the park that allow for interactive learning and user activities that simulate life on the farm.



- 5

FISHING PLATFORM
Provide access to pond.
- 6

PLAYGROUND
Create new farm-themed playground.

ENHANCED FEATURES

- 7

SIDEWALK AND TRANSIT CONNECTIVITY
Expand the trail system in the park to connect to proposed sidewalk facilities, public transit systems, and other recreational amenities, such as the Neuse River Trail.

- 8

MAIN FARMHOUSE
Complete updates and enhancements of permanent exhibits.



- 9

FORMAL ENTRY
Provide designated entry into historic building.
- 10

CROPS
Expand opportunities to cultivate food on the farm and use for educational purposes.
- 11

CONNECTIVITY
Expand the trail system in the park to connect to Wake County office park and facilities and nearby Neuse River Trail.
- 12

PARKING AREA
Add additional parking spaces.

- 13

FISHING ACCESS
Improve access near the existing ponds for viewing and fishing while maintaining the natural “farm feel” of the edge of the lake.



- 14

REAL ANIMALS
Add more live animals to the farm to allow for enhanced interaction with farm life, an opportunity to learn about historic and present day practices, improved user experience, and expansion of the attractions on the farm.



- 15

SOUND WALL
Sound wall on west side of property between I-440 and main farm buildings.



PRIORITIZATION

ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
New themed playground	550,000
Herb Garden ADA improvements	85,000
Main House Upgrades & Exhibits	400,000
Pecan Grove loop trail	175,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,210,000
SECOND TIER	
Sidewalk to Office Park /Poole Rd.	150,000
Pond overlooks / platforms	200,000
Enhance existing garden/crop areas	85,000
Parking addition along entry drive	55,000
Sound barrier along I-40	550,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,040,000
Total	2,250,000

BUDGET

In order to enhance Oak View’s agricultural story, we recommend the County seek funding of \$2,250,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill this park’s vision include general site and landscaping improvements, improved sidewalks, improvements to the livestock barn, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings, including additional bicycle racks.

Future Projects

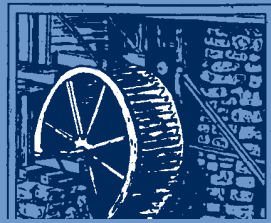
- Trail expansion
- Expanded maintenance yard/facility
- Interactive play elements
- Signage, site furnishings, and landscaping



Historic Oak View County Park recommendations

Two foot contours





Historic Yates Mill County Park

"Escape the Daily Grind" through a variety of unique recreational, cultural, natural and agricultural experiences.

Address:

4620 Lake Wheeler Road, Raleigh NC, 27603

Unique Features:

Historic Mill

Size: 174 Acres

Hours:

8 am-sunset, 7 days a week

MAIN VISION

Historic Yates Mill County Park celebrates its past, cherishes its heritage, and nurtures its cultural and natural resources for future generations. NC State University's agriculture research farm provides the backdrop and offers glimpses into North Carolina agricultural heritage while protecting significant wildlife habitat in the heart of Raleigh. Expanded trails will elevate the park as a favorite day-use facility for health and wellness while new historical elements will provide users with a reason to linger longer. The relationship between Wake County, Yates Mill Associates, and NC State University, the physical connection with modern agricultural practices, and university based research in natural resource management, will draw groups and individuals looking for an experience in local North Carolina history, an escape into our natural world and quality environmental education.

NEW FEATURES

1

BOARDWALK

Add a boardwalk through the wetlands to create a loop for trail users.



2

CLASSROOM AND PICNIC AREA

Provide new covered shelter to serve as outdoor classroom.

3

ART IN THE FIELD

Add art and artifacts that attract visitors and highlight the park entrance. Incorporate art and artifacts near the classroom space that tell the story of the park and create a flexible play space.



4

VILLAGE AND HISTORIC ACTIVITIES

Add village buildings to create historic activity spaces for a blacksmith and a house creamery, as well as appropriate buildings for a gift shop and concessions.



5

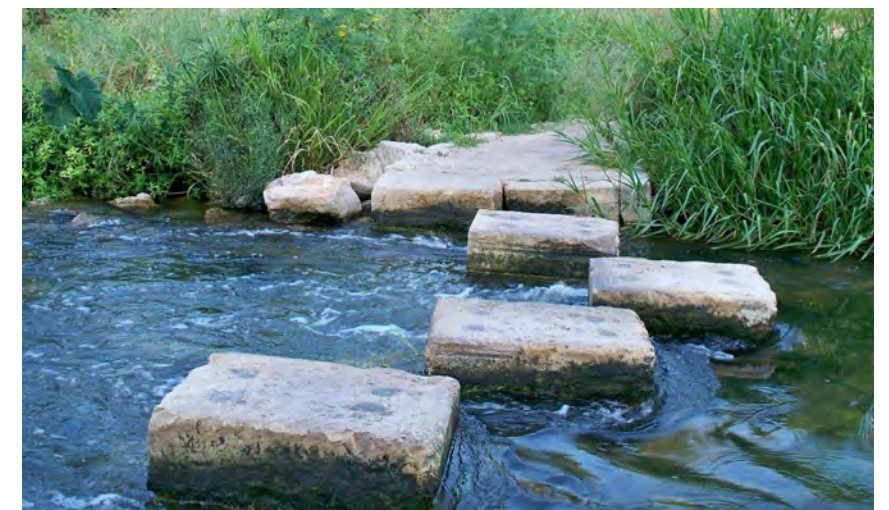
ADA TRAIL TO MILL

Add accessible trail to allow people of all abilities to visit the mill.

6

WATERFRONT ACCESS AREA

Provide access and water interaction opportunities that encourage picnicking and water activities, such as canoeing and kayaking.



- 7

OVERLOOK

Provide areas along trail to view mill and pond habitat.

ENHANCED FEATURES

- 8

GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY

Expand the trail system in the park to connect to regional greenway systems.

- 9

MAINTENANCE AREA

Move some maintenance functions away from the waterfront and expand maintenance area. Screen views into maintenance area with vegetative border.

- 10

OVERFLOW PARKING AND FLEX-SPACE ENTRANCE

Provide new entry signage and clear vegetation to improve visibility and create a more legible park entrance.

- 11

GREENWAY AND TRANSIT CONNECTIVITY

Create key connections to NCSU facilities, nearby sidewalk/paths, and the State Farmers Market. These connections not only create physical opportunities to increase visitation and cross promotion but also tell the agricultural story and mission of the park. Ensure that a road crossing to the NC State greenway is safe by using crosswalks and other devices such as HAWK signals to alert drivers of pedestrian crossings. Collaborate with NC State to explore the potential of connecting people to this park via the Wolfline. Coordinate with NCDOT to explore a greenway connection as part of the bridge replacement project at Lake Wheeler Road.

- 12

MILL EXPERIENCE

Create an ADA accessible entrance to the Mill that protects the integrity of the historic structure. Expand the historic experience by relocating the Phares Yates House to this property and providing access and interpretive signage.

- 13

PARKING

Explore opportunity to share parking with the recycling center for event overflow parking.



PRIORITIZATION

ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
ADA trail to Mill	110,000
Water access edge improvements	350,000
Boardwalk along Creekside Trail	1,800,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	2,260,000
SECOND TIER	
Overlooks (3)	250,000
Overflow parking improvements	300,000
Small shelter at classroom area	175,000
Phares Yates House relocation	450,000
Canoe / Kayak ADA launch area	175,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,350,000
Total	3,610,000

BUDGET

In order to celebrate Yates Mill’s history, we recommend the County seek funding of \$3,610,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill this park’s vision include general site and landscaping improvements, additional trail infrastructure, art and sculpture, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings.

Future Projects

- Millpond loop trail improvements
- Greenway trail connections
- Pedestrian bridge at Lake Wheeler
- Mill village buildings
- Canoe/kayak storage building
- Maintenance/shelter building improvements
- Interpretive art/educational elements
- Signage, site furnishings, and landscaping



Historic Yates Mill County Park

recommendations

Two foot contours





Lake Crabtree County Park

To serve the growing needs of Wake County residents by having passive leisure and recreational opportunities available in a natural setting.

Address:

1400 Aviation Parkway, Morrisville NC, 27560

Unique Features:

Mountain Biking/Water Access

Size: 215 Acres

Hours: 8 am-sunset, 7 days a week
Park office, 8 am-1 pm

MAIN VISION

This park is truly “everyone’s park.” From the ADA accessible trails to the new accessible kayak launches, and connections with trails and transit—equity in recreation, leisure, and wellness is the focus. Multi-generational spaces create opportunities for the whole family to enjoy an hour or a whole day at the park. Water activities, peaceful trails, picnic shelters, and multi-use trails provide opportunities for enjoyment for daily activities and special events for all ages and abilities.

ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES

ADA ACCESSIBLE PARKING

Provide accessible parking spaces to all use areas and the primary loop trail.

ADA ACCESSIBLE TRAIL LOOP

Enhance the existing loop trail to provide equality in mobility and access for all park users.

PARK CONNECTIVITY ACCESSIBILITY

Renovate park trails and sidewalks to create ADA accessible paths connecting each use area in the park.

NEW FEATURES

1

BOARDWALK

Constructed in conjunction with future roadway improvements.

2

TRAIL EXPANSION AREA

Expand trails across Aviation Parkway.

3

CONNECTIVITY

Improve connectivity with crosswalks, links to existing greenways, sidewalk connections to RDU, and coordination with area transit for stop locations and wayfinding. Extend trails across Aviation Parkway to increase total trail length.



4

SIDEWALK

Complete the pedestrian connection from the entrance and tie into the new park loop.

5

TRAILHEAD

Provide a trailhead near the mountain biking trails that has a shelter, bike “fix it” station, restrooms, first aid station, and changing area.



6

PARK CENTER

Create a new Park Center with an iconic building that provides an educational setting, a place for rest and relaxation, observation of the waterfront, and park support facilities. The iconic tower will be re-imagined to preserve the overlook while enhancing safety and accessibility.



- 7

BLUEWAY
Add mile markers and resting places along a blueway trail that skirts the shoreline.

ENHANCED FEATURES

- 8

GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY
Collaborate with municipalities and the office parks to complete a loop around the lake.

- 9

PARKING
Expand existing parking areas.

- 10

LOOP TRAIL
Enhance the existing loop trail to become an ADA accessible Lake Loop. The route would improve connectivity throughout the park and provide new connections to the Cary and Morrisville greenway systems.



- 11

GATHERING SPACE
Provide a new picnic shelter and restrooms for large groups (over 100 people), new playground, and multi-generational park activities suitable for varied ages and abilities.





PRIORITIZATION

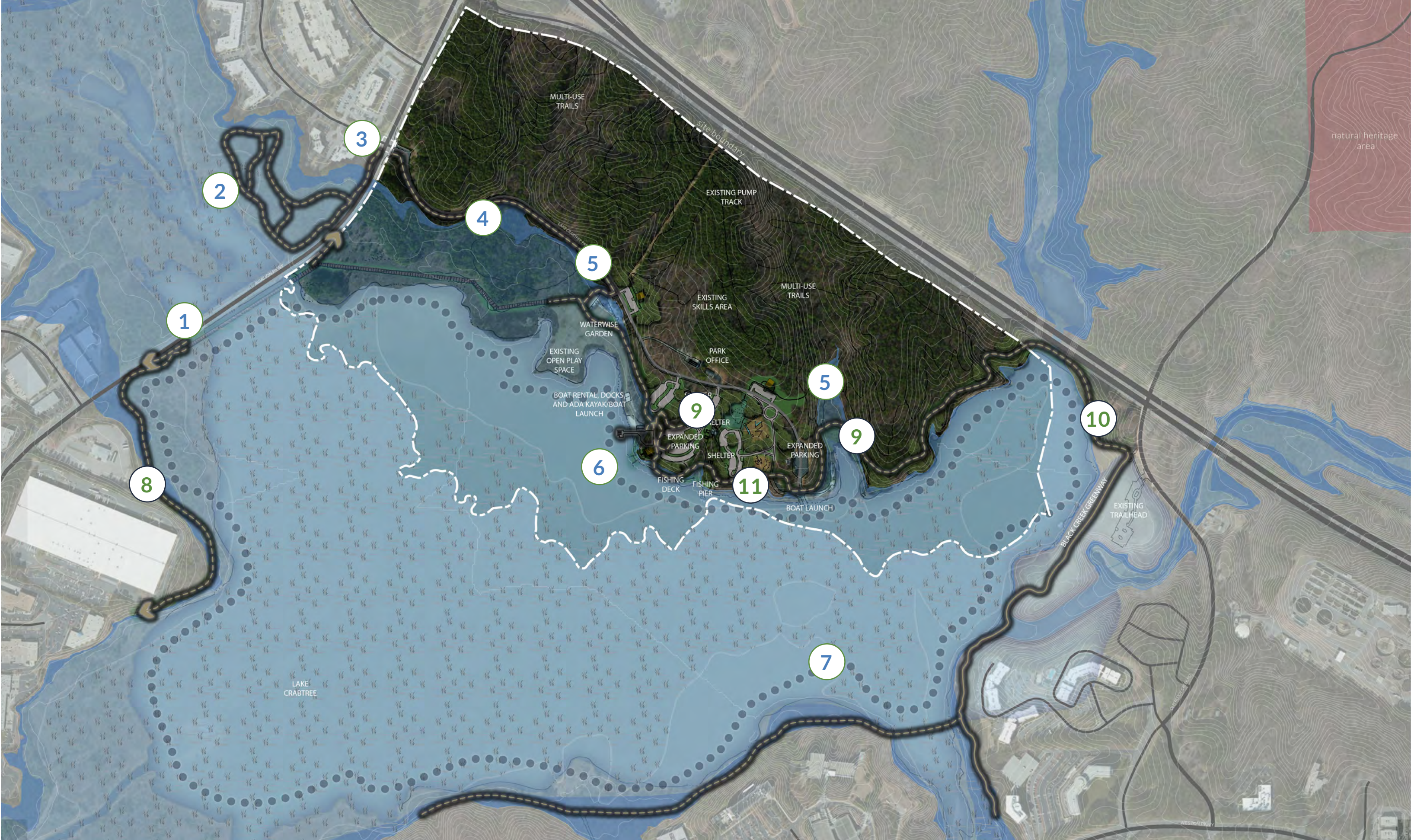
ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
New Park Center	2,790,000
Park loop trail (paved ADA)	850,000
Concrete sidewalk to Aviation	45,000
Expanded parking areas / roadway (2)	400,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	4,085,000
SECOND TIER	
None	
Total	4,085,000

BUDGET

In order to ensure Lake Crabtree continues to appeal to all, we recommend the County seek funding of \$4,085,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill this park’s vision include general site and landscaping improvements, additional trail infrastructure, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings, including dog support areas and bicycle amenities.

Future Projects

- Internal trail connectors
- Trail expansion area
- MTB trail expansion
- New shelter
- Park activity spaces/games
- MTB trailhead
- Boardwalk along Aviation and Old Beech Nature Trail
- Improved kayak car top launch area
- Playground improvements
- Nature playground
- Signage and site furnishings



Lake Crabtree County Park

recommendations





North Wake Landfill County Park

No current mission statement for this park.

Address:

9300 Deponie Drive Raleigh NC, 27614

Unique Features:

Reuse/Viewshed

Size: N/A

Hours:

8 am-sunset, 7 days a week

MAIN VISION

This park brings waste, conservation, recycling, and re-use to the forefront of visitor experience. Opportunities will be created throughout the park to reflect on the importance of conscious use of materials, human effects on the earth, and how re-thinking materials—which some consider trash—can become beautiful art and vehicles for creativity and recreation.

NEW FEATURES

CHANGE THE NAME

Create a committee or hold a contest to create a new name better aligned with the main vision.

1

TRANSIT CONNECTION

Work with CAT to create a stop near the park entrance.

2

PARKING

To serve top of the hill trail.

3

DUMPSTER PLANTERS

Up-cycle dumpsters as planters to provide shade without penetrating the mound. Enlist artists to design each dumpster to tell a story of energy, consumption, and human impacts on the earth.



4

ART ON THE HILL

Provide a setting for student/community developed art to be placed on the mound. At the east, visitors will view the art from the trail and surrounding area.



5

PARKING

To serve mountain biking trails.

6

INTERPRETIVE VEGETATION

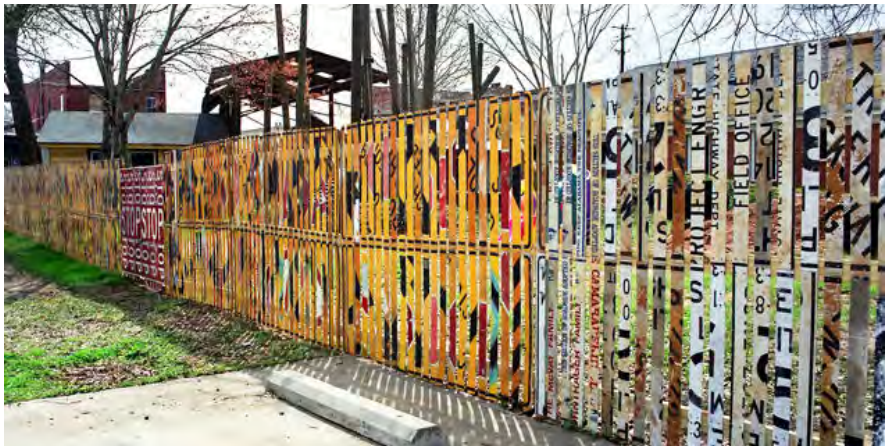
Plant bands of native vegetation in colored patterns around the hill to illustrate the height the landfill grew over a period of time. Pair the plantings with interpretive signage around the park.



7

ART LOOP TRAIL + STORY FENCE

Create a loop trail around the northern mound to link with Abbotts Creek Trail. To prevent access to the mound, install a story fence to educate visitors about waste, recycling, and re-use.



8

RECYCLE PLAY

A different take on nature play using recycled materials instead of natural elements to coincide with the theme of the park.

9

TRAIL

To connect with Abbotts Creek Trail.

10

LOOP TRAIL

Create a greenway trail that loops the perimeter of the road and connects uses throughout the park with dog support facilities including fountains and waste stations.

11

PARKING

This lot will accommodate visitors to the skate trails and art loop.

12

SKATE TRAIL

Create a trail system with below-ground level and above-ground ramps. Plazas, railings, and jumps will be created specifically for tricks and challenges for multiple levels. The loop trail will continue on the outside of the skate trail to provide connectivity and observation.



13

TRAIL

To connect with the school and community center.

14

ADA ACCESSIBLE TRAIL

A new trail leading to the top of the main hill will be manageable for those with limited physical abilities with gradual slopes, landings, benches, and shade.

ENHANCED FEATURES

15

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Expand the trail network as planned in the previous master plan.

16

TOP OF THE HILL

To provide shade while preserving views.

17

PLAYGROUND

To provide shade for youth and adults.



PRIORITIZATION

ITEM	COST
TOP TIER	
Top of the Hill ADA trail	450,000
New Facility Trail	575,000
Parking	250,000
New Playground (Energy/Recycling Theme)	350,000
Playground shade structures	90,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,715,000
SECOND TIER	
Park loop trail continuation	1,450,000
Subtotal Top Tier Items	1,450,000
Total	3,165,000

BUDGET

In order to tell North Wake Landfill’s story of waste and recycling, we recommend the County seek funding of \$3,165,000. In addition to the new and enhanced features outlined, costs required to fulfill this park’s vision include general site and landscaping improvements, artwork, additional mountain bike and skate trail infrastructure, fitness stations, wayfinding signage, and site furnishings, including fencing.

Future Projects

- Art loop trail
- MTB trail expansion
- Sidewalks to Deponie Drive
- Shelters
- Specialty fencing along north hill
- Dumpster plantings
- Interpretive vegetation plantings
- Parking expansions
- Signage, site furnishings, and lighting



North Wake Landfill County Park recommendations

Two foot contours

