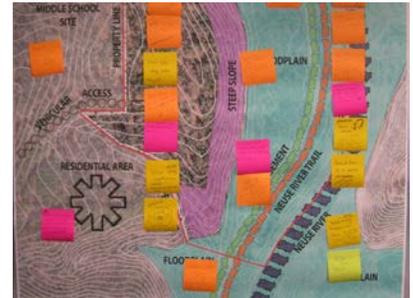
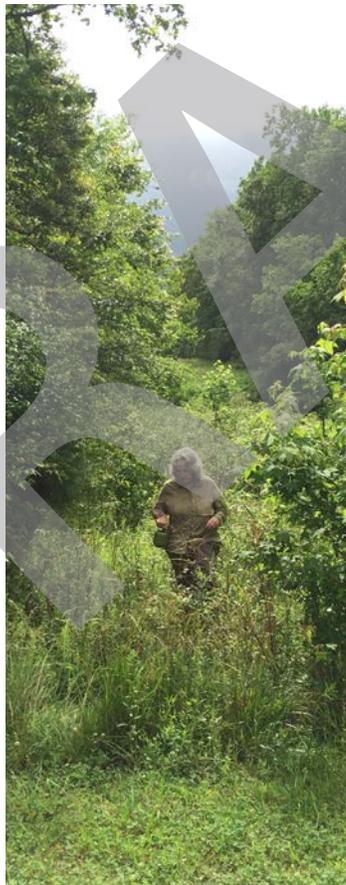


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# RIVER BEND PARK

## Master Plan Report



**RALEIGH** Parks,  
Recreation and  
Cultural Resources  
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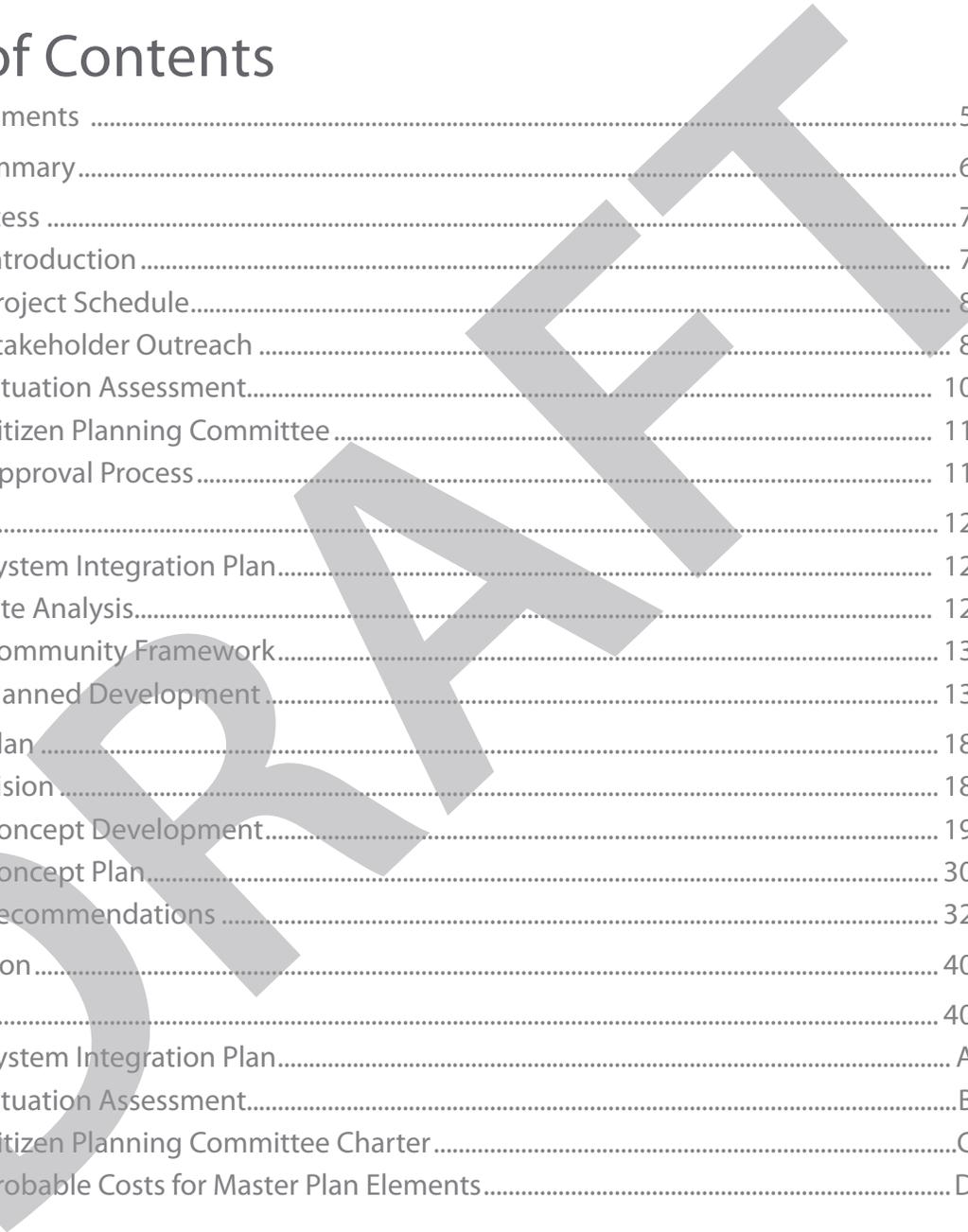
SEPTEMBER 2016





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# Acknowledgements

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All those that came to our public workshops!!!

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## Executive Summary

### River Bend Park

#### Project Summary

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department and the selected design consultant, CLH design, p.a. (CLH), collaborated with citizens to develop a Master Plan for the future River Bend Park located at 6580 Perry Creek Road in north Raleigh.

The proposed River Bend Park is within the 5401 North Planned Development District (PDD), a 402-acre planned residential and mixed-use development at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Highway 401 North and Interstate 540. 5401 North's Vision Plan is a pedestrian-oriented Urban Village community with a walkable and cyclist friendly network of trails and streets.

The first part of this master plan process involved conducting a Situation Assessment that included site analysis, community research and data collection, a public meeting with the area's Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), a community survey, establishment of a public website, and interviews with stakeholders, as well as propose a Citizen Planning Committee (CPC).



View into the future park site from the Neuse River Greenway

Following the City Council's approval of the Situation Assessment Report and the selection of CPC members, the Project Team and the CPC began the task of formulating a vision for the park and generating a park design addressing the issues and recommendations identified. This involved gathering the community's feedback during public meetings and CPC workshops so that the end result is a Master Plan the community and City can embrace.

The master plan encompasses priorities for the first phase, which include the entry road and initial parking, two comfort stations with utilities, accessible trails from the greenway and river, the playground areas, the kayak loading/unloading area and access road, river access, and the required stormwater management devices. Though the park center and amphitheater are considered integral components of the overall park design, projected construction costs relegated them to a future phase of the park development. Future phases will also include additional stormwater devices, parking and trails.



# Planning Process

## Introduction

### Project Overview

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, the community, and the selected design consultant (CLH) collaborated on the development of a Master Plan for the River Bend Park. The public process helped identify specific site elements and amenities that the community desires for this park. The process for the development of the Master Plan and engagement of the community in the park planning process follows the *Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning* (City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department, May 2012 – Updated December 2014).

The proposed River Bend Park is located at 6580 Perry Creek Road northeast of the intersection of Louisburg Road and I-540 in North Raleigh. This 24.9 acre vacant property is within the proposed 5401 North Planned Development District of residential and mixed use located south of the Northern Campus of Wake Tech Community College. The Neuse River Greenway Trail traverses through the east side of the park with the future River Bend Middle School to be constructed on the property adjacent to the west.

The future River Bend park property was purchased by the City of Raleigh in 2012 from the 5401 North, LLC as a potential neighborhood park site. The park parcel is zoned Residential-6-CU (Planned Development Conditional Use Overlay).



5401 North Master Plan (by others). The location of the future River Bend Park is outlined in red. The Neuse River Greenway Trail is shown in orange.



## Project Schedule

MEETING SCHEDULE TASK	DATE
System Integration Plan (PRGAB & City Council Approval)	Monday, April 13, 2015
Staff and Consultant Kick-Off Meeting	Thursday, May 21, 2015
Forestville CAC Meeting	Tuesday, July 14, 2015
Situation Assessment	Thursday, September 17, 2015
PRGAB Review & Recommendation	Thursday, September 17, 2015
City Council Review & Approval	Wednesday, October 07, 2015
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 1	Tuesday, October 27, 2015
Public Workshop Meeting 1	Tuesday, December 08, 2015
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 2	Tuesday, February 23, 2016
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 3	Tuesday, March 22, 2016
Public Workshop Meeting 2	Tuesday, April 12, 2016
Site Visit	Saturday, May 21, 2016
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 4	Tuesday, May 24, 2016
PRGAB Public Hearing Presentation and final public comment of Draft Park Master Plan	Thursday, September 15, 2016
PRGAB Review of Draft Park Master Plan & Recommendation to City Council	Thursday, October 20, 2016
City Council Review & Approval of Draft Park Master Plan	Tuesday, November 15, 2016

### Means and Methods

To begin the public master planning process, a Situation Assessment was conducted to identify stakeholders and topics important to them, and assess the desires of the community. For more information, see *Appendix B, Situation Assessment*.

Research, public participation, review of the study area context and demographics, field review, and site analysis and observation are some of the methodology that were used in developing the Situation Assessment report. Additionally, methods for community engagement were established early in the process to include social media outreach, stakeholder interviews, community survey, public meetings, and the selection and participation of a Citizen Planning Committee.

## Community Outreach, Engagement, and Participation

Community participation is the foundation of this master plan process. This participation helps foster a sense of ownership for the community and encourages future stewardship for the park. The following summarizes the community outreach that has been used to engage the public. All CPC meetings were held at the Abbotts Creek Community Center. This is the closest community center to the park property at approximately four miles to the northwest.

### Project Website

The City of Raleigh initiated a project website in July 2015 to inform the community of planning activities, provide updates, and promote involvement. The website contains a location map of the site, the current activity, a brief project summary and history, contact information, and a project schedule with dates and description of tasks. Links are provided to access the community survey and for a downloadable version of the Situation Assessment. The website continues to be a major component of the park planning process by providing future updates and sharing electronic versions of the project documentation with the public.

### Social Media Outreach

Project announcements and links to the Community Survey were posted on Facebook and Twitter through the project's website along with use of *Nextdoor* by some of the nearby neighborhoods.

*MyRaleigh Subscriptions* (a free subscription-based service provided by the City of Raleigh) allowed the City to provide the community access to relevant information about the park planning process by proactively delivering new information through email and wireless alerts.

## Forestville Citizens Advisory Council

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) staff and CLH attended the Forestville Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) meeting at the Marsh Creek Park Community Center on July 14, 2015. PRCR staff presented a summary of the River Bend Property's System Integration Plan (SIP), an overview of the City of Raleigh's Master Plan Process, and introduced the Project Team.

### Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted from July 13, 2015 through August 4, 2015 to gather insight from individuals with an interest in the site and immediate surrounding area. The stakeholders initially contacted were from the project's Stakeholder Matrix that was established early in the process by PRCR staff and CLH. Other stakeholders were also contacted as names or organizations were suggested (see *Appendix B, Situation Assessment* for an example of the Stakeholder Interview Questions).

Stakeholders that elected to participate included representatives from the City of Raleigh, Forestville CAC, Wake County Public Schools, Wake Technical Community College, and 5401 North, LLC.

## Community Input Survey

An online community survey was developed to further understand the community's needs and interests in the planning process for River Bend Park. The community survey was available online from July 9, 2015 through August 4, 2015. A link to the survey was provided on the project's website, and promoted through the City of Raleigh's emails and other social media outlets.

The survey's key findings are summarized below.

Elements that the majority of the respondents would like to see at the park include:

- fitness and wellness activities (basketball/tennis courts, walking/running trails, canoe/kayak access, bicycle trails)
- nature activities (river access, greenway connection)
- family activities (playground, dog park)
- amenities (restrooms, picnic areas, shelters)

Most respondents identified that they would access the park by vehicle, with few arriving on foot. None would use public transportation. Respondents provided a variety of individuals or organizations they thought should be part of the River Bend Park planning process including HOA's, kayak/canoe clubs, cycling and running clubs, CAC's, surrounding neighborhoods, nearby schools, and youth groups.

Please refer to *Appendix B, Situation Assessment*, for a copy of the community survey questions and additional survey results.

## Situation Assessment

The first part of this master plan process was to conduct a Situation Assessment. This document includes site analysis, community research, a public meeting with the area's Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), a community survey, establishment of a public website, and interviews with stakeholders. These methods were used to assess desires for the proposed River Bend park, as well as inform designers on environmental constraints and opportunities. Public outreach techniques, such as the project website, created a flow of information between the design team, the City of Raleigh, and Raleigh citizens. See *Appendix B* for the full *Situation Assessment*, summarized here.

The key community opportunities and recommendations identified from the stakeholder interviews and the community survey include:

- *Gathering Space*
- *Multi-purpose Recreational Area*
- *Functional Play Park (typical play area)*
- *Comprehensive Community Representation*
- *Focal Point*
- *Accessibility and Safety*
- *Compliment the Community*
- *Greenway Access/Connection*

## Citizen Planning Committee

The Citizen Planning Committee (CPC) member list was comprised of stakeholders that worked together with the project team in the master planning process. The CPC was recommended to the City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB) at the time of the final Situation Assessment report, with final approval by the Raleigh City Council.

One of the initial tasks of the park master planning process was the identification and recommendation of interested community members for the Citizen Planning Committee (CPC) to work with the City of Raleigh and the design team throughout the master planning process. Using the data collected from stakeholder interviews, community surveys, recommendations from other stakeholders, and research and demographic analysis, a list of potential members was compiled.

Composing a representative CPC required diligence in ensuring that both the interests of the existing and planned communities were acknowledged. This involved including representatives of the 5401 North Development, Wake County Schools, and Wake Tech Northern Wake Campus as well as residents from nearby neighborhoods.

Some of the criteria for selection to the CPC was residency in the service area of the park, a willingness to commit the time to attend meetings, have an interest in the park and its uses, and embody diverse demographics and interests.

NAME	GROUP REPRESENTED
Christopher Bjornstad	Raleigh Citizen
Patrick Buffkin	PRGAB
Gayle Gayton	Raleigh Citizen
Ann Godwin	Raleigh Citizen
Joy Hicks	Raleigh Citizen
Christy Miller	Raleigh Citizen
Ric Rojas	5401 North Development / Level Homes
Sam Strickland	Wake Tech Northern Wake Campus
Mike Surasky	PRGAB
Tony Tate	5401 North Development
Latika Vick	Forestville Citizens Advisory Council
Camille Warren	Raleigh Citizen



## Site Context

### System Integration Plan

An initial component of the City of Raleigh’s public park master plan process is the System Integration Plan (SIP). This involves public review and participation from partner agencies and is developed with input and oversight from the City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board.

*The System Integration Plan – Perry Creek Road Property April 2015* was prepared by the City of Raleigh in April 2015 for the River Bend Park property, then known as Perry Creek Road Property. It was approved by City Council on August 4, 2015. The SIP documents existing site conditions by beginning the process of site inventory for natural and cultural resources, provides recommendations for interim site management, and reviews the park’s intended classification and any proposed intent for the park.

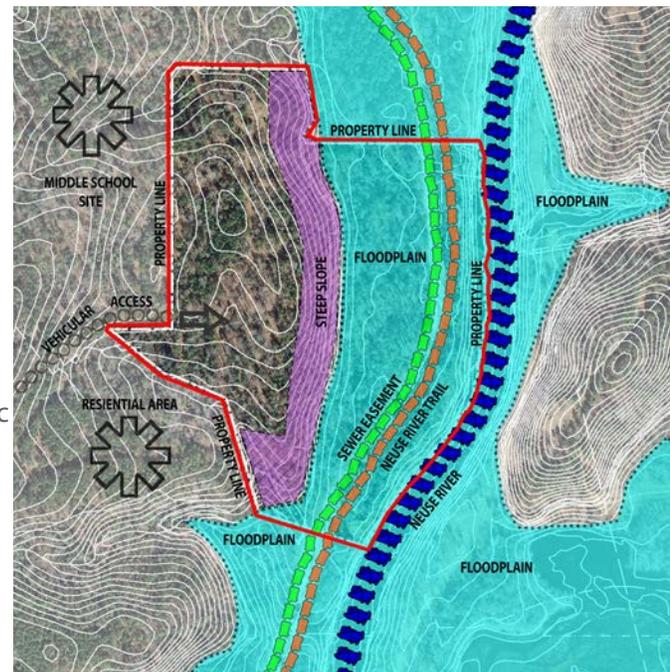
See *Appendix A, System Integration Plan*, for the complete document.

### Site Analysis

A majority of the 24.9 acre vacant site is wooded with the property’s topography generally sloping to the east and southeast toward the Neuse River. There are steep sloped areas located near the northeast corner of the property and the center of the property. A significant portion of the property contains floodplains as the site adjoins the Neuse River. A greater part of the floodplains is within the Upper Neuse River Floodplain Significant Natural Heritage Area, identified as an ecologically valuable natural area. Preliminary investigation of historical and cultural resources of the property have identified no significant resources. The site does not meet the City of Raleigh’s Nature Preserve criteria.

The Neuse River Greenway is located on the park property adjacent to the Neuse River. A 60 ft. wide City of Raleigh Public Utility Easement for a 48-inch sanitary sewer interceptor traverses through the property along the Neuse River Greenway.

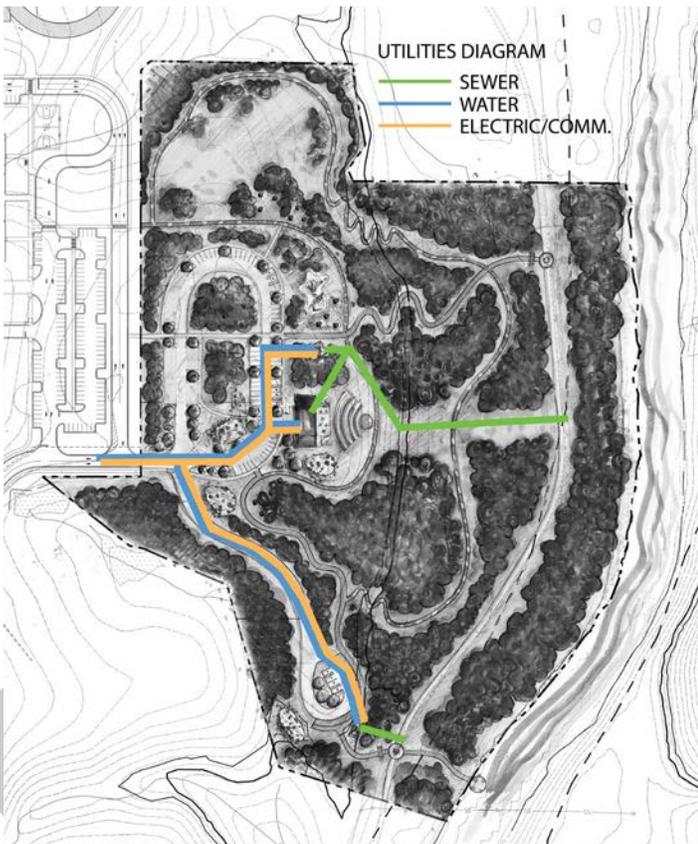
These environmental features are significant because they restrict potential locations of some park elements. For example, structures will need to be built on higher ground, out of the floodplain, while the steep slope allows both the opportunity for views but also means that special



Site Analysis Base Map

consideration must be made for accessible paths. Knowing the direction and methods that visitors will be using indicates where access points should be.

The future utilities for the park's proposed elements will connect to existing water, telecom, and electric near the park entrance. Sewer service will connect to the existing sewer line that traverses the eastern portion of the site. See diagram for a preliminary utility sketch. See *Appendix A, System Integration Plan*, for more detail on the sewer easement.



needs are being addressed. Therefore, the River Bend Park planning process expanded beyond the current demographics to include the area's projected market profile and lifestyle. The 5401 North developer helped address this by providing general development marketing studies and consumer psychographic information for the area. Demographic information includes gender, age, income, race, and marital status. Psychographic information predicts their habits, hobbies, spending habits and values. The combination of both sets of data and understanding them helps to effectively address the target audience needs.

The data suggests that activities the future buyers will enjoy include swimming, jogging/running, gardening, and lawn care. The Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Consumer Psychographics show that the general traits of the TND Consumer are: enjoys low maintenance/yard work, busy/family lifestyle, neighborly and social and will accept smaller lot if area amenities supplement. **Needs of the TND Consumer are an active environment, open green space and amenities.**

See *Appendix B, Situation Assessment*, for more detailed information on demographics.

## Planned Development

The proposed River Bend Park is located within the 5401 North PDD. 5401 North's Vision Plan is a pedestrian-oriented Urban Village community with a walkable and cyclist friendly network of trails and streets. Tree Conservation Area (TCA) for the City of Raleigh has been identified in the overall development plan. This means that River Bend Park will not need a dedicated TCA. However, River Bend Park is responsible for any stormwater runoff that may result from the master plan development, as well as providing signage on-site and wayfinding signage off-site.

\*The area is growing quickly with the 5401 North development planning over 2,250 single family homes, townhomes, row houses, apartments, senior living residential units, along with 1 million

## Community Framework

### Demographics

Since there are few established neighborhoods abutting the proposed park with the exception of those across the Neuse River and the west side of US 401 Highway, the typical planning process for collecting existing demographic data will not provide the sufficient information needed to ensure that the future community



students the first year to 13,155 in 2014. To address this growth, the Northern Wake Campus continues to expand.

**The rapid growth of these schools and campus developments indicates that additional parks may be needed to support recreational activities for these added citizens.**

### Nearby Neighborhoods

Located within the future development of 5401 North, River Bend Park is currently situated in a mostly undeveloped and vacant area. Established neighborhoods within four miles of the park are located either on the opposite side of US401/Louisburg Road or across the Neuse River.

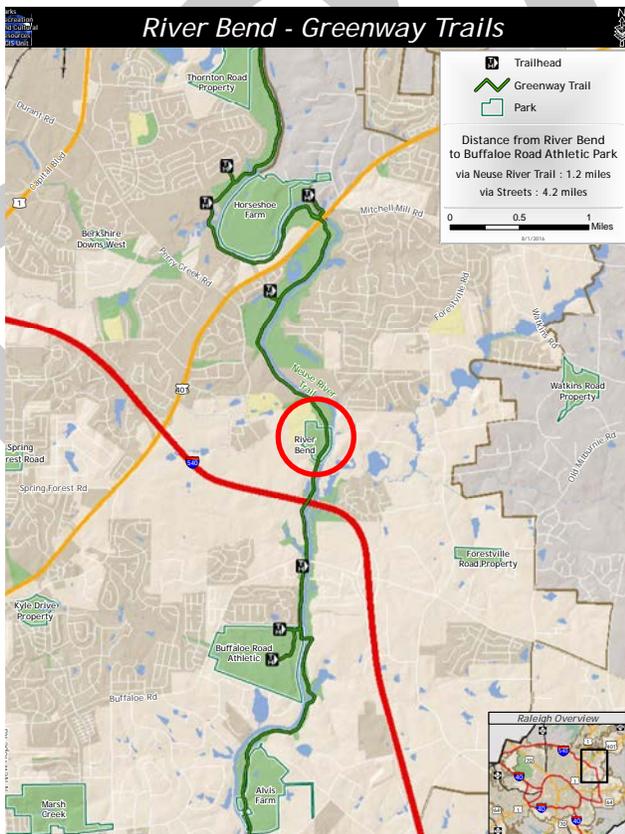
The majority of the established neighborhoods that are the closest in proximity are on the opposite side of the Neuse River with no direct pedestrian or vehicular access to the park property. The nearest access to the Neuse River Trail (that crosses the park property) is from Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve

(north of the proposed park location) where there is a greenway bridge over the river. There are no sidewalks available and it is difficult to cross US401/Louisburg Road. With no bridge access over the Neuse River, someone from one of the closest neighborhoods across the river from the park would have to drive approximately 5 miles to get to the park. This would involve accessing Mitchell Mill Road to the north to get to US 401/Louisburg Road and then Perry Creek Road, or travel south on Forestville Road to access Buffalo Road and 540 to get to US 401/Louisburg Road.

According to neighbors' comments from the survey and heard at the Forestville CAC meeting, many of the neighborhoods across the Neuse River feel that the park is being built for the future 5401 North Development and not for the existing neighborhoods nearby. While most of these neighborhoods east of the Neuse River may have community swim clubs and/or preserved natural areas along the river, there is no immediate neighborhood park. One of the initial and more difficult tasks for the Citizen Planning Committee is to address how these established neighborhood communities access the park and evaluate potential opportunities and solutions.

To explore this possibility, Todd Milam, Greenway Planner with City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Design Development, attended a public meeting to show several crossings in the area and explain the potential costs of constructing a bridge across the river to provide a direct access to the park. The Neuse Crossing Connector project is currently in design and will provide a connection to the Neuse River trail at US 401 for neighborhoods east of the Neuse River. Access from Mitchell Mill Road will be provided.

More established neighborhoods within the service area of the park are on the opposite side of US401/Louisburg Road. These residents face similar difficulties with limited or no pedestrian access across US 401/Louisburg, though with a shorter and less difficult vehicular drive getting to the park.



## Nearby Parks

There are six developed City of Raleigh Parks System elements within a three mile radius of the future River Bend Park. These include: Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve, Buffalo Road Athletic Park, Spring Forest Road Park, the Neuse River Greenway Trail, Berkshire Downs West Park, and Marsh Creek Park. Active recreational parks include Buffalo Road, Spring Forest Road, Marsh Creek, and Berkshire Downs West Parks, with an aquatic center at Buffalo Road.

Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve is an open space/passive recreation preserve and the Neuse River Greenway Trail is a 27-mile linear park and a significant part of the City's Greenway System.

The service area map shows surrounding park locations and their one-mile service areas. These service areas illustrate which homes and neighborhoods are within a walkable one-mile distance of each park. As the map shows, River Bend Park will provide convenient access for people who would not otherwise be able to walk to a neighborhood park.

The nearby surrounding City of Raleigh Parks' current or planned amenities include the following:

### Horseshoe Farm Nature Preserve

- Old Farmhouse, Picnic Shelter, Soft Surface Walking Trails
- Neuse River Greenway Connection, Restroom Facility
- Environmental Education Arts Center (Future)
- Public Art (Future)
- River Access Area/Canoe Launch (Future)
- Outdoor Amphitheatre (Future)
- Playground (Future), Additional Parking (Future)

### Buffalo Road Athletic Park

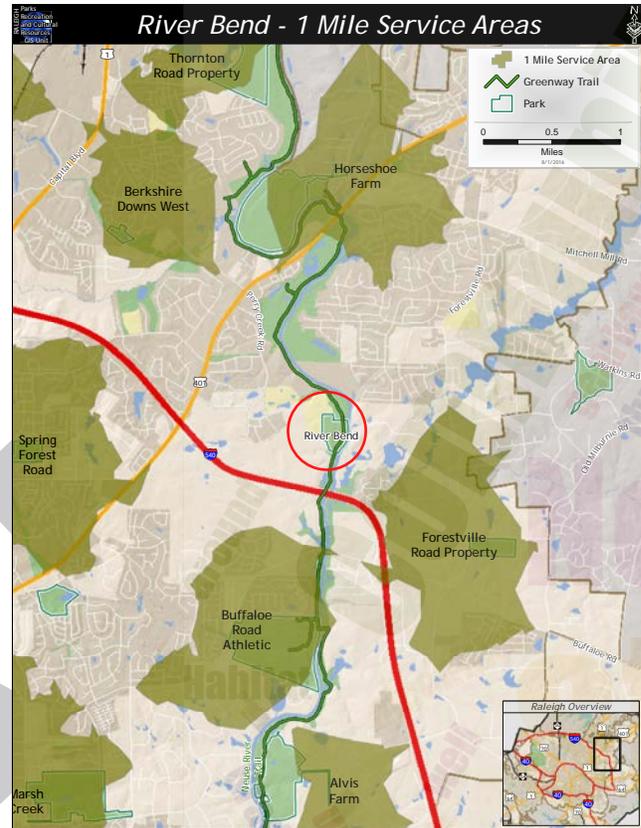
- Aquatic Center, 400 Meter Outdoor Track
- Two Restroom Facilities
- Four Youth Baseball/Softball Fields
- An Older Youth/Adult Baseball Field, One Multipurpose Field
- Two Playgrounds (Ages 2-5 and 5-12)
- Future Dog Park

### Neuse River Greenway Trail

- 27 Mile 10' Wide Paved Trail, Boardwalks (Wetland Areas)
- Interpretive Signage, Canoe/Kayak Access

### Spring Forest Road Park

- Large Open Space, Walking Trail
- Picnic Shelter/Restroom Facility, Four Tennis Courts
- One Youth Baseball/Softball Field
- One Playground (Ages 2-12)



Existing Parks 1-mile service areas  
From Raleigh Parks and Recreation GIS

### Berkshire Downs West Park

- Playground
- Walking Trail

### Marsh Creek Park

- Community Center
- Skate Park
- Inline Rink
- Picnic Shelter/Restroom Facility
- Multi-Purpose Field
- Youth Baseball Field
- Ages 2-5 and 5-12 Playgrounds

**Understanding which amenities exist in the area indicates what type of park, connections, and resources are needed at the River Bend Park location. Proximity to the Neuse prohibits intensive development on approximately half of the acreage due to the floodplain.**

### River Bend Park Vision Statement

A vision statement summarizes the values identified by the community for what River Bend Park should be. It serves as a guide throughout the conceptual and master planning process, providing a clear perspective and framework to participants. Municipal leaders, stakeholders, and community members agreed upon this statement.

***Together, they envision:***

**A** *unique gathering place for the community to connect the natural beauty of the Neuse River with diverse and accesible forms of activity, education, and discovery.*

## Concept Development

Meetings with the Citizen Planning Committee, the public, and the City of Raleigh Parks staff guided the master planning process. See *Appendix D, CPC Meetings Summaries and Materials*, and *Appendix E, Public Workshop Summaries and Materials*, for more detailed information such as agendas, minutes, charette processes, photographs, and results. This section summarizes the items below highlighted in the schedule.

MEETING SCHEDULE TASK	DATE	LOCATION
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 1	Tuesday, October 27, 2015	Abbotts Creek Community Center
Public Workshop Meeting 1	Tuesday, December 08, 2015	Abbotts Creek Community Center
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 2	Tuesday, February 23, 2016	Abbotts Creek Community Center
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 3	Tuesday, March 22, 2016	Abbotts Creek Community Center
Public Workshop Meeting 2	Tuesday, April 12, 2016	Abbotts Creek Community Center
Site Visit	Saturday, May 21	Project Site
Citizen Planning Committee Meeting 4	Tuesday, May 24, 2016	Abbotts Creek Community Center

### Citizen Planning Committee Meeting #1

The first CPC meeting involved meeting with members of the Citizen Planning Committee, staff from the City of Raleigh, and members of the CLH design team. A background and overview of the process was given, as well as expectations of the CPC member’s roles and responsibilities to represent the community and balance interests while offering recommendations to the Parks, Recreations, and Greenways Advisory Board. City of Raleigh representatives reviewed the River Bend Park System Integration Plan (SIP) with maps showing site location, context, features and constraints. The Situation Assessment, prepared by CLH, was also presented. The City of Raleigh’s consensus-building process, along with the CPC draft charter, were reviewed and discussed. See *Appendix A, River Bend Park System Integration Plan*, *Appendix B, Situation Assessment*, and *Appendix C, Citizen Planning Committee Charter* for more information.



## Public Workshop #1

The first public workshop introduced the park site and allowed for uninhibited brainstorming. It was important to create a space in which everyone's voice could be heard. After explaining some of the site aspects (context, slopes, floodplain location), four smaller groups began generating ideas by placing notes on large site maps. By the end of the evening, the group had generated both detailed ideas and generalized priorities for River Bend Park. The priorities agreed upon by the group were as follows:

- Safe and barrier-free access to the river to engage in activities such as fishing, kayaking, or experiences along the bank of the river, as well as access from the other side of the river.
- A park center for indoor recreation, refreshment, equipment rental, and educational space.
- Outdoor gathering spaces (covered and uncovered) for activities such as movies, fire pits, camping, skating, and field sports.
- Greenway pedestrian access and trails.
- Spaces for nature education such as interpretive signage, horticulture, or gardening.
- Nature play areas such as treehouses and children's play areas.

Other general ideas included adequate parking and safety lighting.



Summarizing the group activity



Group comments on site map



Postcard announcement of Public Workshop



Abbotts Creek Community Center



Site context poster boards

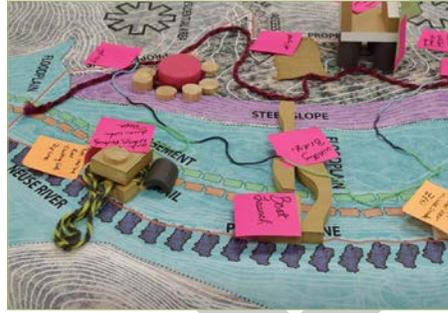
## Citizen Planning Committee Meeting #2

The second CPC meeting used the main priorities from Public Workshop #1 to begin generating ideas. To assist the CPC, CLH provided a large site map and found objects with which the groups could ideate and begin assigning physical locations to broader concepts. Keeping in mind priorities, the groups emerged with these three conceptual ideas.



Group #1

- Education
- Build into slope
- Amphitheater
- Playground
- Gardens
- Dirt trails
- Picnic areas
- Boat launch
- No Community Center



Group #2

- High Energy Zone
- Meditation Space
- Community center
- Trails
- Gardens
- Boat launch



Group #3

- High Energy Activity/Challenges
- Community Garden
- Boat launch
- Outdoor gathering area
- Community Center
- Overlook deck
- Pedestrian connections
- Education
- ADA Accessibility

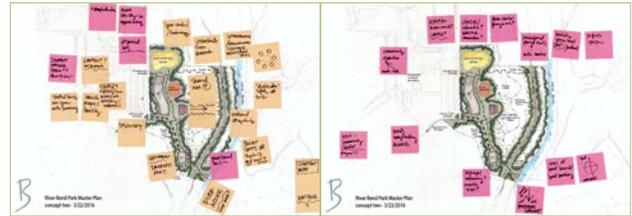
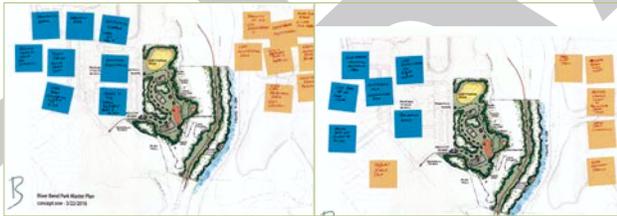


CPC Meeting #2 program development

Each of the ideas shared some commonalities. To take advantage of the steep slope right before the floodplain, suggestions were made to build something into the slope or use it as an overlook. Two of the groups wanted a formalized park center. Each group was concerned about river access, trails, and high energy spaces such as playgrounds, ropes courses, skate parks, bike areas, etc. A garden space was added to each plan, though each group had a different focus. It was important to each group to have gathering spaces for group meetings, or a common public space.

### Citizen Planning Committee Meeting #3

CLH reviewed the three concepts generated by the CPC at the previous meeting, and produced two concepts. These were meant to clarify some of the larger ideas and begin to put scale to the spatial layout of what the site could support. CPC members had the opportunity to break into small groups to comment on both concepts focusing on what they liked and what they would change about each concept.



#### Key Elements of Concept One

- Decentralized parking areas
- Small shelters (no park center)
- Amphitheater
- Picnic areas
- ADA access to river
- Boat launch area
- Multi-purpose space
- Playground

#### Key Elements of Concept Two

- Centralized parking (around 100)
- Park Center
- Picnic areas
- ADA access to river
- Paved and unpaved trail loops
- Parking close to boat launch
- Multi-purpose space
- Playground

## Citizen Planning Committee Meeting #3 (cont'd)

### Concept One

Concept one comments included more attention to the river frontage. More seating areas and interaction by the river was desired. Natural trails and a loop trail were commended. With this concept, keeping the park less developed (no park center) with a space for outdoor, public events (amphitheater) was preferred. Discussions about how the middle school community could interact with the park included shared use of the parking and the amphitheater. A “demonstration” garden rather than community gardens were requested. This group was concerned that the plan did not contain enough placemaking ideas (such as sculpture, wayfinding, and Neuse Trail connections).

### Concept Two

Concept two had favorable reviews for the separate dropoff area for the boat launch, connector trails and variety of trail types, and the multi-purpose spaces. The park center seemed dependent upon how it might be staffed or maintained and what kinds of programs would occur there, but generally the park would need restroom facilities regardless. Changes to this plan included adding the amphitheater, and more indications of signage/wayfinding. There was also a desire for more opportunities to access the river in an unprogrammed way. There was some discussion on how to bring a wider range of community members into the park.

#### DISCOVERY

- create areas where visitors can find something new in the park

#### WAYFINDING

- interpretive signage throughout the park, easy access to park

#### EDUCATION

- reach out to the surrounding community for educational programming

#### UNIQUE

- create a memorable place with its own identity

## Public Workshop #2 - Concept One

The two concepts from at the third CPC meeting were revised and presented as schematic drawings with more programmatic design and scaled elements at the second public workshop. Workshop participants had the opportunity to provide feedback on which park elements worked and which needed to be improved.



## Public Workshop #2 (cont'd) - Concept Two

These two plans added a further level of detail, including stormwater considerations.



Workshop #2 Participant's Feedback

CONCEPT ONE PROS	CONCEPT TWO PROS	CONCEPT ONE IMPROVEMENTS	CONCEPT TWO IMPROVEMENTS
River access	River access/overlook	Need more/larger shelters (50-75 capacity)	Move playground to field
Multi-level designs	Kayak launch access	Need benches along river trail	Gardens
Kayak loading zone	Northern access	More field space	Parking too complicated
Paved trail accessibility	Paved trails	Move playground internal to site	Better trail layout
Wetland boardwalk	Shelters throughout park	Bathrooms near river	Kayak loading zone in floodplain
Amphitheater with deck	Stormwater devices		
Parking lot loop			
Retain forest canopy			
Stormwater devices			

## Site Visit

CPC members expressed interest in visiting the park site to be better informed in their decision making. Seven of us met at River Bend Elementary School on Saturday, May 21, 2016 and walked to the Neuse Trail Greenway to access the site. Potential park connections to the greenway and river access points were observed and discussed.



Citizen Planning Committee Site Visit

## Citizen Planning Committee Meeting #4

The fourth meeting of the CPC members outlined a list of priorities for the park as well as options for future phasing. Meeting attendees prioritized areas by placing stickers on different areas both on the map and on the element priorities list.

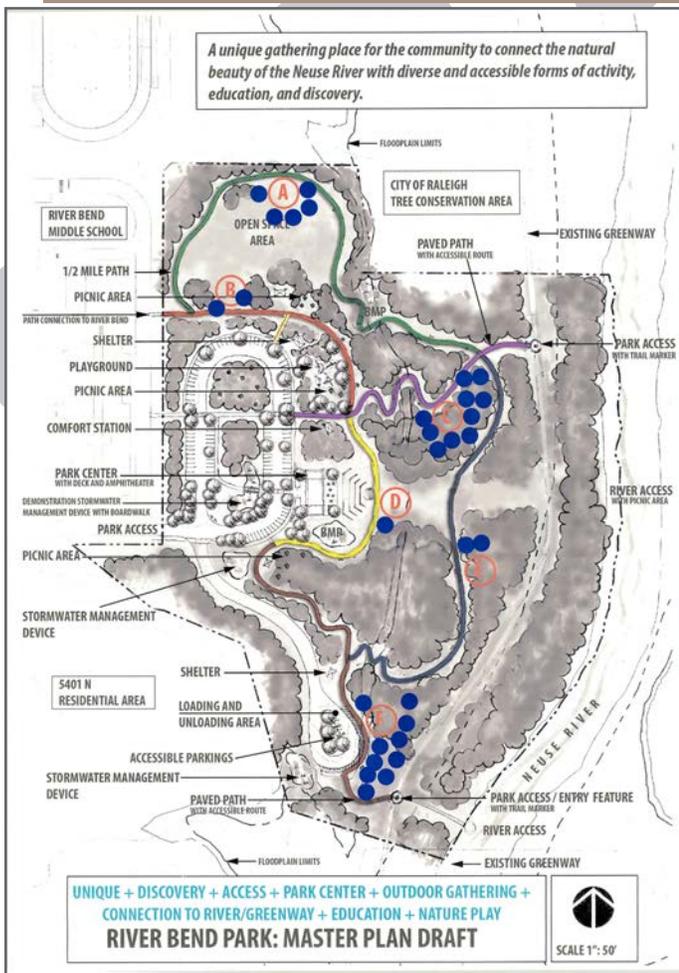
### PARK ELEMENTS PRIORITY LIST

- Park Entrance & Loop Drive
- Parking
- Sidewalks Adjacent to Parking
- Kayak Unloading/Loading Area Drive & Access Parking
- River Access
- Playground
- View to River
- Upper Comfort Station (near playground)
- Lower Comfort Station (near Unloading/Loading Area)
- Open Space Area
- Connection to River Bend Middle School
- Path (1/2 Mile Loop)
- Shelter
- Picnic Areas

- Area A (Open Space)
- Area B (Playground)
- Area C (South of Park Center)
- North Park Entry & Path (Paved) from Neuse Trail
- South Park Entry & Path (Paved) from Neuse Trail
- Demonstration Stormwater Management Device with Boardwalk
- Stormwater Management Devices

### FUTURE PHASES PARK ELEMENTS

- Park Center
- Park Center Elevated Deck
- Amphitheater





*A unique gathering place for the community to connect the natural beauty of the Neuse River with diverse and accessible forms of activity, education, and discovery.*



**UNIQUE + DISCOVERY + ACCESS + PARK CENTER + OUTDOOR GATHERING + CONNECTION TO RIVER/GREENWAY + EDUCATION + NATURE PLAY**  
**RIVER BEND PARK: MASTER PLAN**

SCALE 1"=50'

## Overall Master Plan

The Master Plan for River Bend Park graphically represents the layout for proposed park elements. These include size and location of facilities, recommended locations for smaller shelter structures, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, pedestrian and vehicular access points, areas of active and passive recreation, educational opportunities and learning spaces, stormwater management, environmental conservation, and general landscape.

The master plan includes elements listed in the vision statement/priorities:

- Park Center with Deck and Amphitheater
- Play Area
- Park Access
- River Access
- Park Circulation
- Demonstration Wetland
- Stormwater Devices
- Trails
- Kayak launch/dropoff area
- Site Amenities: Shelters, Benches, Boulders, Fountains, Bike Racks, Trash Cans, etc.

## Park Center with Deck and Amphitheater

The Park Center for River Bend Park Master Plan is centrally located near the parking area and amphitheater. The space is shown at approximately 4,000 square feet and is envisioned to include restrooms, meeting spaces, and places for educational and recreational programming. An overlook deck off the amphitheater side of the building takes advantage of the existing slope, while the amphitheater is built into this slope. The deck is for activities such as family gathering or outdoor wellness programs. At the bottom of the amphitheater is a performance space. The restrooms are situated near the main event area and playground facilities.



Park center with outdoor deck, amphitheater, and stage

### **Recommendations:**

- Provide family restrooms with changing station
- Ensure restroom access and safety if doors are on outside of building
- Feature cisterns or green roof with ties to the adjacent BMP
- Provide a powered, heated, and air conditioned facility
- Use sustainable and low-impact development practices
- Provide benches and tables outside of the building
- Provide moveable seating on the overlook deck
- Allow for exterior drinking fountains at the Park Center
- Provide a notable building entry area
- Provide inviting landscaping at the front of the park center
- Build amphitheater seating into slope with a ~300-person capacity
- Provide ~400 SF of performance deck for amphitheater

## Play Area

The play area is located off of the parking loop near the Park Center to give access to amenities such as the restroom, drinking fountain, or changing areas. A shelter and a comfort station are nearby, and a picnic area is incorporated near the play area.

### Recommendations:

- Both traditional and natural play equipment
- Makerspace for creative play
- Poured in place safety surfacing underneath equipment
- Incorporate accessible play elements
- Integrate landscaping to complement play area and picnic area
- Provide shade



Play Area



Natural play area with grasses and stumps at Annie Lousie Wilkerson Nature Preserve Park



Example of traditional playground equipment at North Hills Park



Natural play area with teepee feature and nearby shelter at Annie Lousie Wilkerson Nature Preserve Park

## Park Access, Circulation, and Trails

Vehicles will have only one access point in and out of the park site. This entrance is located south of River Bend Middle School. The road creates a parking loop that is adjacent to the park center, playground area, shelters, and picnic areas. These park amenities are easily accessible from the parking area. The parking loop contains a wooded picnic area and a demonstration wetland that serves both as an educational tool and a functional stormwater device. The parking loop shows approximately 40 parking spaces. Three accessible spaces are provided at the Park Center entrance, while two are convenient to the playground. The parking spaces can be expanded around the back of the loop to accommodate approximately 30 more spaces. Immediately after entering the site, the road branches off to the kayak launch turnaround. This area is for loading and unloading only, with several accessible parking spaces.

Pedestrians can enter the site from the sidewalk adjacent to the park's entry drive, from the River Bend Middle School parking lot, and from the Neuse River Greenway Trail. There is a 1/2 mile loop trail that traverses the site, accessible and paved paths from the parking lot to the greenway trail, and sidewalks linking parking areas with park destinations.

### **Recommendations:**

- Provide accessible paths to the Neuse River Greenway Trail
- Provide accessible sidewalks from parking areas to the playground area, shelters, picnic area, and park center
- Use different pavement types to differentiate the different path systems
- Provide more accessible spaces than required by code
- Allow for the community to help build natural trails
- Provide signage at park entrances to aid in wayfinding and differentiation between the greenway trail and the park trails
- Provide park entry features at both greenway connections
- Allow for future parking expansion
- Path widths should vary based on the trail hierarchy



## Demonstration Wetland & Stormwater Control Measures

Several stormwater devices are shown scattered throughout the site to capture and treat stormwater. These devices will be necessary to mitigate the impervious surfaces such as drives, parking areas, sidewalks, and the park center. One of the stormwater devices is shown in the loop parking lot across from the park center entrance. This is intended to be a “demonstration wetland” as a feature of the park. The mini wetland will feature educational signage and a small boardwalk crossing.



### Recommendations:

- Provide small bridge over device of boardwalk materials
- Utilize stormwater plantings that are colorful and native; see below examples
- Provide educational signage

Demonstration wetlands



Constructed bioretention at Coastal Studies Institute



Bioretention at Saxapahaw Rivermill  
Saxapahaw, NC



Bioretention device at North Carolina State  
University



Boardwalk at Coastal Studies Institute

## River Access

From the beginning of the master planning process, an important part of River Bend Park has been access to the river. A kayak launch area has been provided and is easily accessible by a vehicular unloading area. The kayakers will be carried past a comfort station and across the Neuse River Greenway Trail. Visitors without a kayak to launch may also use this access point to get near the river.

### Recommendations:

- Provide crossing indicators, such as those already used on the greenway. These signal to users that two paths are crossing and caution should be used. Especially with kayakers crossing the greenway from the park, these features are necessary to avoid collisions between people carrying kayakers and those already using the greenway on foot or on bicycle.
- Do not allow parking in the loading/unloading loop. Visitors will unload their boat, park their vehicle, and walk back down to the loop. This avoids congestion in the loading area and keeps the bulk of the hardscape development out of the lower areas. This allows the design to avoid the floodplain.
- Provide a kayak launch area at the river for ease of access to the water.



Vehicular access to boat launch area with trail crossing



Compass in pavement at Neuse River Trail



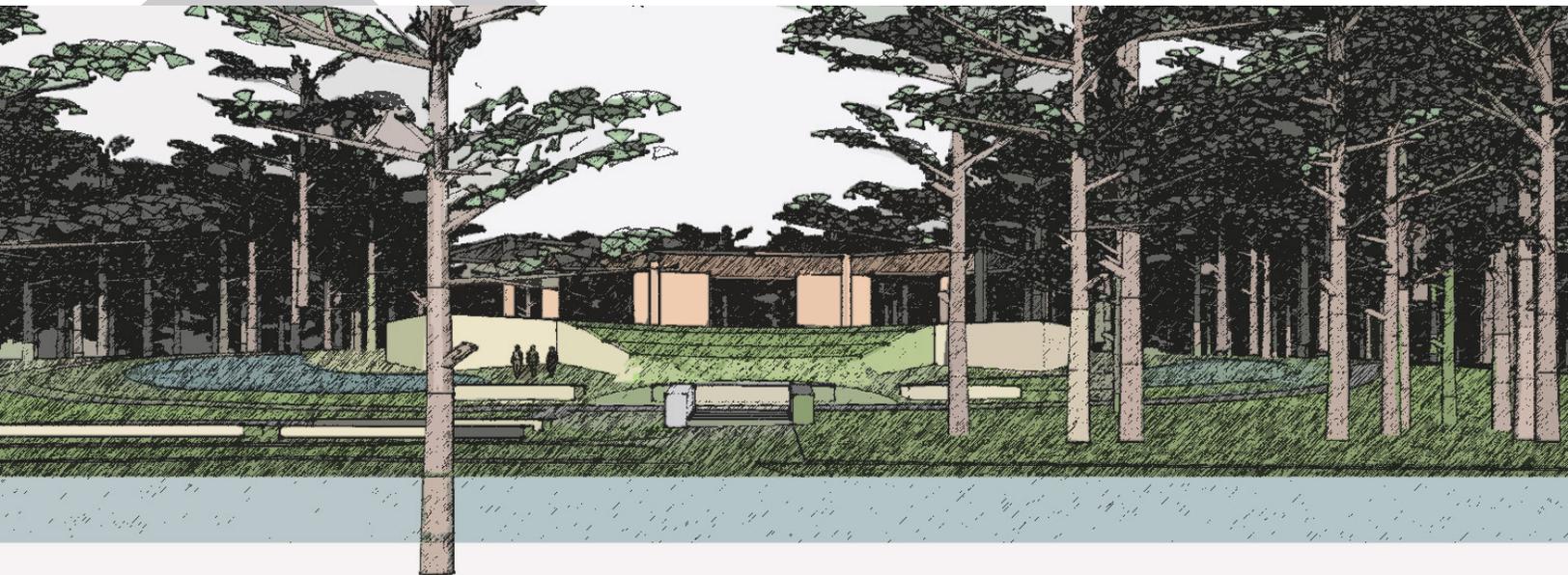
Pedestrian River Access area

## Site Amenities

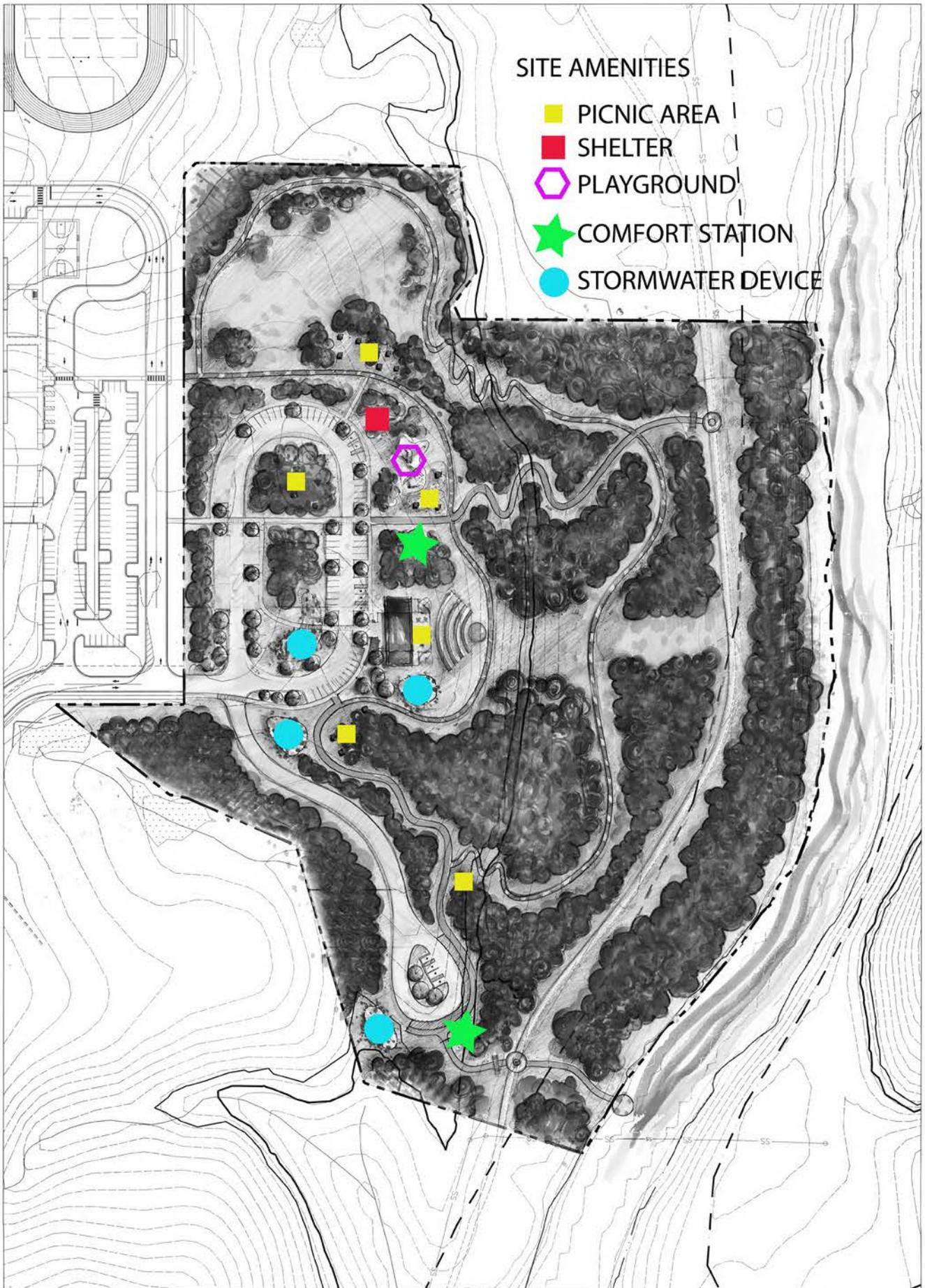
River Bend Park contains several shelters for covered outdoor activities. These provide shade and shelter from the elements. Most of these site furnishings are concentrated near the parking area and the park center, though there are a few benches and picnic areas scattered throughout the site. Site furnishings on the site include benches, picnic tables, shelter structures, drinking fountains, seating boulders, trash cans, and bicycle racks.

### **Recommendations:**

- Provide moveable seating on the park center overlook deck
- Provide benches scattered along the trails for resting areas
- Provide tables and benches near the multi-purpose field
- Drinking fountains should be provided both at the park center and the playground area
- Site furnishings may be built by community members to enhance the uniqueness of the park
- Trash receptacles should be placed near high-activity areas
- Picnic tables should be provided by the playground area
- Bicycle racks should be placed at appropriate locations such as the park center entrance, near the multi-purpose field, and near the two comfort stations.
- High-activity areas, such as a low ropes course or obstacle course, may be provided along the trails
- Technology could be integrated into the park by providing geocache opportunities
- Sculpture or educational signage should be placed along the trails to provide unique interest to the park



Conceptualization of Park Center and Amphitheater (looking uphill)





## Implementation

### Recommended Priorities and Phasing

During the fourth CPC meeting, attendees reviewed possible priorities and phasing options from the list of park elements comprised during the public workshops and previous CPC meetings. The discussion focused on which park items were essential to the park, but also considered overall costs. In addition, the elements selected as the highest priorities were considered characteristic of the Vision Statement.

The selected priorities for the first phase include the entry road and initial parking, two comfort stations with utilities, accessible trails from the greenway and river, the playground areas, the kayak loading/unloading area and access road, river access, and stormwater management devices. Though the park center and amphitheater are considered integral components of the overall park design, projected construction costs relegated them to a future phase of the park development. Future phases will also include additional stormwater devices, parking and trails.

Costs of the priority items can be influenced by many different factors, including site constraints, material costs or environmental concerns which may impact the items to be built in the first phase. See *Appendix F, Probable Construction Costs* for a breakdown of priorities and overall phasing. The document is in two phases with priorities and future construction listed.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A: System Integration Plan**

**Appendix B: Situation Assessment**

**Appendix C: Citizen Planning Committee Charter**

**Appendix D: Probable Construction Costs for Park Elements and Site Work**

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