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SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As we evaluate the Division's delivery of recreation services in a community, a primary task of the planning team is an assessment of existing parks and recreation facilities. This assessment includes facilities provided by the City of Dunwoody, as well as other public and private recreation providers in the area, to determine the level of access to facilities and recreation services in the city. There are four primary groups providing recreation facilities in and around Dunwoody: the Parks and Recreation Division, DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Department, churches and other religious organizations, and private not-for-profit providers who use Dunwoody park facilities or offer programs. There are also some private recreation provided in the city, primarily in the form of swim/tennis clubs and home owners' associations that offer swimming, tennis and few other amenities.

All six of the City of Dunwoody's parks and the North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center were visited and an individual site assessment was made for each facility. These assessments were to determine the diversity of facilities, distribution patterns, maintenance practices, age, condition and compliance with accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Staff members were interviewed regarding the programming and maintenance of the facilities in order to gauge the level of use at each. If there was a private group (such as Dunwoody Senior Baseball) who operate programs in the park or provide any facility maintenance in a park, these groups were interviewed in addition to staff. The planning team also looked for design characteristics that either reduced or increased maintenance requirements or affected the way each park functions. After completing site visits and inventories, concept plans along with a written narrative of recommendations were prepared for each park to address existing conditions, use patterns and the potential for redevelopment and expansion. For Brook Run Park, a design charrette was also held and over 50 citizens attended and provided insight as to how they would like to see the park developed.

Each existing park, along with proposed parks and greenways were mapped according to the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) guidelines for service areas to determine the level of service offered to citizens throughout the city and to identify service gaps based on the location of the existing parks. The team also made recommendations for future park development patterns that will better serve citizens by providing improved access to parks and will reduce travel time and service gaps throughout the city. Existing and proposed greenway routes were also examined to look at possible connections between parks, neighborhoods and other recreation facilities throughout the city.

The NRPA guidelines for facility development and park land on a per capita basis were presented to a citizen sounding board appointed by the Mayor and Council and used to develop local standards based on the unique characteristics of Dunwoody. These community-based standards were then used to identify deficiencies within the system based on acreage, facility type and distribution. These same factors, along with interviews and public comments gathered as part of this planning process, were used to make the recommendations found throughout this section. Recommendations have been made for all existing park properties and new park construction to help reduce current deficiencies and provide more equitable park opportunities for all City of Dunwoody residents. General park recommendations have also been made for issues that exist throughout the entire park system, particularly those that deal with safety, ADA requirements and maintenance reduction.

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Overall Plan Recommendations

Parks

- Establish multiple small parks and one slightly larger park to serve as a community gathering area to implement the Dunwoody Village Master Plan.
- Establish a neighborhood park (6-8 acres) in the Georgetown / North Shallowford area and multiple small parks to implement the Georgetown/ North Shallowford Master Plan.
- Set a target to obtain 5.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents over the next 10 years.
- Develop a network of small neighborhood parks throughout the City.
- Further study and possibly create a community greenway system to connect the park system to other community assets.
- Complete the development of Brook Run Park as detailed in the appendix of this report.
- Complete the conversion of the Donaldson-Chesnut Home site into a City park.
- Complete major renovations throughout the park system to improve safety, ADA compliance and to create a unified appearance for park architecture, signage and site furnishings.
- Look at leasing open space on short term basis to provide additional recreation opportunities on development property that is vacant due to current economic conditions.

Recreation Facilities

- Develop multipurpose fields for soccer, lacrosse and football, an indoor/outdoor tennis facility and at least three baseball fields in a new community park to expand recreation opportunities for youth and adult teams.
- Explore joint-use agreement and partnership opportunities with Peachtree Charter Middle School for possible community use of the football field, baseball field, a competition level track and soccer field.
- Expand Dunwoody Nature Center with the relocation of Dunwoody Senior Baseball to include redevelopment of the sports field area and to offer programs for citizens of all ages - not just children. This would include developing a new education center building in the park.
- Develop a community center with multiple programming rooms.
- Expand community gardening programs beyond Brook Run Park.
- Expand community arts programs beyond the North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center.
- Develop a new community theater as a component of the Dunwoody Village redevelopment outlined in the Dunwoody Village Master Plan.
- Redevelop the Brook Run dog park to include areas of well developed turf and shade to provide a more environmentally sound approach for dog parks.
- Create multiple community event spaces throughout the city in a variety of sizes to decentralize community events and balance the inconvenience of large community events on surrounding property owners.
- Develop a variety of small water play features throughout the city.
- Create more walking trails in existing parks.
- Develop picnic facilities and rental pavilions throughout the park system.
- Improve access to public tennis courts by increasing number and distribution.
- Provide outdoor basketball and volleyball courts.

Greenways

- Building upon the greenway corridors identified in this Master Plan, further study and investigate different greenway corridors.

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- Further study creating north-south greenway corridors connecting community parks and neighborhoods to the proposed regional greenway.
- Further study and investigate the possibility of creating an east-west greenway corridor
- Improve sidewalk and bicycle lanes throughout the city to provide access to greenways, parks and public transportation.
- Greenways should complement complete street initiatives in the city and street crossings should be at controlled intersections or through grade separation (when possible) to improve safety for the greenway user.
- Greenways should be a minimum of 10' paved surface where space allows to better accommodate different user groups.
- Good directional signage and rules should be provided at all trailhead access points.
- Greenways should be built in areas where there is strong neighborhood and community support.

Conservation

- Investigate the creation of a non-profit land trust to solicit and hold conservation easements for land in and near the city.
- Remove underutilized buildings in Brook Run Park and convert to public open space and urban forest.
- Create green density bonuses within the land use code to encourage the development of public open space and the elimination of large surface parking lots.
- Create more non-vehicular access routes to MARTA Station to promote healthier lifestyles for community residents.
- Parks and greenways should be developed with best practices for sustainability and green design.
- Minimize impervious surfaces in parks where possible and use porous pavements where possible.
- Implement a recycling program throughout the parks system.
- Undervalued and underutilized property that is currently developed should be considered as possible targets for park development to reduce urban runoff and improve air quality through reforestation programs.
- Irrigate parks with reclaimed water or captured rain water where feasible.

When viewed collectively, these recommendations reflect the development of a park system that is commonly found in other communities in the Atlanta Metro Region, and are also consistent with comments heard during the public input process and in the survey responses gathered during this master planning effort. Dunwoody is unique because it inherited only portions of a community park system and has not had 30 to 40 years to develop a complete park system as the community grew. While the residential and commercial areas developed in direct relationship to the population growth, the level of park facilities were not equally increased. The City now contends with a park system that lacks a proper mix of facilities, parkland, recreation opportunities and a balanced level of service. Many of the goals outlined above will allow the City to create, over time, a more balanced park system that is more consistent with typical park systems.

NRPA Guidelines

In 1995, the NRPA published *Park, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines* by James D. Mertes, Ph.D, CLP, and James R. Hall, CLP. The book laid out a template of typical park classifications, number of

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acres a system should have and recommended service levels based on population. Strictly intended as a guideline, the book did not take into account the unique character of each community throughout the country. Local trends and the popularity of some activities often dictate a greater need for particular facilities. The guidelines serve as a good baseline for determining a minimum standard. These guidelines, coupled with input received from the community, analysis of participation numbers for various activities and comparisons to similar communities, were used to develop recommended level of service standards for Dunwoody.

For a public park provider, the guidelines suggest, “A park system, at a minimum, should be composed of a ‘core’ system of park lands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population” (Mertes, 1995). Due to the limited availability of open space and undeveloped land in the city, the Sounding Board recommended a park acreage goal of 5.5 acres of parkland per 1000 residents. This is significantly lower than the 20 acres per 1000 residents contained in the ARC Green communities Certification Checklist, Version 2, February 2010, found in the City of Dunwoody Comprehensive Plan, Community Agenda dated June 2010. The Sounding Board felt that the 20 acres per 1000 residents was not obtainable based on the fact that the City currently has approximately 4 acres per 1000 residents and going to 20 acres per 1000 would be an increase of 500 percent. The alternative to the higher acreage requirement of the ARC checklist is to have a park within one half mile radius of all homes. It is much more likely that this goal could be achieved with the addition of new parks and greenways. The recommended community standards chart showing all the recommended park and facility standards for the City of Dunwoody, along with current and projected deficiencies, is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 uses Dunwoody’s estimated population of 46,267 and NRPA standards to determine where deficiencies and surpluses in the park system exist. The recommended community-based standards reflect other recreation providers in the community, such as churches, schools, neighborhood associations and private clubs. The figures shown in Table 3.1 do not include facilities found on school properties that are not open to the public during the school day, nor do they include the park acreage of churches and private facilities, as they are not fully accessible to the public, either. However, these facilities were considered in order to develop the recommended service levels. Because of the large number of alternative facilities in Dunwoody, many of the recommended facility standards are lower than NRPA standards. However, it should be made clear that these private and school facilities are only available some of the time and do not replace the need for public access facilities that are open to the entire community.

Based on both the established NRPA standards and the recommended community-based standards, the City is deficient in every category. The City lacks public parkland, sports fields, a community center, aquatic facilities, greenways, athletic courts and playgrounds. The facility shortages are being slightly offset by other providers, including DeKalb County Parks such as Murphy Candler Park, where there are numerous sports fields, the Marcus Jewish Community Center and churches that offer facilities. It is clear that additional parks, facilities, greenways and natural areas are needed throughout the community. This evaluation is also consistent with the comments heard in interviews, public meetings and the community survey.

The planning team’s observations and review of public input indicate deficiencies other than just a lack of facilities. Other deficiencies in the parks include overuse, causing increased maintenance needs and environmental degradation of resources, lack of diversity of facilities, and deferred maintenance that is now creating safety and ADA issues. Many survey comments spoke to a lack of quality and facilities

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as reasons for using parks in neighboring communities. Based on these findings, it is clear that the City needs to acquire more parkland in order to provide additional facilities. In addition, existing parks should be redeveloped where possible to maximize diversity and the quality of current facilities.

According to the desired level of service ratios per 1000 residents, the City's has significant deficiencies in tennis courts (-16), baseball/softball field (-13), and trails (-13 miles minimum). Again, we know some of the sports field needs are being met by other providers, but it is clear additional sports fields – particularly sports fields that can serve as multipurpose fields – are needed. In addition, there is a need to add diversity in the parks by adding more tennis courts, basketball courts and sand volleyball that serve all ages and to offer quality picnic facilities and rental pavilions for group gatherings. While the many elected officials interviewed expressed a desire to minimize duplication of facilities and to stay out of the recreation programming business, the core of a good park system is its facilities. The current lack of facilities and the condition of those that are provided are limiting and reducing the quality of the recreation experience for Dunwoody residents.

There is also a deficit in indoor programming space, most notably the lack of a community center to provide year-round recreation opportunities. Without a community center or indoor aquatics facility, the City lacks a major recreation resource that the surrounding City and County recreation agencies are providing to their citizens. The recommendations for meeting these needs are detailed in the facility recommendations discussion later in this section.

Park Classifications

For many years, communities across the country have developed parks within a basic classification system developed by NRPA in order to offer balanced parks and recreation opportunities to residents. The standard park system is made up of the following park classifications:

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- School Parks
- Community Park
- Large Urban Parks
- Natural Resource Area
- Special-Use Park
- Greenways
- Sports Complex

Critical to the service delivery system of any parks and recreation department is the provision of the four basic park categories: mini, neighborhood, community and regional. In urban or high density areas where the proper level of neighborhood and community parks are not adequate to meet the community needs, a larger hybrid park has developed in recent years known as the large urban park. These parks are larger in size and provide activities commonly found in community parks but also offer areas that preserve natural settings and provide community open space. Brook Run is an example of a large community park that will function as a large urban park because of the diverse facilities that have been recommended for the park. Beyond these five basic park types are special-use parks, natural areas/preserves, greenways, school parks and private parks/recreation facilities that complete the system of parks in most communities. Each is classified differently based upon the types of amenities, size, service area and how access is gained to the facility. The following gives a description of the different types of parks and facilities common to a system.

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Mini Park

The smallest type of park, a mini park, is typically a site less than two acres. Another term, “pocket park,” has been used in some instances to identify a mini park. The park is designed primarily to attract residents who live within a quarter mile of the park. The park is generally a walk-to type park, meaning no parking facilities for vehicles are normally found. Mini parks’ service levels are .25 to .5 acres per thousand residents.

Size normally prescribes these parks to be passive, limited-activity park facilities. Common elements include benches, playgrounds and tables in an attractively landscaped setting. The parks are sometimes themed to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood. Designs sometimes match the existing homes, fencing, sidewalk pavers, etc. A park of this size is not developed with fields for league play or community-wide events.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks are found in most county and city systems. The park normally has 2 to 10 acres and typically serves a population living within a half mile of the park. Neighborhood parks conceptually concentrate intense recreation activities and facilities into a limited amount of space.

Facilities typical to this park include:

- Playing Fields
- Playgrounds
- Shelters
- Walking Paths
- Swimming Pool
- Parking Facilities
- Restrooms/Concessions

Parking is necessary for this type of facility due to its scope of activities and size. The standard for parking is a minimum of seven spaces for the first ten acres and one additional space for each additional acre. This may vary based upon the activities and program appeal. If team sport facilities or a special feature such as a swimming pool are included, parking spaces in the range of 40 per field or greater will be needed.

Although the park is classified as a neighborhood park, the scope of people served can vary based upon densities and the number of other parks available. Typically, one neighborhood park should serve between 10,000 to 20,000 residents, or one to two acres per 1,000 people.

Community Park

Community parks are needed within a system to ensure that all users’ recreation needs and interests are addressed and included. This type of park expands beyond a local neighborhood and may sometimes include several neighborhoods. The concept behind community parks is to include essentially a one-stop shop for all recreation users. It should include a mix of active and passive activities and attract users of all ages. From sports fields to a community center, the park should provide as many recreation and support services as possible. A park of this size and scope commonly has from 30 to 50 acres.

Community parks have both day and night activities. Large facilities, such as a large indoor fitness/recreation center or multi-field sports complex, can be placed in such a facility because of the amount of space available and ability to buffer from the surrounding community.

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The service area for such a facility can vary based upon the size and scope of activities offered. However, a facility of this type may serve anywhere from 50,000 to 80,000 people, or 5 to 8 acres per 1,000 people. User analyses are often based upon a service radius, while others in more urban areas may be based upon drive times.

Large Urban Park

A large urban park is typically the largest park within a system. These parks are normally found in large park systems, highly populated communities or in communities with pockets of high populations. The size of these parks varies from minimum of 50 to 75 acres, up to several hundred acres, depending on the type of activities and the amount of use.

The service radius for this type of facility is tied to the facilities provided in the park and the overall community makeup. In many large urban systems where there are multiple large urban parks, each park will serve a five mile or 15 to 30 minute drive time for core recreation services and may serve and entire community if a unique or one-of-a-kind facility is provided there.

Special-Use Park

Special-use parks are designed to meet the needs of a specific user group. An example of a special-use park would be a golf course, zoo or a museum. A typical feature of these parks is that they are normally good revenue generators. If maintained and properly staffed, these parks can provide a substantial cash flow for the designated entity.

These facilities can vary in size according to the demand and type of layout. For example, a regulation size, par 72 golf course would need at least 140 acres, while an executive style (par 60) layout may only require 100 to 120 acres, based upon amenities such as driving range and practice facilities.

Natural Resource Area/Preserve

According to the NRPA, natural resource areas are defined as “lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.” These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources
- Lands unsuitable for development but offering natural resource potential (examples: parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainage ways and ravines, surface water management areas and utility easements)
- Protected land, such as wetlands, lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes and ponds

Acquisition of natural resource areas and preserves serves to enhance the quality of the community by maintaining a portion of its natural amenities.

Greenways

Greenways have become one of the most popular family recreation activities across the country. The value of greenways in terms of recreation, education and resource protection is invaluable. Greenways serve as linkages between cities, parks, schools, commercial areas and neighborhoods. They provide a safe mode of transportation that preserves the environment.

Typically, greenways can be anywhere from 10 to 15 feet wide and can be paved or natural surface.

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When developing a greenway system, corridors should be identified where people will access the area easily and connect elements within the community and incorporate all the characteristics of the natural resource areas. Greenway corridors should be no less than 50 feet in width, except in neighborhoods, where 25 feet may be acceptable. In his article published in 1995, Julius Fabos, a former professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts, divides greenways into three categories: ecological, recreational and cultural.

Greenways can be located in a variety of settings and can be utilized for active and passive recreation activities. Ecologically speaking, they are typically located along natural environments such as rivers, ridgelines and coastal areas. These trails provide connections to nature, protect and maintain biodiversity, minimize development, and provide for wildlife migration across natural and man-made boundaries.

Recreational greenways commonly link elements that have diverse and significant landscapes. Many link rural areas to more urban locales and range from local trails to larger systems. Most are paved trails that accommodate pedestrians, skaters and bicycles.

School Park

School park sites are an excellent way to combine resources and provide accessible recreation amenities to the community. Depending on the school type (i.e. elementary, middle, high school) the size of the park will be dictated by the land available adjacent to the school. Typically, middle and high schools are constructed with youth athletic fields to support team sports. These facilities provide the basis for developing a community park or, at the very least, youth athletic fields for recreation programs. The selection of school sites is determined by the school district and according to the countywide or citywide distribution of students. The school site selection criteria may or may not meet the needs for parkland distribution. When development of school parks is possible, guidelines for neighborhood/community parks should be followed to meet the needs of residents. When joint developments occur, features common to other parks in the county and surrounding cities (i.e. signs) should be used to identify the property as a public facility.

In Dunwoody, the school that has the greatest potential as a school park site is Peachtree Charter Middle School located adjacent to Brook Run Park. There is interest by parent groups at the school to see the sports fields on the campus developed to a higher level. There is also a need for additional sports fields to meet recreational demand and to take pressure off of the baseball fields at Dunwoody Park. The City should try to work with the DeKalb County Schools and appropriate parent groups to develop a long term partnership agreement for the fields. If a partnership agreement/joint use agreement can be developed, it would be to the City's benefit to spend the necessary capital to upgrade the fields if the City has first right to use the fields during non-school use. The public should also have access to the property, which will include a baseball field, a soccer field and a running track around a football field. These facilities should be developed to match other City facilities and be suitable for school competitive level play.

In addition, there is green space across the front of the school that would allow a multi-use greenway trail to connect neighborhoods with the school and Brook Run Park. Multi-use pathways would then be able to connect to the larger system of greenways that has been proposed for the City.

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Private Park/Recreation Facility and Church/Non-profit Groups

The private park and recreation facility, as described by the NRPA, meets one of the two following characteristics:

- “Private Parks, such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and party houses, are generally within a residential area developed for the exclusive use of residents and are maintained through a neighborhood association. They are not, however, a complete substitute for public recreation space, and
- Private Recreation Facilities that are for-profit enterprises, such as health and fitness clubs, golf courses, water parks, amusement parks and sports facilities.” Not-for-profit private providers include churches, foundations and land trusts that provide both active programs and land stewardship activities.

These facility types can be entirely private or, in many cases, be a joint venture between a public entity and a private organization. Partnerships of this kind allow for the provision of facilities and programs at a reduced cost to the public sector. Determining the impact of private providers on the delivery of park and recreation opportunities in a community is difficult to quantify. However, in the case of Dunwoody, the large number of church and not-for-profit providers indicate that the community’s need for recreation facilities and opportunities was not being met prior to the City’s incorporation and further strengthens the community comments for more parks and greenways. Calls to several of the churches and not-for-profits indicated they were also operating at maximum capacity and, in some cases, on undersized facilities.

The two areas in which the private providers are meeting much of the need are swimming and tennis. Due to the large number of private neighborhood facilities and swim/tennis clubs and the high income levels of the City, there will be less of a need for swimming pools and tennis courts than in some communities we have studied, but there is a need to provide some public courts. We heard request for tennis in most every meeting and there is a desire to have a City sponsored tennis championship.

Other Park and Recreation Service Providers

Dunwoody is unique compared to most communities in Georgia in that it has taken over a portion of what was a County park system as part of the incorporation of the City. This unique trait is one that has recently occurred in several other communities within the ARC region, including Milton, Sandy Springs and Johns Creek. Because Dunwoody parks were formally DeKalb County parks, many of the facility users are not city residents. In fact, many of the children under the age of 12 still play baseball and softball at a DeKalb County Park with other county residents, until they reach age 13 and move as a group to Dunwoody Park for baseball – whether they are a Dunwoody or a county resident. This is true for other facilities such as the skate park, which has a reach well beyond the city boundaries. Additionally, our survey findings indicate that 60% of residents go outside the city for park activities.

When asked why they travel outside the city, responses indicated the following:

- They are closer to my residence - 4.2%
- They offer facilities that are not available in Dunwoody parks - 78.3%
- They offer better quality facilities - 34.9%
- I feel safer in their parks - 10.4%
- Other - 17.5%

The park locations and service areas are shown in maps that are described in detail in the service area analysis, later in this section.

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Private Providers

As previously mentioned, the biggest provider of recreation facilities other than the City are local churches and religious-based organizations.

Dunwoody United Methodist Church, North Atlanta Church of Christ, Dunwoody Baptist Church, Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta (MJCCA), and North Peachtree Baptist Church all operate some athletic programs and offer a variety of athletic facilities including soccer fields, gymnasiums, swimming pools, gymnastic facilities and outdoor programming space. Many operate fitness and other related programs as well. The MJCCA is the most developed of all the religious-based providers. Table 6.1 illustrates the disparity between their facilities and other church providers.

Schools, while not private, also have recreation resources that could be a benefit to the City if joint use agreements are negotiated. School facilities are also shown on Table 6.1.

Private health clubs include:

- Body Fit Atlanta
3677 Womack Road
Dunwoody, GA 30360
- Dunwoody Body Works
2480 Jett Ferry Road
Dunwoody, GA 30338-3040
- Fitness Together
5482 Chamblee Dunwoody Road
Dunwoody, GA 30338
- Liberty Fitness of Dunwoody
5495 Chamblee Dunwoody Road
Dunwoody, GA 30338
- RJG Fitness - Personal Training
6205 Ashford Gables Dr
Dunwoody, GA 30338
- Workout Anytime 24 Hour Fitness Center
4490 Chamblee Dunwoody Road
Dunwoody, GA 30338

The Cowart Family Ashford Dunwoody YMCA is located just south of the city limits on Ashford Dunwoody Road and offers a full range of indoor and outdoor programming for all ages. These private providers are all membership-based and are commonly found in metropolitan areas. It is the planning team's experience that most private providers serve a different user group than public recreation facilities. Public providers tend to be more family-orientated and offer programs that, in many cases, are not revenue generators for the facility, while private facilities offer programs that can cover costs. The same is true for religion-sponsored facilities; there is a segment of the population that does not feel comfortable participating in programs that are religion-based. Therefore a good mix of all types of providers is needed to meet the needs of the entire community.

Community Green Space and Zoning Provisions

Other factors that can impact the delivery of parks and recreation services and the provision for greenways and open space in the community are the requirements associated with land development within a community. There is a broad range of community zoning and open space standards across the country. Some communities have strict requirements for funding park development which range

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from setting aside land for public parks to paying fees that help construct parks. Several rapidly growing communities have charged park impact fees in an effort to keep pace with the growth, while others have used a less clear-cut approach and negotiate with landholders and developers to acquire parkland.

The City's zoning regulations currently set minimum requirements for the amount of land that can be developed and the amount to remain in open space. Most single residential, commercial and office space zoning districts require a minimum of 20% open space. Only when one reviews multi-family and conservation zone districts do you find requirements for more open space, mandatory development of recreation areas, and standards for how the open space is used. A minimum standard of 4,000 square feet of dedicated recreation space is required at multi-family developments, but this is a very small requirement when you consider the total recreation needs of a family for indoor programming space, sports fields, trails, playgrounds and other amenities that are provided by public recreation providers.

Many communities have set up detailed requirements that look at the total recreation needs of a community other than those that can be met on site by each individual development. Many communities start with mandatory park dedication requirements with an option to pay a fee in lieu of dedicating the land. The parkland dedication takes into account the facilities that would normally be found in both neighborhood and community parks. This is done by keeping an inventory of current facilities on an annual basis and developing level of service ratios on a per capita basis. The better ordinances seek to balance the dedication of land that is provided in the community where the development is occurring or at the nearest community park that will actually serve the development. In a city like Dunwoody, where high density vertical development is anticipated, a fee in lieu of arrangement would be a good alternative to address the impact of thousands of new residents living in multi-story units. The money collected could then be used to upgrade or add facilities at one of the existing community parks to meet sport field needs and interior programming space. Collierville, Tennessee, has a good ordinance for both park land and greenway ordinance tied to new development and would be a good one to review if the City decides to pursue mandatory park land dedication requirements.

Another new trend for green development is to offer incentive programs to developers who set aside open space or utilize green infrastructure solutions in their developments. Nashville, Tennessee, has just developed an overlay for the central business district that has incentive for green roofs, rain gardens and structured parking. The incentive is density credits, which can in turn be used to increase density of the development or sold as credits to other developers, who can use them on a different property. These types of incentive programs could work well in gaining valuable green space and parks around the Perimeter Center area, around the MARTA station and the mall as it redevelops over the next 20 years.

Service Area Analyses

Gap Analysis

A gap analysis is an assessment of the service areas of facilities to determine if there are areas of a community that are being under served and represent gaps in the overall service standard for each park category. The service area analysis begins by classifying existing parks using the NRPA park categories. All existing parks were classified as follows based on use patterns as well as size and NRPA standards.

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Park/Facility	Classification	Service Area
Brook Run	Community/Large Urban Park	2 miles
Donaldson-Chesnut House	Special Use/Neighborhood	½ mile
Windwood Hollow	Neighborhood	½ mile
Vernon Springs	Mini	¼ mile
Dunwoody Park	Community	2 miles
Dunwoody Nature Center	Natural Area	30 miles
North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center	Special Use	30 miles
Perimeter Park	Natural Area/Neighborhood	½ mile

Our findings related to service area gaps are consistent with the findings of the “City of Dunwoody Comprehensive Plan, Short Term Strategies,” which includes recommendations to buy additional park land and to begin development of a greenway system. Passive parkland is equally as important for a City to provide as athletic facilities in a park system. This balance is just as important as the geographic placement of facilities. If all of the active parks are located on one side of the city and all the passive parks on the other side, everyone is forced to travel greater distances for park services. The good news about the current parks is they all have some area for passive activities. The current problem is most of the passive lands are undeveloped and lack trails to access much of the passive property and the bulk of the passive land is found at Brook Run Park and Dunwoody Nature Preserve. Protecting these resources and enhancing access should be high priorities as the City increases its role in managing park resources and as resources are added to the system.

One of the best methods to add natural resources to the park system is through greenway development. If the City could obtain easements along stream corridors and develop greenways it would insure both protection of the resources and access. The improved access could be used to increase public awareness of the value of these stream corridor resources and greatly expand city park acreage through the applications of easements rather than fee simple purchases of property. Because the City has increased buffer requirements over the state mandated 25’ buffer to 75,’ this should allow adequate space to construct a greenway outside the state buffer.

The maps on the following pages illustrate the service area analysis and are described in the text below. Figures 6.1 through 6.10 show the relationships of existing parks, schools and other recreation providers and to the community as a whole. Their service areas reflect the NRPA community park standard of .25 mile for mini parks, .5 mile for neighborhood parks and 2 miles for community parks. Figure 6.7 also shows Brook Run as a Regional Park with a 5 mile radius, which was its intended purpose when initially purchased by DeKalb County.

Figure 6.1 is a simple map showing the location of the City’s eight parks and school facilities located within the municipal boundaries. The Division does not own or operate programs in these parks, but rather facilitates the use of the parks by organized groups who do the programming. The majority of the park land lies in the southern half of the city, with the southeastern section being the most well served in terms of acreage. Dunwoody Park and Dunwoody Nature Center share 35 acres in the northwestern section of the city. Residents in the north central section of the city have better access to Brook Run Park than Dunwoody Park, due to the limited number of east to west roads in the city. Figure 6.2 shows at a larger scale school and park locations along with the location of churches and other groups who offer recreation facilities in Dunwoody.

Figure 6.1

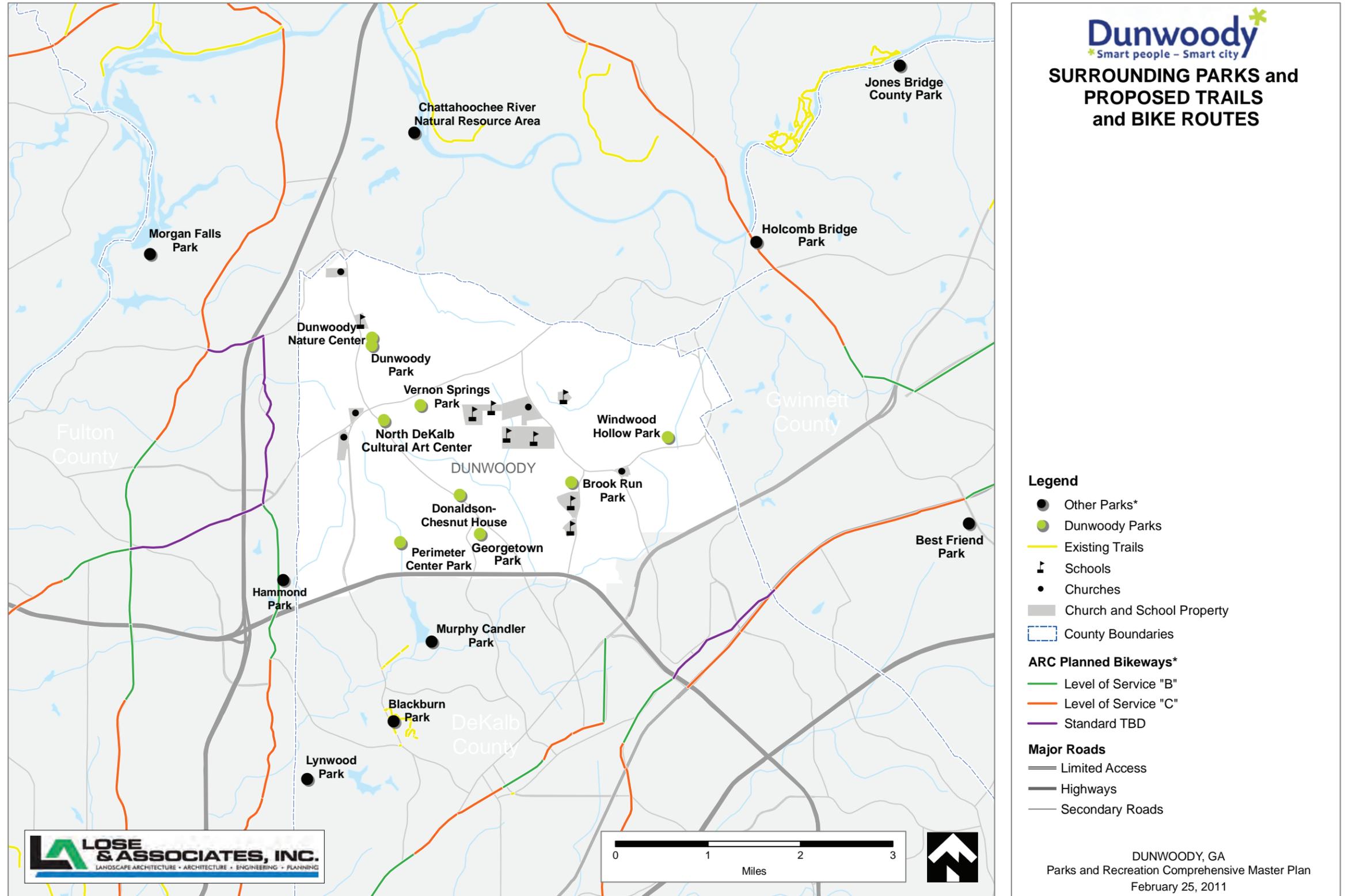


Figure 6.2

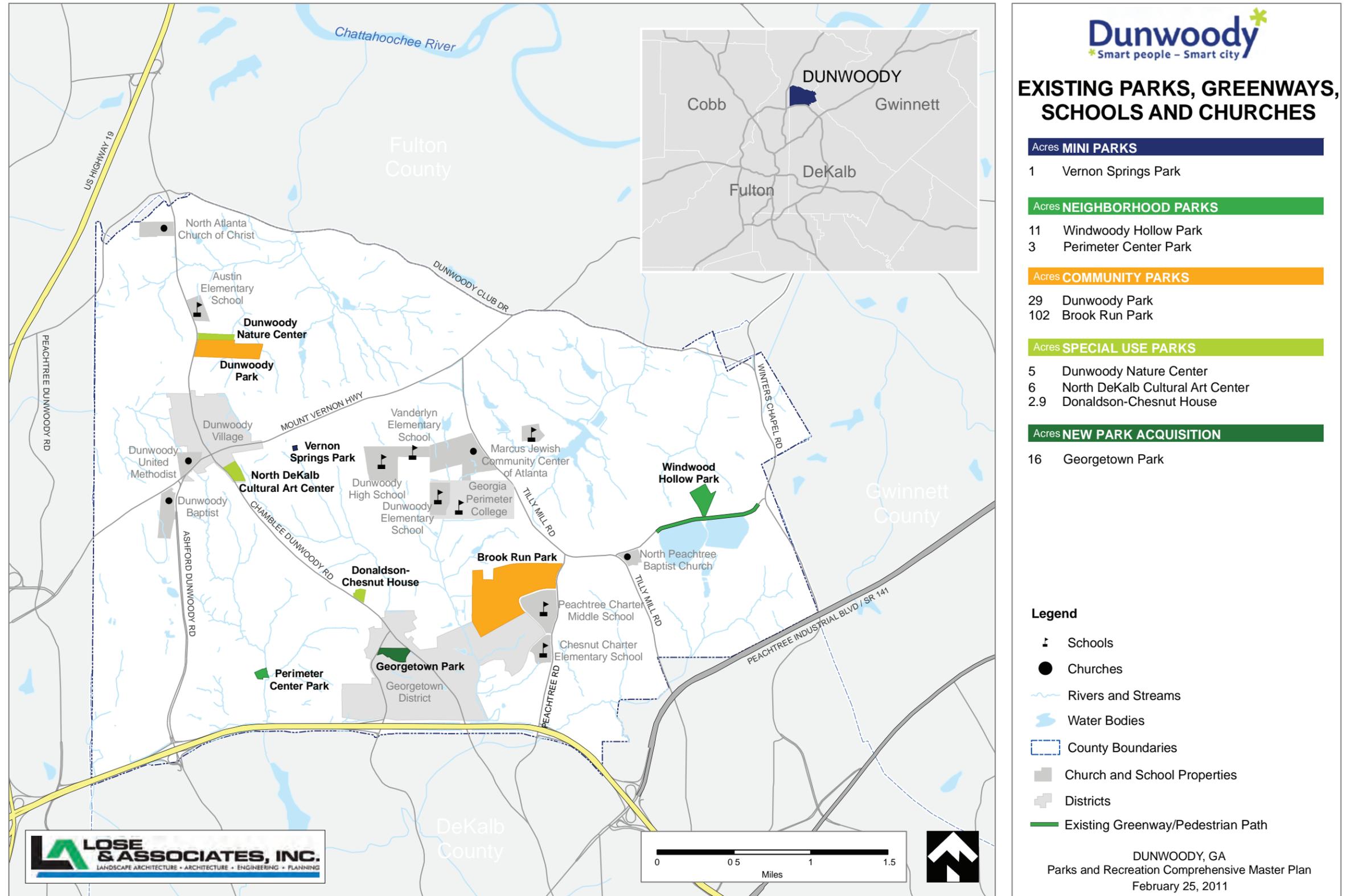


Figure 6.3

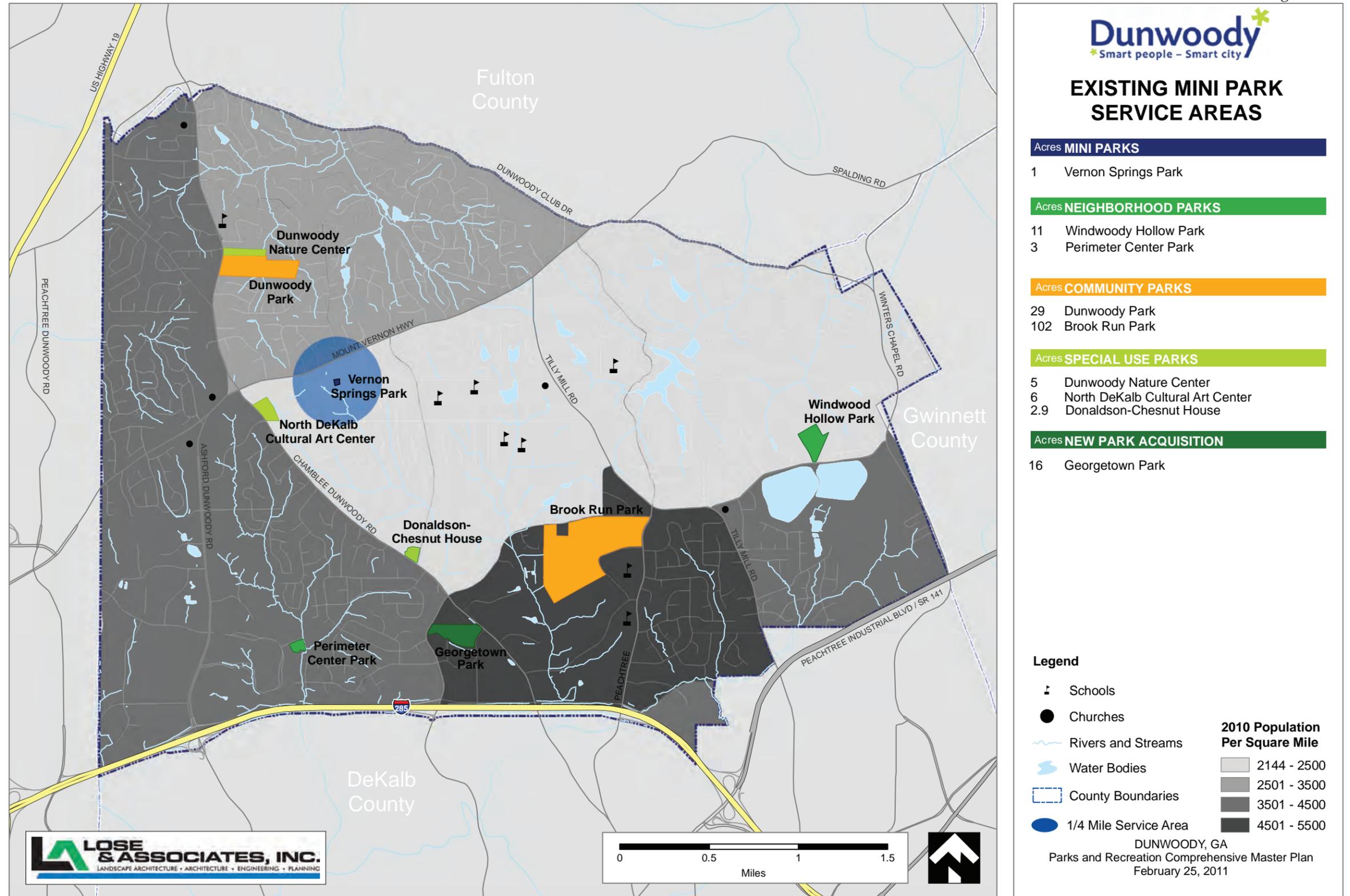


Figure 6.4

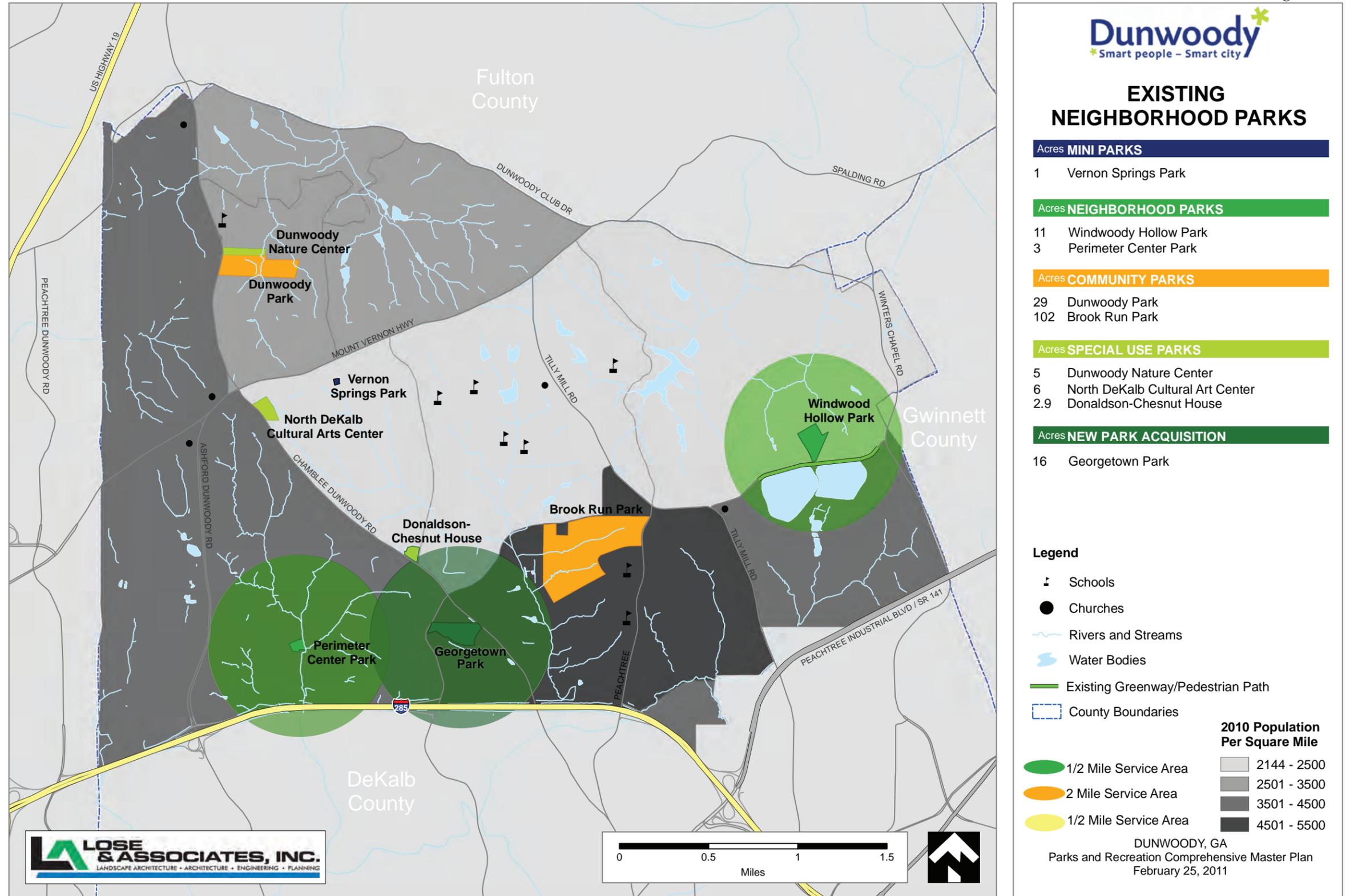


Figure 6.5

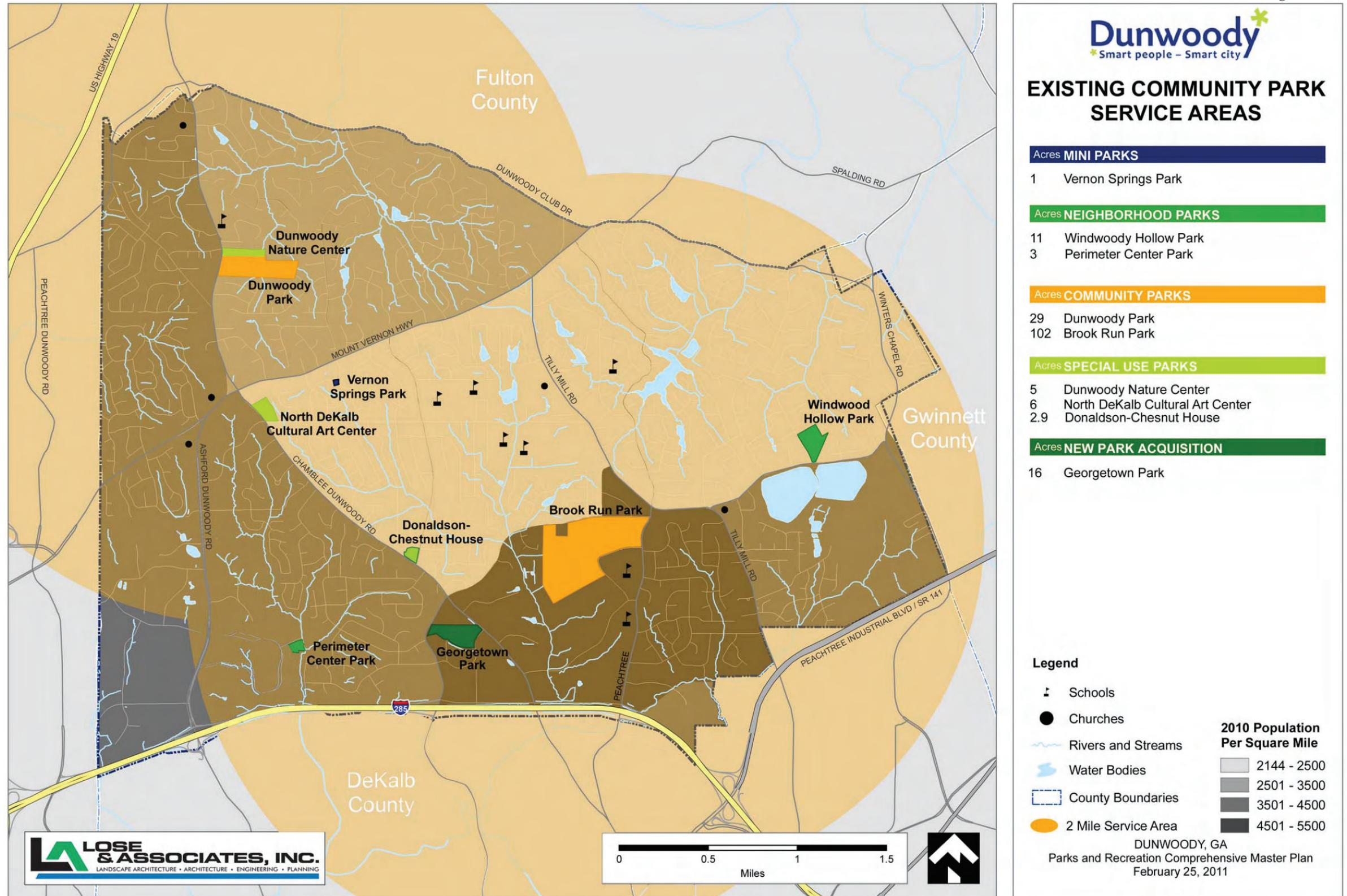


Figure 6.6

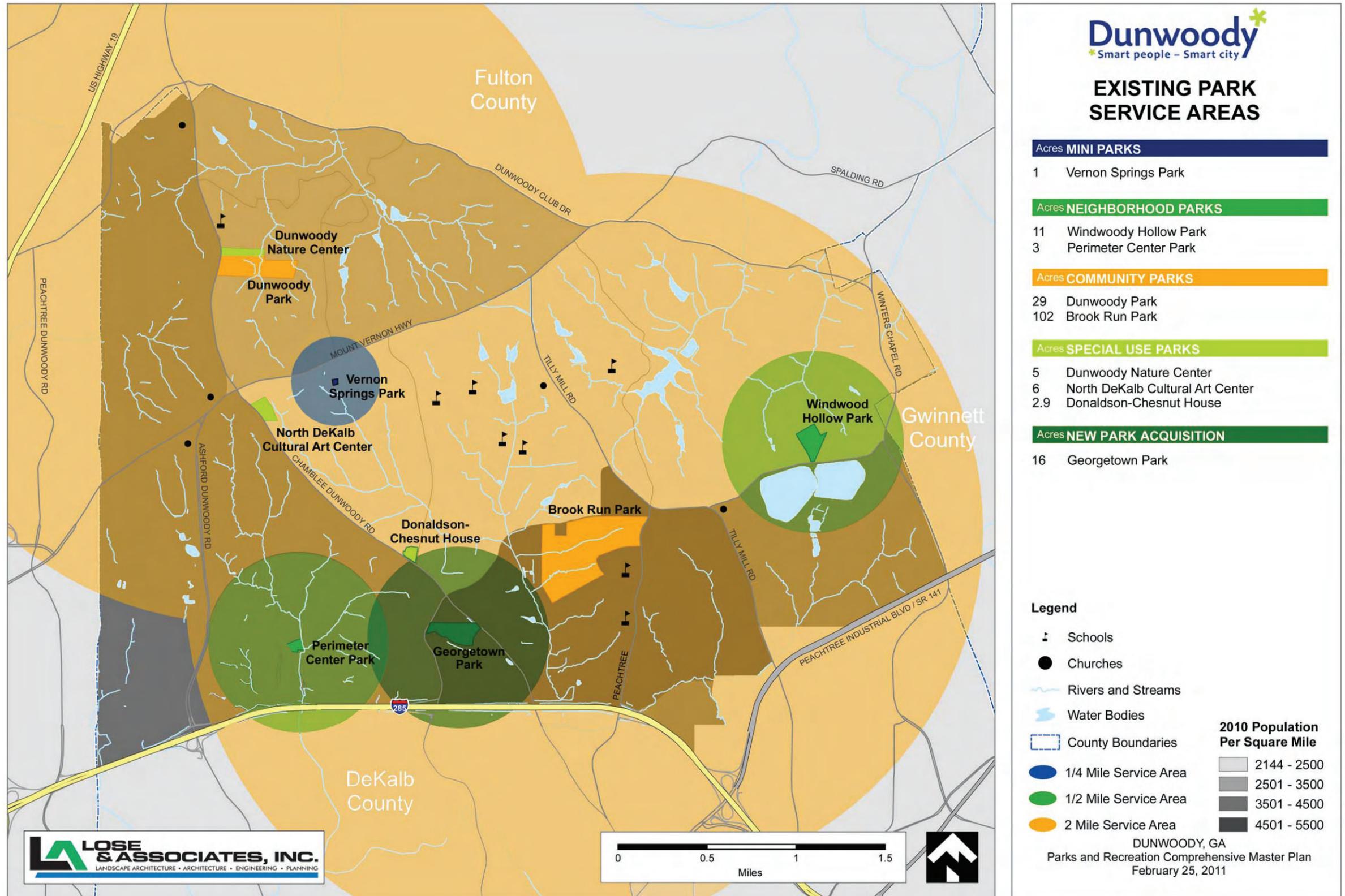


Figure 6.7

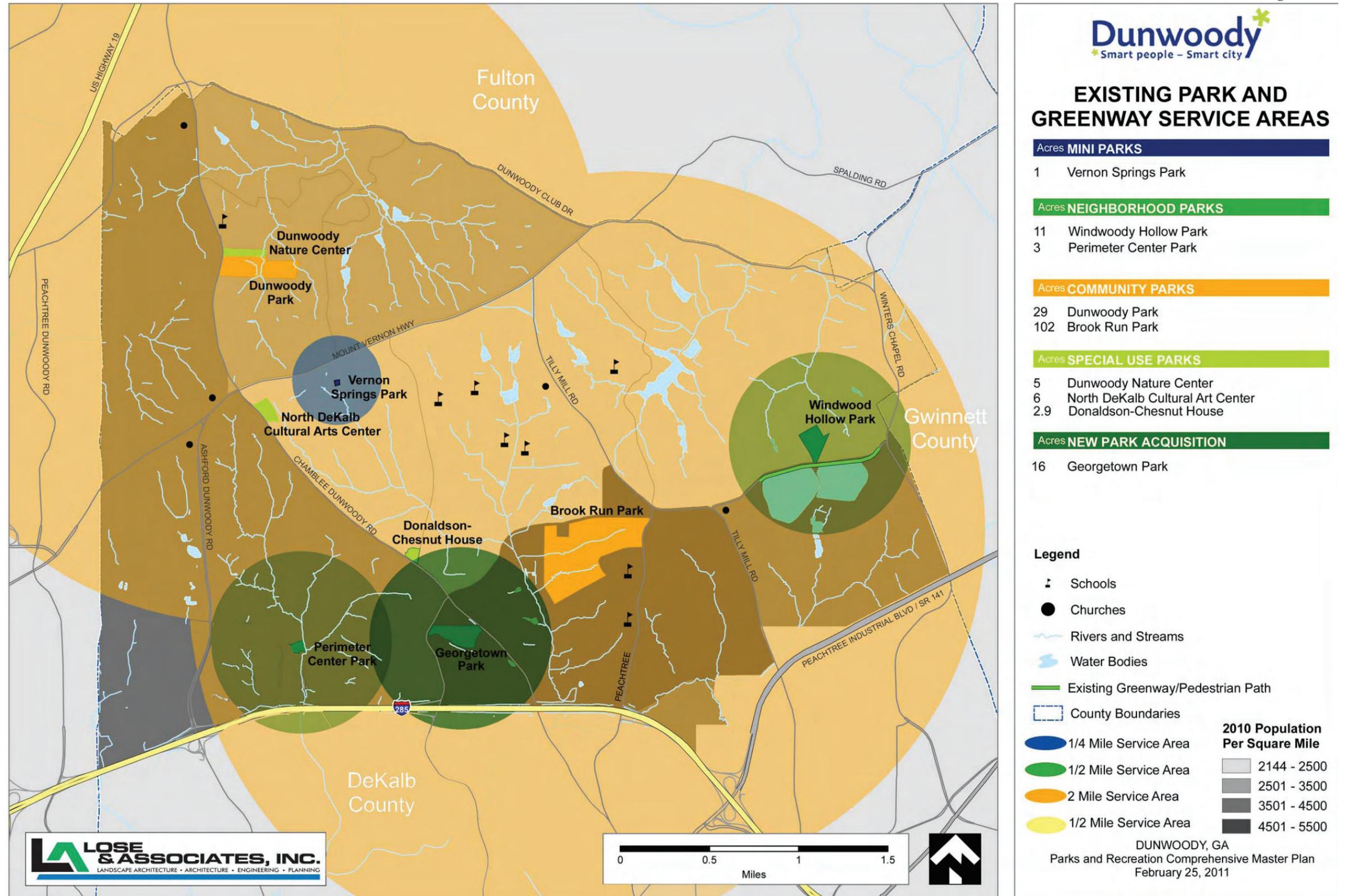


Figure 6.8

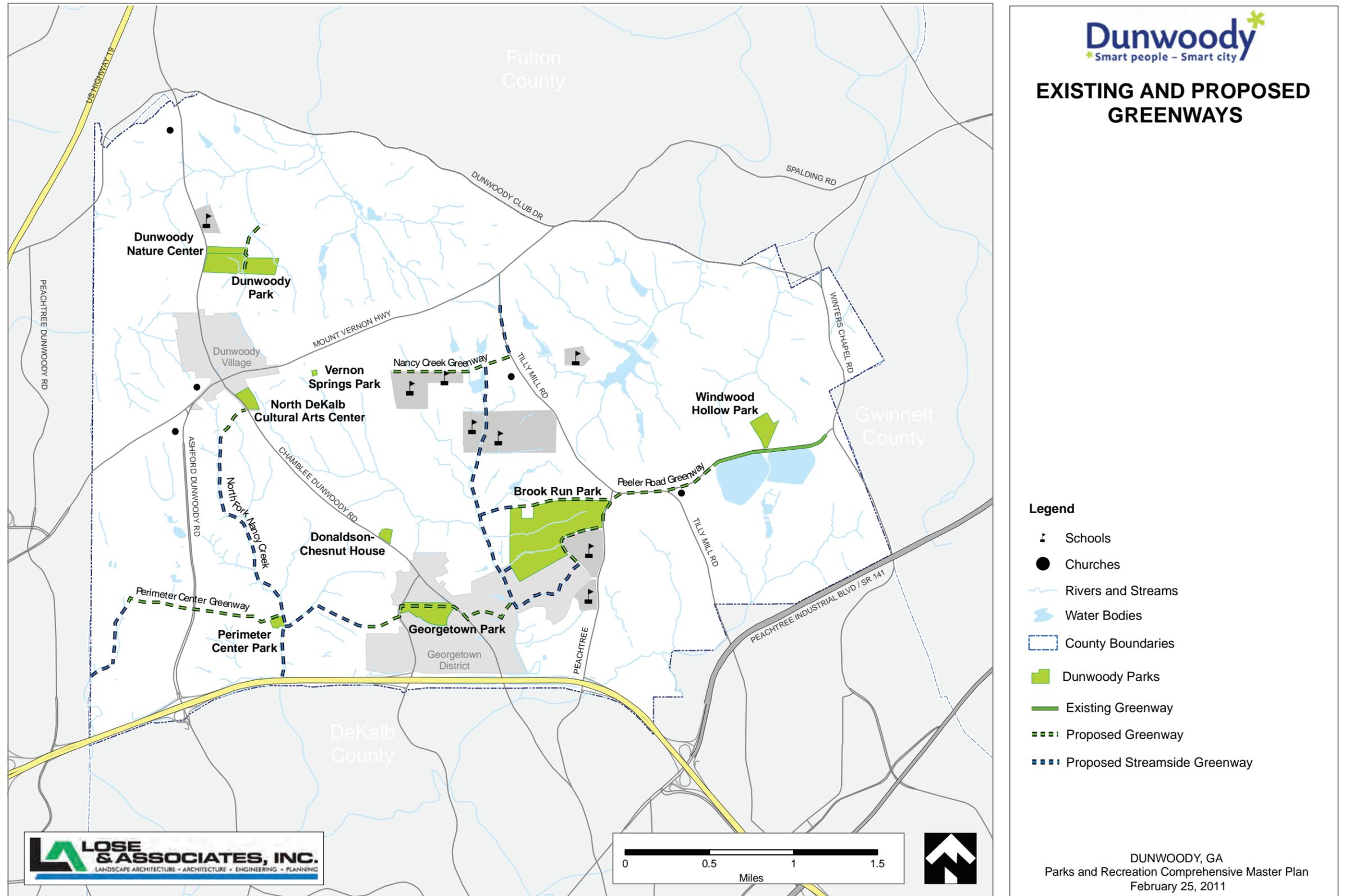


Figure 6.9

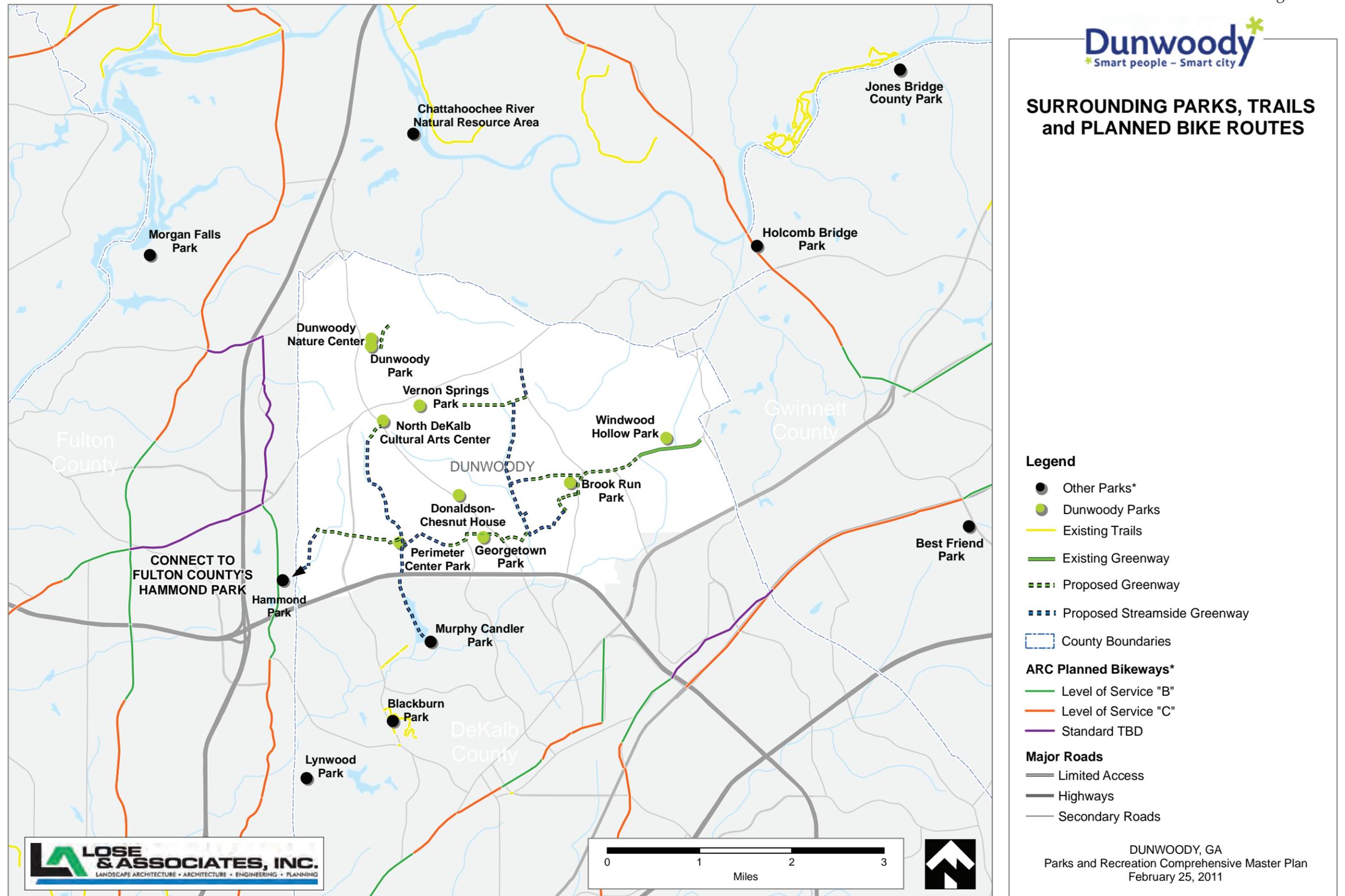
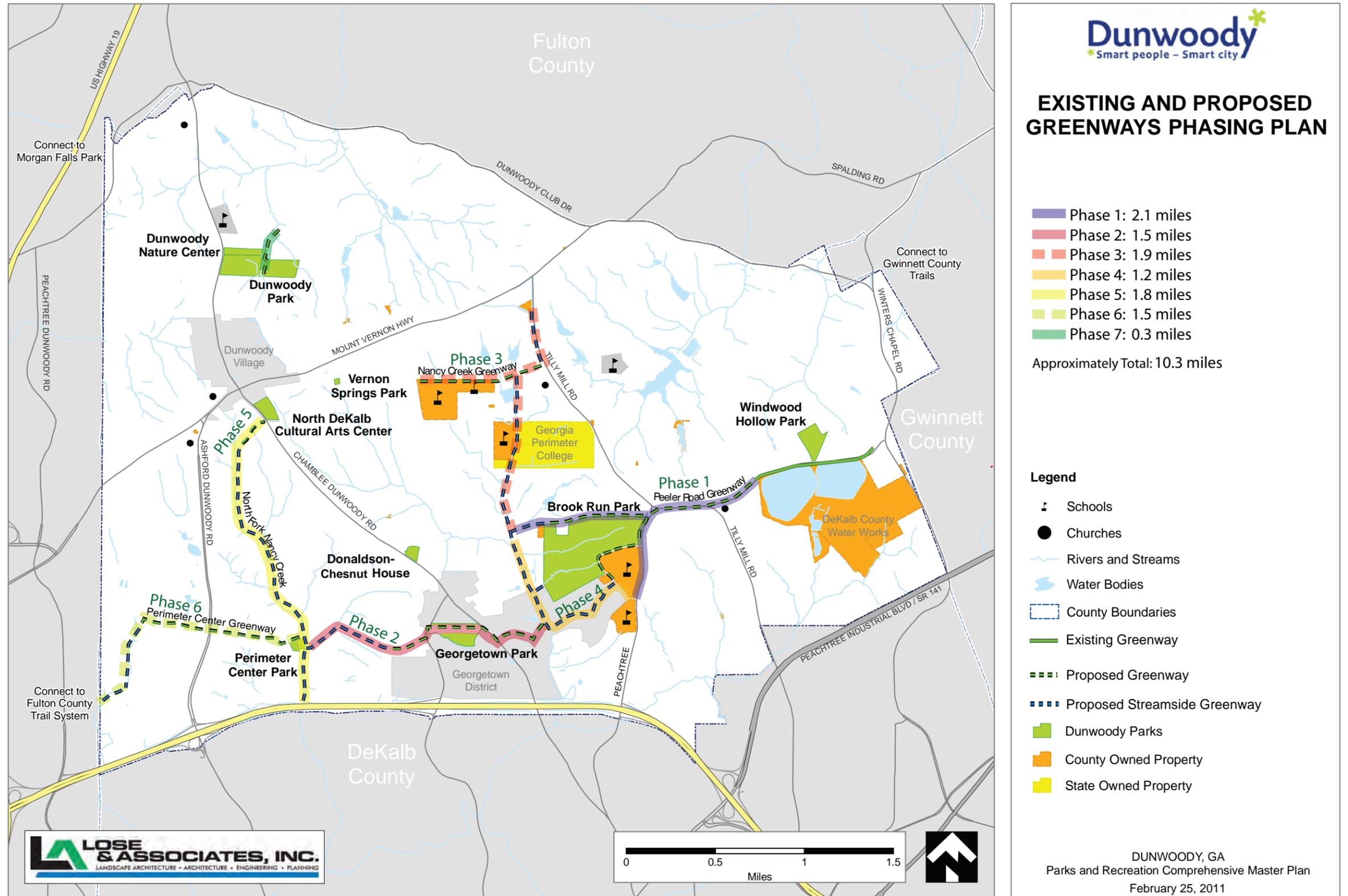


Figure 6.10



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Figures 6.3 through 6.7 show what are commonly called gap analysis maps. These maps show the city's housing density and existing park service areas. The most densely populated areas are in the southern section of the city, along Interstate 285. The highest density is south of Brook Run Park, roughly bounded by Tilly Mill Road and Chamblee Dunwoody Road. Densities east and west all along the corporate limits are the second highest in the city. The Perimeter Center area is the most under-served area of the city in terms of green space and also has limited remaining undeveloped land. Finding property between the Georgetown/North Shallowford area and the Perimeter Park area to develop as parks or community open space will have the greatest per capita impact and provide recreation opportunities in an area that currently has no developed parkland.

An analysis of the park service area maps shows that current park properties do not allow the City to meet the stated goal of having a park within one-half mile of all residents. The central part of the City comes closest to this goal if Perimeter Center Park and Donaldson-Chesnut House were developed and open to the public for use. With the development of these two properties and the service areas of Brook Run, you have one small section of the city with coverage overlap at one-half mile. Because Brook Run is a community park, it has a two mile service area for those willing to walk or drive that distance; it also has overlap with Dunwoody Park, which has a two mile service area as a community park as well. The community parks' service areas cover the entire city, with the exception of a small area in the extreme southwestern corner. This is the area dominated by Perimeter Mall and home to several mid-level and high-rise housing developments. Residents of these high-density residential developments need green space, as is revealed by the number of people seen walking their dogs along roadway shoulders and jogging on sidewalks.

Acquiring land in this area to reduce the existing service gap may require the acquisition and assembling of several adjacent parcels which currently have structures on them. There may be business properties which, due to the recession, are currently unoccupied; there may also be development properties that were left incomplete. Another way to assemble green space and park land in these highly developed areas is to assemble linear parks or greenways. Our team has looked at several major stream corridors where, due to flooding and development restrictions, good urban forest remains. In Figure 6.8, we have mapped potential trail routes running north and south along streams that would then link up various neighborhoods and allow residents alternate modes, such as walking and biking to connect to the parks. If, after further study and conversation with the community, the City moves forward with establishing a greenway in any of these identified possible corridors, greenway trails, at 50' wide, would protect six acres per mile. With over 10 miles of proposed greenway corridor, this could result in the protections of approximately 64 acres of park land along trails. In Figure 6.9, we have shown how these trails can be used to link to a regional trail system and provide an opportunity for expanded off-road recreation opportunities.

Interviews and subsequent discussions with staff regarding the GID development revealed 5,400 residential units have already been permitted for a mixed use development at this intersection. Given the opportunity, the City should push for as much green space in this GID development as possible – and the reclaiming of as much land as possible – through alternative design of infrastructure systems. As illustrated in the Transit Village Sub-Area plan, the reclaiming of a drainage way to a public park to serve the transit stop is a great example of reclaiming land. With 6000 residents living within walking distance of the station, wide public walkways, bicycle lanes, and green space and park land will be needed to create a community that reflects the green and sustainability goals outlined in the City's Comprehensive Plan and supported by this plan.

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The current recession will likely result in changes to the GID development plan approved by DeKalb County, which will give the City the opportunity to work with GID as it relates to green space. The large surplus of residential units in the Atlanta market will most likely delay the GID development for a number of years during which the City could put in some low cost soft surface walking trails, park benches, some shade arbors and swings. All of these features could be relocated at a later date when the development occurs – if the space is not retained as green space as part of the overall development.

In order to improve the balance of service, it is clear that additional property and facilities will be needed. Greenway development, along with redevelopment of existing parks, will provide the greatest initial impact and expand recreation opportunities. Because there is so little land available and the current state of the economy, it is critical to move on land purchases quickly, even if development has to wait for some years. Therefore, in our summary of recommendations we have ranked the redevelopment of Brook Run and Dunwoody Park as a top priority, followed by the purchase of additional park parcels, and improving the overall safety and ADA accessibility of all park facilities. These priorities are followed by greenway corridor development.

General Park Evaluations, Observations and Recommendations

The completion of the existing facility assessments revealed a park system that is in fair to poor condition, with the exception of the Brook Run playground and skate park. The facilities vary in age and style, as they have been developed over a number of years. All of the facilities were developed by DeKalb County before they were sold to the City. In addition, many of the facilities have been developed in buildings that were developed for another purpose and have been adapted for their current use. Facilities that fall in this category include the barn and greenhouses at Brook Run Park, North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center, the Donaldson-Chesnut House (which has yet to be open to the public) and the Dunwoody Nature Center. Numerous other buildings exist at Brook Run Park and uses have not been identified for these buildings.

General Park Observations

- Items listed in “good” condition are either new or require little maintenance or repairs. Items listed in “fair” condition are still functional but require maintenance to ensure their use throughout the life of the master plan. Items listed in “poor” condition will require replacement during the span of this master plan.
- In general, all the parks have major ADA access issues. The lack of designated handicap parking and access routes in the parks to connect facilities could expose the City to costly litigation if the problems are not corrected.
- The playground surfaces were mulch. At the time of installation, these probably met safety and accessibility standards. Over time, however, portions of these surfaces have compacted to less than safe levels and are no longer accessible or level with adjacent sidewalks.
- Most items noted during the assessment were found to be in poor condition. Team members noted that the majority of issues found throughout the site were maintenance-related and primarily due to the high levels of use at each park.
- None of the restrooms in the parks and at park facilities except the skate park and playground at Brook Run are ADA compliant.
- Signage at each park is inconsistent. The City should develop sign standards to bring park facilities to full compliance and to create a unified look. The new temporary park entry signs installed by the City are the most effective signs in the parks.

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- Site furnishing such as benches and trash cans are needed throughout the parks, along with standardization of the site finishing. The use of wheeled trash carts provided by DeKalb County Sanitation Division are not consistent with the aesthetic look desired for a public park.
- Several areas of the park require additional maintenance due to excess use and erosion. Where steep slopes are difficult to maintain, recommend low-maintenance plantings for both aesthetics and erosion control. Small patches of turf between facilities or trees should be mulched or planted with other low-maintenance plantings to reduce these demands.
- The athletic fields provided at Dunwoody Park are overused, resulting in poor turf quality. If the current level of programming is to remain, alternative synthetic turf material should be explored or increased maintenance of natural surfaces will be needed.
- Our field observations revealed that none of the City's parks have a pavilion capable of handling large groups. Providing a variety of sizes in rental pavilions is good for revenue generation and to accommodate the different demands of citizens and companies.
- The overall lack of a central design style for the City's parks is not consistent with the ongoing branding of the City. It is recommended that a set of design guidelines for park buildings and facilities be developed to guide all future park development.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

A large issue facing both public and private recreation providers is the ability to enhance access for disabled patrons. Park and recreation departments are not exempt from this requirement, and legislation dictates that primary park amenities be barrier-free.

Primary access routes as described in the *Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas*, by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), are defined in the following manner:

Outdoor recreation access routes are the paths that connect the primary developed spaces and elements that are basic to the recreation experience being offered at the site. For example, the outdoor recreation access routes at a picnic ground are the paths linking the parking area, restrooms, picnic units, and water hydrants. While many of these elements – parking area, restrooms and water hydrant – are not the primary reason for a person to visit the site, they are basic developed elements that serve all visitors.

Designers and managers, in consultation with users, must determine which of the developed activities and elements at a recreation site are basic to the recreation experience being offered. Further, they must insure that there is a comprehensive system of outdoor recreation access routes that connect all primary elements and spaces with each other and with accessible parking spaces and facility entrances. This determination should be based upon visitor expectations as well as the level of development at the site.

The ADA regulations were updated in July of 2010, when President Obama signed the legislation that governs the design standards. The new standards offer more governance and specifics than the previous standards, but still leave some room for interpretation for some park facilities; however, they are very specific in their requirements for all playgrounds, hard courts, pathways, spectator areas, fishing piers, water play features, restroom and programming spaces to be accessible. The guidelines provide specifics on maximum vertical and horizontal slopes that can be used along access routes if they are to be compliant. Several of the key standards that will impact new park and renovation

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projects are as follows:

206.2.10 Recreational Boating Facilities. Boat slips required to comply with 235.2 and boarding piers at boat launch ramps required to comply with 235.3 shall be on an accessible route. Accessible routes serving recreational boating facilities shall comply with Chapter 4, except as modified by 1003.2.

206.2.12 Court Sports. In court sports, at least one accessible route shall directly connect both sides of the court.

206.2.13 Exercise Machines and Equipment. Exercise machines and equipment required to comply with 236 shall be on an accessible route.

206.2.14 Fishing Piers and Platforms. Fishing piers and platforms shall be on an accessible route. Accessible routes serving fishing piers and platforms shall comply with Chapter 4 except as modified by 1005.1.

206.2.17 Play Areas. Play areas shall provide accessible routes in accordance with 206.2.17. Accessible routes serving play areas shall comply with Chapter 4 except as modified by 1008.2.

206.2.17.1 Ground Level and Elevated Play Components. At least one accessible route shall be provided within the play area. The accessible route shall connect ground level play components required to comply with 240.2.1 and elevated play components required to comply with 240.2.2, including entry and exit points of the play components.

206.2.17.2 Soft Contained Play Structures. Where three or fewer entry points are provided for soft contained play structures, at least one entry point shall be on an accessible route. Where four or more entry points are provided for soft contained play structures, at least two entry points shall be on an accessible route.

Refer to the following web sites for additional ADA information.

<http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAStandards.pdf>

Playground Safety Standards

Another prominent issue within some park systems is the non-compliance of playground equipment to safety standards by organizations such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the International Play Equipment Manufacturers' Association (IPEMA). The standards proposed by these organizations are meant to serve as a guideline to help create atmospheres that are safe and pose a minimal threat of injury. Studies show that the majority of injuries sustained on public playgrounds are to the head—a result of falls from the play structure to the ground. For this reason, consideration has been given as to what the critical fall height would be in which a fatal head injury might occur.

Guidelines have been established measuring the impact performance of various materials. As with ADA issues, alternatives should be studied and a standard established for implementation of safe play environments throughout the parks system.

While the playground at Brook Run Park has proper safety surfaces, the playgrounds in the other parks

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do not. The use of natural surface wood chips is a common playground surface material but has much higher maintenance requirements to maintain its safety rating. Many of the playgrounds lacked proper maintenance, which should occur daily. Newer poured-in-place rubber surfaces are becoming more cost effective, as they involve a higher initial cost but eliminate the need for annual maintenance and material costs. As playgrounds are added to the system and older equipment is updated, this type of surfacing should be examined as an alternative.

It is recommended that at least one member of the park staff maintain a playground safety certification (Certified Playground Safety Inspector, CPSI) to monitor playground conditions and limit the City's liability. This is a standard practice in public park agencies across the country.

Vandalism

Individual park assessments and evaluations revealed minor issues with vandalism with the exception of Brook Run Park. At Brook Run, graffiti and damage to several of the old buildings has been a problem; vandals are breaking windows and doors to gain access to the buildings due to their isolation and non-use. In some cases, the buildings have been used by homeless for shelter. Two of the existing buildings that have seen the most damage have been removed. The old theater building has been a recent target of vandals; because it has the potential for some type of reuse, it needs to be secured.

Graffiti is a common problem in parks systems across the country. Many of the departments the planning team has worked with have a zero graffiti policy. This policy requires any area with graffiti to be painted over within 24 hours of a report. It is recommended that the City adopt a policy to deal with graffiti in parks.

Other recommendations to reduce site-based problems that create atmospheres for criminal activity have been made to minimize the threat of vandalism and other illicit behavior. The addition of lighting in parks and the practice of clearing thick vegetative growth to improve visibility into and around parks are two methods that should be employed. Whenever possible, parks should be oriented toward the road to allow maximum visibility into them and eliminate areas where vandals can hide or congregate. Providing materials that are resistant to destruction reduces the frequency of repairs or replacement. Facilities that offer something for everyone increase the number of visitors to the park, thus reducing the potential actions of a criminal.

Individual Park and Facility Assessments and Recommendations

The following are individual park assessments and recommendations. Information has been provided according to their size, location and amenities provided within each park. Facilities were analyzed for their age, functionality and condition, and recommendations were made accordingly. The Brook Run Assessment is in the Brook Run Master Plan found in the Appendix of this report.

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Brook Run Park

Location: North Peachtree Road

Acreage: 102

Classification: Community Park/Large Urban Park

Facilities: Community garden, greenhouse complex, dog park, skate park, large community playground, Veterans' Memorial, pavilion, walking trails, open play areas, roads and parking. Additional non-recreation facilities include a number of buildings that were developed by the former property owner, including an old theater, dormitory and office space. The former maintenance building for the property is used as the City of Dunwoody Public Works Maintenance Compound.

General Observations and Analysis

Brook Run Park functions partially as a park and partially as an undeveloped property. There are a large number of old buildings on the property, as well as areas that have been cleared of buildings but not developed. The site has tremendous potential to be a wonderful community park once all of the old buildings are removed or redeveloped and the construction of park amenities is complete.

Specific Condition Assessments

Vehicular Access and Parking

- The parking lots currently found on the property are in fair condition, as are the roads. The locations of parking lots are tied to previous uses and should not dictate how the park develops in the future.
- Due to traffic congestion on North Peachtree Road, which serves as the main entry to the park, alternate access points are needed. There is a second access point off of Peeler Road but it is only open during the hours that Public Works crews are on site.
- Several of the old roads lead to dead ends, creating unmonitored areas within the property.
- Some of the old roads are being used by Public Works crews to store materials and debris collected from throughout the city. This practice should be discontinued, as it is not conducive with park activities.
- Parking for the skate park and playground appears to be adequate.
- The community garden lacks a defined parking area.

Pedestrian Circulation

- There is no pedestrian system currently in the park.
- Some older paved trails exist in the woods. They are approximately 4' wide and some have new light standards along the trail. It appears that the entirety of the trail was lit at one time.
- There is no signage along the trail or at trail entry points, and the trail has breaks resulting from where buildings and sidewalks that would have provided the connections for a complete trail system were removed.
- The skate park and playground have ADA accessible routes, although they are not marked properly.
- The only sidewalks that connect items in the park are at the skate park and playground.
- There is not good connectivity between the park and surrounding residential neighborhoods or Peachtree Charter Middle School, which is adjacent to the park.
- There is adequate space in the park to develop a good system of interconnected pathways and sidewalks to link park elements.

Figure 6.11



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Park Signage

- The main park sign is too large and not in keeping with the new City branding program.
- Individual activity areas of the park are not signed.
- There is no wayfinding signage in the park to direct visitors to their destinations.
- There are limited rules signs in the park.

Building Assessments

- The two buildings on site that would require the least amount of money to redevelop based on condition are the old dormitory building and the maintenance compound. The theater and office buildings near the front of the park would require a much larger investments to restore. However, relocating the Spruill Center for the Arts programs to this site would free up the six acres at the North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center to become a community park or be used for other purposes by the City.
- Saving the theater chapel as a community meeting or art gallery would save the historic stained glass windows in the chapel.
- Several of the buildings appear to have some good mechanical equipment that might have value if resold.

General Notes

- The park needs to be reorganized to maximize the available land and create a true park-like setting.
- Old fencing found throughout the park needs to be removed.
- Old tennis courts and other outdated facilities need to be removed.
- The old pavilion needs to be removed.
- Restrooms are needed throughout the park.
- The dog park needs to be relocated where there are areas of lawn and shade to reduce the negative impact of compaction of tree roots and erosion in the current dog park.
- Improved water service is needed at the community garden.
- Consideration should be given for developing more entry points to the park but not connecting them with roads that would encourage drive-through traffic in the park.
- Protecting as much of the urban forest in the park as possible should be a consideration of the master plan development.
- Restrictive covenants placed on the deed must be honored when developing park plans.
- With the addition of multiple access points to the park, electronic gates should be considered.
- Two major drainage areas run through the park and are waters of the state.
- Any trail development or enhancements that cross these drainage areas will have to be permitted through the State.
- A focal point is needed near the main entry to the park.
- Centralized shared parking lots should be developed that are connected to park facilities by a good system of sidewalks and trails.

Final Plan Recommendations

Develop a Multi-Use Lawn

In order to provide flexibility for multiple types of events, a multi-use lawn has been provided near the southern portion of Brook Run. The shape and design of this area has been designed to help preserve the existing tree line and to take into consideration the existing topography. Terraced seating is provided overlooking the large lawn to support community events such as concert, cultural art performances,

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shows or similar activities. The large lawn, containing a section of turf whereby a regulation soccer field with the minimum rectangular dimensions of 100 yards x 50 yards would be contained within, can be used for pick-up ball games, team practices, and various programmed activities such as craft festivals, summer camps, sports training session, balloon festivals to mention a few of the potential events. Also, provided at the base of the lawn is a multi-use trail that links users to the remainder of the park.

To support all of the activities at the multi-use lawn, a restroom/concession building has been provided. The restrooms will service this area of the park on a daily basis and the concession can be operated during special events and during peak use periods of the park. Existing parking adjacent to the space should be reconditioned and restriped and a cul-de-sac has been added at the end of the parking lot to provide a turnaround for fire trucks. Site furnishing for this area include picnic tables, benches and trash can.

Building Reuse and Removal

Renovated building space in the existing dormitory building and theater -could be converted into public meeting space, program space for other activities in Brook Run Park, and/or administrative space for the Parks Division.

Community Greenspace

The next high priority item is the development of a community green. Throughout the public input process, a desire for multiuse green space was identified as a critical need. This park can accommodate this need with a community green of 8-10 acres. It will be surrounded by a 10' sidewalk to meet the pedestrian needs of walkers and a place for vendors to set up during special events. This feature will replace smaller spaces that are currently being used during special events.

Dog Park

The next high priority recommendation is the relocation of the dog park from its current location to an area between the maintenance compound and greenhouse complex. There have been conflicts with adjunct residential property owners over the noise of barking dogs and negative impacts to the forest floor where the current dog park is located. The proposed area offers both open fields and wooded areas which will provide a variety of spaces for dog owners and their pets. Consideration should be made in the design of the proposed area to minimize fecal contamination into the local waterways.

Roads and Pedestrian Systems

The implementation of a new roadway and parking system will be required to complete these primary recommendations. Along with changes to the roadway system, a combination of paved sidewalks and trails are needed to create pedestrian connections throughout the park. Along the perimeter of the park and Peachtree Charter Middle School, a multi-use greenway path is needed to connect these facilities to the park. All of these circulation components should be attractively landscaped to create a pleasant park experience. Other support facilities include a new restroom building to serve the dog park and community garden.

Playground Area

Additional facilities are needed in the park to complete the redevelopment process. These include expanding the current water feature in the playground to include an interactive fountain. The development of a fountain will complement existing play opportunities and add a family friendly feature. Along with the fountain, adding landscape pathways with areas to display outdoor sculptures is recommended. These pathways will introduce art to people of all ages who visit the park. These features can be added to the park as funds become available.

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Community Garden

Expanding the area for the community garden is also recommended. There is additional open space adjacent to the existing community garden that would allow for expansion.

Activity Area

Areas have been developed into active recreation facilities with basketball and volleyball courts, tennis courts, a multi-use sports field and a disc golf course. Parking for these facilities should be provided in areas adjacent to the amenities.

Alternate Development for Tennis

A demand for tennis has been identified in the public meetings. Currently there are two usable public tennis courts in the park system. The community standards set by the Citizen Sounding Board of 1 court per 1000 residents would result in the City providing 20 public tennis courts. Based on 2015 population projections, the City would need 25 public courts. Development of a tennis complex is feasible on this site. Due to the deed restriction adding additional pavement within the existing park boundary would be difficult. However the 3 acre out-parcel recommended for acquisition would not be limited by the deed restrictions and would support development of up to 8-courts. With the use of a small portion of the park property with the deed restrictions an additional 4 indoor courts could be developed. An alternate plan for this complex has been provided.

Property Acquisition

Currently there are three residential properties along Peeler Road that create an out-parcel within the park boundary. It would benefit the City in the long term to purchase these properties and bring the property within the park boundary. The property is not impacted by the current deed restrictions and would be suitable for development as noted earlier in this section.

Recommendations Summary

- Sculpture Garden
- Interactive Fountain
- Activity area with court games and disc golf
- Multi-Use Lawn
- Great Lawn
- Picnic Areas and Pavilions
- A system of walking trails
- Restrooms throughout the park
- Perimeter multi-use greenway trail along Peeler Road and North Peachtree Road.
- New parking lots in several locations

Enhanced or Redeveloped Facilities

- Renovate water feature in existing playground
- Relocate the dog park to a more central location within the park
- Resurface parking areas that are to remain
- Complete an agreement with Peachtree Charter Middle School and renovate sports fields on school campus
- Close Barclay Road to thru traffic; control with electronic gates to maintain fire department use of the road
- Enhance shade opportunities around playground facilities and sports facilities

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Land Acquisition

- Acquire three parcels along Peeler Road for future park expansion

Alternate Development

- Acquire out parcels for tennis complex or multi-purpose field

Donaldson-Chesnut House

Location: 4831 Chamblee Dunwoody Road

Acreage: 3

Classification: Mini Park/Special Use Park

Facilities: Historic house, various barns and out-buildings, old swimming pool

General Observations and Analysis

The facility provides a unique opportunity to interpret the City's rural and agricultural past. Over the years, the desire to preserve the past has in some cases prevented necessary maintenance and sufficient facilities to make the house and farm a desirable destination for the public.

Specific Condition Assessments

Vehicular Access and Parking

- All vehicular access and paving is on gravel. This prevents ADA accessibility and also creates wear and maintenance problems.
- There is not a defined, dedicated parking area.
- There is no turn-around opportunity for vehicles that arrive and discover a locked gate at the driveway entrance.
- The lower grass pasture has potential to serve as a parking area if an ADA compliant access route can be developed.
- Signage is needed at the street to identify the facility as a City park for motorists.
- Overall acreage and the surrounding residential properties will limit the size of events that can be accommodated due to limited parking.

Pedestrian Circulation

- There is no pedestrian access from the street. Should sidewalks be developed along main roads in the future, pedestrian connections will be needed.
- There is no clear pedestrian circulation route on the site. A defined access point from a parking lot to a building entrance is needed to reduce wear and maintenance. Access to other buildings and site uses should also be defined.
- ADA access is not provided, as all circulation is surfaced in gravel. Several brick walks exist that could serve as the starting point for an ADA compliant access network

Main house and other structures

- The main house has mold issues that need to be remedied before other renovation work can begin.
- Exterior and interior painting, floor repairs, etc. should be considered for the main house and other buildings.
- The existing arbor is in good shape and needs some minor restoration.
- Other site buildings have some wood rot and other cosmetic condition concerns that need immediate attention to prevent further deterioration and decay. All buildings need to be made watertight, with roof and window repairs a first priority.
- Master plan programming for the overall facility should drive any restoration/renovation work

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- on the house or other buildings, barns, etc. For instance, if interpretive elements are to be added in the interior of the barn, the barn may require more work than if interpretive elements are provided outdoors and the barn is locked from public access.
- Site fencing is in fair shape, with some areas needing replacement.
 - A historic fence was removed during a recent work day and needs to be replaced.
 - Historic farm equipment in barns needs to be evaluated to determine if it is better to donate to a farm museum or if displaying on the site is preferred.
 - A handicap ramp or lift will be required to access most buildings.
 - Depending on the intended use of the main house second floor, an elevator may be required for ADA compliance.
 - ADA compliant restrooms will be needed for any structure that is rented or has full-time staff.

Swimming pool area

- The existing swimming pool area (pool, fencing, etc.) is in poor shape and should be demolished.
- If the pool area is demolished, it will create a large open space suitable for reprogramming (expansion of interpretive features, addition of other passive features, gardens etc.).
- There is an attractive brick wall at the end of the pool that should be retained and a fountain at the base of the wall should be evaluated for repairs.
- A nicer fence is needed around this area and the adjacent cemetery.
- There is a small garden structure that is not historic at the end of the pool that should be removed.
- A garden pavilion is recommended to provide shade for the pool area.

General Notes

- There is an overall lack of site furnishings. A consistent package of standard site furnishings (benches, trash cans, picnic tables, etc.) should be applied in the park.
- A consistent package of standard park signs (rules signs, facility identification signs, etc.) should be applied in the park. The main park sign captures some of the elements of other main park signs at other parks, but is not completely consistent with them.
- Because of the historic nature of this property, some deviations from standard site furnishings and signage may be necessary. However, such deviations should be as close to the park standards as possible while still respecting the character of the site.
- As part of the site redevelopment, a detailed landscape plan should be developed after a plant inventory is completed to determine which existing plants should stay and which should be removed.
- Some people have mentioned having farm animals at the site. Based on the small size of the site and the care required to maintain farm animals at the site full-time, it is not recommended. An alternate method or introducing visitors to farm animals would be to bring them to the site when special programs are being held that focus on farm activities.
- There is a tremendous opportunity to celebrate the history of this facility. An interpretive plan should be developed that tells the story of the various building types, what they were used for and how the farm evolved over time.

SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations Summary

Buildings

Providing access to the main house and stabilization of the outlying building should be the first priority because the main house is on the Historic Register. An architect who is familiar with restoration requirements should be hired to evaluate how to best convert the home into a rental facility. As part of this evaluation, the master plan developed for the site as part of this planning effort should be updated to reflect ADA access points to the main house and all other facilities on site. Stabilization of outbuildings should also be included in the project. Several known issues with the main house and outbuilding that will have to be addressed to make it functional include:

Main House

- Complete redevelopment of the kitchen
- Renovation of bathrooms
- Providing ADA access to the house and within the house
- Providing an ADA accessible restroom
- Providing audio, video and communications equipment necessary for rentals and staff functions
- Upgrades and or full replacement of the mechanical and electrical systems
- Removal of mold and water damaged materials

Outbuildings

- Renovation of bathrooms
- Providing ADA access to each building that will have staff or public access
- Providing an ADA accessible restroom in the guest house building
- Providing audio and video equipment necessary for rentals and staff functions in guest house building
- Upgrades and or full replacement of the mechanical and electrical systems at each building
- Removal of mold and water damaged materials from each building
- Replace windows and roofing materials as needed to make buildings water tight
- Provide interpretive signage at each building which describes the function of the building.

The construction plans should address these known issues and others that are uncovered during the development of construction documents for the buildings and site.

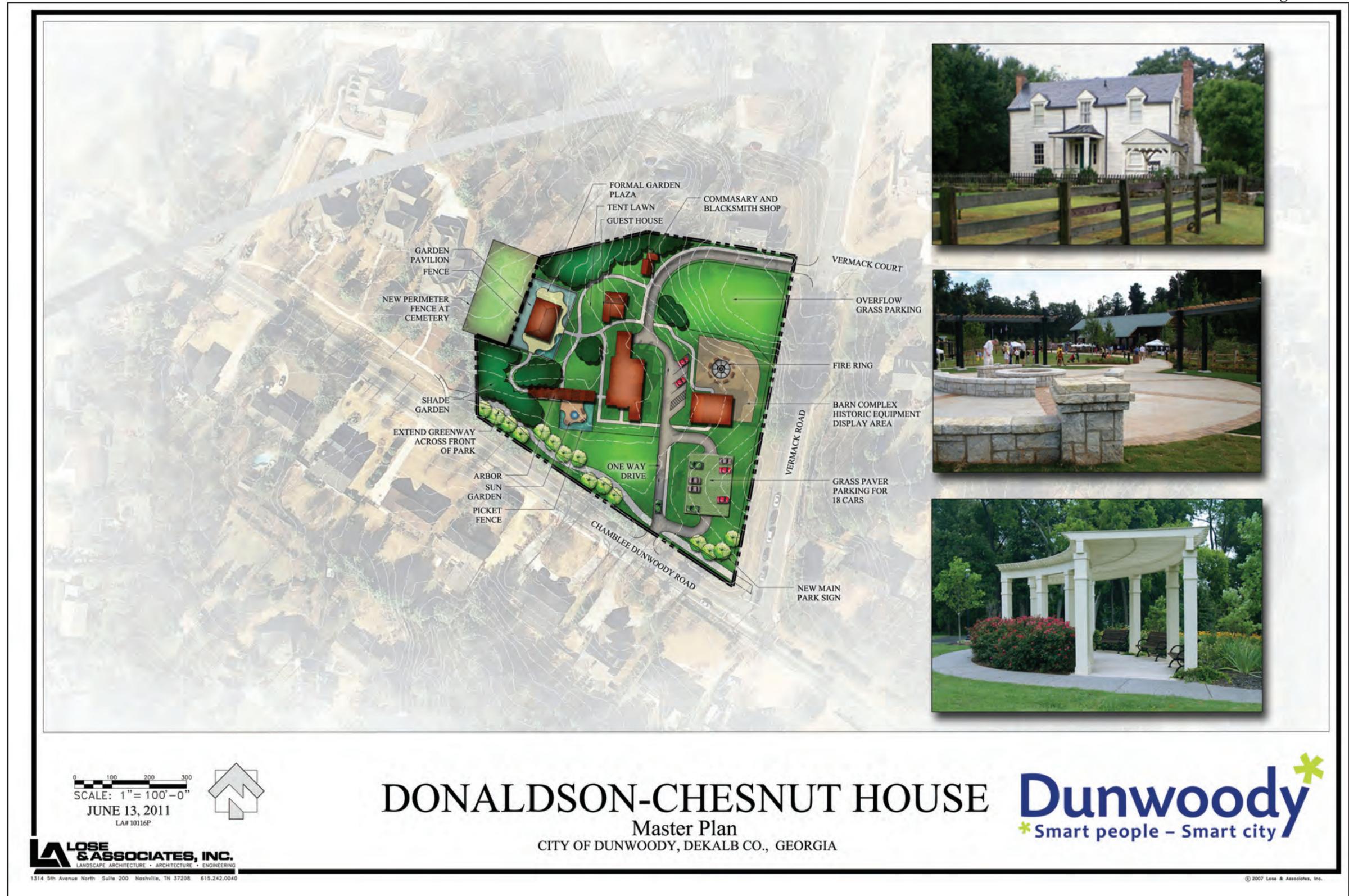
Primary site improvements that are needed are described below.

Vehicular Circulations

Access to the site should be limited to a one way drive from Chamblee Dunwoody Road. The drive will serve a grass paver parking lot developed in the front pasture and access handicap and visitor parking provided adjacent to the main house. The drive will continue to the rear of the property and exit onto Vermack Road. A second pasture at the rear of the property can be used for overflow event parking.

It is recommended that all paving materials used in the vehicular transportation system be porous pavers to reduce runoff.

Figure 6.12



SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pedestrian Circulation

The framework of a pedestrian circulation system is in place. Several existing pathways are provided but additional pathways are needed. The dominant pathway material for existing paths is brick. New pathways should be constructed of brick set in sand over a stone base. This technique will allow rainwater to flow through the walks and into the stone base materials.

Pathways should be provided to each building on site that will be open to the public or used by staff. All buildings, courtyards, gardens and event areas are required by ADA to be linked to the pathway system. The pathway system should provide alternate routes to various facilities so that when someone has rented one of the site facilities, public access to the remainder of the site and the cemetery are provided.

Courtyard Complex

In the area that is currently occupied by the swimming pool, a courtyard should be developed. The courtyard should be constructed of brick or complementary paving materials that will allow for concentrated foot traffic during rentals. The area is ideal as a site for outdoor weddings and similar functions. The courtyard should be heavily landscaped. Support facilities should include lighting, sound system and an electrical service to make the space as versatile as possible.

The brick wall at the end of the space is a nice feature and should be used to guide the construction of additional brick walls to provide separation of the courtyard and the cemetery. This will provide privacy from surrounding properties for the courtyard. A new fence is also needed around the cemetery. This fence should be in keeping with the character of the site. An open metal material is recommended to reduce long term upkeep of the fence. A garden pavilion is recommended to provide a year round rental facility. The garden pavilion should be designed so that it is a conditions space for the winter and summer and can be an open air facility during the spring and fall.

Adjacent to the courtyard is a lawn area. This lawn area offers a good location to place tents for special events that occur during periods of cooler weather or in case of rain. Tents would be offered as an additional item for any rentals and could be a good source of additional revenue for the facility.

Garden Areas

The front of the property has large trees and areas of open sun and shade. In addition, a large garden arbor connects the front lawn with the swimming pool area. The areas south of the arbor should be developed into a sun garden and a shade garden. The master gardeners have already started some work on the sun garden. The area north of the arbor is heavily shaded and should be developed into a shade garden to complement the proposed courtyard and to enhance pathways that traverse the area. To enhance the aesthetics of the front gardens, the historic wooden picket fence that was recently removed should be replaced with a copied fence in the original location.

A master plan should be prepared for the gardens as part of the overall site redevelopment plan. Portions of the garden that are needed to enhance the facility as a rental property should be installed as part of the redevelopment. Other portions of the garden can be installed by volunteers as part of an ongoing gardening program at the site.

Barn Area

The barn area of the site should be used as an education and display facility. As part of the redevelopment plan, an interpretive plan for displaying the farm equipment should be developed. The plan should

SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

document which pieces of equipment are best viewed in the barns and which equipment should be brought outside the barns for display. A hard surface paving material should be installed around the barn to provide ADA access to all displayed equipment and to the interior of the barns.

Near the barn there is currently what appears to be a fire ring made of stone. To accommodate parking adjacent to the building, the fire ring will need to be relocated. It is recommended that the stone fire ring be reused in an area adjacent to the barn and farm equipment displays. This will maintain a feature that is historic to the site and also add a nice feature for visitors to the facility.

Action Plan

Organize a committee to include the Dunwoody Preservation Trust headed by the Parks Manager to develop a program to convert the facility to a public park Special Use Park, historic site with interpretive program and rental facility. The committee should formulate a use and management plan for the facility with an emphasis on historic interpretive programs and then develop a request for proposal to hire a consultant to develop the renovation plans and construction documents.

SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dunwoody Park and Dunwoody Nature Center

Location: 5343 Roberts Drive

Acreage: Dunwoody Park - 35 acres

Classification: Community Park/Special Use Park (Dunwoody Nature Center)

Facilities: Two baseball fields, nature center with indoor and outdoor exhibits, nature trails, playground in woods, tree house structure, a small storage building, bee keeping area, two separate parking lots

General Observations and Analysis

The athletic facilities are worn and are not constructed of materials durable enough to accommodate the heavy use they receive. The nature center site was largely developed with volunteer effort, and as such, is not totally code compliant. Because the facilities appear to have evolved over time (as opposed to being planned as an integrated mixed-use park), there are spatial efficiency issues, situations where one site's stormwater drainage causes erosion on another area of the park, etc. A lack of adequate parking at the baseball complex and inefficient parking at the nature center could probably be addressed together, with each parking lot serving as overflow to the other. The facilities in this park, with the exception of the recently completed tree house, are in very poor conditions and in need of total replacement.

The site is also too small to adequately accommodate both the nature center and the baseball complex and provide the highest level of user experience. The high use of the site is also impacting the natural resources on the site. Consideration should be given to relocating one of the uses to an alternate site to better accommodate the individual programs. Relocation of one of the uses will allow redevelopment of a part of the site to provide additional park amenities and offer a wider array of activities to surrounding neighborhoods.

Specific Condition Assessments

Vehicular Access and Parking

- The baseball complex parking lot is in poor shape and needs repaving. There are not enough parking spaces to accommodate the two baseball fields.
- Serious storm water runoff problems occur at the bottom of the baseball complex parking lot, creating serious erosion issues for the nature center site.
- Parking at the nature center is also inadequate. Vehicular circulation routes are unclear at the nature center and buses are not well accommodated.

Pedestrian Circulation

- There is no pedestrian access from the street. Should sidewalks be developed along main roads in the future, pedestrian connections will be needed.
- There is no signage to direct visitors from the baseball complex to the nature center, or vice versa, and no defined path between the two uses.
- The nature trails at the nature center are unpaved and have occasional erosion issues and large tree root issues. ADA access at the nature trails is non-existent.
- Several of the trails are built on steep terrain or with adjacent drops down steep slopes and do not have protective fencing.
- Bridges at the nature center are in various states of repair and appear to have been built by volunteers. Bridges are not completely code compliant or structurally sound. A detailed evaluation of each bridge is necessary. Future bridges should be built to a much higher level of safety and structural integrity.
- A lack of clear circulation at the baseball complex has resulted in wear and erosion of grassed areas adjacent to the fields.

SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sidewalks and concrete circulation around the fields is in terrible condition.
- No ADA access route is identified from the parking lot to the ball fields
- No ADA access route is provided to the restrooms

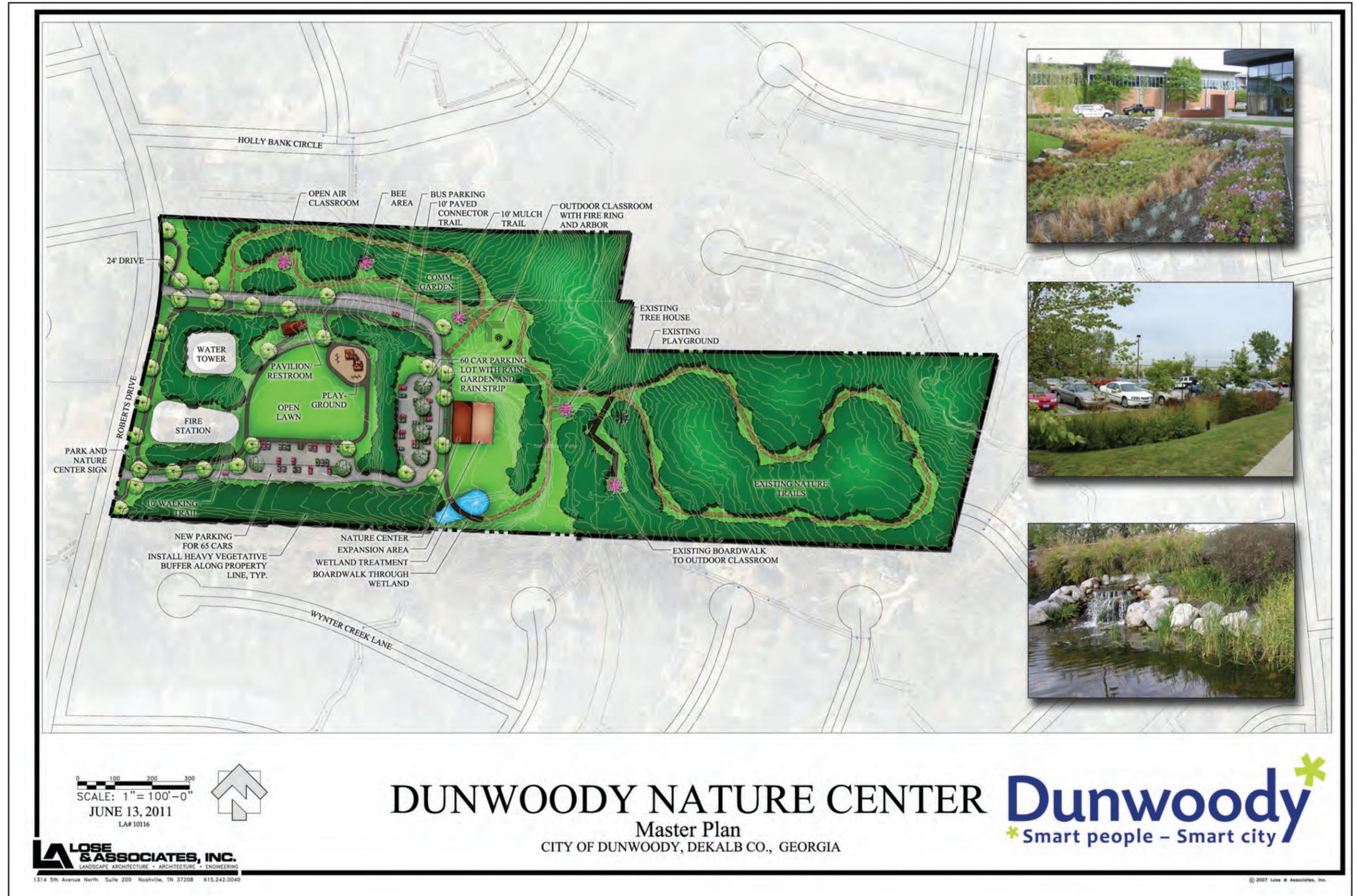
Baseball fields

- Both fields are sized for older boys' play. The grassed infields accommodate baseball, but not softball. Both outfield fences are approximately 300' from home plate.
- Modern sports lighting was added in 2004. It can easily be relocated and shouldn't be seen as a hindrance to complete renovation of the baseball complex.
- Fencing is in poor to fair shape. Some areas are serviceable, while others have gaps, sharp edges, missing gates, improperly installed materials, etc. that create safety concerns.
- Without a comprehensive overhaul of the fields every few years, field grades have been affected by build-up of infield material. In some cases, drainage on the turf is poor, creating maintenance issues with the turf. In some cases, water drains from fields onto bleacher/dugout areas; in other cases, water from bleacher and paved areas flows onto the fields. Overall drainage problems continually cause maintenance and wear issues.
- Grades between fields contribute to drainage/erosion issues. In some cases, grade separation near pedestrian areas creates a safety concern as well.
- The bleacher areas and dugouts have some pavement while other areas are not paved. The built-in concrete bleachers are cracking and are not code compliant.
- Because each bleacher pad, building slab, dugout, sidewalk, etc. was built independently, the slabs are at different elevations and ADA access to the various slabs is not always present.
- Batting cages are in poor shape.
- Electrical lines and other components are accessible to the public, creating a safety concern.
- Maintenance equipment is stored where it is accessible to the public, causing a safety concern. More storage for dry materials and maintenance materials is needed.
- The main building was built at a time when ADA issues and fire safety issues were not required. Overall condition of the building is fair, but it should not stand in the way of parking expansion, field layout changes, etc. Any overhaul of the baseball complex should also consider a replacement of the building.
- The concession stand should be emptied out if the building is to remain, and it should be thoroughly cleaned and repainted from the floor to the ceiling

Nature Center

- Because the overall facility has been largely developed by volunteer efforts, not all facilities can be assured to be code compliant, or to have the best relationships to one another.
- The main building is crowded and over-programmed. More and better organized space is needed. The maintenance storage area needs to be better isolated/screened from the public.
- ADA access to the building is separate from the main entrance, and is not fully code compliant.
- Vehicular access evolved over time and is not efficient. Parking in the rear of the facility does not have good pedestrian access to the front of the building.
- The nature trails at the nature center are unpaved and have occasional erosion issues and large tree root issues. ADA access at the nature trails is non-existent.
- The tree house, other small structures and bridges are in various states of repair and appear to have been built by volunteers. Not all are completely code compliant or structurally sound. A detailed evaluation of each is necessary.
- Erosion caused by runoff from the parking lots needs to be addressed and repaired.

Figure 6.13



SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General Notes

- There is an overall lack of site furnishings. A consistent package of standard site furnishings (benches, trash cans, picnic tables, etc.) should be applied in the park.
- A consistent package of standard park signs (rules signs, facility identification signs, etc.) should be applied in the park. The main park sign captures some of the elements of other main park signs at other parks, but is not completely consistent with them.
- The Nature Center staff informed the planning team of their desire to replace the building as part of a change in the focus of their programming. It is their desire to relocate the new building closer to the front of the park to improve visibility and access. As part of the planning effort to relocate the building, redevelopment of the entire six acres managed by the nature center should be included in the site planning study.
- Overuse of the natural resources has led to extensive deforestation of the creek bank where children access the creek. A more permanent, hardened solution is needed at the access point to the creek to withstand the heavy foot traffic and use patterns.

Recommendation Summary

The middle school/adult baseball fields, currently shown as being relocated out of Dunwoody Park, represent an important asset for our community and are part of our strategic vision. These facilities will not be relocated until the City can acquire a parcel of land that can accommodate at least three ball fields for league play and community use. The redevelopment option contained in this plan is based on this relocation. With space currently used by baseball available for redevelopment, the upper field is proposed to be developed with neighborhood park facilities including a restroom, rental pavilion with a recommended maximum of 1,200 SF, an open lawn and a playground with a maximum footprint of 7,500 SF. These elements would be connected with a sidewalk system. A heavy vegetative buffer of no less than 110 feet should be established along the southern property line. The lower field would be redeveloped as the site for Dunwoody Nature Center. There is adequate space to build a new nature center building and a parking lot for 60 cars.

Additional improvements in the park would include redevelopment of the existing baseball field parking, the creation of a loop drive with parking for buses, paved trails at the front of the park, a loop trail around the fire station and water tower and a new playground. It is recommended that the existing playground be replaced or removed in the future. Where existing nature center parking and buildings are removed, an outdoor classroom and additional nature trails can be developed; reforestation can occur where existing pavement is removed.

Action Plan

Because this concept impacts existing user groups and the overall ability to provide expanded recreation opportunities for the community, the decision to relocate Dunwoody Senior Baseball is critical to development of this park and other parks in the system. The Parks and Recreation Manager should work the City Manger and Council to evaluate the potential to acquire land to relocate baseball to another site and redevelop the park.. Once a decision is reached, the City should work with the user group(s) to develop a final development program for the park. Once a program is agreed upon, a request for proposals can be prepared for the development of construction documents for the park.

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Perimeter Park

Location: Near 48 Perimeter Center East

Acreage: 3

Classification: Mini Park

Facilities: Detention facility for office park, rest of park is undeveloped.

General Observations and Analysis

The land is largely undeveloped except for a detention facility retaining wall. The site's steep terrain likely prohibited efficient development when the surrounding office park was developed, leaving a pocket of nature. The site's large trees and drainage features would make for a nice natural retreat for the employees of the surrounding office buildings and residents of the surrounding multi-family developments. Due to its isolation from nearby roads, vehicular access will be difficult so connecting to surrounding properties with sidewalks and trails should be a high priority. If parking is to be provided at this park, additional property will need to be purchased. Providing some parallel parking adjacent to the streets would provide improved access for citizens who work or live in the area but are not in immediate walking distance to the park.

Specific Condition Assessments

Detention Facility

- A concrete retaining wall spanning the site's valley provides detention for the surrounding development. The wall is in good shape and the stormwater storage area behind the wall is wooded.

General Notes

- There is an overall lack of site furnishings. A consistent package of standard site furnishings (benches, trash cans, picnic tables, etc.) should be applied in the park.
- A consistent package of standard park signs (rules signs, facility identification signs, etc.) should be applied in the park. The main park sign captures some of the elements of other main park signs at other parks, but is not completely consistent with them.
- The site is wooded with a small level area in the northern section of the property and steeply sloping ridge down to the detention area.

Trail Connections

- The City, prior to the development of the master plan, has studied routes to connect the park property with the Georgetown area by a multi-use trail. This connection will allow residents from Georgetown area to access Perimeter Park as well as provide better connectivity for these neighborhoods to access the Perimeter Center area. Our planning team supports this idea and has shown the proposed connection on our plans.

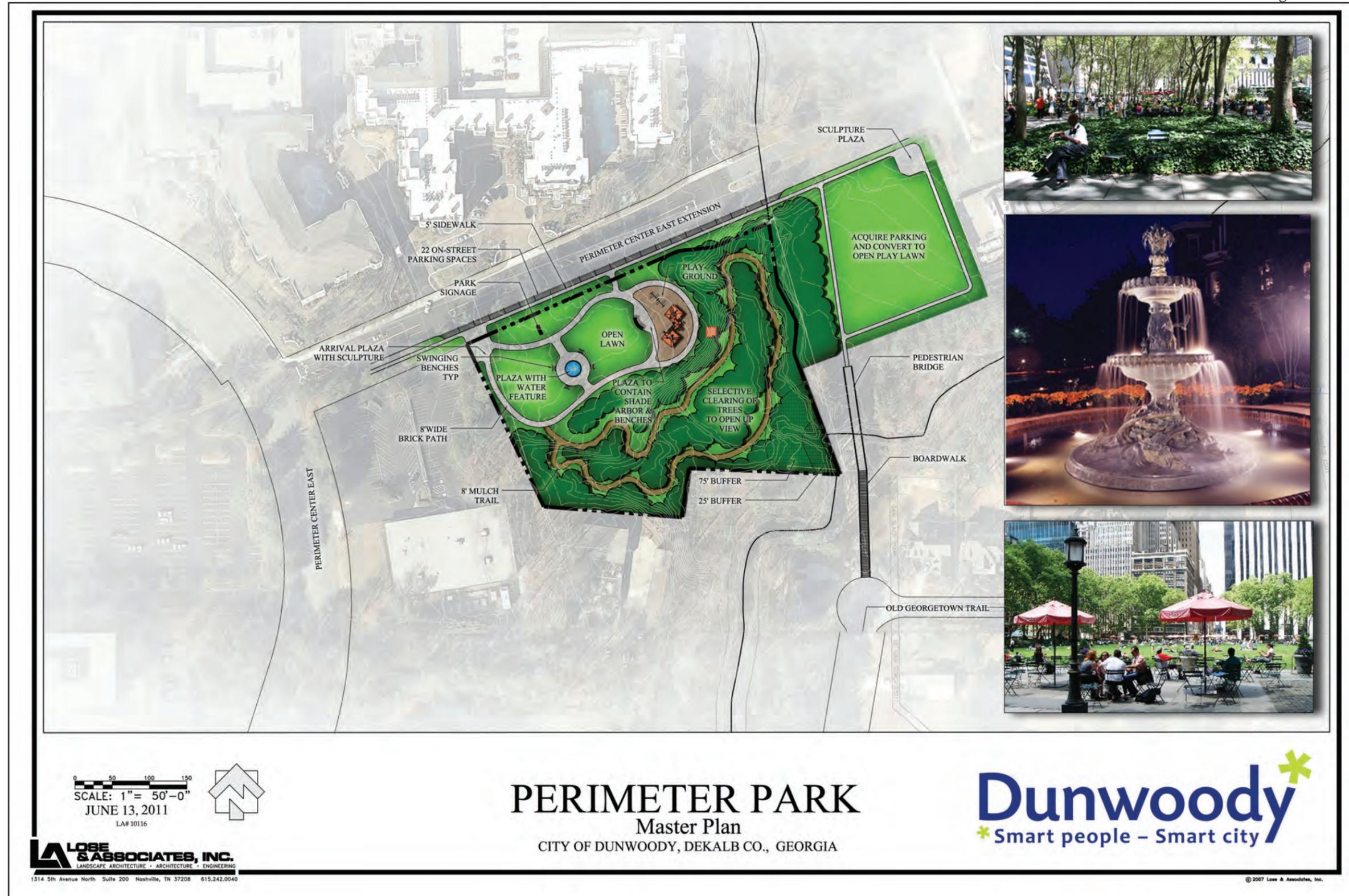
Land Acquisitions

The City is interested in expanding the size of the park. There is a parking lot on the adjacent property that may become available for purchase. This would add .76 acres to the park. If acquired, it would provide an open area for the establishment of a community green that would greatly enhance the park. It would provide an area for citizens to walk their dogs, play pickup sports games, people watch, or simply gather and talk with friends and neighbors.

Recommendations

The small overall size of the park and limited level area impact what can be developed at this park. Facilities that can be accommodated include a walking path, an area for central plaza with a water

Figure 6.14



SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

feature, a small playground and additional space for a sculpture plaza and arbor. An 8' brick walkway is proposed to link gathering areas together. The first gathering area is an arrival plaza that is large enough to display a piece of sculpture. The second and largest gathering area is a central plaza. This plaza would have a water feature surrounded by adult swings and benches. Seatwalls around the plaza with help with grade transitions and provide seating for visitors. The third plaza area located at the east end of the path would have an arbor and benches. Adjacent to this plaza would be a small playground.

The area contained inside the path is currently wooded. It is recommended that selective clearing occur to provide sufficient light to reach the ground to promote several small areas of lawn. There is limited public green space in the area and with large numbers of multi-family developments within walking distance of the park the lawn spaces will provide area for people to gather and to walk pets.

The central plaza water feature should contain water movement that will create pleasant background sounds for park users and help eliminate traffic noise from adjacent roads. In addition to the water feature, a water fountain with a pet bowl should be provided in the park as part of the site furnishings package.

If the parking lot is acquired, the pavement should be removed and a community green developed. The green should have an 8' sidewalk around the perimeter, with benches and swings along the walk an irrigated lawn. At the corner of the green adjacent to the street right-of-way, a plaza should be developed to display a piece of art to match the proposed plaza on the opposite corner of the park. Between these plazas, parallel parking spaces along the existing public street should be constructed.

As with the other parks, porous paving materials should be used to minimize impervious surfaces in the park. Site furnishings should be of a consistent style selected for use in parks throughout the City and include waste receptacles and dog waste bag dispensers in both sections of the park.

In the lower section of the park that serves as a detention pond, nature trails with a wood chip surface should be developed in areas that are not prone to flooding or standing water for long periods of time.

Action Plan

Obtain the property to construct the trail and purchase the property where the parking lot is located. Prepare a request for proposal and hire a design consultant to develop construction documents for the park and trail elements.

SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center

Location: 5339 Chamblee Dunwoody Road # B

Acreage: 6

Classification: Special Use Facility

Facilities: Small performing arts theater, several small offices, dressing rooms, storage rooms, set shop, box office, public restrooms (from lobby), back stage restrooms, arts programming classrooms, a outside pottery kiln, hallway exhibit space and an outdoor courtyard space.

General Observations and Analysis

The conversion of the space into a performing and visual arts center has worked well to this point, but like any repurposing of an existing building, the various existing spaces fully addresses the needs of neither the theater company nor an arts center that offers all types of visual arts classes. Now that the City has assumed the liability for the facility, certain conditions and building code concerns need to be addressed if the uses that currently are housed at the site are to remain.

Another option that should be considered in the assessment of this property is the property's highest and best use for the City. It is located in the Dunwoody Village Redevelopment District and is in an area that lacks neighborhood parks. The site, at six acres, is large enough to be redeveloped as a neighborhood park. The Dunwoody Village Plan shows the site as a potential residential property and provides parkland in a more central area of the redevelopment district. It is clear that there are many needs to be met in the city and determining the best use of this property will impact both recreation opportunities and the community as a whole.

Specific Condition Assessments

Vehicular Access and Parking

- Directions from the library parking lot to the theater entrance need to be signed.
- Because there are multiple building entries, it is difficult to provide security with one security guard and also to meet access needs for those using the facility.
- Handicapped parking at the theater is not fully ADA compliant.
- The curbs are in poor shape in most places and need to be cleaned and/or repainted where paint is present.
- The main facility sign at the street is in poor condition and needs to be replaced with signage more in keeping with the City's new branding program.
- Much of the landscaping adjacent to the building is overgrown and needs to be trimmed or removed.

Pedestrian Circulation

- There is no pedestrian access from the street. Should sidewalks be developed along main roads in the future, pedestrian connections will be needed.
- Several sidewalks are cracked.
- Water stands in the plaza at the entrance to the theater.

Exterior Drop-off/Entry Area

- The awning over the entry area has several cosmetic problems and needs a facelift.
- Water drains from the roof of the building directly into the entry area, and does not properly drain away. This is causing a good bit of mildew to grow on the building face, and also causes a slip hazard during cold weather.

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Interior Spaces

- The public restrooms are not ADA compliant. The doors are difficult to open, the entry vestibules cannot accommodate wheelchairs and the stalls are not large enough. The cosmetic condition of the restrooms needs a complete overhaul. Backstage restrooms have the same ADA and cosmetic concerns.
- The box office seems to function well enough for its purpose.
- The theater seating is not code compliant. Dedicated ADA seating is not present and the railing on the raised seating was built with stage set materials. It is loose and does not provide fall height protection. Overall fire code compliance needs further review, but the initial review noted lack of lighting of exit aisles, lack of sprinkler in an assembly area, etc.
- Each of the dressing rooms, offices, storage rooms, etc. appears to function well, but is limited on space.
- Because of an overall lack of storage, many shelving units are stacked in the hallways and other gathering areas, creating a crowded condition.
- The set shop could not be fully observed at the time of the review, but it too was crowded and the storage of flammable materials needs to be addressed in terms of fire suppression, proper storage and handling. Access to and the use of power tools and other construction equipment needs better control.
- Arts classrooms vary in condition but for the most part are functional.
- ADA issues exist in most classrooms, as no accommodations have been made for students who use wheelchairs.
- The pottery kiln is located in a small building outside of the main building, but there is no cover connecting the two buildings for times of inclement weather.
- There is not good access from the classroom space to the courtyard.
- The courtyard is underutilized and is in need of a major face-lift.
- A detailed study of the entire building and how to best meet the needs of the theater and arts center is needed if the two groups are to remain at this site. Once their programming and facilities needs are well defined, then a renovation study of the building can be conducted to determine if it is cost effective to renovate or if replacement is the better option.
- Consider relocating the Spruill Center programs to Brook Run Park in order to convert this site to a neighborhood park. This would include relocating the County library to a new home as well, potentially to another site in the Dunwoody Village as contemplated in the Dunwoody Village Master Plans.

Recommendations

The use of this property as a performing and visual arts facility is not thought to be the highest and best use of the property. These functions, along with the library, could be relocated to other locations within the City and it would not negatively impact the programs. If these facilities were relocated, there would be approximately four acres that could be developed as park facilities with the existing parking being redefined to serve the park. A new site should be identified and developed for these facilities prior to any redevelopment of this property. If this is the preferred use for the property, the following facilities are recommended.

Actions Needed

Determine the highest and best use for the property. Develop a time frame to relocate existing facilities to allow for redevelopment of the site. Redevelop the site based on the highest and best use of the property. Give consideration to relocating the theater component of the building to a central location in the village.

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Vernon Springs Park (also known as Vernon Oaks Park)

Location: Corner of Vernon Springs Drive and Vernon Oaks Drive

Acreage: ½

Classification: Mini Park

Facilities: Natural surfaced walking trails, stone spring house

General Observations and Analysis

The site's steep terrain and flowing stream has prohibited development, providing a pocket of nature for this neighborhood. The park serves its immediate neighborhood, and would not likely draw visitors from across the city. The site is almost completely wooded and has many large trees. Any development in the park should consider compliance with local and state stream buffers.

Specific Condition Assessments

Vehicular Access and Parking

- Due to the park's terrain and small size, onsite parking is not provided. Parking occurs on the streets surrounding the park.

Pedestrian Circulation

- Access into the park is via two staircases. No sidewalks are provided from the roads to the staircases. These staircases are made of large stone steps, many of which are loose and shift with weight. Neither staircase has handrails. Overall pedestrian access into the park is difficult and unsafe. ADA access does not exist.
- Pedestrian circulation routes in the park are via dirt footpaths along the small stream. These are in fair condition, and are crossed by the occasional root of a large tree.
- A small wooden footbridge crosses the stream. It is tilting to one side, is narrow, and does not have handrails/guardrails.

Stone Spring House

- The old spring house is in fair shape and is made of stone.
- It does not have a roof.
- Due to its construction and condition, a more detailed structural review should be performed to ensure the structure's safety.
- Any renovation work on the spring house needs to consider the presence of state and local stream buffers.

General Notes

- There is an overall lack of site furnishings. A consistent package of standard site furnishings (benches, trash cans, picnic tables, etc.) should be applied in the park.
- A consistent package of standard park signs (facility identification signs, etc.) should be applied in the park. The main park sign captures some of the elements of other main park signs at other parks, but is not completely consistent with them.

Recommendation

Due to the limited development potential for this park, no major recommendations are suggested. This park should continue to function as it is currently used. Community work days should be used to maintain the current trail system, repair stone stairways in the park and to keep understory and invasive plant materials under control.

SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Action Needed

Schedule a community work day in the park. The Park and Recreation Manager should identify projects that can be undertaken by volunteers and the work with volunteer coordinators to provide the necessary supplies for the work days.

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Windwood Hollow Park

Location: 4865 Lakeside Drive

Acreage: 11

Classification: Neighborhood Park

Facilities: Two tennis courts (not lighted), medium sized picnic shelter, playground, open play areas and sidewalks

General Observations and Analysis

The park serves its immediate neighborhood, and would not likely draw visitors from across the city. The mix of active and passive amenities provides recreational opportunities for different ages and interests. Over the years, maintenance has been average. Over time, facility replacement needs have not been met; instead, minor cosmetic repairs to amenities have occurred on an as-needed basis. Most amenities require replacement. A continued mix of passive and active features seems logical. Due to the site's relative small size, introducing large facilities and their parking requirements would not be feasible. Additional parking could be provided along the edges of the access drive or through redevelopment of the circulation system entirely. A lack of restrooms probably limits overall use of the park. The park has no lighted recreation amenities.

Specific Condition Assessments

Vehicular Access and Parking

- The parking lot is small and probably does not accommodate enough vehicles when all facilities are in use. Spaces need re-striping and handicapped spaces need new signage.
- There is evidence that in the past, vehicles have parked along the edges of the access drive to the parking lot. Wear from these vehicles parking in the grass along the edges of the drive has been controlled with split-rail wood fences located along the edges of the drive.

Pedestrian Circulation

- There is no direct pedestrian link back to Lakeside Drive
- Site sidewalks are largely in fair shape, with some isolated areas with significant cracking or other pavement damage.
- Slope on sidewalk from parking lot (on lower level) to pavilion and playground (on upper level) exceeds ADA guidelines for facility access.
- Outside of the park, the City should investigate providing pedestrian access back to the Peeler Road/Lakeside Drive crosswalks and the Lanier Park along the DeKalb County water supply lake.

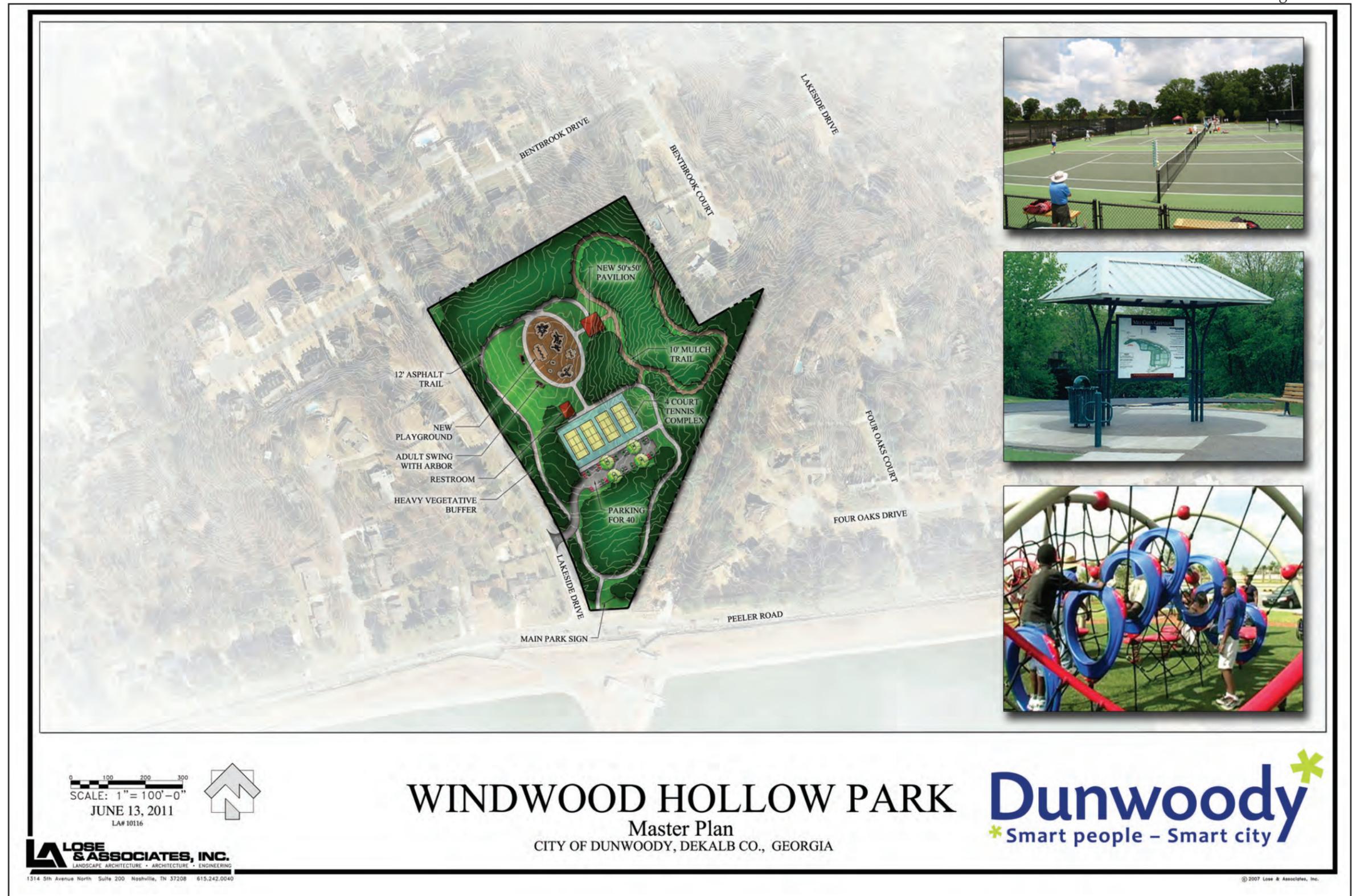
Tennis Courts

- The two tennis courts are asphalt with acrylic surfacing. The asphalt has significant cracks. These courts cannot be simply resurfaced. Repaving will be necessary.
- The nets are in fair shape and could probably be recycled.
- The surrounding chain link fence is galvanized and is in fair shape. Unfortunately, it looks to be a recent installation, and the repaving of the courts will likely require the removal/replacement of the fence.
- There are no tennis accessories (windscreens, brooms, etc.)
- The courts are not lighted.

Playground

- The playground is divided into two distinct areas (one for young children, one for older children).

Figure 6.15



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- The material surrounding the playgrounds is in fair to poor shape, with some concrete curbs/sidewalks needing replacement.
- The playgrounds have mulch as safety surfacing. It does appear to be deep enough to safely accommodate fall heights of the equipment.
- The equipment is nearing the end of its life expectancy and has some cosmetic condition concerns (i.e. fading or peeling paint, wood that needing replacement). Because of the age of the structures, a more detailed study will be necessary to ensure the playgrounds are safety compliant if the City wishes to continue using the structures.

Pavilion

- The pavilion is in fair shape. The wood frame structure and ceiling decking is not rotting, but will begin to deteriorate soon without significant maintenance. The shingle roof is in fair shape, but appears to be leaking in several places. It needs to be evaluated before the pavilion is renovated. Fascia boards need to be replaced. The concrete slab is in fair shape. The pavilion currently houses four or five tables; it appears that it could accommodate around eight tables. The pavilion is not lighted. The small railroad tie retaining walls around the pavilion are rotting and need to be removed/replaced.

Open Play Area

- The grass in the open lawn area is worn and is not irrigated. Shade from the surrounding trees is nice for some park features, but makes establishment of durable grass difficult.

General Notes

- There is an overall lack of site furnishings. A consistent package of standard site furnishings (benches, trash cans, picnic tables, etc.) should be applied in the park.
- A consistent package of standard park signs (rules signs, facility identification signs, etc.) should be applied in the park. The main park sign at Lakeside Drive could be used as a model for the remaining park system.

Recommendations Summary

Park Amenities

The amenities recommended for the park include a larger playground, a pavilion with restrooms, a minimum 40 car parking lot, four tennis courts, and site furnishings to support the playground and trail system. To accommodate these facilities, the parking lot has been expanded to provide better access to the playground and pavilion. A pavilion has been placed on the edge of a steep slope to provide views to a wooded hillside. Between the pavilion and Lakeside Drive, a new playground is proposed. This area is currently wooded and selective tree removal is recommended to improve light penetration to the ground so grass lawns can be established adjacent to the playground. The current tennis courts will be redeveloped into a set of four tennis courts. Because the tennis courts are in a residential neighborhood, a heavy vegetative buffer should be established to minimize the impact on their homes, and citizen input should be gathered in order to determine if the courts should be lit for night time play.

Trail Amenities

A 12' asphalt trail will start at the parking lot, running parallel to Lakeside Drive and then looping back to the tennis complex. This trail will provide pedestrian circulation from the playground and nature trail to the tennis complex.

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Along with the trail and park amenities, site furnishings provided in the park should include a water fountain, benches, adult swings, trash receptacles and a new park identification sign.

Action Needed

As part of the park redevelopment, neighbors should be polled regarding lighting the tennis courts.

Proposed Parks and Facilities

Urban Greenway Corridors

Location: Perimeter Center and Peeler Road Greenways

Acres: Minimal new acreage as greenways will be in roadway rights of ways

Classification: Linear Park/Greenway

The Peeler Road Greenway will be an extension of the only greenway that currently exists in the city. Beginning just east of Tilly Mill Road at the western terminus of the existing greenway, the corridor will continue past Brook Run Park and terminate at the Nancy Creek Greenway. The extension will be just 1.5 miles. Because this greenway corridor will be developed in the right-of-way of Peeler Road, we recommend a bike lane be added to Peeler road and a 6' to 8' sidewalk be developed parallel to the existing roadway. Like the current trail, we recommend a planting strip of a minimum of 3' wide be placed between the back of curb and the trail. The trail currently stops just before the intersection of Glaze Drive and Winters Chapel Road. There is an old home site at the intersection of these two roads that would make a great gateway into the city and is large enough to be a trailhead. The City should purchase this property and extend the trail to this location. Additional trailheads for this greenway should be located at Windwood Hollow Park and the intersection with Nancy Creek Greenway. Because the greenway will run through Brook Run Park, the section of trail on the park can be expanded to a full 12' wide and the park will also function as a trailhead location.

Perimeter Center Greenway will combine urban on-road greenway sections with stream corridor sections. Beginning at the terminus of the Nancy Creek Greenway the trail will have an urban cross section with on-road bicycle lanes and a separate 6' to 8' sidewalk behind the curb line. This cross section will be typical in the Georgetown Redevelopment District, moving west through the Perimeter Center District. Beginning west of Ashford Dunwoody, the trail will become a stream-based corridor and continue to the corporate limits in a southwestern direction. The overall length of this section of trail is just over three miles.

Major destinations along this section of trail include Perimeter Center Park, which can function as a trail head, Perimeter Mall and numerous shops and restaurants that will be located along the trail.

Action Plan

As these two trail sections are primarily road-based, their development will be tied with development and redevelopment of existing roads as called for in the recently completed Dunwoody Transportation Master Plan.

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Riparian Greenways Corridors

Location: Nancy Creek and North Fork Nancy Creek

Acreage: 6 to 12 acres per mile depending on width of right-of-way

Classification: Linear Park/Greenway

The Nancy Creek corridor is approximately two miles in length and runs in a north south direction. The corridor – with some short side connecting trails of approximately one mile – will connect Georgia Perimeter College (Dunwoody Campus), Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta, Dunwoody High School, Brook Run Park and Peachtree Charter Middle School to the Georgetown/North Shallowford Master Plan area. Located in this redevelopment district is another trail corridor we are referring to as the Perimeter Center Greenway.

The majority of this trail will follow the stream corridor through an area that was left undeveloped when home and adjacent properties were developed. A small section will have to follow Tilly Mill Road. This corridor is located in almost the geographic center of the city and will connect the southernmost Perimeter Center Greenway.

This greenway should be developed using the new citywide greenway design standards. Trailhead should be located at Dunwoody High School, the community college, at the connector trail to Brook Run Park and at the intersection with the Perimeter Center Greenway.

The North Fork Nancy Creek Greenway is a north-south riparian corridor greenway located on the western side of the city. This greenway will connect the Perimeter Center Greenway with the North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center and the Dunwoody Village Redevelopment district. Like the Nancy Creek Greenway, the corridor will be developed on property that was left undeveloped when homes and adjacent properties were developed. This corridor is approximately two miles in length.

Trailheads should be developed at the southern terminus at Interstate 285, at the intersection with the Perimeter Center Greenway and at the North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center.

Dunwoody Village Green Space

Location: Dunwoody Village

Acreage: Small Parks of 1 to 3 acres

Classification: Mini Parks and Green Space

A Dunwoody Village Master Plan was developed concurrently with this master plan and adopted in March 2011. Members of all planning groups agree that small community green spaces or parks will enhance the re-development of the Dunwoody Village. The Dunwoody Village Master Plan envisions several potential mini-park sites and a community green located in the heart of the Dunwoody Village. Development of these community green spaces should be a requirement of any redevelopment plan that is presented by future developers within this district. The exact locations should be worked out as part of the zoning and plan review process.

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Georgetown / North Shallowford Green Space

Location: Georgetown / North Shallowford area

Acres: 6-8 acres and other smaller parks of 1/2 to 1 acre

Classification: Neighborhood Park and Mini Parks

A Georgetown / North Shallowford Master Plan was also developed concurrently with this master plan and adopted in March 2011. Members of all planning groups agree that a neighborhood park in combination with several smaller mini parks would be critical improvement to this area of the City. Development of these community green spaces should be a requirement of any redevelopment plan that is presented by future developers within this district.

Negotiate Joint-use Agreement with Peachtree Charter Middle School Athletic Facilities

The high cost of land in Dunwoody creates a situation in which good cooperative agreement with the local school system is a necessity. Programming needs for the 13 to 18 age group as well as adults are going unmet, in part due to the lack of adequate school facilities. It is recommended that the City work with the DeKalb County School System to negotiate a joint-use agreement for the athletic facilities at Peachtree Charter Middle School in order to expand fields that would be available for use by the public during non-school hours. This would include paying for the development of new athletic fields that meet the proposed Dunwoody Facility Design Standards and would be managed by the City during non-school hours. Because there are no interscholastic athletic programs in the middle schools, the City could oversee the associations and groups who would use these facilities.

A review of the site indicates that there is adequate space to develop a baseball field, soccer field and football field with a seven lane track. All of these fields would expand recreation programming opportunities.

Action Plan

Continue to work with the DeKalb County School System to formulate and an agreement that is in the best interest of both parties.

General Recommendations

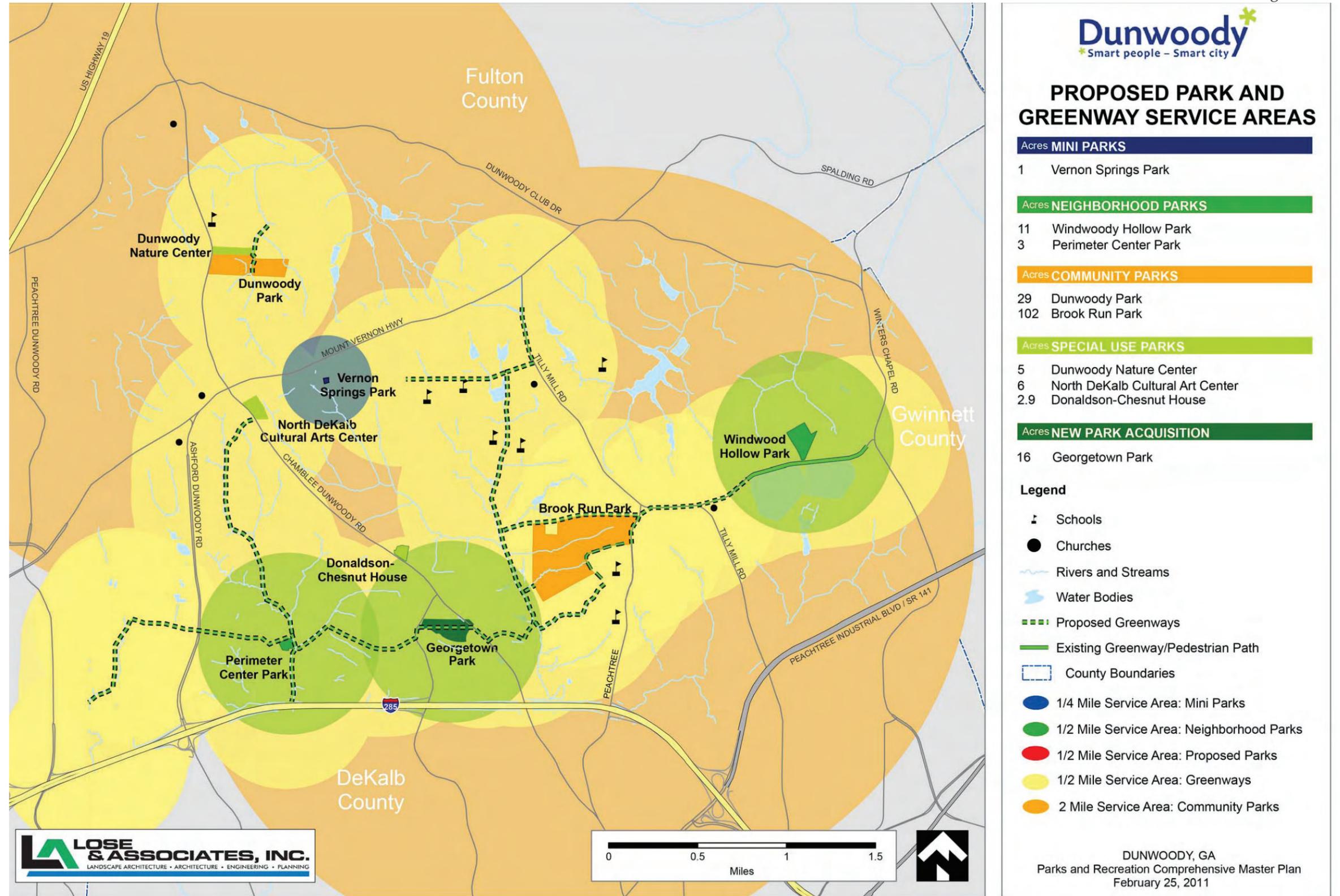
Create a Greenway Conservation Easement Document

The potential for development of greenways throughout the City creates the need for a greenway conservation easement document. This document could be a tool to gain access for greenways across private property without having to purchase the property or acquire the land at a reduced rate. A sample agreement is provided in the appendix. Parks staff should work with the City's legal counsel to craft a similar document to be used for greenway corridor acquisitions.

Develop Facility Design Standards

The basis for creating a strong image of the Parks and Recreation Division is to follow design guidelines and standards in park development that allow a visitor to immediately identify a public park by the elements that are present there. Design standards also reinforce the branding efforts of communities who want to present a unified approach among all public facilities. Gwinnett County is a great example of a park system that uses standard design guidelines in their parks, which are readily identifiable by residents and visitors to the county.

Figure 6.16



SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Architectural

Architectural standards apply to the built structures within a park and dictate such elements as construction materials, roofing materials, paint colors, hardware and furnishings. While a strong park system does not require that every structure look exactly the same, using a combination of the same building materials and colors is enough to create an identity for the park structures. Using common hardware and building materials throughout the park system can reduce maintenance costs by increasing the efficiency of repairs. Our observations indicate a lack of architectural uniformity in Dunwoody parks.

Athletic Amenity Standards

Athletic amenity standards relate to backstops/dugouts, bleachers, fencing, gates, lighting, scorers' stands, irrigation, turf, spectator seating, concession/restroom buildings and other elements that support the athletic fields or complexes. Using the same fencing materials and dugout standards, etc. helps to strengthen a system's image by creating uniformity at major features found in the interior of a park. It also allows for the development of uniform field maintenance when all fields contain the same equipment and mechanical systems.

Due to the high usage level of baseball fields and other programs, there are on-going issues with turf care and field safety. Baseball fields and proposed multi-use fields will likely be heavily programmed. The City should consider using synthetic turf on some fields in the park system. Not only would synthetic turf reduce long term maintenance, it would reduce weather-related delays and would support increased play time. A design standard for synthetic fields should be developed with the overall field standards.

General Site Amenity Standards

General site amenity standards are some of the easiest and most cost feasible to implement. They include such things as perimeter fencing and gates, furniture, green space irrigation, landscape planting, trash receptacles, lighting and playgrounds. Some basic guidelines for developing a standard package for park amenities include specifying elements that are produced by the same product supplier and are of the same color scheme and design style.

Using the same plant materials at park entrances and around key park features like pavilions or restroom buildings is one way of using site amenity standards to create an identity for the system. Maintenance of these landscapes is simplified because the inventory of replacement landscape material has been established beforehand. Repairs are made faster and scheduling is easier because time standards for repetitive repairs can be tracked. Our observations indicate a lack of uniformity in the site furnishings and landscaping.

Parking, Circulation and Site Development Standards

Parking, circulation and site development standards relate to the dimensions and construction specifications of parking, paving, roads, sidewalks and trails. These standards set parameters for the layout of new or redeveloped parks through requirements such as the type of curb and gutter found along roadways and parking lots and the minimum width of sidewalks. In addition, these standards can provide general guidelines that minimize the visual impact of parking to create more efficient circulation by grouping similar activities like basketball, tennis and other court games.

Some parking, circulation and site development standards that should be considered include:

- Providing shade for picnic areas between 11:00 am and 5:00 pm
- Maximum buildable slope of 20% with 2-15% being most desirable
- Providing a proper balance of wooded and open lawn areas

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- Minimizing offensive sounds and smells through careful site selection
- Minimizing the impact of lighting through the placement and selection of light fixtures
- Locating large facilities in open areas and on flatter slopes to minimize removal of existing tree canopy
- Providing shade along walking paths and playgrounds
- Providing a central restroom for several recreation facilities to share in more developed parks
- Locating facilities where they are visible from a main road
- Locating unique park facilities in locations that are accessible for walkers and cyclists
- Locating parks along proposed greenway corridors
- Establishing parking ratios for each type of facility
- Providing standard turf and maintenance for dog parks

When looking at parking lot layouts, the following should be considered:

- Minimizing the visual impact of large parking lots with landscaping
- Utilizing right-angled parking for the greatest space efficiency
- Providing overflow parking on stabilized turf or lawn areas
- Separating pedestrian and vehicular circulation routes
- Using wheel stops where parking spaces abut sidewalks
- Using porous pavements and bioswales to reduce and clean stormwater runoff

Sign Standards

Entrance signs, directional signs and identification signs are critical elements for providing a standard image of the park system. Park sign programs can be implemented into an existing community-wide wayfinding program or as an independent program.

The existing park entry and identification signs are located at the majority of the parks and were installed as temporary signs to replace signs leftover from when the parks were part of the DeKalb County System. A uniform set of park signage standards should be developed. Figure 6.17 below provides an example of the new park sign standards adopted by the City of Cary, North Carolina.

Figure 6-17 - Town of Cary Park Sign Standards



SECTION 6: FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Action Plan

As part of the overall capital plan, fund the development of standards documents to create a high quality unified look for all parks and greenways in the City of Dunwoody. This should be initiated prior to or as part of the Brook Run Park redevelopment process as it is the largest and most diverse park and will contain more elements that can be used as the basis for system standards.

Park Development Priorities

The planning team has prioritized the projects recommended throughout this master plan. For a detailed phasing of these projects, including opinions of cost and the year in which they should be implemented, refer to Section 7, *Land Acquisition and Opinions of Probable Cost*.

Tier One Priorities

Tier One Priorities are the actions that should be taken and the park projects that should be funded in the next 24 months.

- Develop all recommended design standard documents
- Develop master plan for Georgetown park
- Develop a prioritized capital plan and funding mechanism for implementation
- Secure funding for capital plan
- Begin redevelopment of Brook Run Park
- Determine best use for North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center Property
- Complete redevelopment master plan for Dunwoody Park and Nature Center
- Complete master plan and stabilize all buildings at Donaldson-Chesnut House
- Complete management agreement for Donaldson-Chesnut House
- Continue working on joint use agreement for Peachtree Charter Middle School
- Develop Perimeter Center Park including land acquisition
- Determine future location for Stage Door Players and North DeKalb Cultural Arts Center
- Explore lease options on green space in Perimeter Center area that is unused at this time do to economic conditions.
- Develop Peeler Road Greenway

Tier Two Priorities

Tier Two Priorities are projects to be completed in months 25-60 following adoption of this master plan.

- Complete redevelopment of Brook Run Park
- Redevelop Brook Run Park
- Further discuss and investigate the greenway system
- Renovate Windwood Hollow Park
- Relocate Spruill Center programs to Brook Run Park
- Relocate Dunwoody Senior Baseball to newly acquired property
- Redevelop Donaldson-Chesnut House
- Redevelop Dunwoody Park and Nature Center

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Tier Three Priorities

Tier Three Priorities are projects to be completed in months 61-120 following adoption of this master plan.

- Continue to develop additional sections of the City's greenway system
- Develop tennis complex at site to be determined
- Complete an update of the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan
- Evaluate the need for a community center
- Develop mini parks in redevelopment districts
- Continue to look for additional parkland to meet desired community parkland ratio

Tier Four Priorities

Tier Four Priorities are projects to be completed in the future, beyond the 10 year master plan time frame.

- Continue to develop additional sections of the City's greenway system
- Complete an update of the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan
- Evaluate condition of synthetic turf field and determine if replacement is needed
- Evaluate the need for a community center
- Continue to look for additional parkland to meet desired community parkland ratio
- Evaluate condition of synthetic turf field and determine if replacement is needed

Refer to Section 7 for parkland acquisition strategies and key properties for new park development. Section 7 contains a year-by-year spending plan and cost estimates for park renovation and redevelopment.