

MIMS PROPERTY MASTER PLAN

for HOLLY SPRINGS



PREPARED FOR: TOWN OF HOLLY SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING PROCESS

1.0 OVERVIEW

In 2011, the Town of Holly Springs acquired a 17-acre, forested and historic property in the core of its Downtown. This property was once part of the historic, 180-acre Mims Estate and is adjacent to the existing Mims House (nationally registered as the Leslie-Alford-Mims House). The families that dwelled in this house and farmed on this estate helped shape the Town's history. Today, the site is mostly wooded, featuring streams, natural springs, and interesting topography along with historic remnants such as a small cemetery and brick cisterns. It is surrounded by Downtown Holly Springs, residential neighborhoods, and the Holly Springs Library and Cultural Center.

Upon acquisition, the Town of Holly Springs began a conceptual master planning process to uncap the property's potential. The visioning and concept design process was driven by resident input. The goal was to craft a master plan that would enhance the social, ecologic, and economic opportunities for the site and the Downtown Village District. This Master Plan document includes a summary of the planning process, site analysis, design concept, and next steps.

1.1 PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESS

The planning and design process took place over a 10-month period from August 2011 to June 2012 (See the project timeline, page 2). Integral to this effort was a comprehensive community involvement process. The process empowered

citizens of Holly Springs to help shape the programming and design of the site.

The planning and design approach was holistic, incorporating history, previous plans and documentation review, site analysis, fieldwork, community involvement, and a flexible process. The goal of the process was to arrive upon a solution well-suited for the time, place, culture, economy, and ecological factors on the site, within the surrounding community, and in the context of the region.

Before concept generation, the Town formed a Steering Committee to guide the public involvement and design process. These community members and stakeholders convened at each milestone in the process to evaluate current progress and direct future initiatives.

1.1A VISIONING PROCESS

Two meetings were held at the beginning of the process to establish visions and goals for the Master Plan. The first meeting was with the Town's "Creative Economy" group; the second meeting with Town of Holly Springs staff. Visions and goals were established for the project that guided the entire process. A thorough description of the visioning meetings can be found later in this chapter.

1.1B STEERING COMMITTEE

The Town formed a Steering Committee composed of Town staff, stakeholders, and residents. The Steering Committee helped guide the existing conditions analysis, public involvement, and design

process. The group convened at each milestone in the process to evaluate current progress and direct future stages of planning and design.

Early in the process, the Committee helped refine visions and goals for the Master Plan. The first Steering Committee meeting was a Muddy Boots Tour of the Mims Property to experience the site firsthand and gain an appreciation for the landscape. The Design Team and Committee walked along existing soft surface trails through the site noting features about the property including significant vegetation, topography, the spring, brick cisterns, views, sounds, temperature, shade, and adjacent uses. A map depicting the Muddy Boots Tour Site Analysis was created to present to the public at future participatory events.

Later, the Committee reviewed existing conditions analyses and helped to craft the three concept

alternatives presented in this Plan through interactive discussion. The Committee worked to refine the final concept. Committee members also provided assistance at public workshops.

1.1C STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Collaborative thinking and consensus building with adjacent landowners was a necessary part of this process and will need to continue with future implementation of the final site design. Important stakeholders involved in the process were the Holly Springs United Methodist Church, the owner of the Mims House, and the owner of 919 Marketing. Because of the historic and physical connections to the property, and proximity to the Downtown, the lane surrounding the Mims House will be a key entrance to the site.

The above stakeholders were involved in a private meeting to gain an understanding of the Town's planning process and participate in a small collaborative workshop. At this meeting, the three entities work together with the Town to discuss potential programming and design for the site - particularly the access and design of the lane looping around the Mims House. Before the 2nd Open House, private meetings were held to meet with each of the stakeholders separately. The three site designs were revealed and discussed to determine how the concept would affect each stakeholder, and how the stakeholders and Town can partner in the creation of a successful public open space for residents and visitors of Holly Springs.

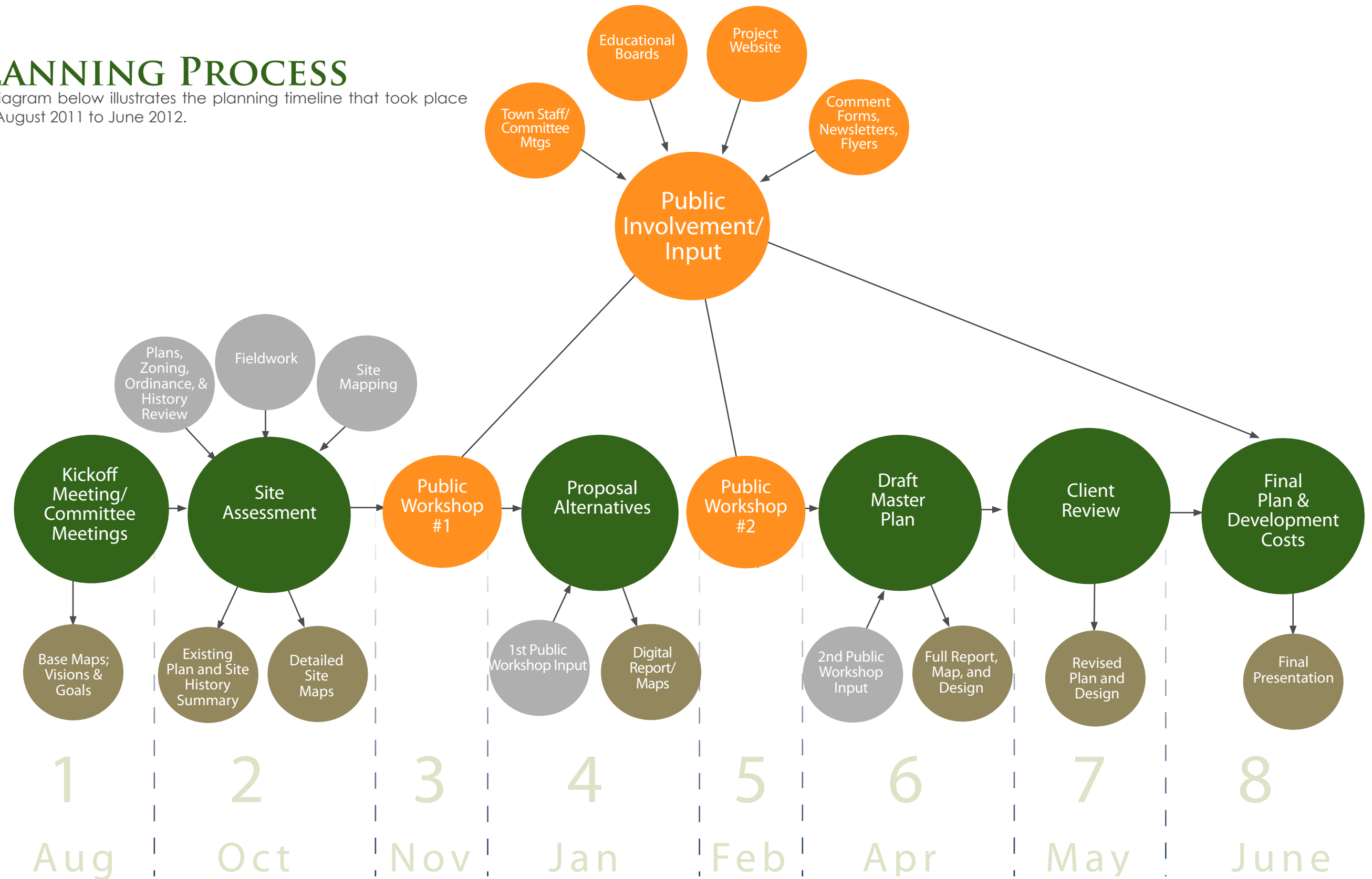


Figure 1-1: Steering Committee on Muddy Boots Tour.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING PROCESS

The diagram below illustrates the planning timeline that took place from August 2011 to June 2012.



INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS

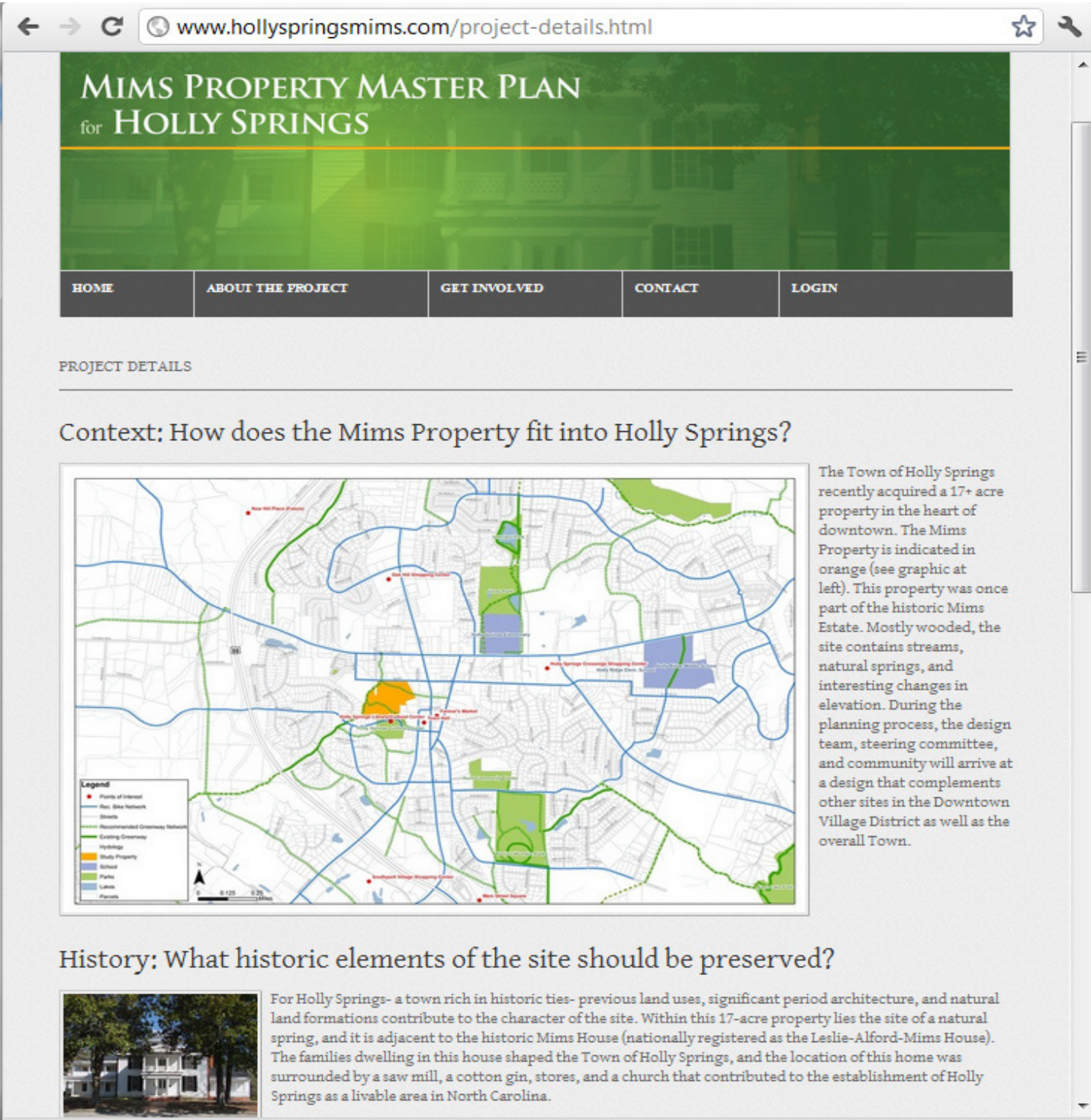


Figure 1-2: Project website.

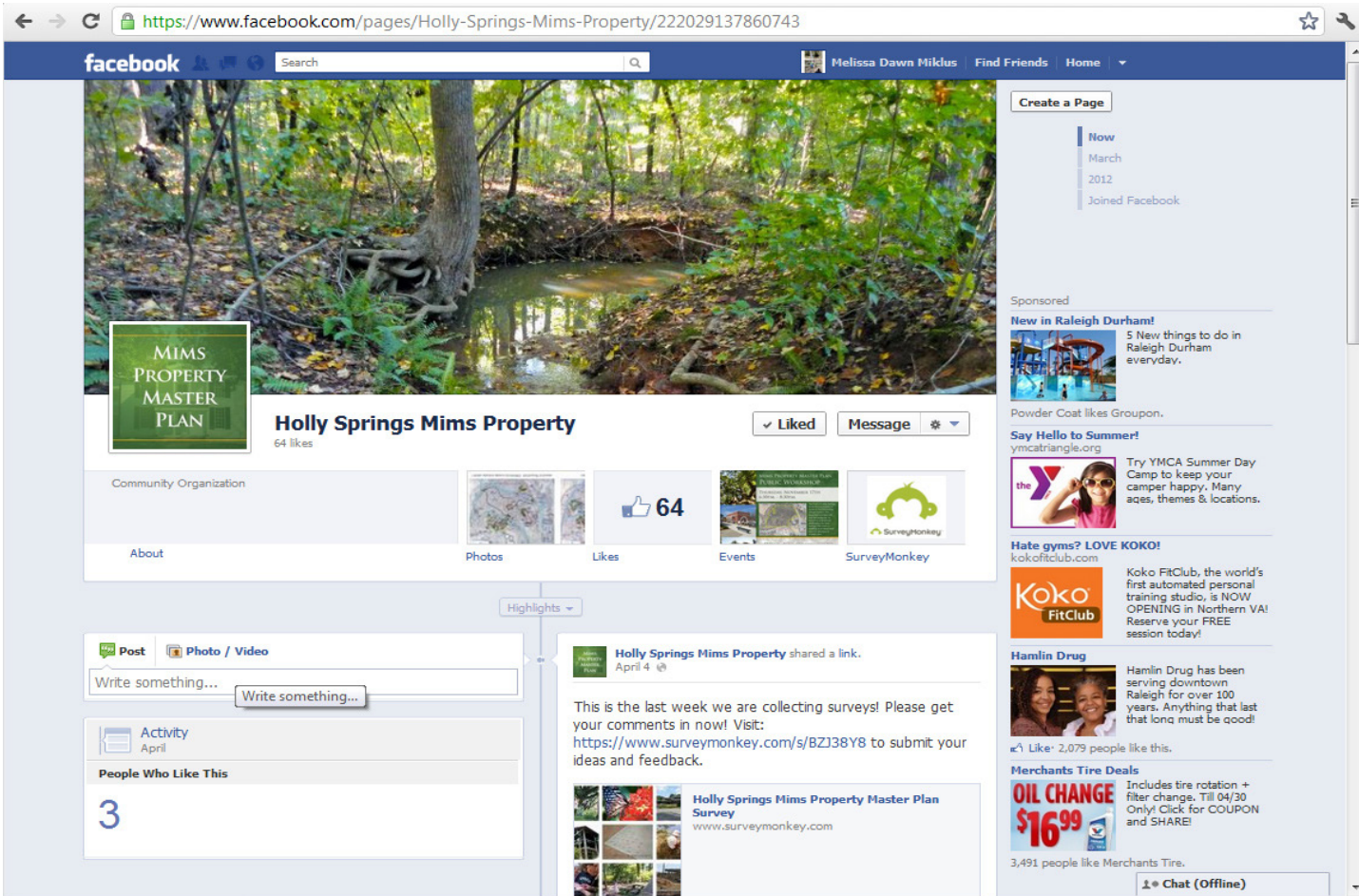


Figure 1-3: Project Facebook page.

1.1D WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA
A project website (www.hollyspringsmims.com) and separate Facebook page were established for the Mims Property Master Plan as a means to keep people informed and as a means of receiving input. Utilizing these online and social media tools allowed for an extended reach to citizens beyond traditional methods. These websites created a public forum via the Internet where people were free to engage in the community involvement process at their convenience. Announcements for workshops and public open houses were published on the project website with an interactive RSVP function. The traditional meeting details, location, and time were also posted as

an event on the Mims Facebook page. The two tools worked simultaneously to expand the reach of participation and enhance the breadth of knowledge presented to the public.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS

1.1E VISIONING SESSIONS

“Creative Economy” Visioning Meeting

On August 26, 2011, the consultant Alta/Greenways led a “Creative Conversation” to craft a visioning statement for the 17-acre Mims Property. A presentation on the site’s history and features was given to the group along with a description of the upcoming planning process.

Method for Crafting a Visioning Statement

To initiate this discovery, the Creative Conversation began with segmented categories of brainstorming culminating with small groups crafting potential vision statements. The following categories were vetted by the group:

1. Wants and needs (using a voting system to prioritize a top 5)
2. What kind of place is the Mims property? How does it feel? What do people do here?
3. Who will use this place?
4. What are the unique benefits (social, ecological, economic)? How does the Mims Property fit into Holly Springs (context)?

All category lists were posted around the room for small groups to craft a statement based on the following framework:

The Mims Estate Property is a [what kind of place] for [user group] where they can [do what] because [unique benefits of the site].

STEP ONE: The following list of **wants and needs** was established by the group:

- Preserving springs (identity/ landmark)
- Amphitheater/ music venue
- Green space preservation
- Collaborative incubator
- Public square (retail shops, mixed use)
- Holistic approach
- Legacy for children

- Revenue generation/ Self-sustaining economically
- Gathering space
- Playground/ skateboarding
- Education
- Bike parking
- Festivals
- Art space/ lofts
- Public art
- Mini gardens/ nature walk
- Springs/ spray park for kids
- Community gardens
- Historical site
- Small museum
- Mims soda shop/ ice cream/ eatery
- Carousel
- Military ties/ patriotic
- Exercise/ active use
- Summer camps (tied in with all themes)
- Teen activities
- Space for “creative econ” uses
- Rentable space
- Permanent farmers’ market
- Seasonal space

After listing myriad wants and needs for the site, each person in the group voted on their top three wants and needs for the site. This voting process revealed the top wants and needs as:

1. Preserving springs (identity/ landmark)
2. Amphitheater/ music venue
3. Green space preservation
4. Collaborative incubator
5. Public square (retail shops, mixed use)

Considering the above priorities, the group continued the visioning process through an imaginative process of discovering site potential. Ideas were shared and further expanded through experiential, programmatic, and contextual testing.

STEP TWO: The group listed the following statements as potential kinds of place, how it feels and what people do:

- Sight/ sound of water
- Activity with quiet places
- Interactive
- Festive
- Educational
- Combine “green space” with urban edge
- Quiet/ peaceful/ beautiful
- Soft music
- Kids playing
- SHADY
- Interactive use
- Stay/ return
- Historical architecture + modern amenities
- Buildings: ± 2 story, “Front porch” / covered
- Retail

STEP THREE: The following potential user groups were recorded:

- Seniors: active & quiet spaces
- Visitors for specific events
- Active adults & kids
- Local craftsmen/ artisans

STEP FOUR: The large group brainstorming culminated in a discussion of the following unique benefits of the site:

- Historic
- Centrally located
- Will bring people downtown time & time again (Who is target audience?)
- 17 wooded acres
- Community space for ALL AGES

STEP FIVE: Visioning Statements

Each of the four groups assembled a vision statement for the Mims Property by combining and fine-tuning elements from each of the categories. The following represent four statements that carried

through the entire discovery process to enhance community workshops. They were incorporated into a final vision statement for the Mims property to carry the master planning process from an idea into a reality.

The Mims Estate Property is a seasonal gathering place for Holly Springs citizens where they can enjoy a traditional downtown experience because that's where the action is and the town needs a heart.

The Mims Estate Property is a historic gathering hub for every generation of the whole community where they can relax, play and create because we have the opportunity of working with a clean slate.

The Mims Estate Property is a center for public activity for the greater holly springs community where they can enjoy leisure activities, interact with nature, cultural opportunities and each other while connecting to the town's character because of the unique setting and opportunities available on the site.

The Mims Estate Property is a gathering place for active holly springs citizens of all ages where they can relax, commune, laugh and enjoy a drink while experiencing nature and our history because it's convenient, inviting, and affordable.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS

Town Staff Visioning Session

With staff members from administration, parks and recreation, public safety, planning, and other departments of the Holly Springs local government, the Consultant led a visioning session to learn the wants and needs of those who will be involved in the development and operations of the 17-acre Mims Property. This meeting was the second visioning session conducted and was intended to gather a different perspective than the initial session with the Creative Economy group.

After a brief presentation on the planning process, the staff embarked on a brainstorming activity to illustrate their vision for the site.

Method for Crafting a Visioning Statement

The same method was used in the staff meeting as was implemented with the Creative Economy group.

STEP ONE: The following list of wants and needs was established by the group:

- Preserve the springs
- Permanent home police department
- Tennis courts
- Carousel
- Rentable space
- Food services
- Balanced space: preservation & development
- Add adjacent parcels (south)
- Signature building at NE Edge
- "The Green" benches art fountain (1.5 Ac)
- Connection to cemetery
- Permanent home for farmer's market
- Walking trails
- Picnic amenities
- Multi-purpose meeting/ congregation area
- Features to help define downtown character
- Natural preservation (trees)
- Holly Springs central park
- Artist studio space on eastern perimeter

- Place for teenagers to recreate (skate park?)
- Attractive views/ sequence into site
- Residential areas on periphery (not necessarily in site)
- Riparian buffers along streams
- Recognition of site's historic character
- Flexible water feature (ice skating in winter)

The top wants and needs were:

1. Preserve the springs
2. Carousel
3. Features to help define downtown character
4. Holly Springs central park
5. Signature building at northeast edge



Figure 1-4: Visioning Session with Town Staff.

Considering the above priorities, the group continued the visioning process through an imaginative process of discovering site potential. Ideas were shared and further expanded through experiential, programmatic, and contextual testing.

STEP TWO: The group listed the following statements as potential kinds of place, how it feels and what people do:

- Cool
- Vibrant
- Festive
- Inviting
- Historic
- "music in the rocks"
- Waiting for table @ restaurant
- Fusion of natural features/ shops (a la Greenville, SC)
- Places to congregate
- Groves of trees
- Plazas
- Trails
- Central green space within downtown
- Active uses to observe
- Public art installations
- Accentuated natural features
- Farmer's market
- Mountain bike trails
- Teen activities: dancing
- Wine tastings

STEP THREE: The following potential user groups were recorded:

- Library patrons
- People eating lunch
- People exercising
- Ice skaters
- Carousel riders

STEP FOUR: The large group brainstorming culminated in a discussion of the following unique benefits of the site:

- Accessible/ easy to get to
- Central
- Large in size
- Older, unique stands of trees
- Rolling topography

STEP FIVE: Visioning Statements

Two groups produced vision statements for the Mims Property by combining and fine-tuning elements from each of the categories. The following represent two new statements that will be added to the first four assembled by the Creative Economy group.

The Mims Estate Property is an Inviting Historic place for Friends where they can enjoy and appreciate the essence of Holly Springs because there is no other place like this.

The Mims Estate Property is a unique, vibrant place for all people where they can congregate and engage in passive and active activities because it's the place to be.

Visioning Process Conclusion

There were several parallel objectives and visions between the Creative Economy group and Town staff. A common theme was having a balance between preserving the natural state of the site and programming the site to become a place that draws people for repeat visits. Another common theme was creating a unique space that highlights the area's history and serves as a community meeting place for people of all ages.

Ideas and visions for the site extend into the overall Downtown Village District. The Staff of Holly Springs, who are familiar with land owned by the Town within the Downtown District, shared an overall vision for enhancing the downtown experience with retail, an ice cream shop, restaurants, a wine bar, a beer garden, and other commercial uses on the periphery of the site.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS

While the visioning process resulted in broad thought, it served to inform the remainder of the planning process. As fieldwork, analysis, and discussion ensued, more specific opportunities and constraints were revealed that impacted suitable uses for the property. Adjacent uses, site conditions such as topography and hydrology, overall vision for the Village District, and other factors impacted the study, narrowing the focus of programming and form over time.

Taking the drafted vision statements, a final vision statement was crafted for the Plan:

The Mims Property is a
signature conservation
landscape with sensible
integrations of urban form
for people who
embrace collaborative
energy
where they can
enhance their knowledge
of ecologic and social
systems, exercise their
creative contributions to
society, and enjoy active
and passive recreation
options
because the space
fosters a sense of identify
and ownership by fusing
historic character with a
vision of healthy living.

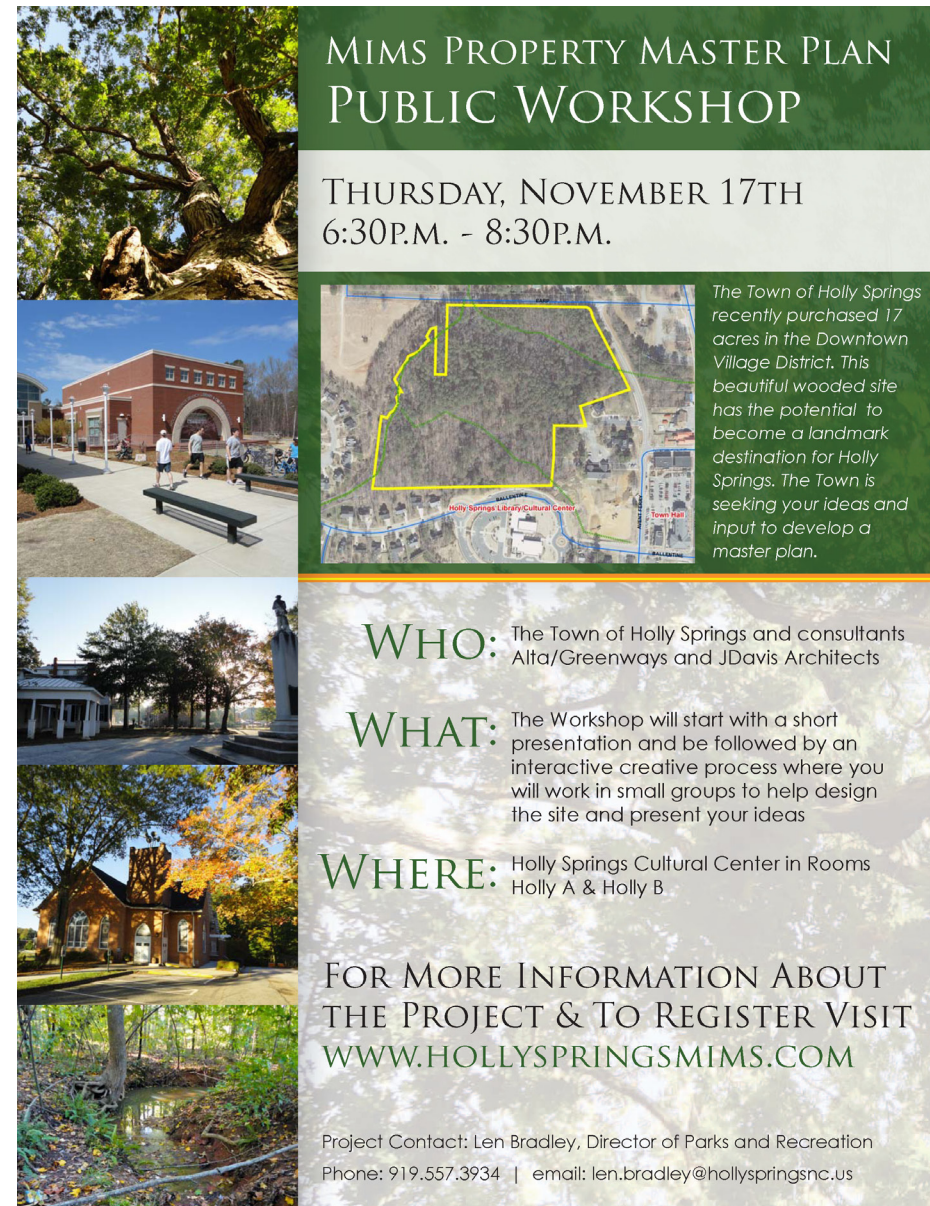


Figure 1-5: Flyer for Open House #1.

1.1F PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #1

The first public open house took place at the Holly Springs Cultural Center on November 17, 2011. The open house was advertised through the project website, Facebook page, Town website, HOA listserves, and hard copy flyers.

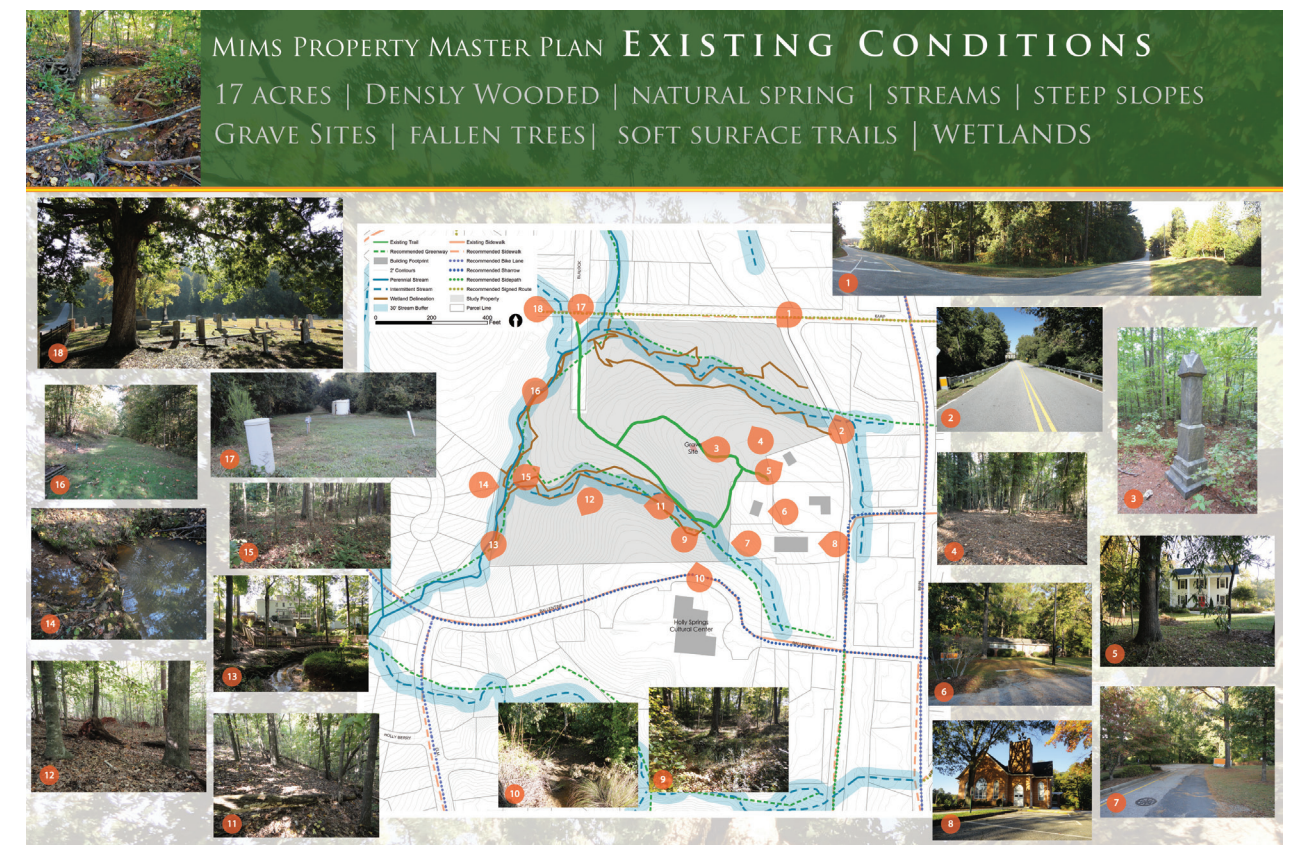


Figure 1-6: Existing Conditions Board.

Approximately 50 Holly Springs residents participated in the event and provided meaningful input toward visioning and the future design of the site. Participants were welcomed and invited to examine a series of boards presenting a brief history of the site, existing plans and standards for the Village District, site photos, site analysis created by the steering committee, and a final visioning statement for the plan.

After forming groups of 4-8 people, a presentation was given to help participants understand the planning and design process. A layered site analysis was revealed for those who may not be familiar with the site or had not walk along the existing soft-surface trails. These layers included topography, adjacent uses, historic relics, existing trail systems, hydrology and wetland areas.

Being acquainted with the site via this layered approach prepared the group for the next step: a Visual Preference Survey (VPS). During this segment of the workshop, the site was broken into zones to enlist reactions to photos that may, or may not be, appropriate for the park. By showing materials, uses, and experiential elements, participants start forming their ideal design for the site and indicated their reactions on a worksheet. After reviewing 4-8 photos for each of the five zones, the small groups discussed their individual ideas and came to consensus on the appropriate elements for each zone of the site. Using cut-out photos from the VPS and drawing materials, each table created a site plan.

Presentations from each group followed the ideation session and the workshop closed with a discussion of each of the designs.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS



Figure 1-7 through 1-9: Photos from Public Workshop.



Figure 1-10: Vision Board.



Figure 1-11: Photo from Public Workshop in November.

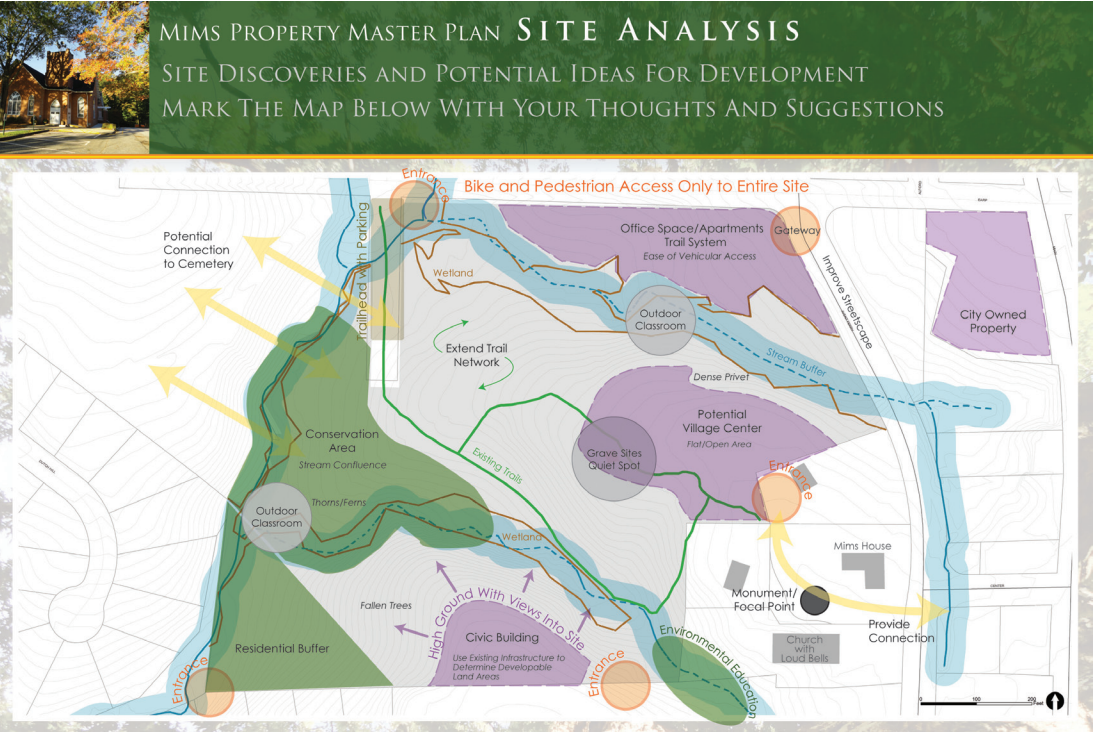


Figure 1-12: Site Analysis Board.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS



MIMS PROPERTY MASTER PLAN PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND
5:30P.M. - 7:30P.M.

It's time to review three concepts for the 17 acre Mims Property! Join us for an Open House any time between 5:30pm and 7:30pm to comment on the designs and provide input for the final park plan.

WHO: The Town of Holly Springs and consultants Alta/Greenways and JDavis Architects

WHAT: The Public Open House will be an open forum for comments on three different concepts for the site. Each concept was generated based on feedback and ideas in the first Public Meeting.

WHERE: Holly Springs Cultural Center in Rooms Holly A & Holly B

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MASTER PLAN PROJECT VISIT WWW.HOLLYSPRINGSMIMS.COM

Project Contact: Len Bradley, Director of Parks and Recreation
Phone: 919.557.3934 | email: len.bradley@hollyspringsnc.us

Figure 1-13: Public Open House #2 Flyer.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #2

As the second part of a two-step community participation process, a second public open house was held February 22, 2012 at the Holly Springs Cultural Center. Residents participated in a two-way conversation about the overall planning and design process and provided feedback on three potential concepts for the property. Flyers were distributed throughout Holly Springs by the Steering Committee and Town staff via email, HOA listserves, the Town of Holly Springs website, the project website, and the project's Facebook page (see Public Open House Flyer, figure 1-13).

From 5:30pm – 7:30pm, citizens stopped by the Cultural Center to progress through a seven-station experience (see Open House Set Up, figure 1-14). After signing in, attendees progressed through a series of boards depicting the process and site analysis, visited a station displaying maps from the first Public Workshop, and learned about each of the three concepts by viewing a slide show of lifestyle and materials images accompanied by a site plan rendering and design team member. They finished the tour by completing a feedback worksheet (see Public Open House Worksheet, figure 1-15) and capturing a photograph of their ideal site plan by using puzzle pieces from each concept.

Station One: Check In

Visitors were greeted by a steering committee member who explained the progression of the stations, answered questions about the feedback worksheet, and provided a brief introduction to the project. After signing in, each attendee began the evening at station two.

Station Two: Process and Site Analysis

Boards previously presented at the first Public Workshop were displayed to familiarize those new to the process with the activities of the steering committee and design team. Each board communicated details about the project to help the attendee better understand the planning and design evolution, and details specific to the site. The boards illustrated a process diagram; site context and existing plans; desires, needs, and visioning statement; existing site conditions; and a site analysis diagram.

Station Three: Public Workshop Maps

For a deeper understanding of how the design concepts evolved, Station Three provided an opportunity to review site maps created by the community at the first Public Workshop. Each map was a product of a Visual Preference Survey (VPS), where participants were asked to react to a series of images, which they later cut out and placed on the map where desired. Each map was created by a group of five to eight members of the community, who presented their concept at the close of the workshop.

[Station Four: Concept No. 1 – Leslie-Alford-Mims Ecologic Learning Center

Station Five: Concept No. 2 – Mims Forest Activity

Station Six: Concept No. 3 – Holly Springs Village Green]

The three concepts are described in detail in Chapter 3.

Steering Committee members represented each station to describe each concept to the public. A large-format concept sketch was provided for each concept along with a running slideshow beside the sketch. The slideshow consisted of example photos that represent the overall themes of the concept.

Station Seven: Comment Form and Puzzle Mapping

The final station allowed attendees to collect their thoughts and respond to a few questions about each conceptual design (see Public Open House Comments, Appendix A). After providing written feedback, each participant was invited to use a series of 'puzzle pieces' with elements from each design to arrange their ideal park. Photographs recorded each design (see Puzzle Maps, figures 1-23 through 1-24).

Following the Second Open House, site concept plans and narratives were posted to the project website. Citizens were encouraged - through links on the Town website, email, listserves, and Facebook - to participate in an online questionnaire to gather input from those who were not able to attend the second public open house. Comments were recorded for a period of four weeks to capture additional feedback.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS

MIMS MASTER PLAN OPEN HOUSE: HOLLY A & B

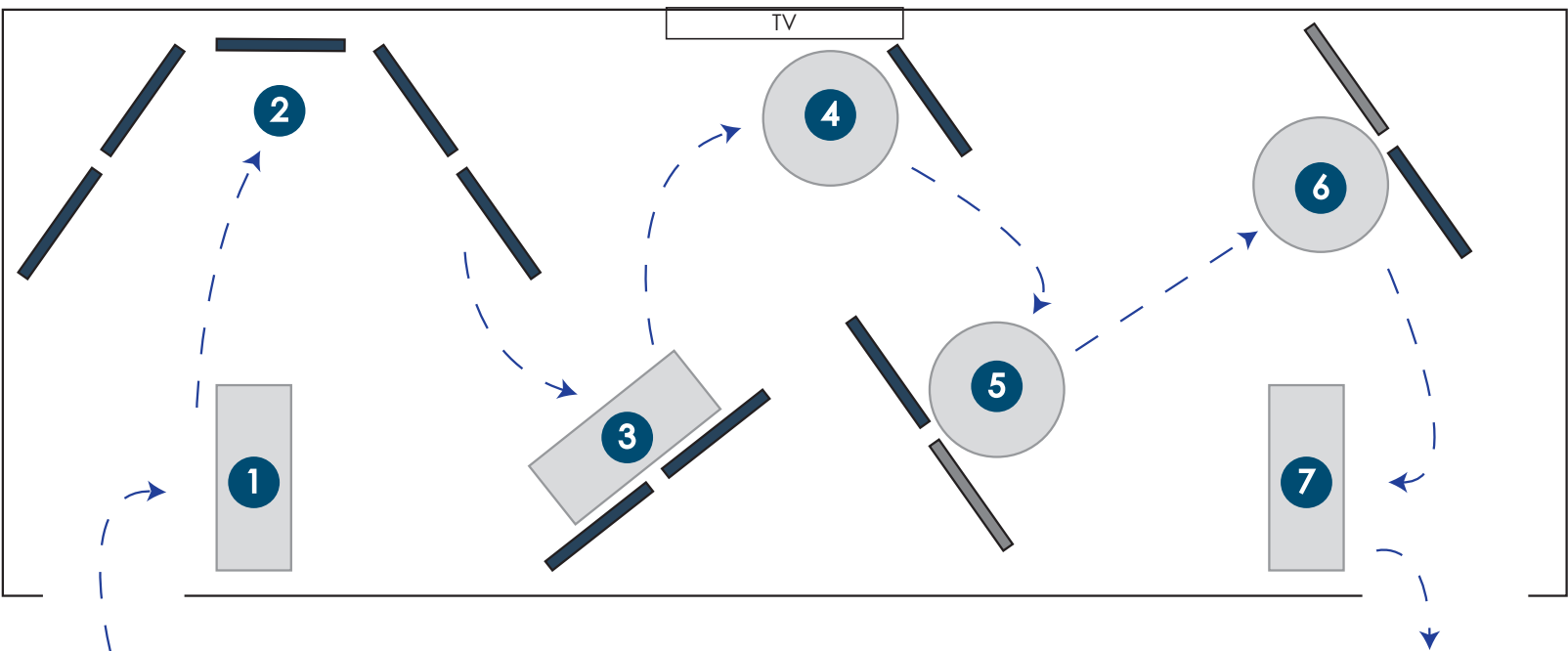


Figure 1-14: Open House Set Up.

MIMS PROPERTY MASTER PLAN ABOUT THE PROJECT

HOLLY SPRINGS PURCHASES 17 ACRES IN VILLAGE DISTRICT

HOLLY SPRINGS HIRES ALTA/GREENWAYS AS CONSULTANT

STEERING COMMITTEE IS CREATED TO TEAM WITH CONSULTANT

COMMUNITY PROVIDES INPUT AND IDEAS FOR THE MIMS PROPERTY

CONSULTANT ILLUSTRATES MASTER PLAN BASED ON COMMUNITY INPUT

LOCATION

APPROACH & PROCESS

We believe in appropriate design solutions. This approach would incorporate history, previous plans, and documentation review, site analysis, field work, community involvement, and a flexible process. Our intention is to help the community arrive upon a solution well-suited for the time, place, culture, economy, and ecology of the site, within the surrounding community, and in the context of the region.

HISTORY

EARLY HISTORY

Like many areas of North Carolina, Holly Springs served as hunting grounds for the Tuscarora Indians. In 1773, this 1773 map depicts a record of the open land and waterways of North Carolina that supported a relationship between the land and the land.

THE BIRTH OF A COLONIAL TOWN

The natural spring, located on this 17-acre property, provided inspiration for settling the town of Holly Springs. Adjacent to the site of the spring, colonial settlers erected homes, churches, shops, and eventually a town. A Scottish settler, Archibald Leslie, opened a trading business and began construction of a 180-acre estate. The home on this property serves as a landmark of strength for the town, having survived the Civil War and occupation by the Union Army.

As recorded in the home's formal name, the Leslie-Alford-Mims House, Colonel George Benton Alford, owned the home, and influenced the town of Holly Springs by helping to establish rail connections, improving the economy, and aiding in the incorporation of the town of Holly Springs in 1877.

Figure 1-17: Process Board.

MIMS PROPERTY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS COMMENT SHEET

CONCEPT NUMBER 1

LESLIE-ALFORD-MIMS ECOLOGIC LEARNING CENTER

CONCEPT NUMBER 2

MIMS FOREST ACTIVITY PARK

CONCEPT NUMBER 3

HOLLY SPRINGS VILLAGE GREEN

LIKE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DO NOT LIKE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

RANK: _____

LIKE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DO NOT LIKE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

RANK: _____

LIKE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DO NOT LIKE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

RANK: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____ Email: _____

Please return this sheet to the check-out table. Thank you!

Figure 1-15: Public Open House Worksheet.



Figure 1-16: Public providing input for one of the alternatives.

MIMS PROPERTY MASTER PLAN HOW DOES THE SITE FIT IN?

☐ VILLAGE DISTRICT

- COMPLEMENTARY USES
- SENSE OF PLACE & LIVABILITY
- ACCESSIBILITY & ENTRANCES

☐ TOWN OF HOLLY SPRINGS

- GREENWAYS & PARKS
- PLACES OF INTEREST
- BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

☐ REGION

- ATTRACTIONS
- CENTERS OF ACTIVITY
- CONSERVATION AREAS

2005 VILLAGE DISTRICT PLAN

TOWN SYSTEMS

REGIONAL DESTINATIONS & CONNECTIONS

Figure 1-18: Context Board.

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING PROCESS



Figure 1-19 through 1-21: Holly Springs residents review and provide comment on the three alternatives for the park site.

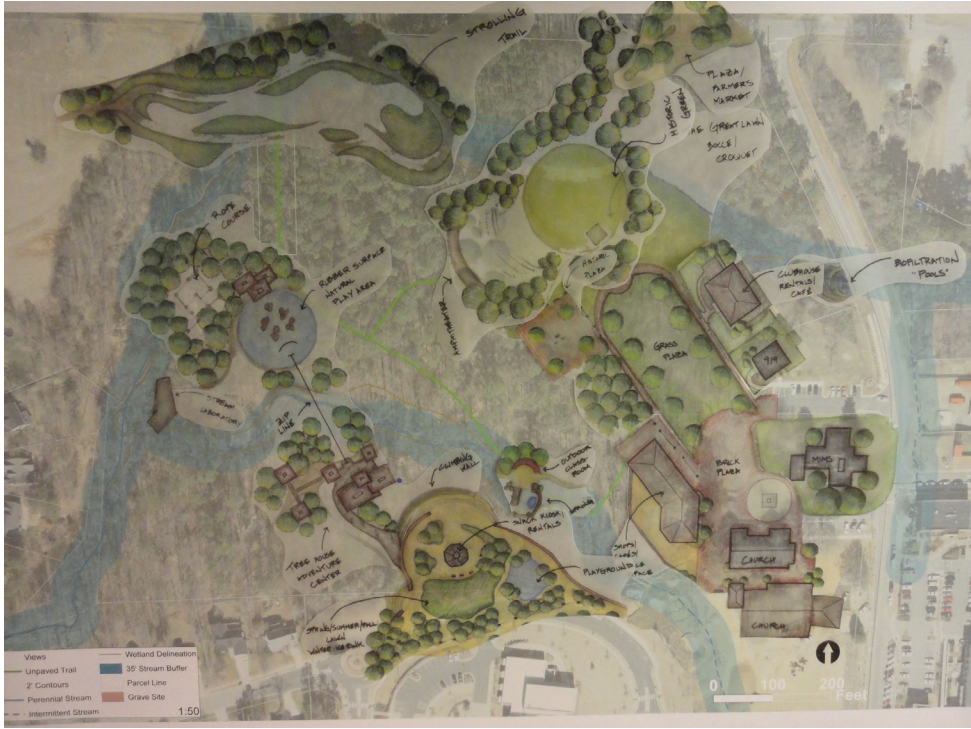


Figure 1-22 through 1-24: Participants were asked to take "puzzle pieces" of each component to create their preference for the Mims property. Two examples are shown above.

CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

2.0 PLAN CONTEXT

Holly Springs is juxtaposed as a community adjacent to the Greater Triangle Area of Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill. Its proximity to these towns and their suburbs provides a wide variety of cultural and economic opportunities for residents. Because of this, it is essential to consider varying scales of impact. This 17-acre site is not an isolated island, but an important piece of the region, Town of Holly Springs, and Village District Area.

During the planning process, both the existing conditions and planning efforts locally and regionally were taken into account and adhered to when determining appropriate concepts for the site. Regionally, major destinations, parks, centers of activity, conservation areas, and regional greenways were considered. Townwide, existing parks and greenways, places of interest, and bicycle and pedestrian connections were analyzed. Within the Village District, complementary uses, sense of place, livability, and accessibility have a significant Impact on the Mims Property.

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The future park site is located in the core of downtown Holly Springs in the Village District Area. It is bordered by Earp Street to the north, Avent Ferry Road to the east, Ballentine Street to the south and Utley Creek to the west. A single-family home development flanks the Mims Property to the south and west, with approximately 12 families directly adjacent to the study site. Holly Springs

Library and Cultural Center are located directly across Ballentine Street to the south of the property. The Holly Springs Village District is located to the east, with various commercial and institutional uses including the Holly Springs United Methodist Church, Historic Mims Home, and 919 Marketing directly adjacent to the southeast corner of the property. The historic Holly Springs Cemetery is located just across Utley Creek on the northwest side of the property. Single-family and multi-family housing is present along Earp Street across from the property.

2.2 HISTORY

2.2A THE ROLE OF HISTORY

History plays a key role in the development of any site. Since Holly Springs is a town rich in historic ties - previous land uses, significant period architecture, and natural land formations will contribute to the character of this site. Within this property lies the site of a natural spring and the property is adjacent to the historic Mims House (Nationally registered as the Leslie-Alford-Mims House). The home was surrounded by a saw mill, cotton gin, stores, and church that created roots for the Town of Holly Springs.

2.2B EARLY HISTORY

Like many areas of North Carolina, Holly Springs served as hunting grounds for the Tuscarora Indian Tribe. This 1773 map depicts a record of the open land and waterways of North Carolina that supported a relationship between hunting tribes and the land.

2.2C THE BIRTH OF A COLONIAL TOWN

The natural spring on the Mims property provided inspiration for settling the Town of Holly Springs. Adjacent to the site of the spring, colonial settlers erected homes, churches, shops, and avenues for trade.

Scottish settler, Archibald Leslie, opened a tailoring business and constructed a 180-acre estate. The home on this property now serves as a landmark signifying the strength of the Town - having survived the Civil War and occupation by the Union Army. The history of the families dwelling in this lasting specimen of architecture contributed to the shaping of Holly Springs as a town.



Figure 2-1: Historic Architecture in Holly Springs.

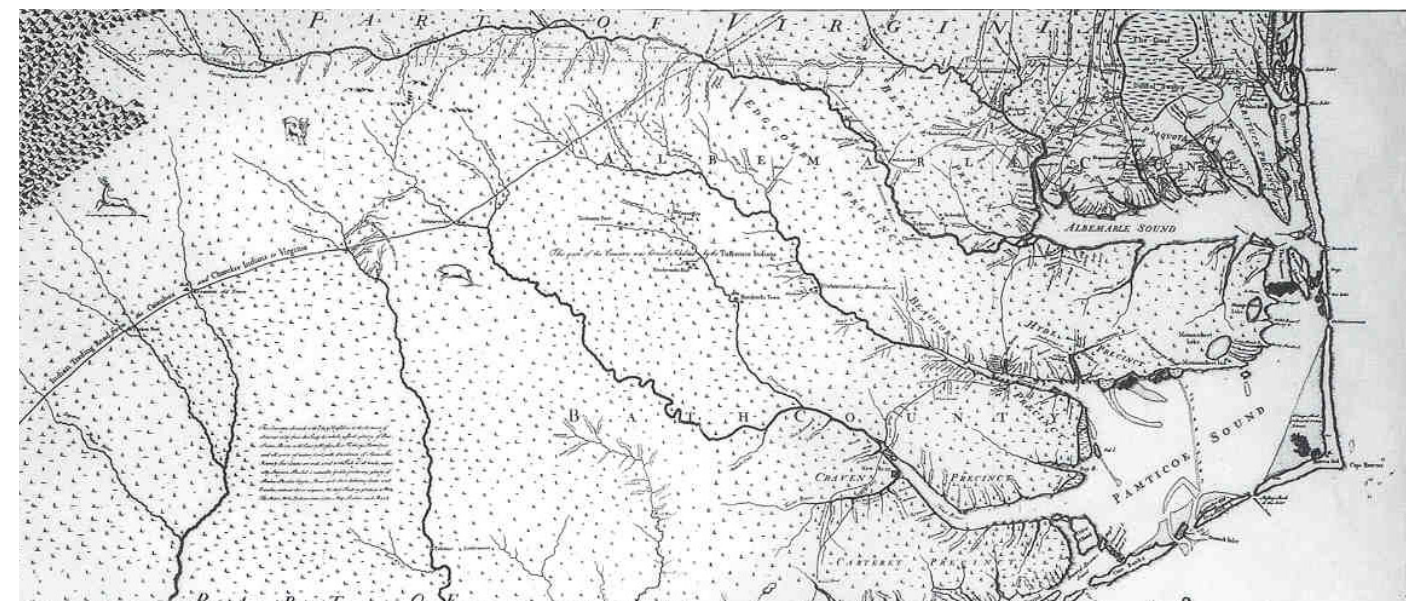


Figure 2-2: North Carolina shown as home to the Tuscarora Indian Tribe.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS



Figure 2-3: Historic Mims Home.

As recorded in the home's formal name, the Leslie-Alford-Mims House, Colonel George Benton Alford owned the home and influenced the town of Holly Springs by helping to establish rail connections, improve the economy, and aid in the incorporation of the Town of Holly Springs in 1877.

2.2D THE INFLUENCE OF A LANDMARK

The Mims House and the spring have become part of the identity of the Town. Other historic landmarks in the core of Downtown include

homes, the building housing Dewar's Antiques, the Seagraves Drugstore building (now police station), and churches.

2.3 TOWN OF HOLLY SPRINGS PLANS

Previous Town planning efforts provided a baseline of information as they include vision, planning, design, and supporting recommendations for the Village District Area.

Visions, maps, and recommendations were extracted from:

- "Vision Holly Springs: Town of Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan," November 2009
- "Beyond the Green, A Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Town of Holly Springs, NC," August 2007
- "Village District Area Plan," December 2005

The following goals (sourced from the above plans) were important to the development of this Master Plan.

- Create a "Village-like" atmosphere and sense of place through design and planning initiatives
- Celebrate and protect historical assets
- Provide an identity or branding for the Village Core and the Mims Property
- Provide a mixture of uses to attract people to the downtown core
- Create a family-oriented downtown
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian connections
- Visually link and brand the area with human-scale streetscapes, architecture and public art
- Create a linked system of parks and open space
- Use a regional model for future development

"Beyond the Green" Parks and Recreation Plan

As seen in the Greenway System Concept map from "Beyond the Green," the Town intends to create/enhance a system of connected areas throughout Holly Springs. The Mims Property is part of the Downtown "Historic" Center which is a hub for these connections.

As the Downtown core becomes a bikable, walkable village, the importance of connections

via greenway and public transportation are at the forefront of overall town planning. Therefore, the study area should accommodate and enhance such connections.

According to "Beyond the Green," the Mims property area may also contain a park (or park-like) area in the future. This green space would serve as one component of Holly Springs' entire park system concept. Connections, complementary uses, and access were explored during community involvement and design concepting to enhance the overall greenprint for Holly Springs. (Map from "Beyond the Green").

A new park classification system was also established as part of this plan and includes the following types:

- Community Central
- Town-Wide Entertainment
- Conservation Education
- Neighborhood Greenway
- Neighborhood Subdivision
- Road Linkage
- Trail Linkage



Figure 2-4: Bass Lake Park.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Village District Area Plan

The 2005 "Village District Area Plan" promotes a sense of place for the Downtown core with recommendations for streetscapes, increased density, reduced setbacks, and other design details and implementation strategies contributing to the "village" character.

The accompanying market analysis provides a picture of the intended additions to the District including office space, mixed use, and retail.

A survey revealed community desires including:

- Upscale townhouses and condos
- Mixed use with residential on the second floor
- Shopping
- Restaurants
- Brewery
- Cinema
- Coffee Shop
- Art Galleries
- Salon/Spa
- Hardware Store

The 2009 "Vision Holly Springs" Comprehensive Plan reinforces the Village District Area Plan's land use recommendations. Suggested land use for the Mims property is residential, mixed use, and open space bordered by additional park, civic, and institutional uses.

Planned Circulation and Connections

The recently completed Holly Springs Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Plan, and Parks & Recreation Plan indicate a variety of on-road and off-road bicycle and pedestrian connections. This includes a recommended "spine" greenway along Utle Creek along with bicycle lanes and sharrows on adjacent and nearby roadways. These existing and recommended features were analyzed as part of site access considerations. These elements were also incorporated into the public input and design process.

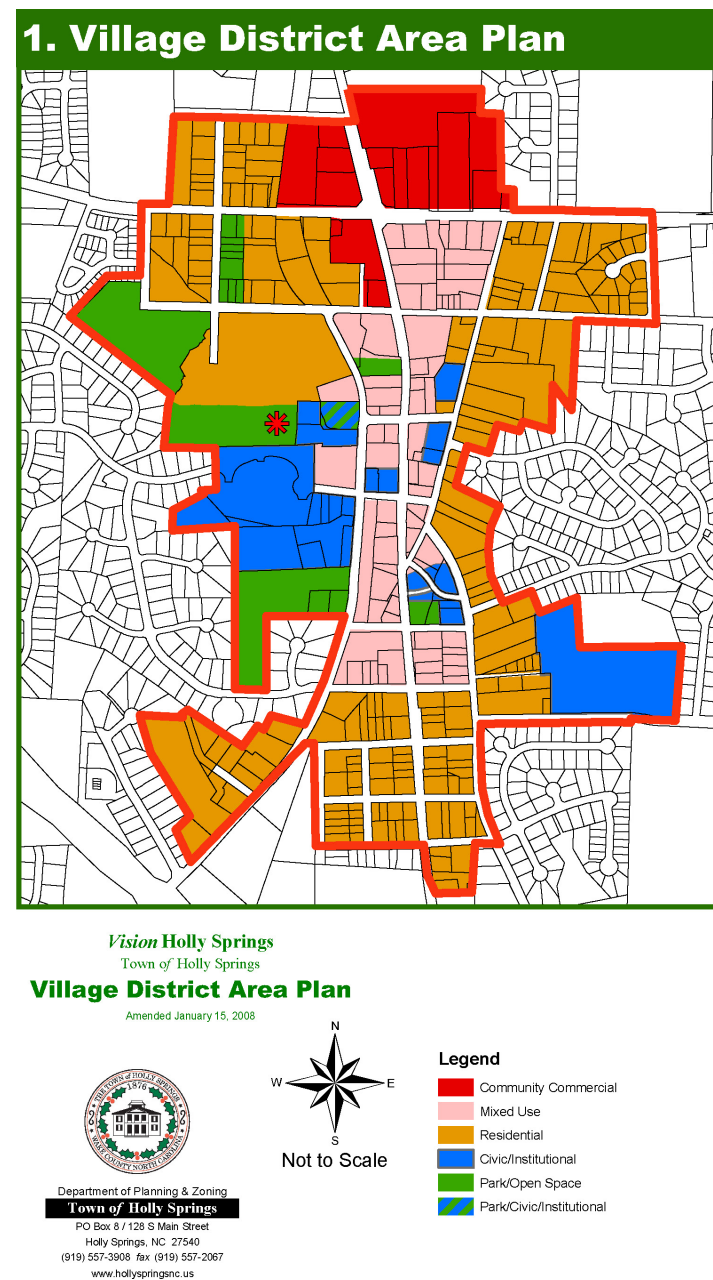


Figure 2-5: Village District Area Plan land use map.



Figure 5: Proposed Core Area Schematic Plan

Figure 2-6: Village District Area Plan concept map.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

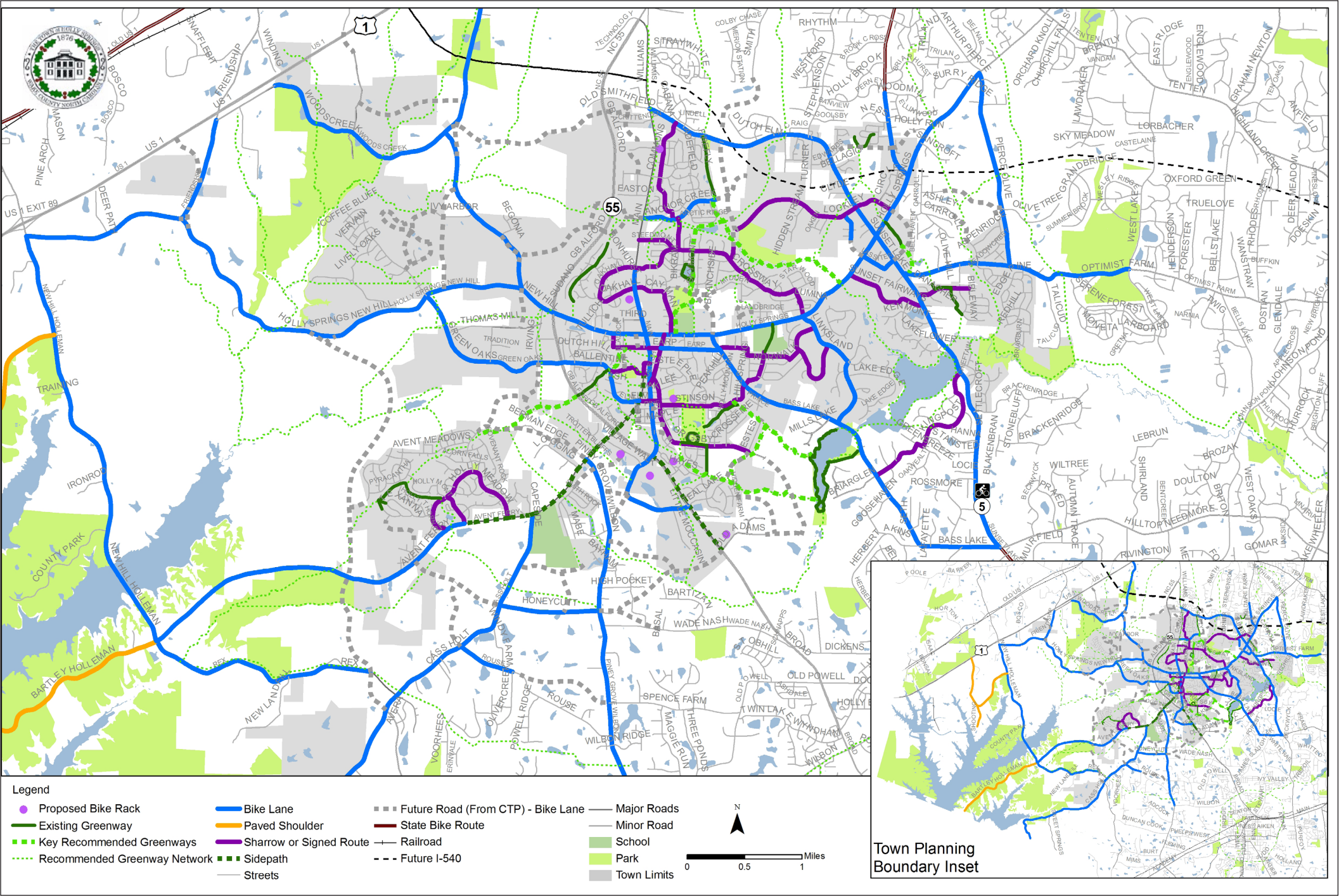


Figure 2-7: Recommended bicycle and greenway network from the Holly Springs Bicycle Plan.

2.4 SITE CONDITIONS

A thorough site analysis was conducted through the examination of GIS mapping and on-site fieldwork. The analysis was conducted to better understand landscape features such as topography, vegetation, and water features. These landscape characteristics were a defining factor in site planning and design.

Natural Features

The 17-acre site is densely forested with a mixture of mostly hardwood with some pine trees present. Large oaks, beech, and tulip poplars are scattered throughout the site with magnolias, holly trees, and ferns in the understory. A large patch of the invasive privet can be found on the northeastern side of the property near and along a small tributary creek. A variety of wildlife is present on the site including deer, rabbits, fox, squirrels, amphibians, and many bird species.

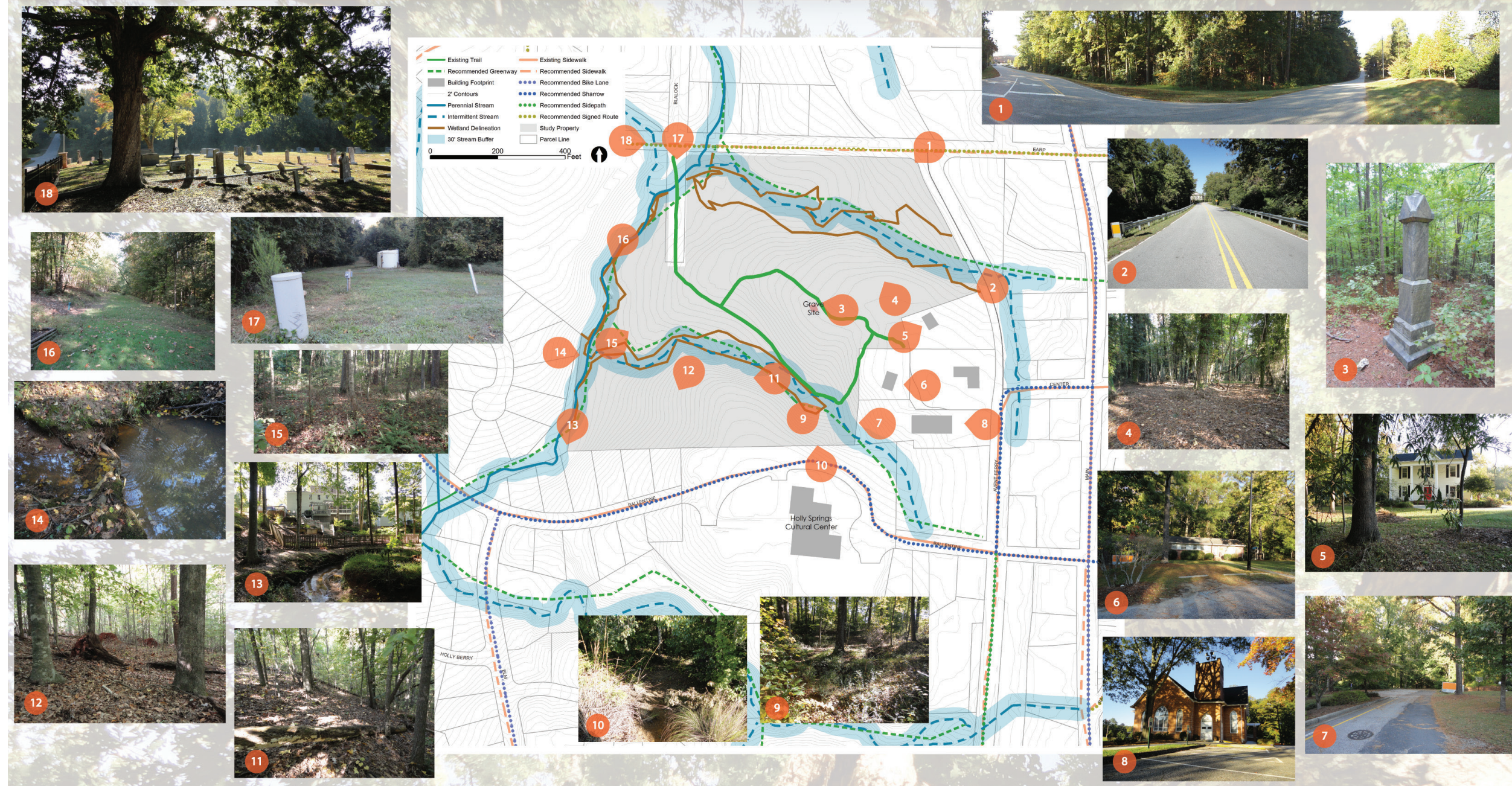
Site elevations range from approximately 372 feet to 438 feet with steep slopes present especially on the southern half of the property where the spring and Utley Creek tributary form a valley.

Water features include Utley Creek, which runs northeast to southwest along the western border of the property. Utley Creek ranges from 5-15 feet wide and is channeled with five to ten foot banks in places. A Town-owned sewer easement can also be found paralleling Utley Creek. The natural spring is found on the southeastern portion of the property. This spring feeds a tributary that joins Utley Creek on the southwestern portion of the property. A second tributary (where the dense privet is located) runs east to west on the northern side of the property connecting to Utley Creek at the northwest corner of the site. Mapped wetlands were confirmed during fieldwork and can be found in narrow swaths along both creek tributaries.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

MIMS PROPERTY MASTER PLAN EXISTING CONDITIONS

Figure 2-8: The Existing Conditions Board was displayed at the first public open house workshop. Photos are labeled on the map to give an overall feel of the unique characteristics of the landscape.



EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS



MIMS PROPERTY MASTER PLAN **SITE ANALYSIS**
SITE DISCOVERIES AND POTENTIAL IDEAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
MARK THE MAP BELOW WITH YOUR THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS

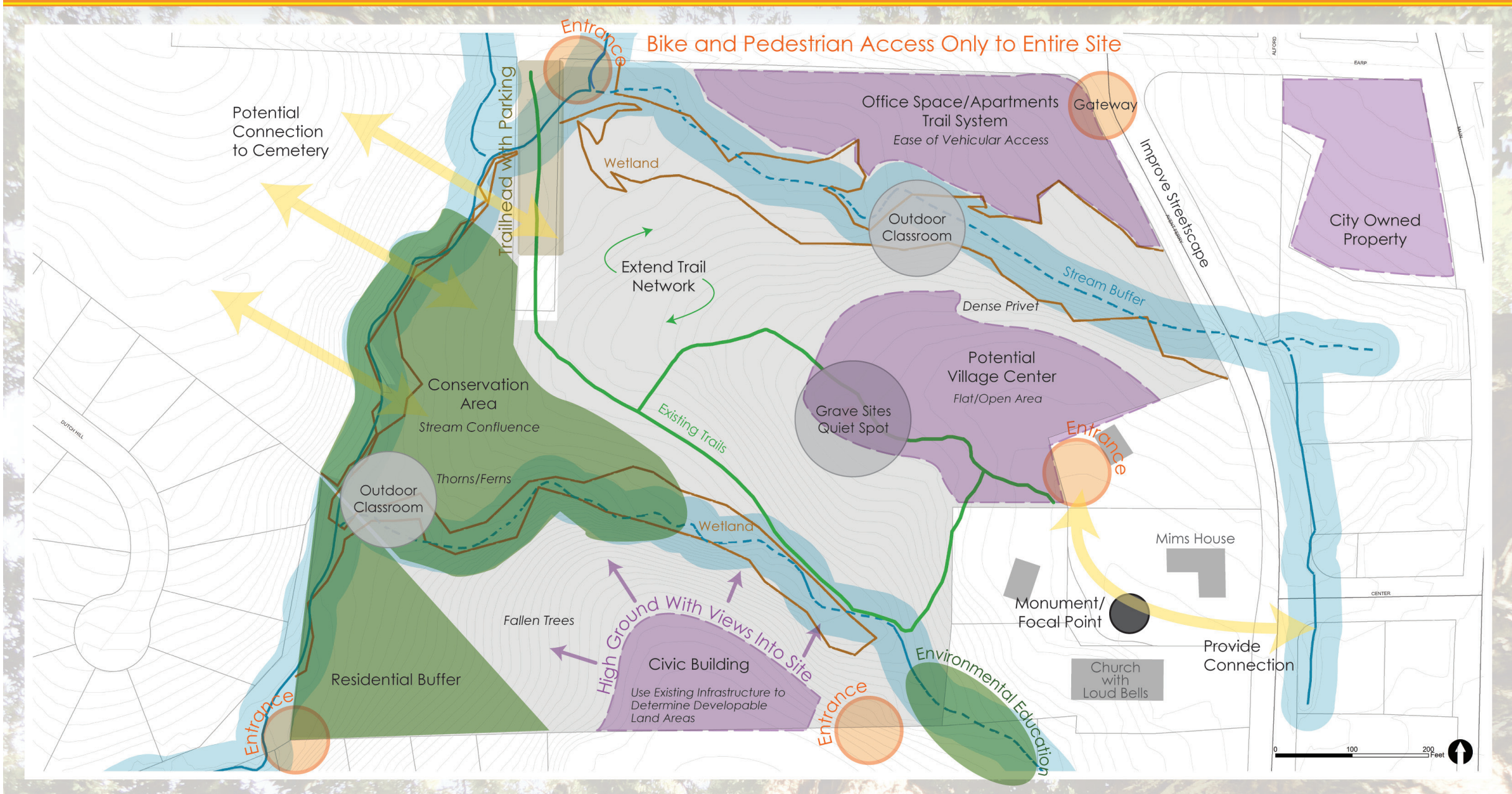


Figure 2-9: The Site Analysis Board is a result of the Steering Committee Muddy Boots Tour. This board was displayed at the first public open house workshop. General site characteristics are revealed along with potential opportunities at specific sites.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

3.0 OVERVIEW

One of the most effective methods for understanding what a community wants and needs is to present them with something to react to and provide opinions. Three distinct alternatives with variations in programming, form, architectural style, theme, and placement of focal points were created and presented to the public in Public Open House Workshop #2. Each concept reflected ideas generated throughout the public, Committee, and Town staff participation process. In addition to community input, the following were considered:

- How to balance creating a sense of place for people with ecologic preservation and conservation
- How to deliver a concept that can grow with the changing culture, development, and uses adjacent to the site and within Holly Springs
- How to create a place that will be regionally and locally treasured and attended through all four seasons
- How to provide access and multiple uses for a variety of age groups
- How to achieve the creation of elements and spaces that would be appropriately programmed and maintained by the Town

3.0A APPROACH TO SITE DESIGN

Appropriate design solutions incorporate history, previous plans and documentation review, site analysis, fieldwork, community involvement, and a flexible process. The goal of this planning process

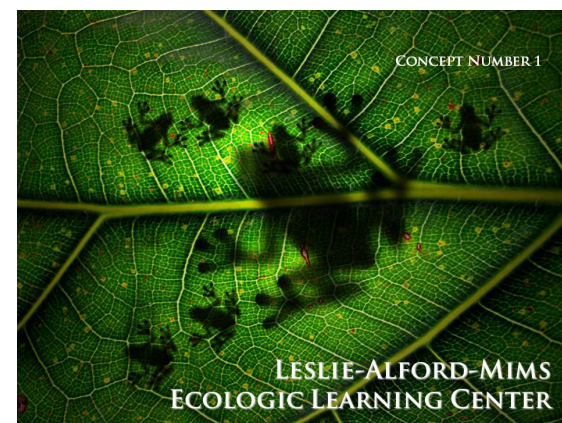
was to help the community arrive upon a solution well-suited for the time, place, culture, economy, and ecological factors on the site, within the surrounding community, and in the context of the region. The Town and Steering Committee helped guide the process and provided important feedback along the way.

3.0B ADHERING TO EXISTING GUIDELINES

Final design elements within the study area incorporate standards already established by existing design guidelines (where appropriate) including the Holly Springs Bicycle Plan, Holly Springs Pedestrian Plan, streetscape design guidelines, and other existing appropriate aesthetic standards. To preserve the historic integrity, enhance the overall image of the town, or improve upon existing standards, new guidelines were established within the plan for the Mims Property.

3.1 THREE ALTERNATIVES

CONCEPT NO. 1 – LESLIE-ALFORD-MIMS ECOLOGIC LEARNING CENTER



The Leslie-Alford-Mims Ecologic Learning Center focuses on education and ecologic awareness. Sensitivity to natural systems and the balance between human access and preservation will be present throughout a series of experiences on the site. With daily use as a goal, hard- and soft-surface trails will be gently integrated into the natural topography. To acknowledge the rich history of Holly Springs and this site, small treatments will be made to both the location of the spring as well as the cemetery. Brick and patterned concrete will provide accents in paths, walls, and small plazas.

A signature building, located across from the Cultural Center, is fronted with a large hardscape plaza with organic-shaped planting beds and shade trees. Native grasses, ground covers, and shrubs will provide seasonal color and interest to the space, which will function as a venue for the Holly Springs Farmers Market, concerts, art fairs, and any other public gatherings programmed by the Town.

The architecture of the Learning Center will be carefully designed to fit into the forest surroundings. With conservation in mind, materials, methods, and maintenance will fold into a LEED® Certified structure, harnessing the power of wind, solar, and other renewable energy sources. A loop driveway approaches the building from Ballentine Street. Shaded by the building's overhang, this driveway provides a drop-off area for elderly and physically challenged visitors, and protection from the weather for service vehicles. The building will be integrated into a natural ridge, appearing to be two stories from the south and three stories on the north facing side with a large wrap-around porch

serving as a viewing platform to the wooded site and stream below.

Programming for the building will mainly revolve around the importance of the natural systems found within forested areas, stream banks, wetlands, and the aquatic environment within the flow way of the stream. Habitat, water quality, soil composition, plant species, animal species, and their interactions will provide a foundation for visitors to the site and Learning Center. Potential audiences include families, school groups, and students—with integrated programming for local schools (elementary through higher education). One exciting feature of the building is an overnight facility where students of all ages, from towns near and far, could spend multiple days enhancing their knowledge of the forest and stream systems. An overnight trip would include guided tours and experiments within the site, as well as access to the sleeping quarters, bathroom facilities, full kitchen, and dining room. Structured programs with varying themes could be created to produce a portfolio of overnight adventures. These programs could be operated in conjunction with other Holly Springs Parks and Recreation amenities, including Bass Lake. Other rentable space, a café or restaurant, and gift shop could also be included within this signature LEED® Certified structure.

The rear porch of the building allows visitors to view the natural landscape of the property - overlooking the streams, trails, ridges, valleys, and a series of organically arranged, terraced planting beds and trails. The beds will serve as a study area for native planting and botanical education, creating a picturesque setting for a quiet stroll. A more

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES



Figure 3-1: Leslie-Alford-Mims Ecologic Learning Center Site Plan.

formally structured trail segment will navigate the steep slope from the planting bed area, west toward the main greenway alignment within the sewer easement located just west of the stream. Small pedestrian bridges will cross the stream at carefully selected locations to create a system of trails that residents can use daily to enhance their health routines.

Water quality and conservation will be a main focus of the building's interior and exterior - with

collection and filtering methods accompanied by interpretive and educational signage. A cistern will collect rainwater from the roof with an overflow valve distributing excess water volume through a series of naturally-planted terraces peppered with boulders and rocks. This area will provide seating, visual interest, and an educational avenue for the importance of stormwater cleansing – especially around stream and wetland areas.

On the west side of the property, tucked in between the confluence of two streams, a Stream Laboratory will house supplies for collecting water samples, small aquatic life, soil, and other materials from the site. Here, classes will run tests on samples and explore materials using microscopes. The patio and seating will serve as an outdoor classroom or public space for picnicking, pausing, and meeting.

The northeast corner of the site is treated as a welcome center and entrance to the site, capturing visitors who park along Earp Street. Bicycle parking, a site map, an information kiosk, and carefully selected plantings will welcome visitors to the site and hint at the educational experience beyond the densely forested path ahead.

To collect, convey, and filter stormwater from the downtown area, a biofiltration system, similar to the large system adjacent to the Learning Center, will be constructed along Avent Ferry Road where the culvert passes underneath the road. This system will clean stormwater before it reaches the natural flow of the stream that flows east to west, located on the northern end of the site.

As the Mims House is an important historic connection to the site, entrance signs will be placed near the driveway leading to Holly Springs United Methodist Church and 919 Marketing. A delicate treatment of one-way vehicular circulation, coupled with a raised, brick plaza, will alert motorists to this pedestrian-dominated area. The plaza can be blocked off for special events hosted by the Town, Church, 919 Marketing, or Mims House. This brick path will meander through the forest to reveal a small brick plaza surrounding the existing grave sites. Benches, wrought iron fencing, large shade trees, and a formal layout contribute to the quiet, reflective properties of this plaza.

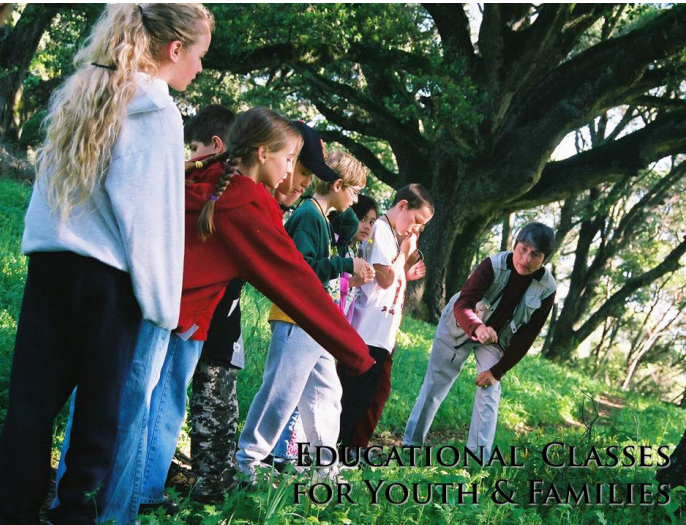
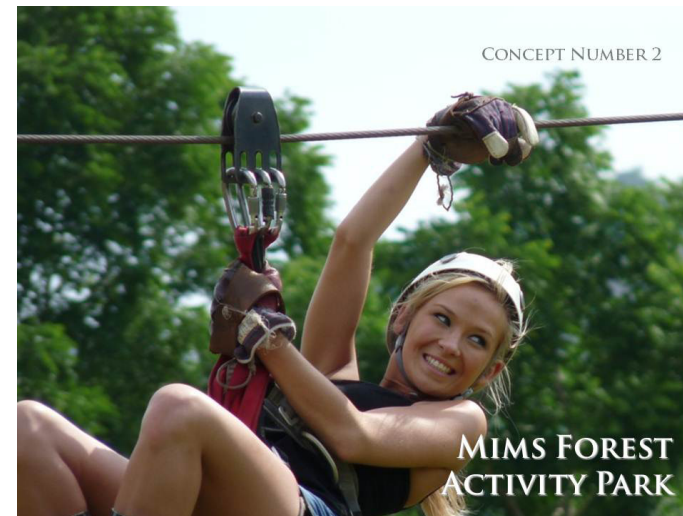


Figure 1-14: Compilation of slides shown at Public Open House for concept one.

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES



CONCEPT NO. 2 – MIMS FOREST ACTIVITY PARK



Mims Forest Activity Park is a highly-programmed, revenue-generating hub of community connections. The main center of activity is focused near the Cultural Center. A large turf area hosts a variety of events, including the Farmers Market. This structural turf can withstand the weight of trucks, staging materials, and other elements required for community gatherings. Situated on the highest point of the site, the turf lawn becomes an overlook, with forested vistas and glimpses into other activity within the site. Built out over the natural ridge, the turf overlook transitions into a rock climbing wall with areas suited for varying levels of experience including young children, beginners, intermediate climbers, and those advanced climbers seeking a challenge.

To minimize the impact to the forest and streams, a raised boardwalk transfers users from the at-grade turf to a series of tree houses constructed within the forest canopy. The nucleus of adventure is located inside the forest, starting with the tree houses. Manned by the Holly Springs Parks and Recreation Staff, this main tree house will be the storage center for all ropes, carabineers, harnesses, and personal guides of adventure. A

starting platform for a series of zip lines is located just outside the main tree house flanked by two smaller houses for those who wish to observe or enjoy dining in these two tree-top cafes.

Via soft surface trail, paved greenway, or zip line, visitors will arrive at another station. Here, a rubberized surface will host a children's play area with naturalized structures for climbing, swinging, and fostering imaginative play. A second set of tree houses provide restrooms and the second 'base camp' for those wishing to partake in body and mind challenges. Tucked in the forest, a ropes course and physical obstacle course are the perfect settings for a weekend adventure or corporate retreat. From low structures perfect for youth to more challenging heights, individuals and groups can test their strength and agility in the natural, forested setting.

A main greenway along the sewer easement to the west of the property will connect to the Activity Park in key locations. In addition to a system of trails throughout the site, daily users can extend their cardio conditioning on the cemetery loop trail. A challenging, steep slope will work the lower body, rewarding runners, walkers, and cyclists with a view of large, established trees sheltering historic gravestones.

Entering from the Mims House/Church/919 Marketing area, a densely wooded path leads visitors into the forest, revealing a large historic green. Interpretive signage encircles the green, telling the story of Holly Springs and highlighting the founding families who walked the woods in the past. Continuing with the theme of low impact, an amphitheater and event space is integrated into the natural slope. Stone surfaces give way to terraces of low plantings, creating seating for concert goers, families watching school plays, and proud parents at graduation ceremonies.

A short walk toward the stream on the south end of the forest leads to an outdoor class room at the site of the spring. Here, interpretive signage

Figure 1-14: Compilation of slides shown at Public Open House for concept one.

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES



Figure 3-2: Mims Forest Adventure Park Site Plan.

and seating areas will allow users of all abilities to enjoy a moment of pause in this hub of activity. Stormwater throughout the site will be artfully conveyed to concrete pools interspersed with vegetation. Each vegetated layer will slow and cleanse rainwater and runoff before entering the sensitive stream environment.

The rather flat, northeast corner of the site features a loop trail perfect for seniors and young families seeking a short distance trail. Vegetated beds will identify plants by botanical name and serve as a learning opportunity as well as a beautiful setting to stroll, meet friends, or read a book while enjoying the peaceful forest.



POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURE FOR TREE HOUSES



ROPE COURSE FOR ADULTS AND TEAM BUILDING RETREATS



LEVELS OF ADVENTURE FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN



ROPE COURSE FOR CHILDREN



POTENTIAL ARCHITECTURE FOR TREE HOUSES



CANOPY HAMMOCKS

Figure 1-16: Compilation of slides shown at Public Open House for concept two.

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES



DETAIL OF CANOPY HAMMOCKS



GRASS AMPHITHEATER



INTEGRATE PLAYGROUND WITH NATURAL SETTING



STROLLING PATH WITH BOTANIC LABELS



PROVIDE PLAY FOR ALL AGES



BIOFILTRATION: STEPPED POOLS AND VEGETATED TERRACES

CONCEPT NO. 3 – HOLLY SPRINGS VILLAGE GREEN



Holly Springs Village Green focuses on connecting with downtown, promoting a sense of community, and establishing the feeling of a quaint, historic village. Moving throughout the site, visitors will feel as if they are enveloped in an old town – with a modern twist. Using the Civil War Monument as a focal point, a brick plaza, an allée of large trees, a grass plaza, and a brick horseshoe promenade create a pedestrian-only space. By blocking vehicular access to this space with planted bollards, families will feel safe on the Village Green.

By aligning a Clubhouse adjacent to the 919 Marketing building, the grass plaza feels like a public square or front yard. As neighbors, 919 Marketing and the Clubhouse provide an old town feel with wrought iron fences, pergolas, and dense vegetation. A small monument on the brick horseshoe promenade creates an axis from the existing Civil War Monument. Stepping stones embedded in the lawn provide access to a quiet, contemplative area surrounding the grave sites. Interpretive signage along the horseshoe promenade and within the cemetery will tell the story of the Town and the families who lived on this estate.

The Town Clubhouse will mimic the architectural style of the Mims House with large, grand wrap-around porches and white columns, welcoming visitors into a multipurpose space. A café will be placed in the clubhouse with a residential feel. Diners will enjoy comfortable seating inside or on the porch, where they can partake in a business lunch or enjoy sipping wine with a group of friends. The Town will also rent space within the Clubhouse, or the entire Clubhouse for events of varying sizes. Visitors can rent items for use on the grass plaza or Great Lawn, including bocce, croquet, and a variety of other supplies for enjoying open green space. Within the Clubhouse, small rental spaces will be available for shops and local artists to display and sell their wares.

The grass plaza can also house the Holly Springs Farmers Market. Bollards blocking vehicles from the brick plaza can be removed for loading and unloading trucks, tents, and supplies. A structural turf will support the weight of vehicles and event materials.

A key architectural structure pulls the space together, responding geometrically to the 919 Marketing building, the Mims House, and the existing Methodist Church structure. This angled building unites all existing buildings within the space, establishing a sense that the area was sensitively designed with all parties in mind. This structure can serve several purposes. The first option is for the town to own the building, creating an architectural structure similar to the Mims House - enhanced with small, modern details. This town-owned building could house restaurants, art studios, small shops, and small offices for local community members. The second option for this angled building is to become a modification to the Church's expansion. With this option, the architecture would reflect the classic lines and materials of the existing Church building. This concept also involves a small modification to the Church's sanctuary expansion plan providing a porte-cochère to drop off elderly parishioners,

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES



Figure 3-3: Holly Springs Village Green Site Plan.

small children, and those avoiding unpleasant weather. This building is slightly offset from the original building, creating a public plaza and integrating the Church into the village feel of the Town. Breezeways and covered passages could extend from each building to create seamless transitions.

A grand promenade bridge passes over the creek connecting this historic village space

to the cultural center and a grand park. Wide paths edged with formal plantings are reminiscent of a time when ladies would stroll with their escorts, protected from the sun by parasols. The formalized planting beds will be strategically integrated with modern amenities. A soft-surface playground area will complement children's programs at the Cultural Center and provide a haven of safe activity for all ages. A

large lawn will change with the seasons, acting as a splash pad in the heat of the summer and an ice rink during the holiday season. Central to this space is a kiosk for purchasing snacks and accommodating seasonal rentals. Two grand, stone stairs will descend from the high overlook of the park, leading visitors down soft surface trails or to the site of the springs, where they will find brick and stone walls, interpretive signage, and comfortable benches.

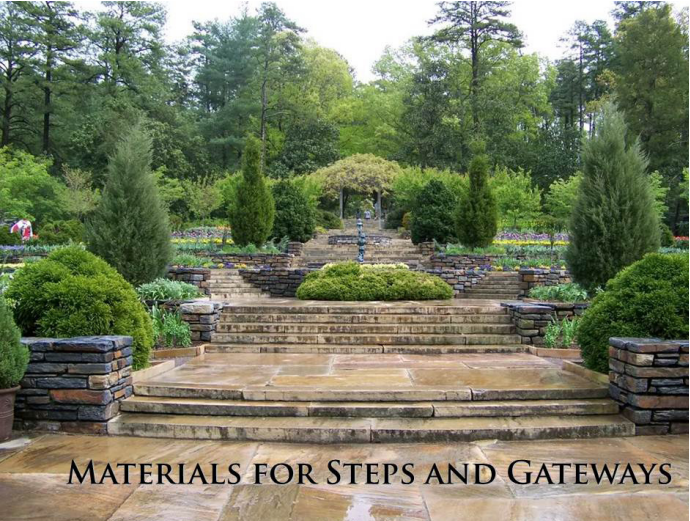
Stormwater treatment throughout the site will masquerade as beautiful, densely planted beds. These stone-rimmed areas will collect and filter stormwater from the downtown area, roof tops, and hard surface areas throughout the site. Tasteful, historic themed educational signs will provide details about the modern methods for protecting our precious water sources for years to come.



DESIGN ALTERNATIVES



ARBOR ALONG THE GLASS PLAZA



MATERIALS FOR STEPS AND GATEWAYS



SKATING IN THE GRAND PARK



GRAND PARK SIMILAR TO FEEL OF PULLEN PARK IN RALEIGH



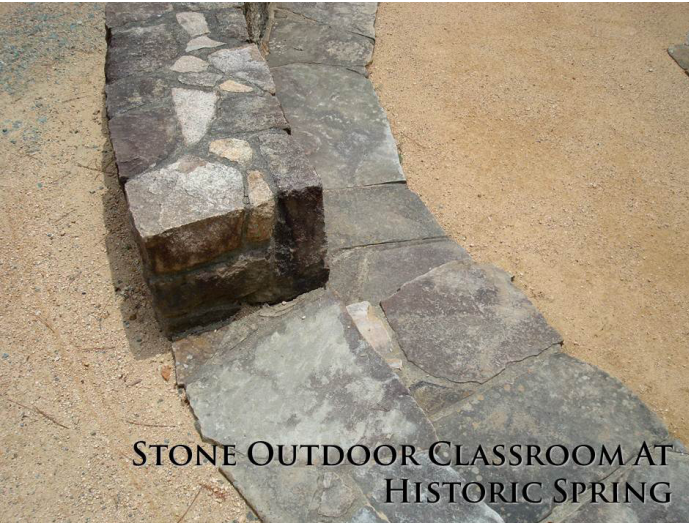
GATEWAY FEATURES AND FORMAL VEGETATION



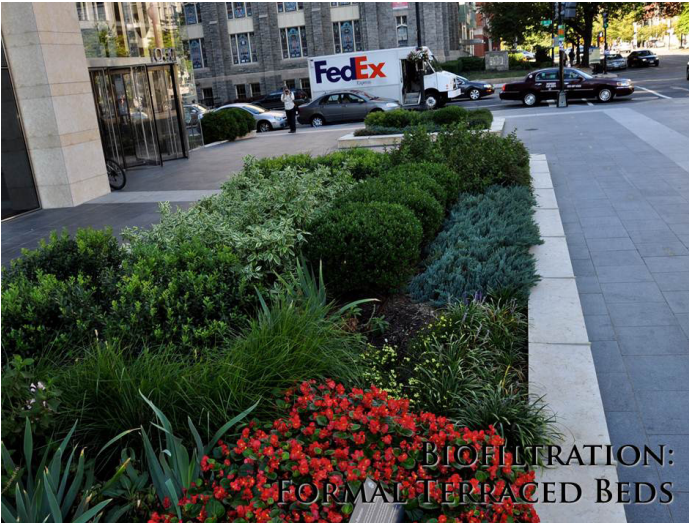
HEAVILY VEGETATED BIOFILTRATION SYSTEM



INNOVATIVE PLAYGROUND



STONE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AT HISTORIC SPRING



BIOFILTRATION: FORMAL TERRACED BEDS

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