



# Park Facility Master Plan Updates

final report

FEBRUARY 2017



# 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

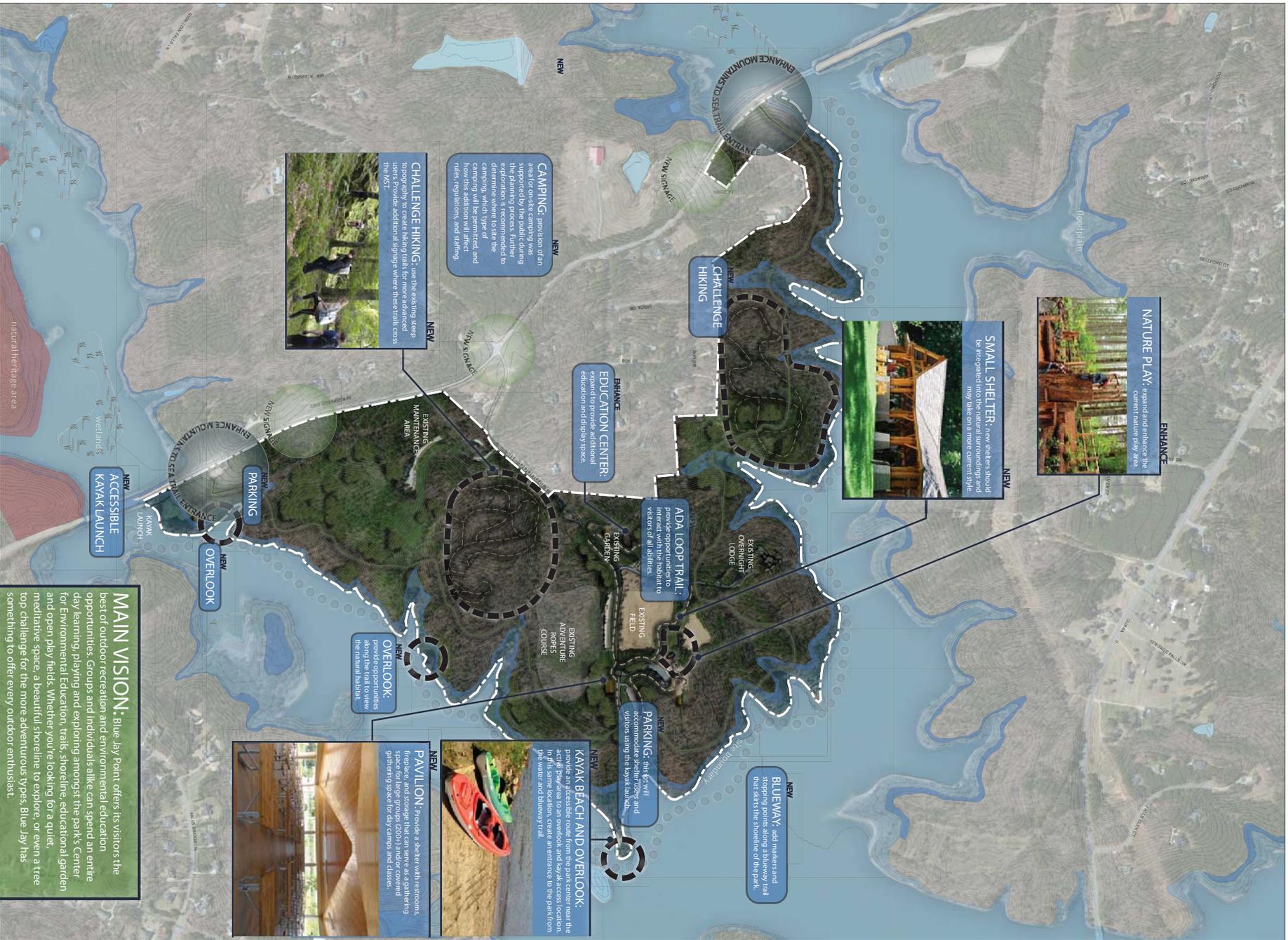
The recommendations of this plan have been vetted through several perspectives via a robust process of engagement and cross-checking. Each touchpoint of discovering need and determining appropriate action was considered through the lenses of staff, management, citizens, visitors, users, and non-users 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.*







**NATURE PLAY** - expand and enhance the current nature play area.



**SMALL SHELTER** - new shelters should be integrated into the natural surroundings and may also serve as a current shelter.



**CHALLENGE HIKING**

**CAMPING** - provision of an area for on-site camping was highlighted as a priority for the challenge exploration. It is recommended to determine where to site the camping, which type of camping will be permitted, and what the visitors will need (e.g. fire pits, 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.

**EDUCATION CENTER** - expand to provide additional education and display space.

**ADA LOOP TRAIL** - provide an undisturbed, paved trail that is accessible to visitors of all abilities.

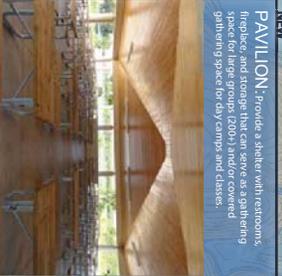
**PARKING** - this off-street parking area will accommodate shelter, ropes, and visitors using the kayak launch.

**BLUEWAY** - add markers and stopping points along a Blueway trail that starts at the shoreline of the park.

**KAWAK 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 blowway trail.



**PAVILION** - provide a shelter with restrooms, firebox, and storage that can serve as a gathering space for large groups (500+) and/or covered gathering space for day camps and classes.



**OVERLOOK** - provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy the natural habitat.

**ACCESSIBLE KAWAK 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



**NEW HEALING GARDEN:** provide a quiet respite for self-reflecting youth. The garden will connect to the existing trail and connecting with east entrance.



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

**NEW NATURE PLAY:** a new nature play area will support daily use after school to support park programming.



**EXISTING CLASSROOM:** A large screened-in back porch similar to the classroom space at Prairie Ridge.

**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. Includes kayak and water education access for staff access during programs and creative platforms for water interaction.



**NEW BOG GARDEN:** create a garden with opportunities for play and water quality education.



**ENHANCE PRAIRIE GARDEN:** expand the garden by adding vegetation, interpretive signs, and seating areas.

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



**RAIN GARDEN:** enhance the garden by adding interpretive signage and storage functions.

**NEW HEALTH & WELLNESS GARDEN:** replace existing outdoor fitness equipment at this location and along the primary greenway trail.



**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 PARK CENTER:** create a welcome center, add parking, and on pedestrian arrival and lounge enough for gatherings or check-in tents for special events.

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

**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 signage to improve driver and pedestrian awareness will be added. Work with KCDOT 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.

**PARK ENTRANCE:** work with Corland 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.

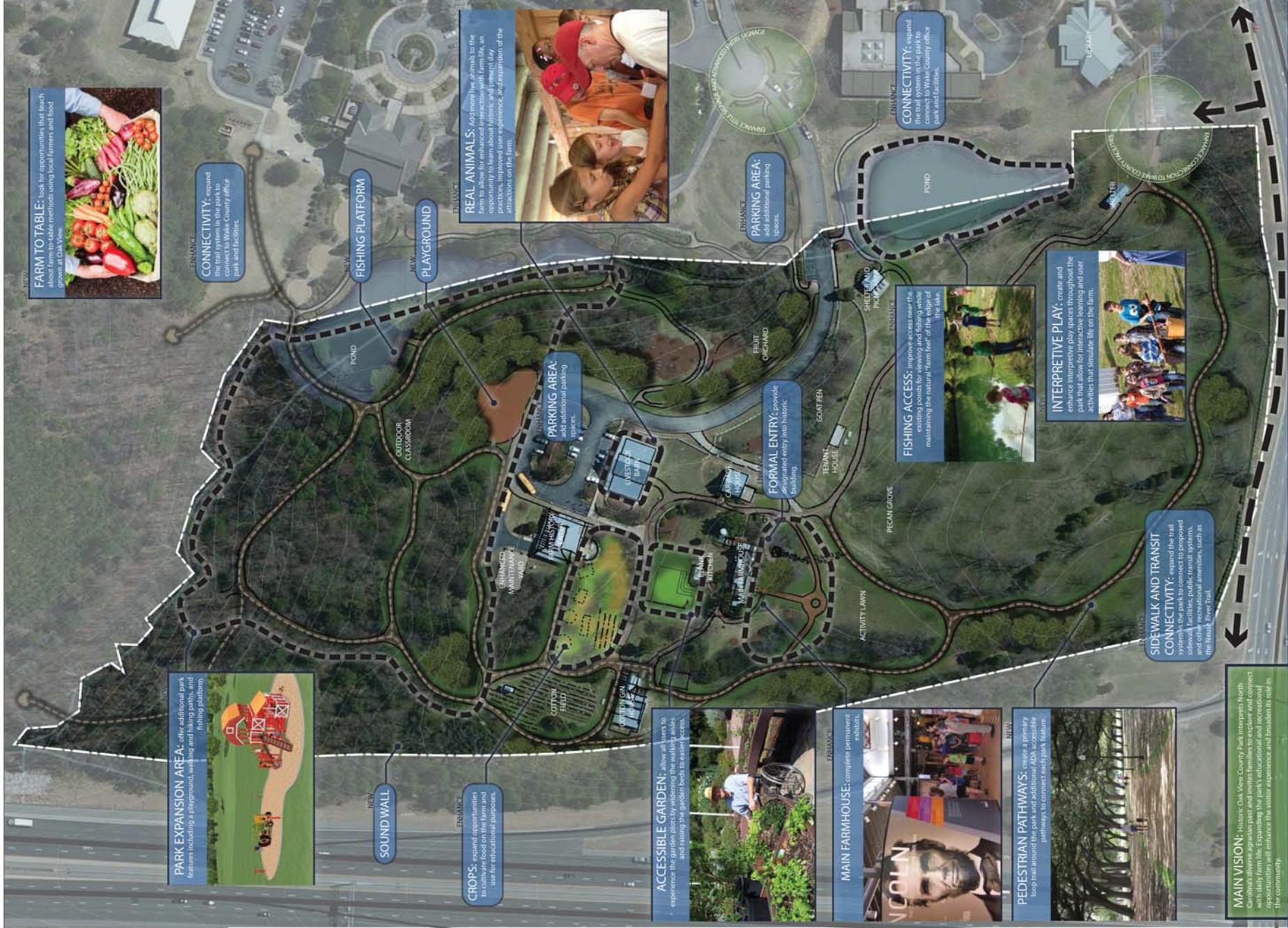
# Crowder District Park recommendations





# 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.

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

**FISHING PLATFORM:**

**PLAYGROUND:**

**REAL ANIMALS:** Add more live animals to the farm to allow for enhanced interactions with farm life, an opportunity to learn about historic and present day agriculture, and an experiential, and expansion of the attraction on the farm.



**PARKING AREA:** add additional parking spaces.

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

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



**SOUND WALL:**

**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.



**MAIN FARMHOUSE:** completes permanent exhibit.



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



**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 recent, local trail.

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



**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.

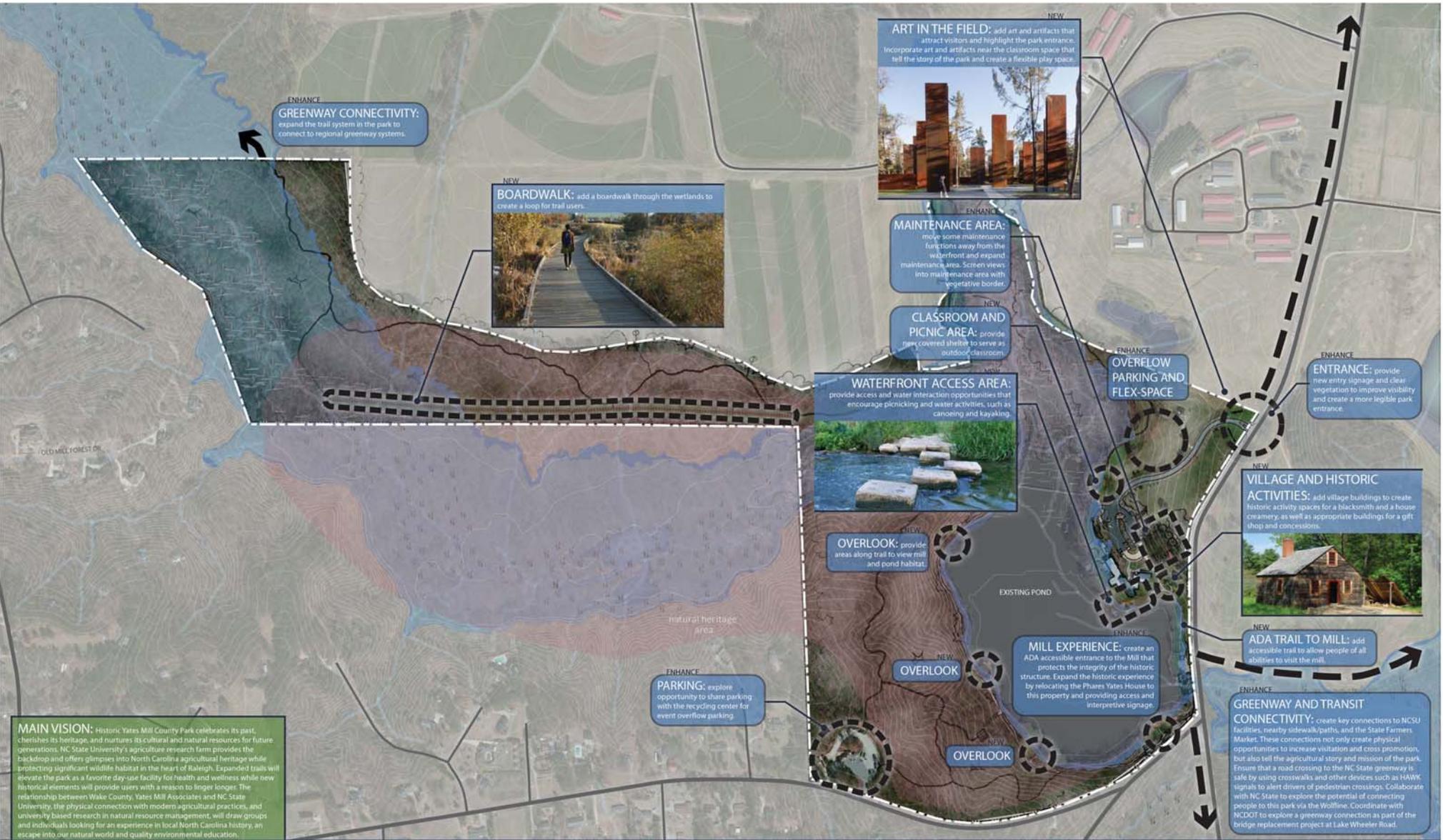


**MAIN VISION:** Historic Oak View County Park interprets North Carolina's diverse agrarian past and invites families to explore and connect with daily farm life. Expanding the park's educational and recreational opportunities will enhance the visitor experience and broaden its role in the community.



# Historic Oak View County Park recommendations





# Historic Yates Mill County Park recommendations

two foot contours



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



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

**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.

**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 blowway trail that skirts the shoreline.

**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**

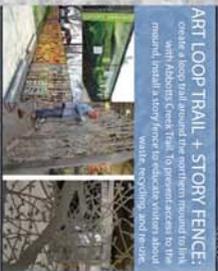




**NEW**  
**INTERPRETIVE VEGETATION:**  
 Plant native or native-sympatric vegetation in colored sections around the trail to illustrate the height the landfill grows over a period of time. Use the plantings with interpretive signage around the park.



**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 full loop trail and interpretive trail with Abbotts Creek Trail. To prevent access to the mound, install a story fence to educate visitors about waste recycling and the site.

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

**NEW**  
**TRAIL:** to connect with Abbotts Creek Trail

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**NEW**  
**ART ON THE HILL:**  
 Create a hillside art installation (sculpture) on the mound.

**NEW**  
**PLAYGROUND:**  
 to provide shade for youth and adults.

**NEW**  
**LOOP TRAIL:** create a greenway trail that loops the outer perimeter of the mound and connects uses. This about the park with dog support facilities (raining, benches and water stations).

**NEW**  
**PARKING:** to allow with accommodate visitors to the skate trails and art loops.

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

**EXISTING**  
**TOP OF THE HILL:**  
 To provide shade while preserving views.



**NEW**  
**SKATE TRAIL:** create a trail system with below-ground level and above-ground ramps and rails. The trail will consist of a series of concrete ramps for the skate trail to provide connectivity and observation outside of the skate trail for creative and recreation.

**NEW**  
**DUMPSTER PLANTERS:** up-cycle dumpsters as planters to provide shade without providing the mound. Each artist to design each dumpster to tell a story of energy consumption, and human impact on the earth.



**NEW**  
**PARKING:** to serve users of the hill trail.

**NEW**  
**PARKING:** to serve recreational hiking in park.

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

**NEW**  
**TRANSIT CONNECTION:**  
 work with CAT to create a loop that serves the park and residents.

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

**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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