



CROSS CREEK PARK

Washington County, Pennsylvania
December 2014



“The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

-Theodore Roosevelt

FINAL DRAFT PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2014

WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Courthouse Square
100 W. Beau Street
Suite 701
Washington, PA 15301

Phone: (724) 228-6811
Fax: (724) 250-4110

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CLIENT

Washington County Board of Commissioners

- Lawrence D. Maggi
- Diana Irey Vaughan
- Harlan G. Shober, Jr.

STAKEHOLDERS

Lisa Cessna, Executive Director, Washington County Planning Commission

Jeff Donahue, Superintendent of Recreation, Washington County Parks and Recreation

Kevin Garrison, Superintendent of Parks, Washington County Parks and Recreation

Sherri Taddeo, Parks Programmer

Lisa Taylor, Parks Programmer

The People of Washington County

MASTER PLANNING TEAM

Pat Gallagher, MBA, Principal in Charge, GAI Consultants

David Gilmore, RLA, Landscape Architecture Group Manager, GAI Consultants

Ryan Seacrist, RLA, Sr. Landscape Architect, GAI Consultants

Jayson Livingston, RLA, Sr. Landscape Architect, GAI Consultants

Jacob Burns, Land Specialist, GAI Consultants

Neelay Bhatt, Vice President, PROS Consulting

Sarah Durham, Planner, PROS Consulting

Andrew Knight, RLA, Sr. Landscape Architect, MKSK



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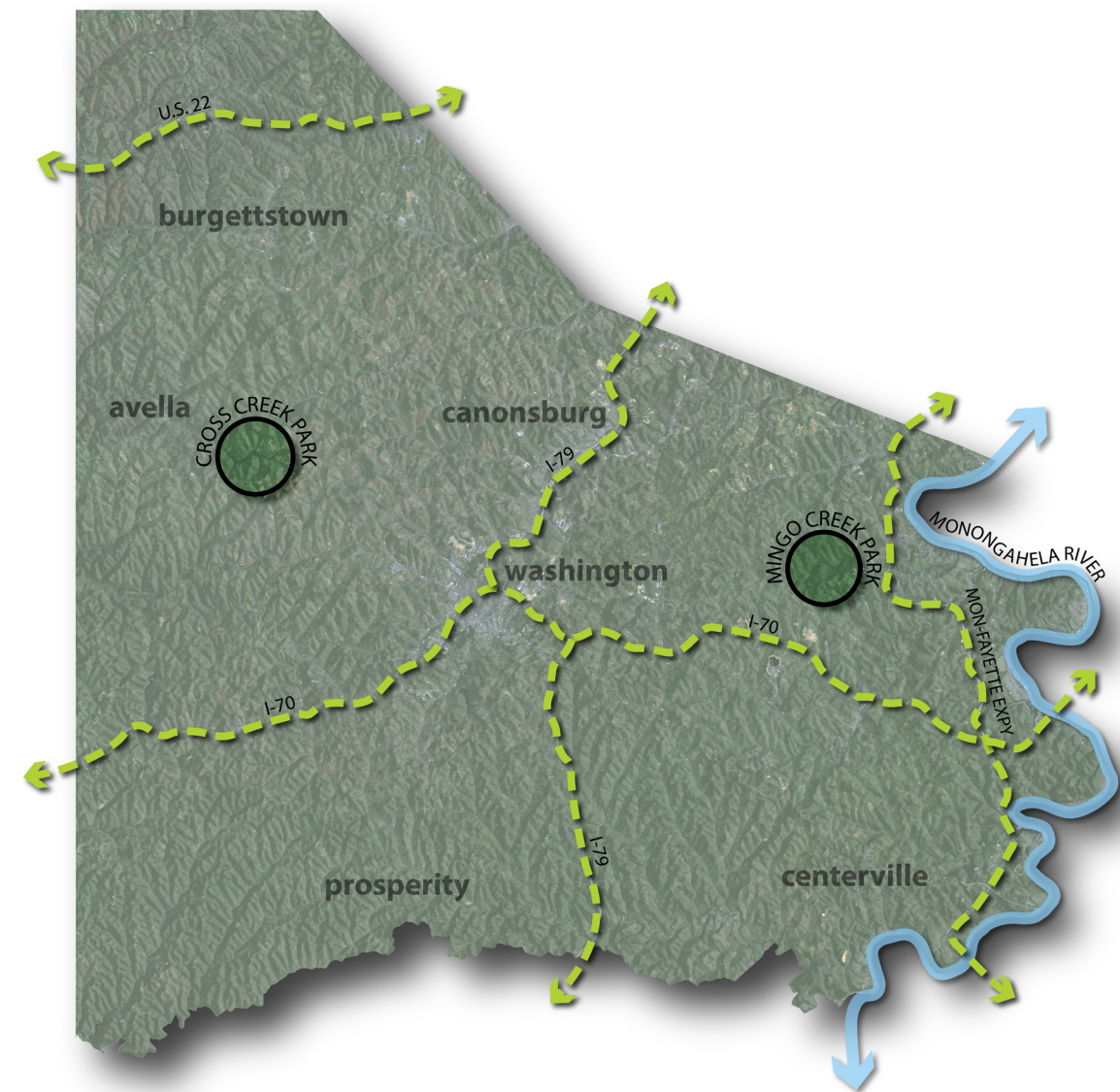
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CHAPTER ONE | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This master plan report provides a comprehensive summary of a ten (10) month planning and design process which utilized community engagement, inventory and analysis of existing conditions, review of existing programs and facilities, development of planning and design goals, and exploration of alternative concepts for a variety of spaces and destinations throughout the park. This master plan serves as a vision for the community of Washington County to expand their open space and recreation offerings for a unique and world class park, fostering community interaction between nature and people, and the development of a sustainable Washington County: **Socially, Environmentally, and Culturally.**

The ideas in this report establish a comprehensive series of physical recommendations in support of ecology, history, programs/events, activities, and behaviors that echo the goals and objectives developed by the project team, stakeholders, and the community. The well-planned design and management of the park will further the goal of providing a community park with regional appeal, where spending an hour or a day at the park is a rewarding experience of opportunities for both individuals and groups engaging in expression, self-discovery, and recreation. It is also important to point out that all of the spaces within the park are intended to contribute to a sustainable environment honoring the legacy of the past while celebrating the future growth of the Washington County community. This renewed consciousness about rural park planning and design, and its impact on the health and wellness experience, will help create a dynamic and meaningful park signature for Washington County and the surrounding communities.



CHAPTER ONE | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNING & DESIGN PROCESS

Throughout the duration of the project, it is crucial that the design team abides by a process that, in the end, will provide validity and strength to any recommendations set forth. To achieve this, the design team utilizes the design process, which is a logical sequence of steps that guides the project from start to finish with checks and audits along the way. In between gaining a wealth of knowledge and information on the park and proposing final recommendations, the design team will develop concepts and seek feedback from the public and stakeholder groups. While some concepts may make it through to finalization upon proposal, others may be rejected or revised numerous times before being included in the plan. The following list outlines and describes each step of the design process:

Grounding

An intensive period of interviews, observation, and research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the park site and its surroundings.

Exploration

Developing in words and concepts, broad planning principles and goals in response to community and waterfront issues and needs.

Recommendations

The formulation of physical planning and design concepts, tested against planning principles and goals, in meeting identified program and enhancement needs.

Finalization

The refinement and adoption of a comprehensive, unified set of ideas that comprise the master plan.

These steps were taken in concert with a master plan project team, which provided input and evaluation of each step throughout the planning and design process. The role and focus of the design team was to:

- a) Grow in knowledge and understanding of the site and the surrounding context, how it looks and how it works
- b) Review and help determine planning and design principles and goals for the development and re-development of the site
- c) Discover and explore new ideas and new ways of thinking about the site and the surrounding area
- d) Share results of the planning and design process with key stakeholders and the community
- e) Promote and be an advocate for the orderly planning, development, and re-development of the site.

Building upon the planning principles and goals of the Washington County Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Master Plan published in 2000, this master planning report has identified key park rules of form and overall development structure to allow both an understanding of the park as a total framework and of individual spaces within that framework. In understanding the park as a series natural landscapes and recreational resources, the master plan provides detailed recommendations for the enhancement and character of each space in achieving both quantity and quality goals for the park. The master plan identifies key goals and recommendations regarding land use, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and broad landscape and enhancement recommendations to be implemented over time. The following goals form the touchstone of the goals and recommendations within the document:

1. Parkland and Natural Systems - "Stay Green"

Provide seamless transition between ecology, community, and park development.

2. Pedestrian Connectivity

Provide an extensive pathway system that promotes connectivity to destinations within the park as well as those for the surrounding context. The park should offer a variety of interconnected paths that offer views of the park and the reservoir: paths that are fast + slow, wide + narrow, hard + soft, and sunlit + shaded.

3. Multiuse Circulation

Provide convenient and safe bicycle access throughout the park and along the waterfront edges. Link pathway network with existing pathways as well as future paths.

4. Festival Space

Provide space within park for civic gathering, concerts, and special events. This space should be centrally located or easily accessible from multiple directions.

5. Engage the Water

Provide a variety of opportunities for people to engage and view the reservoir corridor. The space should be designed to support fishing, boating, environmental education, health and wellness, and be constructed with materials that reflect the authentic character of the region and system of parks throughout the county.

6. Active Recreation

Provide a variety of recreation opportunities throughout the Cross Creek Park area. Recreation spaces should integrate with the surrounding landscape, using shade, landform, and native plantings to promote an inclusive and ageless destination for everyone.

CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

AREA OF STUDY

LOCATION

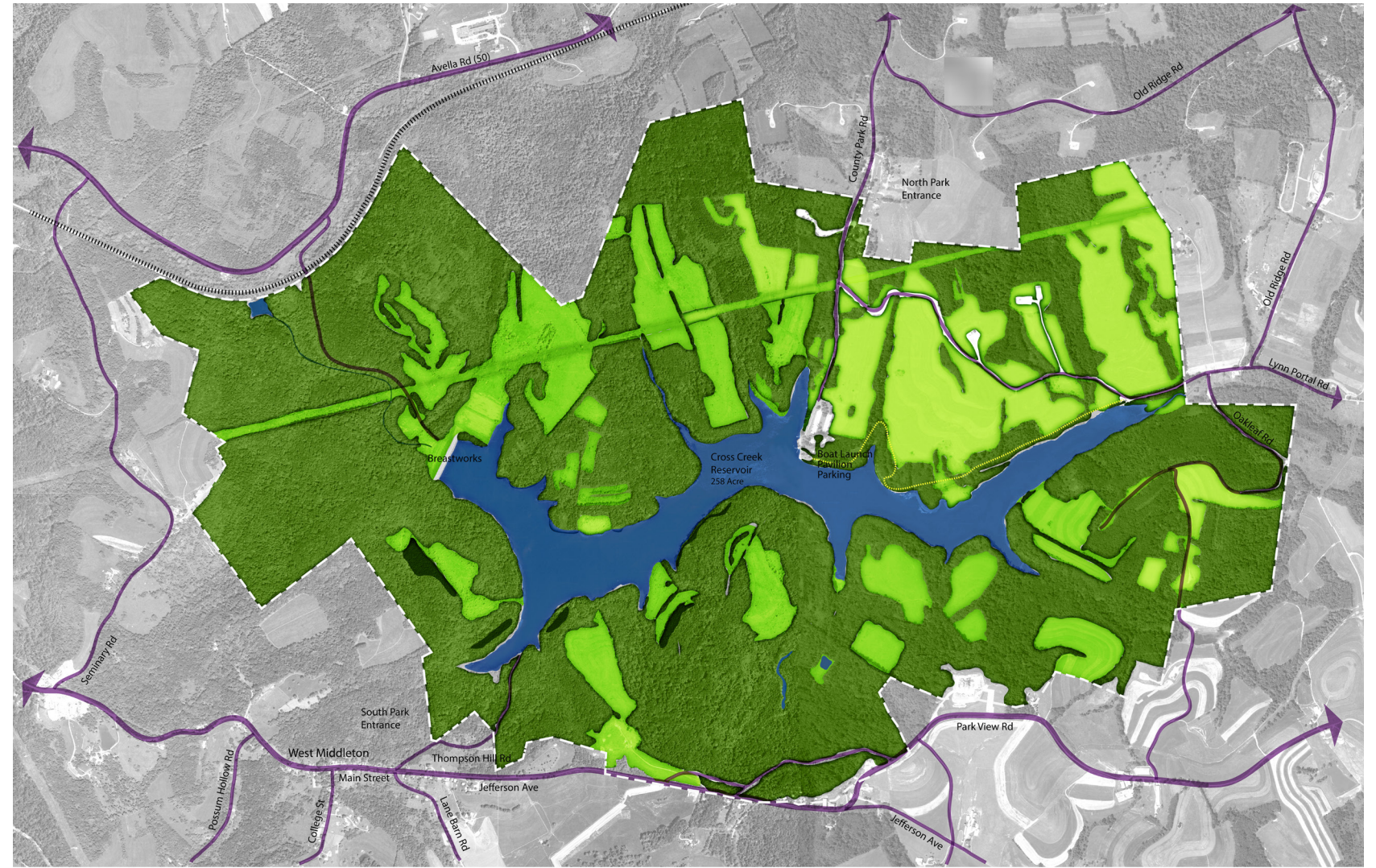
Nestled into the rolling topography of western Pennsylvania, Cross Creek Park is located nearly 15 miles northwest of downtown Washington, and immediately adjacent to the Borough of West Middleton and Cross Creek Township. Primary access to the park is from State Route 50 (Avella Road), but several potential and future access points exist from State Route 844 (Jefferson Avenue / Washington Pike) bordering the southern edge of the park.

Located nearly 35 miles from downtown Pittsburgh, Cross Creek Park also serves as a regional destination for Washington and the surrounding counties. Encompassing 2830 acres, this regional park reserve offers a variety of unique recreation opportunities, both active and passive.

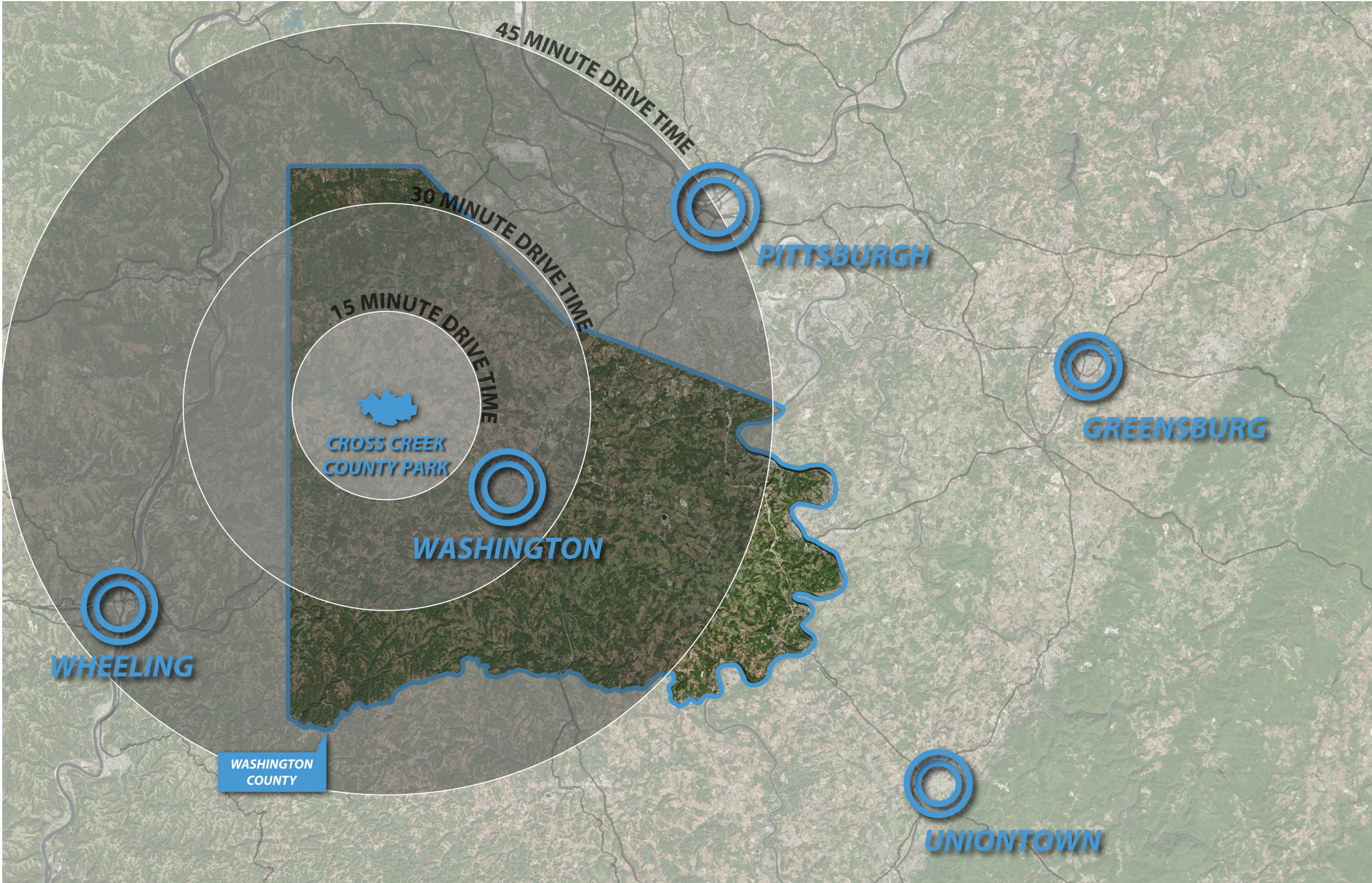
HISTORY

Established in 1967, the initial park land holdings totaled nearly 2,500 acres purchased by Washington County. The park expanded as land became available, and in the mid-1980's the construction of the Breastworks (Flood Control Dam) in the western end of the park resulted in the 258 acre Cross Creek Reservoir, immediately serving as the anchor to the park and effectively promoting Cross Creek Park as a regional fishing destination. Since the development of the reservoir, the park has been host to several fishing competitions and it consistently considered one of the top largemouth bass resources in Pennsylvania.

Recent history has seen an increase in gas drilling in Washington County and the surrounding area. Buried beneath the surface of much of Pennsylvania, New York and West Virginia, the sedimentary rock Marcellus Shale has been decomposing deep in the ground for millions of years, producing natural gas as a byproduct in the process. There are several drilling wells located within Cross Creek Park, altering the landscape both ecologically and economically. Lease agreements between the county and a drilling company have resulted in an economic boom for the area, specifically providing Washington County Parks and Recreation with revenue for future park improvements.



PROXIMITY MAP



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

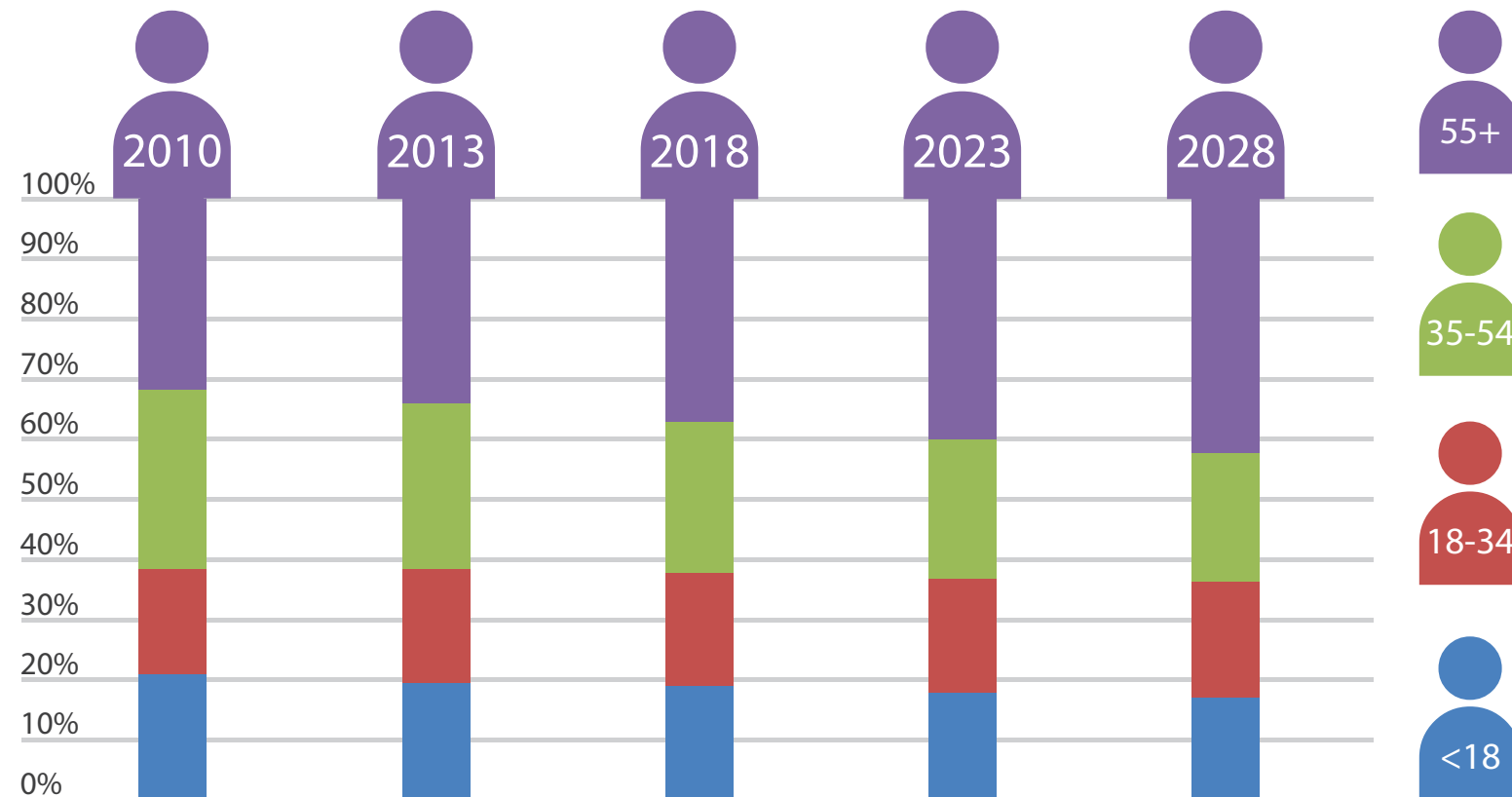
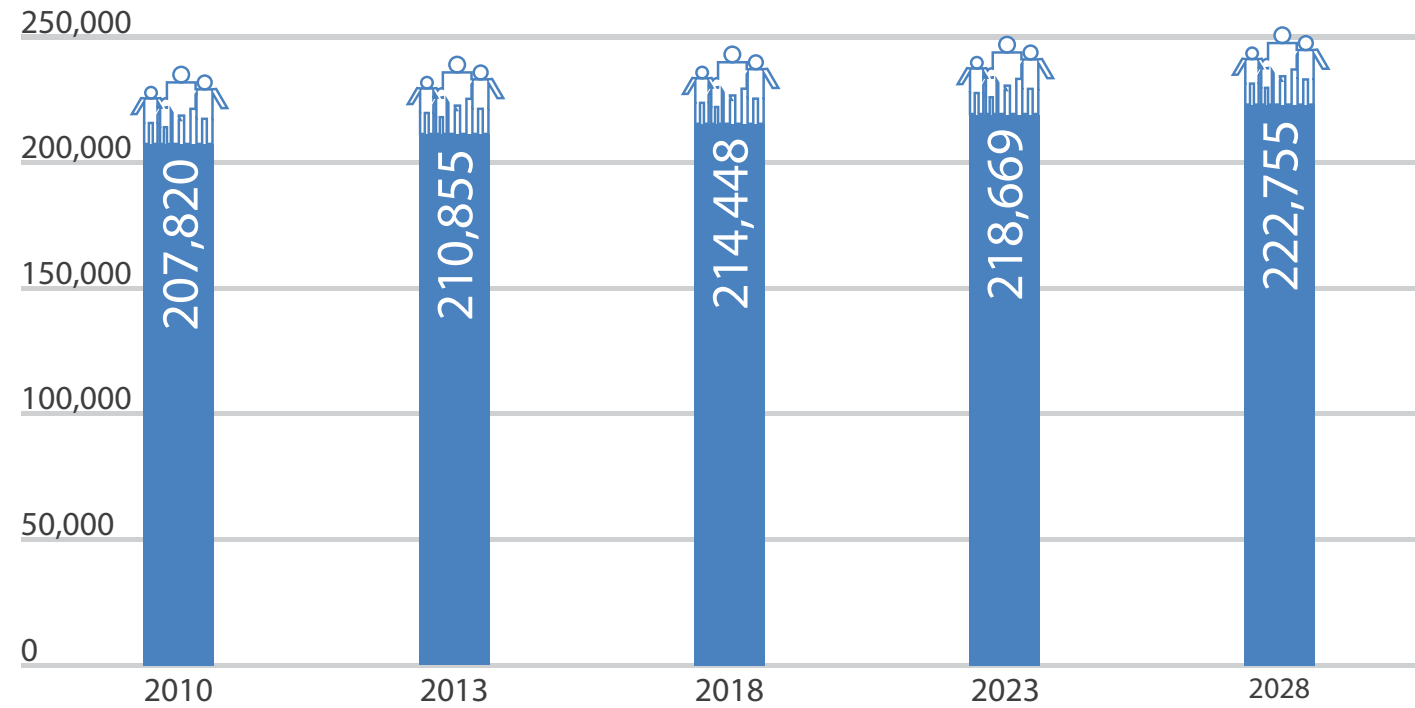
DEMOGRAPHICS

County Population

The County has witnessed a slight growth in recent years. From 2010 to 2013, the County's total population experienced an increase of 1.5%, which is slightly above national growth averages which were just over 1% annually. Projecting ahead, the total population of the target area is expected to slowly grow over the next 15 years. Based on predictions through 2028, the local population is expected to have approximately 222,755 residents living within 92,684 households.

Population by Age Segment

Evaluating the distribution by age segments, the County has a skewed balance between middle-aged and older adults compared to youth and young families. Over time, the population is projected to continue an aging trend. Based on the 2013 estimate, the 55+ segment will emerge as the largest age group, constituting 34.0% of the population. Future projections through 2028 show that each age segment, except the 55+ group, will undergo small, but steady, decreases in size as compared to the population as a whole. The 55+ group is expected to continue to gradually grow to represent approximately 43% of the population by 2028 which indicates that more than 2 out of every 5 individuals in Washington County will be over the age of 55. This is consistent with general national trends where the 55+ age group has been growing as a result of increased life expectancies and the baby boomer population entering that age group.



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Effective communication between the project team, Washington County parks and recreation staff, and various stakeholder groups was essential for this master plan study to develop in an organized manner and meet a wide range of concerns represented by various interests. Working with the local community was deemed a critical and vital component to this study. A comprehensive community engagement approach was planned to gain feedback from the following stakeholders as design research and design alternatives were explored.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Two workshops were conducted that incorporated a visioning component including activities based on audience involvement to actively engage them in the process. Topics included opportunities and constraints as well as sustainable design strategies. Alternatives were presented at a public meeting with opportunity for feedback. Surveys were used to facilitate input.

PARKS SURVEY AND WEBSITE

A website and survey were developed in order to help reach out and gather the input of county residents. On the website, residents were able to participate in an interactive survey. The results of the survey, which had close to 300 individual responses, were used in order to help guide the master planning process.

ADVISORY / TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Combined meetings with stakeholders were held to help keep participants informed of progress and to obtain feedback. The lines of communication were kept open throughout the study duration. These meeting included Washington County planning staff, parks and recreation staff, and the Washington County Board of Commissioners.



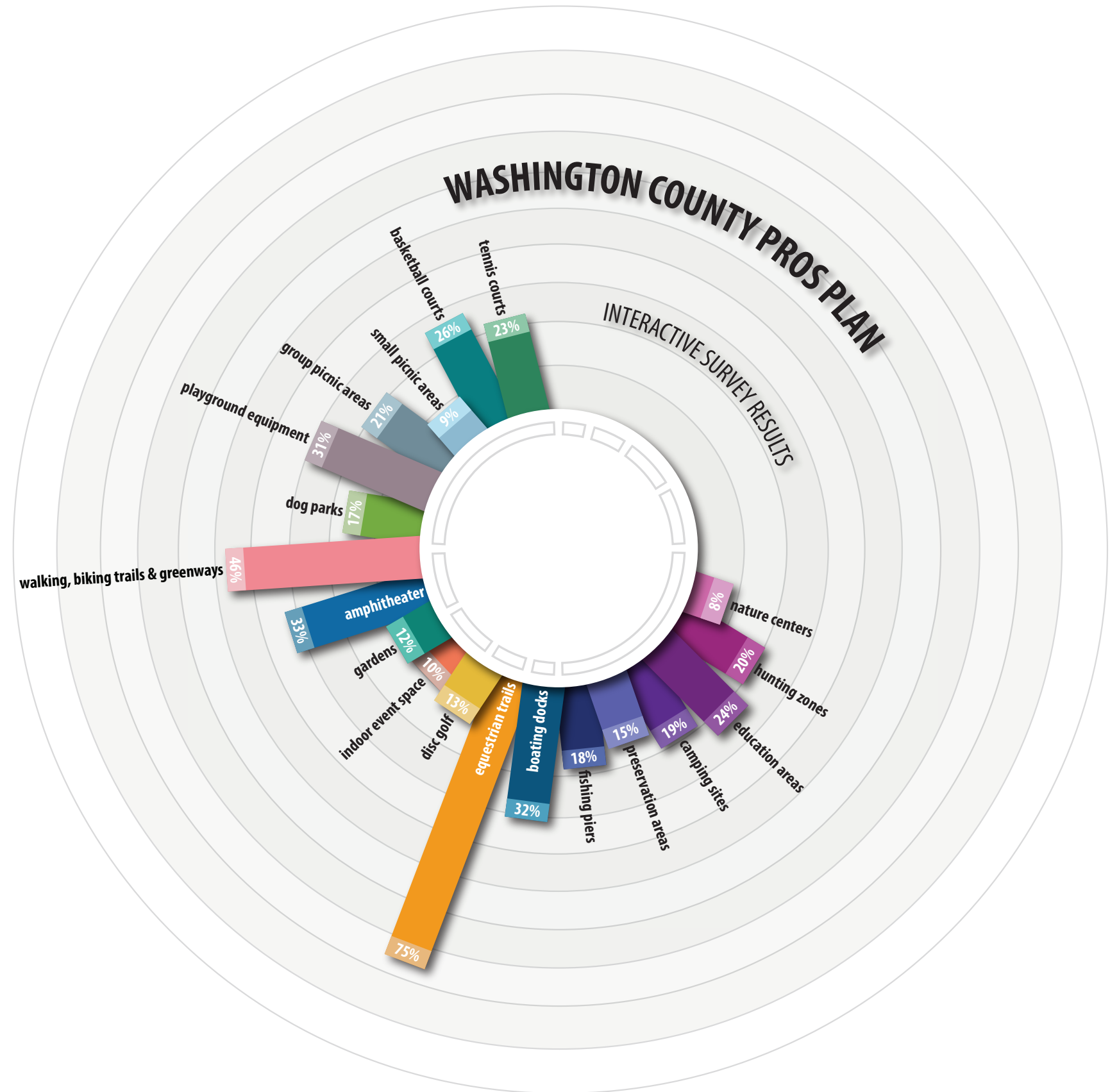
CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

SURVEY RESULTS: PARK AMENITIES

As part of the parks study, community members were asked to take part in an interactive survey in order to help determine which amenities and programs park users would like to see. The survey was open to the community throughout the life of the project and garnered close to 300 responses.

WHICH AMENITY IS YOUR TOP CHOICE?

Initially, community members were asked out of a provided list of amenities, which would be their top choice to be placed in Washington County Parks. The results, shown on the graph to the right, reflect the percentage of survey respondents who chose an amenity as their number one choice. The majority of respondents favored equestrian trails. Amenities such as walking and biking trails, an amphitheater, and boating docks were also chosen by many as a number one choice. Rounding out the survey were amenities such as nature centers, small picnic areas, and indoor event space.



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

SURVEY RESULTS: PARK PROGRAMS











WHICH PROGRAM IS YOUR TOP CHOICE?

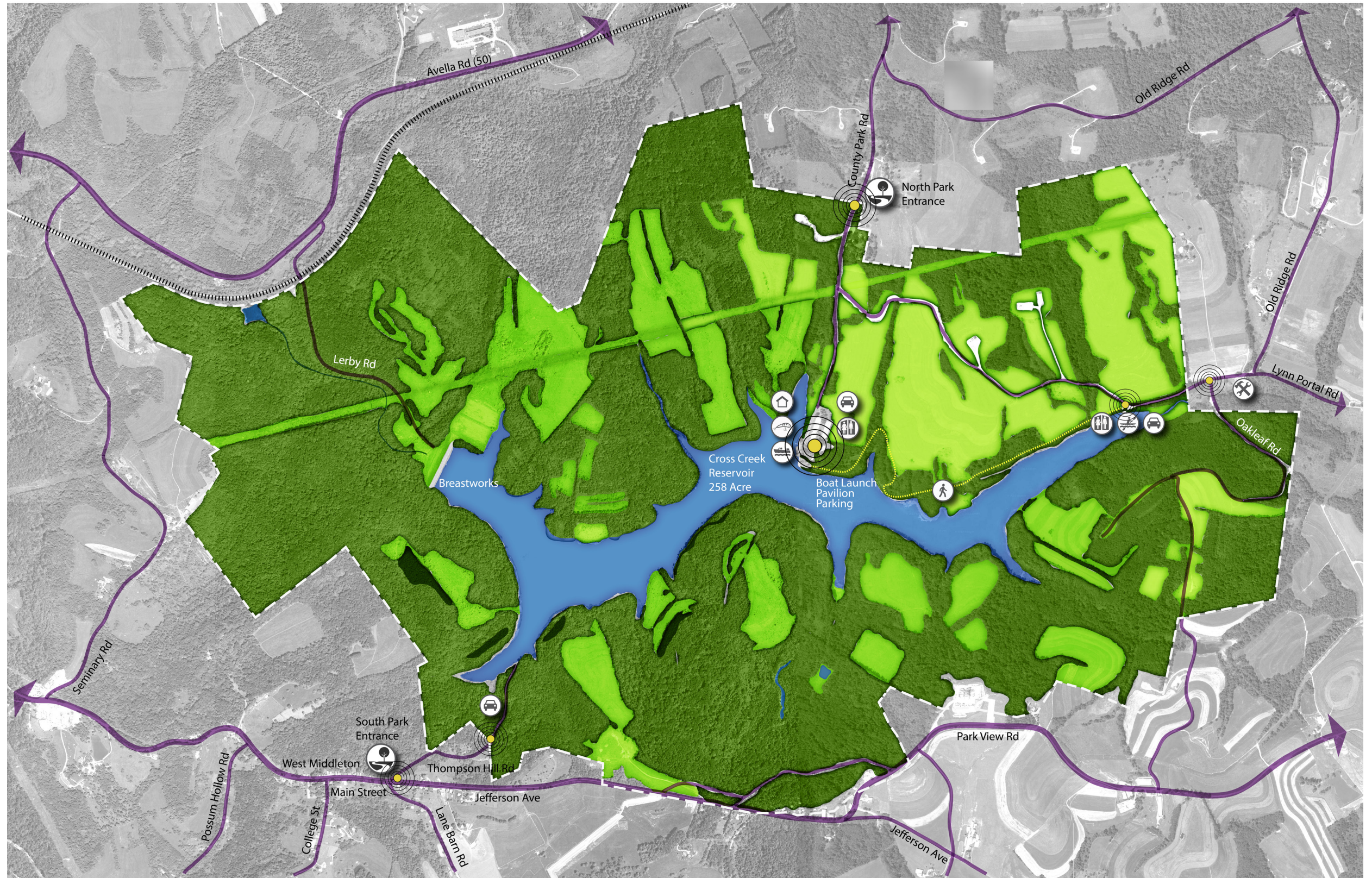
Community members were provided a list of potential, broad-based park activities or programs and asked to select their top choice that they would like to see the parks department offer to the public. The number one choice of the majority of respondents was youth summer camps. Programs such as home school outdoor classroom, outdoor skills/adventures, and nature and outdoor programs were also selected by many respondents as a top choice. Finally, environmental education, workshops, and 90 minute family oriented programs were among the least desired choices. Overall, the survey results will help guide Washington County Parks in determining which programs would be beneficial to incorporate into their existing park programming.



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

INVENTORY MAPPING

-  PARK ENTRANCE
-  PARK OFFICE
-  RESTROOM
-  PICNIC PAVILION
-  FISHING PIER
-  RECREATIONAL BOATING
-  MAINTENANCE
-  PARKING LOT
-  WALKING / HIKING TRAILS
-  POINT OF INTEREST



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



PARK ENTRANCE

OBSERVATIONS

- Entry announced at intersection of Avella Rd, Atlasburg Rd, and County Park Rd
- Bridge crosses creek immediately after intersection along County Park Rd
- County Park Rd winds through small commercial zone, residential, and parkland

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve entrance aesthetics: Improve/enhance signage visibility, add plant material
- Consider providing space for multimodal transportation (walkers/joggers, bicycles)



RESTROOMS

OBSERVATIONS

- Conveniently located adjacent to parking
- Restroom facilities only located in boat launch and Lynn Portal areas

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider plans for expansion as park usage increases
- Provide paved access to Lynn Portal restroom facility
- Place restrooms at Lerby Road access



PARKING

OBSERVATIONS

- +/- 100 parking spaces (boat trailer and car parking)
- Accessible parking is accommodated
- Efficient access to boat ramp, playground, picnic shelter, and water's edge

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider providing shade for parking areas during peak use in summer months
- Where appropriate, implement sustainable stormwater management strategies to reduce runoff into Cross Creek Reservoir
- Provide paths for efficient and safe pedestrian circulation; reduce vehicle and pedestrian conflicts



PICNIC PAVILION

OBSERVATIONS

- High capacity pavilions adjacently located to parking and amenities
- Simple construction with picnic tables under canopy
- Grills and amenities recently updated or added
- New pavilion constructed with restrooms, drinking fountain, and ADA parking

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider additional picnic shelters throughout Cross Creek Park
- Vary shelter size and capacity throughout the park



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



PARK OFFICE

OBSERVATIONS

- Utilitarian and accessible
- Conveniently located adjacent to accessible parking and boat launch
- Signage and mapping located on exterior office wall

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider providing shade for parking areas during peak use in summer months
- Where appropriate, implement sustainable stormwater management strategies to reduce runoff into Cross Creek Reservoir
- Provide paths for efficient and safe pedestrian circulation: Reduce vehicle and pedestrian conflicts.



RECREATIONAL BOATING

OBSERVATIONS

- Convenient launch access to park entrance and parking area
- Accessible boat launch area
- Anti-slip surfacing recently added to docks and walkways

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider improved stabilization along banks of reservoir in dock area
- Removal of railroad ties and chain link fence in favor of paved observation area



SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

OBSERVATIONS

- Existing signage is simple and direct
- Materials are readily available and damaged signage repaired by park staff and maintenance
- Signage blends in with foreground and background

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider a unified aesthetic for all Washington County Parks
- Promote a consistent Family of Signs for all county parks
- Explore color alternatives to increase signage visibility while blending into the landscape



FISHING PIER

OBSERVATIONS

- Located conveniently adjacent to restrooms, parking, and boat launch
- Anti-slip surface and accessible routes provided
- Seating provided for park users

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider improved access to water
- Consider expanding boardwalk/dock fishing along bank of reservoir



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



WALKING & HIKING TRAILS

OBSERVATIONS

- Existing trails are paved in areas near the picnic pavilions and soft material (mulch/turf) along the edge of the reservoir

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider providing small shelters or seating areas along less rigorous trails for resting and as a destination for hikers
- Provide a trail rating system that can be incorporated into signage that will indicate the level of challenge that can be expected before navigating trails



PLAYGROUND

OBSERVATIONS

- Variety of catalogue play equipment
- Moderately accessible
- Close proximity to parking area, restrooms, and picnic pavilions
- Woodland setting
- Hardwood mulch safety surface

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Evaluate for inclusive play opportunities...play opportunities for all kids
- Evaluate fall zones and safety surfaces
- Evaluate for opportunities to include natural playground to create safe, accessible, age appropriate play areas



MAINTENANCE

OBSERVATIONS

- Located within the park grounds
- Relatively new facility

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider screening the maintenance facility from the park



CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Irreplaceable Park Assets

One of the greatest assets Cross Creek Park has to offer is its abundant natural beauty. From open fields to dense forest canopies and the ecotones that lie between, the park contains a variety of habitats that present a diverse potential of use areas. Perhaps the most notable natural characteristic of the park is Cross Creek Lake. This trait alone provides both opportunities and constraints that must be considered while recommending any development that may directly or indirectly effect the quality of the stream.

The photographs on this page represent only a small sample of the natural heritage found within Cross Creek Park. However, these examples capture and characterize the essence of the park and beg the importance of designing in a way that promotes the stewardship of such natural resources.

Scenic Shores



Varied Environments



Rolling Hills



Mountaintop Vista



Vast Lake



Meandering Trails



Picturesque Shelters



Diverse Recreation



Inviting Playgrounds



Accessible Water



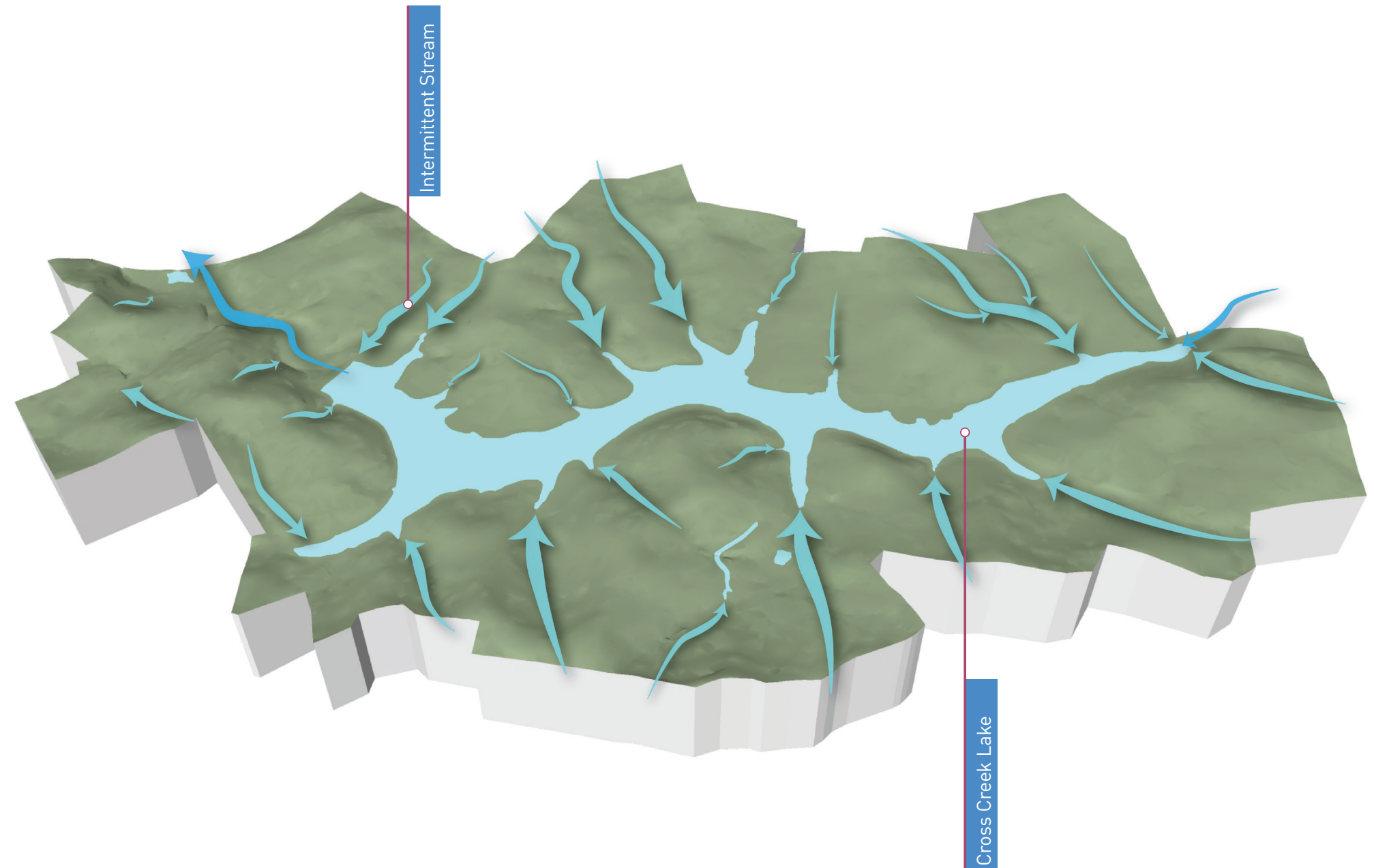
CHAPTER TWO | INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Site Hydrology

With Cross Creek Lake bisecting the park, a heightened level of sensitivity is necessary in considering development within the lakes riparian corridor. While it is important to protect the banks and areas immediately adjacent to the lake, it is equally paramount to consider the upland areas surrounding the riparian zone. Over development or poor stormwater management of the land surrounding a stream can be detrimental to a riparian habitat through increased runoff and/or the introduction of additional sediments and erosion.

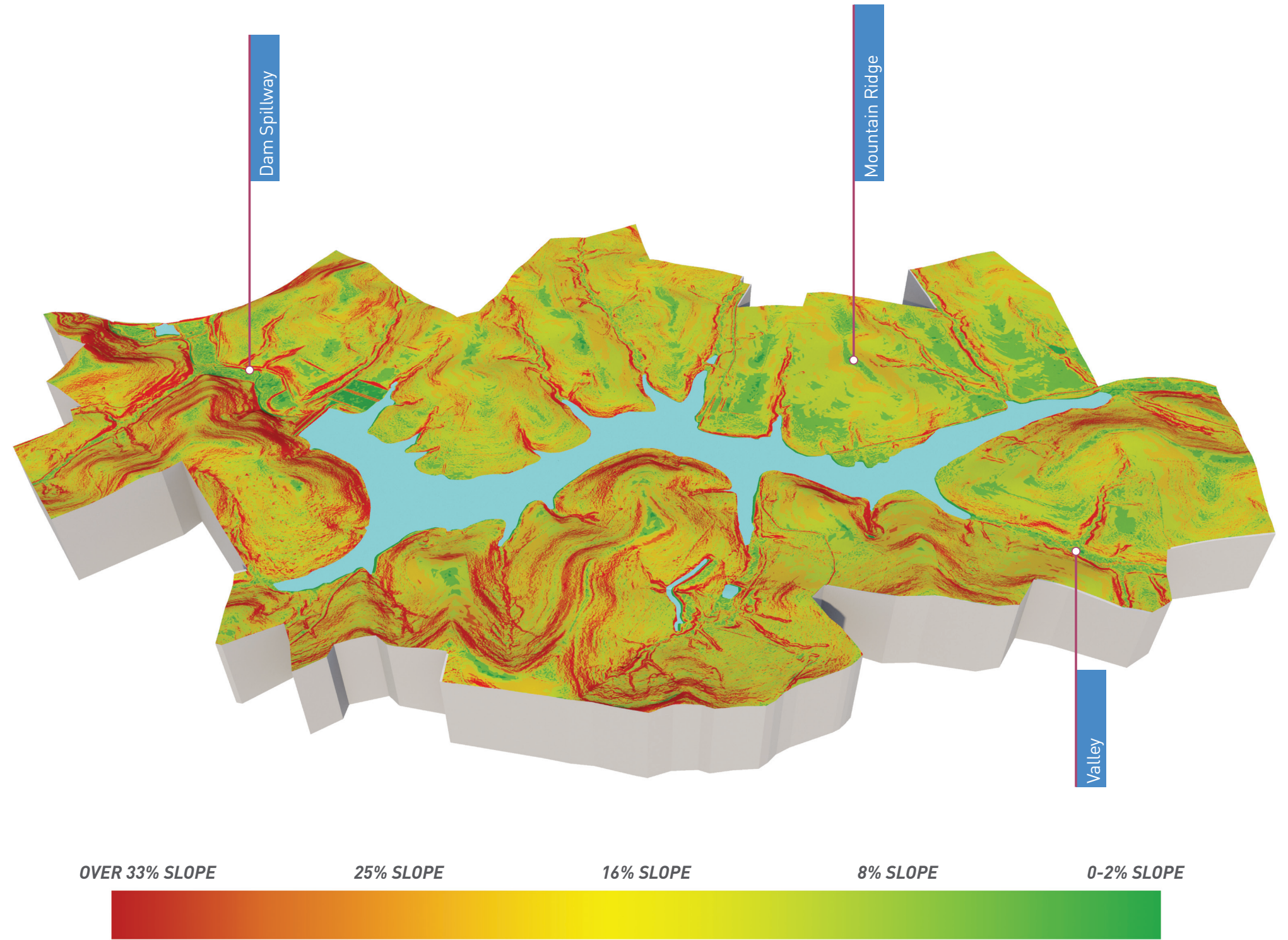
Although Cross Creek Lake is the largest and most obvious perennial body of water within the park, there are many small tributaries throughout the valley. Whether the streams are ephemeral streams that flow only during periods of precipitation or intermittent streams that flow only weeks or months at a time, they are all subject to the overall health of Cross Creek Lake. Any development that may impact these small tributaries should be considered in future planning.



Site Topography

Nestled within the Appalachian Plateau, Cross Creek Park consists of an undulating arrangement of valleys and ridges most of which fall into Cross Creek Lake. Although the majority of the topography can be classified anywhere from gentle slopes to steep terrain, the park does offer flat regions along the floodplains of Cross Creek Lake.

Any considerations for development along the lowland regions and floodplains should be made mindful of flood potential. On the other hand, due to the steep terrain of the upland areas, a level of sensitivity should be observed while planning to avoid erosion and slip hazards.



CHAPTER THREE | DESIGN MOTIVATION

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & BEST PRACTICE

GOALS: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to promote Cross Creek Park as a destination for water activities, recreation, and education
2. Increase connectivity and access to the park from the surrounding community, downtown Washington, and interstate
3. Provide access to current unused land within the park for the growing population of Washington County
4. Promote Cross Creek Park as a destination for all ages
5. Preserve and manage the existing natural resources throughout the park
6. Encourage environmental education opportunities for the surrounding community and local schools
7. Promote authenticity; share the unique stories and character of the park landscape and surrounding community

WHAT WAS SAID: STAKEHOLDER MEETING

1. Provide trails around the reservoir for both hiking and equestrian use
2. Encourage swimming as a potential active recreation opportunity
3. Promote environmental education within the park for all ages
4. Add more opportunities for picnic areas throughout the park
5. Conserve the natural resources throughout the park
6. Encourage camping as a future program opportunity
7. Provide safe and convenient access to existing park amenities and future park spaces

PRECEDENCE: BEST PRACTICE EXPLORATION

In order to provide a perspective on the potential for future character of the park, the planning and design team presented examples of a range of potential improvements. The variety of park improvement recommendations include the following topics:

1. Sport and Recreation
2. Circulation: Paths and Trails
3. Maintenance Facilities
4. Signage and Wayfinding
5. Playscape
6. Gateways and Entrances
7. Sustainable Parking Areas
8. Park Structures: Offices, Restrooms, Pavilions, Shelters
9. Recreational Boating

CHAPTER THREE | DESIGN MOTIVATION

BEST PRACTICE



SPORT

- Outdoor
- Passive & Active
- Health & Wellness
- Variety
- Water & Land
- Bird Watching



SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

- Integrated
- Attractive
- Communicate
- Educational
- Intuitive
- Legible



PATHS & TRAILS

- Variety
- Explore
- Discover
- Fast Paths
- Slow Paths
- Meander
- Direct
- Adventure
- Accessible



PLAYSCAPE

- Integrated
- Discovery
- Exploration
- Nature
- Safe
- Durable



MAINTENANCE

- Functional
- Accessible
- Convenient
- Attractive
- Flexible
- Durable
- Sustainable



CHAPTER THREE | DESIGN MOTIVATION

BEST PRACTICE



PARK ENTRANCE

- Legible
- Attractive
- Intuitive
- Functional
- Safe



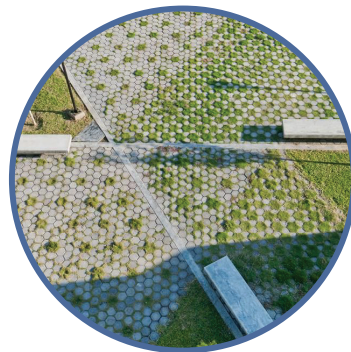
RESTROOMS

- Accessible
- Unique Identity for Cross Creek
- Regional and Local Materials
- Durable and Low Maintenance
- Safe



PARKING

- Accessible
- Convenient
- Efficient
- Safe
- Sustainable
- Attractive



PICNIC PAVILION

- Accessible
- Unique Identity for Cross Creek
- Regional and Local Materials
- Durable and Low Maintenance
- Variable Sizes
- Safe



PARK OFFICE

- Accessible
- Unique Identity for Cross Creek
- Regional and Local Materials
- Durable and Low Maintenance
- Safe



RECREATIONAL BOATING

- Accessible
- Unique Identity for Cross Creek
- Regional and Local Materials
- Durable and Low Maintenance
- Multiple recreation opportunities
- Safe



CHAPTER THREE | DESIGN MOTIVATION

Cross Creek Lake



Fishing Pier



Changing Terrain



Launch Area

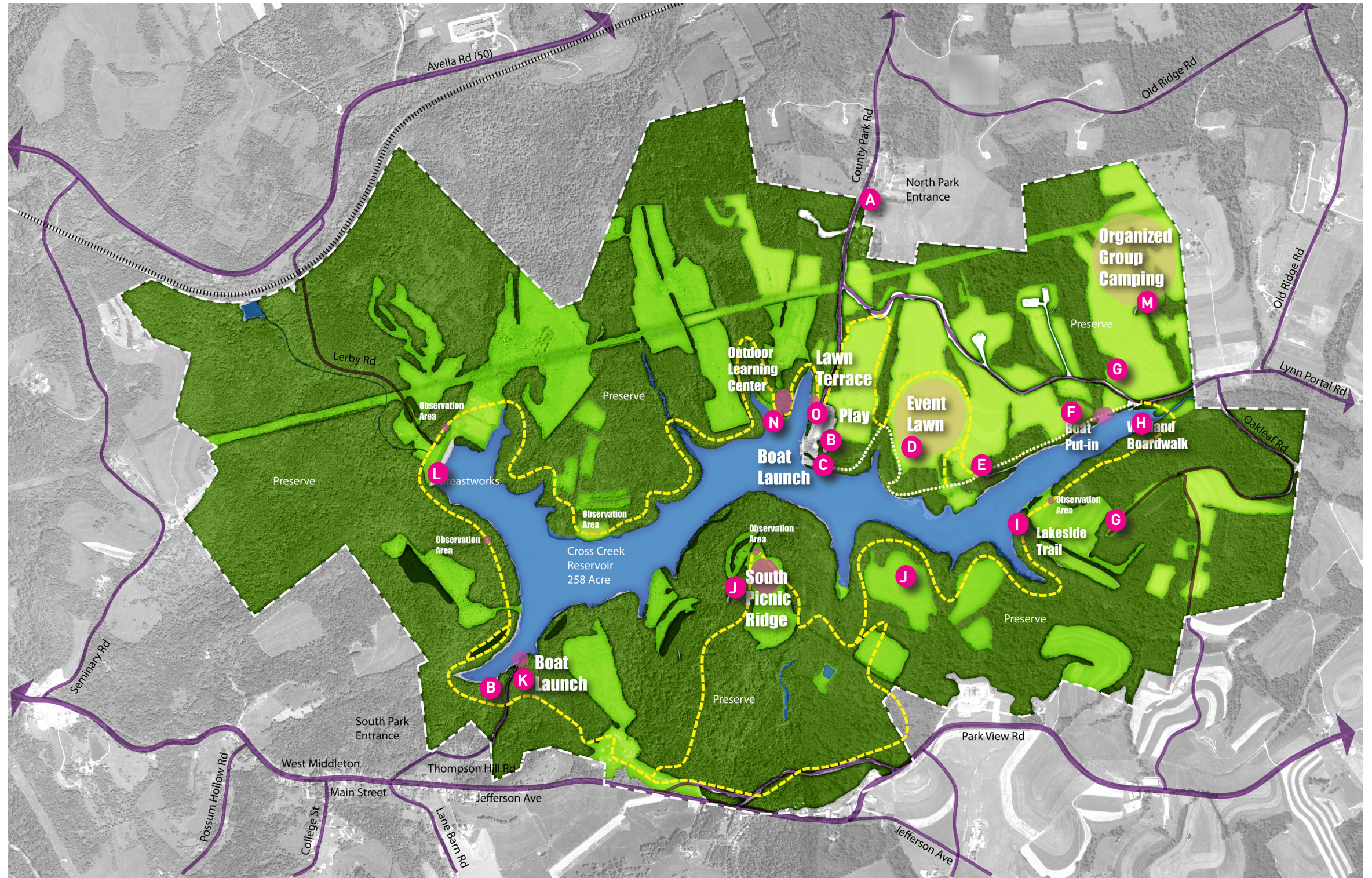


CHAPTER FOUR | MASTER PLAN

GENERAL PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGEND: PARTS OF THE WHOLE

- A. MAIN ENTRANCE / GATEWAY
- B. PARKING, SHELTER, PLAYGROUND
- C. BOAT LAUNCH
- D. EVENT LAWN
- E. LAKESIDE TRAIL
- F. BOAT PUT-IN AND PARKING AREA
- G. EQUESTRIAN TRAIL HEAD AND PARKING
- H. WETLAND AREA AND BOARDWALK
- I. LAKESIDE TRAIL AND FISHING
- J. PICNIC SHELTER, MEADOW, AND PARK OVERLOOK
- K. BOAT LAUNCH AND PARKING AREA
- L. BREASTWORKS (RESERVOIR DAM STRUCTURE)
- M. ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPING AREA
- N. OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER AND FISHING PIER
- O. LAWN TERRACE



ONGOING PROJECTS

Trail Maintenance

Trail maintenance is an ongoing chore that is required in order to provide a safe experience for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders. Also, special care should be taken to ensure trails do not become erosive and cause environmental issues such as slips and landslides.

Signage

As new amenities are added, park signage should be kept up to date. To ensure continuity and a sense of place, a catalog or family of signage should be developed and carried uniformly throughout the park.

Shelters and Facilities

Although park shelters and structures should be designed to be as low maintenance and durable as possible, regular maintenance and upgrades should be observed to insure the longevity of the facilities.

SHORT TERM

Lakeside Trail

Currently, formal access to most of Cross Creek Park is limited due to the lack of trails and access points. With the implementation of a lakeside trail that circumnavigates Cross Creek Lake, park visitors will gain access to more regions within the park. This project should be completed in the short term to allow access for future development throughout the park.

Boardwalk

The boardwalk structure will increase accessibility to the lake for park visitors of varying ages and mobility. As accessibility is an important factor in any public space, the boardwalk should be completed as a short term project and tied into the proposed lakeside trail.

Lawn Terrace

Implementation of the lawn terrace will add a passive attraction for park visitors. Development of the lawn terrace will not be a major undertaking and it will be highly visible along the main entrance drive to the park. For this reason, it should be a short term, catalytic project.

MID-TERM

South Picnic Ridge

After implementation of the lakeside trail and the Thompson Hill access road, the ridges on the south side of Cross Creek Park will become more accessible. Many of the upland areas on the south side of the park offer flat, open land that is ideal for picnic areas and shelters along with an outstanding view of the lake below.

Event Lawn

In order to provide opportunity for park and community events, one of the vast, open meadows within Cross Creek Park should be leveraged and transformed into a revenue generating event lawn.

Equestrian Trailheads

As the trail network in Cross Creek Park expands over time and equestrian trails become a feature within the park, establishment of equestrian trailheads will be necessary. This will encourage horseback riders to stay within areas that are permitted for equestrian use by providing necessary park amenities.

LONG TERM

Outdoor Learning Center

Implementation of the Outdoor Learning Center will provide a base for park sponsored educational programs. A long term goal is suggested for this facility with the reasoning that as park sponsored educational programs grow within Cross Creek Park, the apparent needs and requirements for the facility will be revealed over time.

Fishing Pier

An additional fishing pier will increase accessibility to the lake. However, due to the fact that Cross Creek Park currently offers a fishing pier in the location of the proposed lakeside boardwalk, the proposed fishing pier can be considered a long term goal.

Organized Group Camping

Unlike Mingo Creek Park, Cross Creek does not currently provide opportunity for organized groups, such as scout troops, to utilize the park for overnight camping events. As the need grows over time and interest from local groups increase, implementing an organized group campground should be considered.

CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

DISCOVERY COVE

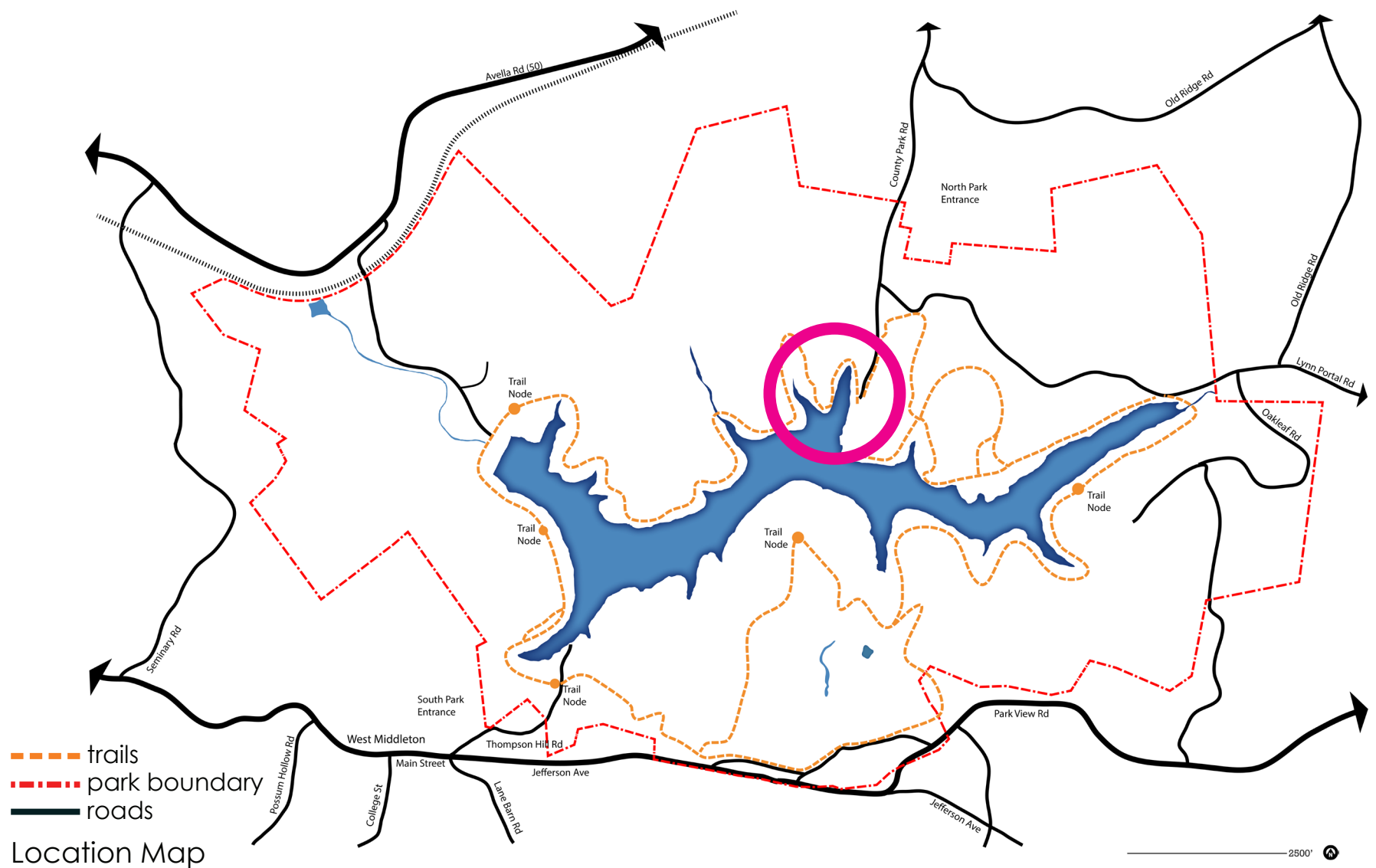
Discovery Cove

Education + Recreation + Community

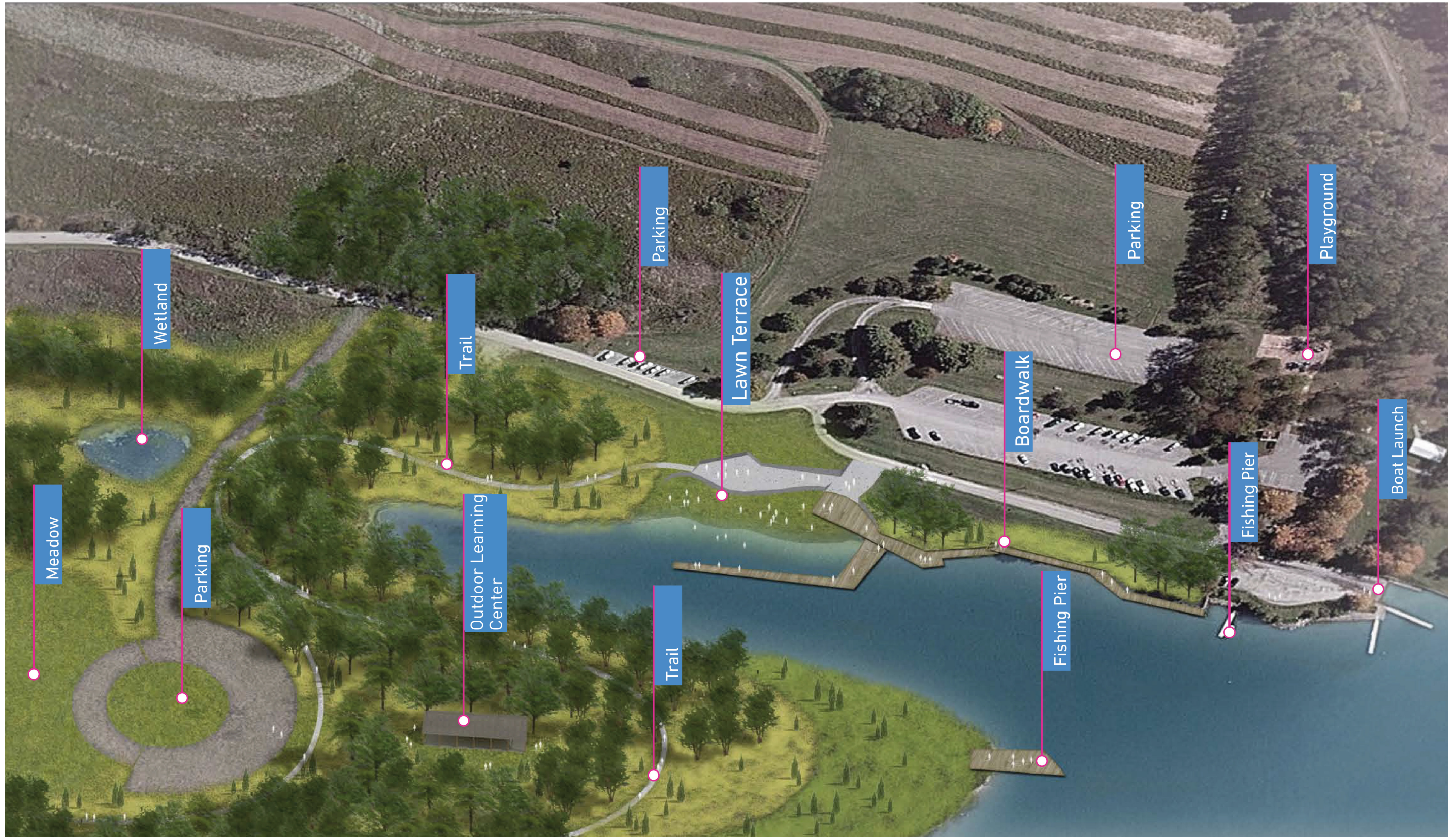
Positioned at the terminus of County Park Road, the northern entrance to Cross Creek Park, Discovery Cove is envisioned as both a community destination as well as a valuable ecological resource. Taking advantage of the existing parking and support amenities, the master plan recommends increasing opportunities for active recreation, performance, interaction with the water, play/exercise, and environmental education. The success of the existing boat ramp, playground, and pavilions has established this area of the park as a community asset, providing activities such as boating, fishing, picnicking, bird watching, and hiking. The master plan acknowledges the value of these existing amenities, and recommends the following destinations to increase participation, discovery, and education.

Features

- Lawn Terrace
- Boardwalk
- Fishing Piers
- Outdoor Learning Center
- Trails and Paths



DISCOVERY COVE RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

FISHING PIER & BOARDWALK

Fishing Pier and Boardwalk

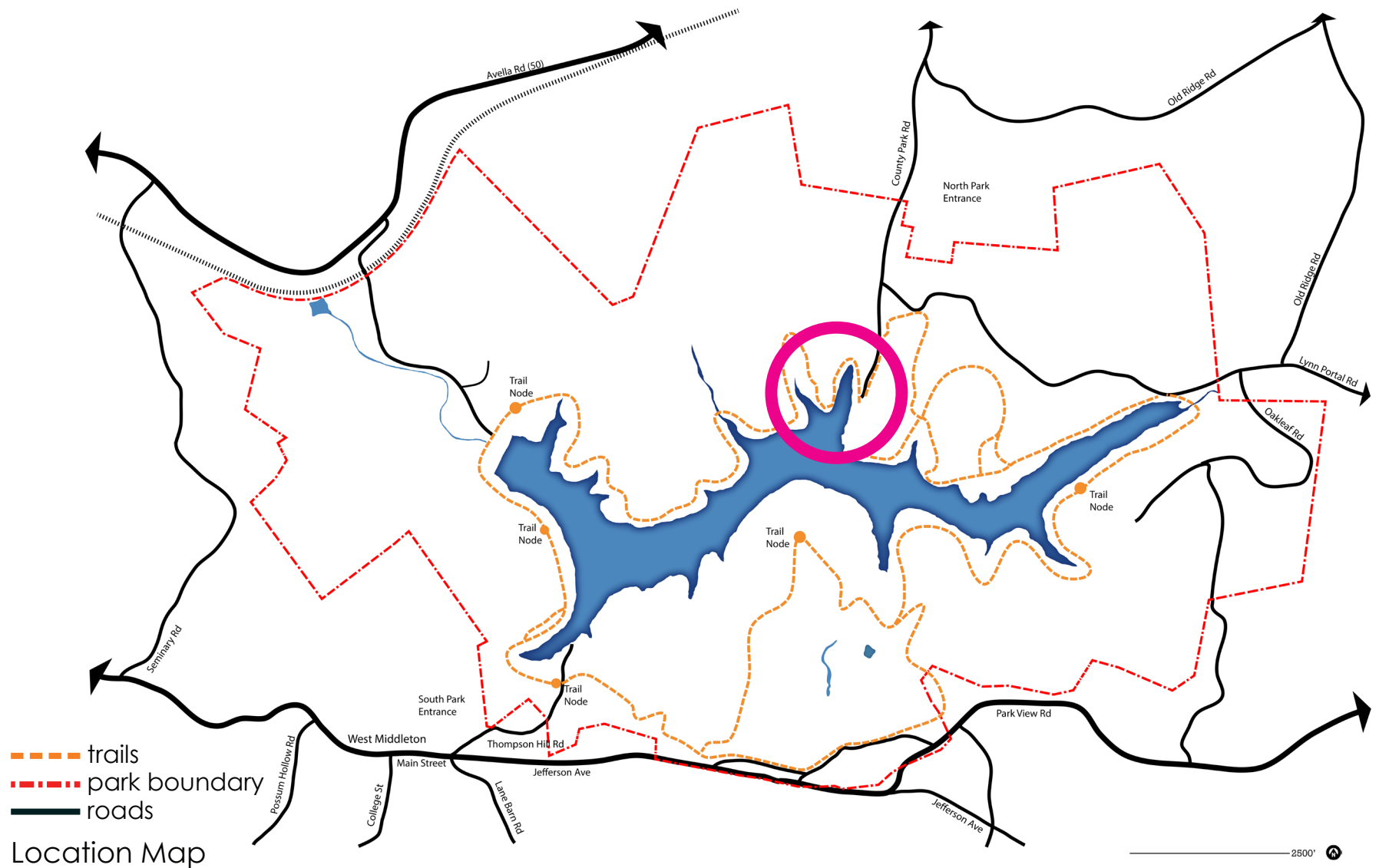
Relax + Observe + Interact

Cross Creek Reservoir is roughly 258 acres in size, establishing it as the largest body of water in Washington County. With a shoreline nearly 7.5 miles long, Cross Creek Reservoir offers a variety of conditions for park participants to engage and observe the water. Whether intimately exploring the riparian edge or viewing across the surface of the water to the distant shore, the park serves as an aperture for viewing and interaction with the reservoir. The master plan recommends increasing these opportunities throughout the park, woven together through a series of paths and trails to be explored and traversed throughout the seasons.

One of the most popular activities in the park currently is fishing, and the reservoir is specifically identified as one of the top 10 Bass Lakes in the State of Pennsylvania (*Game and Fish Magazine, October 2010*). The master plan envisions a variety of shoreline fishing opportunities, providing additional access points along the banks of the lake and expanding accessibility throughout the perimeter of the shoreline. A boardwalk along the eastern shore of Discovery Cove is also planned to provide family fishing opportunities as well as observation of the lake, riparian vegetation and wildlife. The master plan also recommends additional fishing piers for access to quieter areas of the shoreline.

Features

- Boardwalk along water's edge for views of reservoir, wildlife, and vegetation along riparian edge
- Built-in seating and fishing areas along edges of boardwalk
- Restoration of riparian edge along eastern bank of Discovery Cove
- Low impact lighting along boardwalk for safety and accessibility
- Interpretive and Educational Signage integrated into boardwalk



Location Map

FISHING PIER & BOARDWALK RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

LAWN TERRACE & PICNIC AREA

Lawn Terrace and Picnic Area

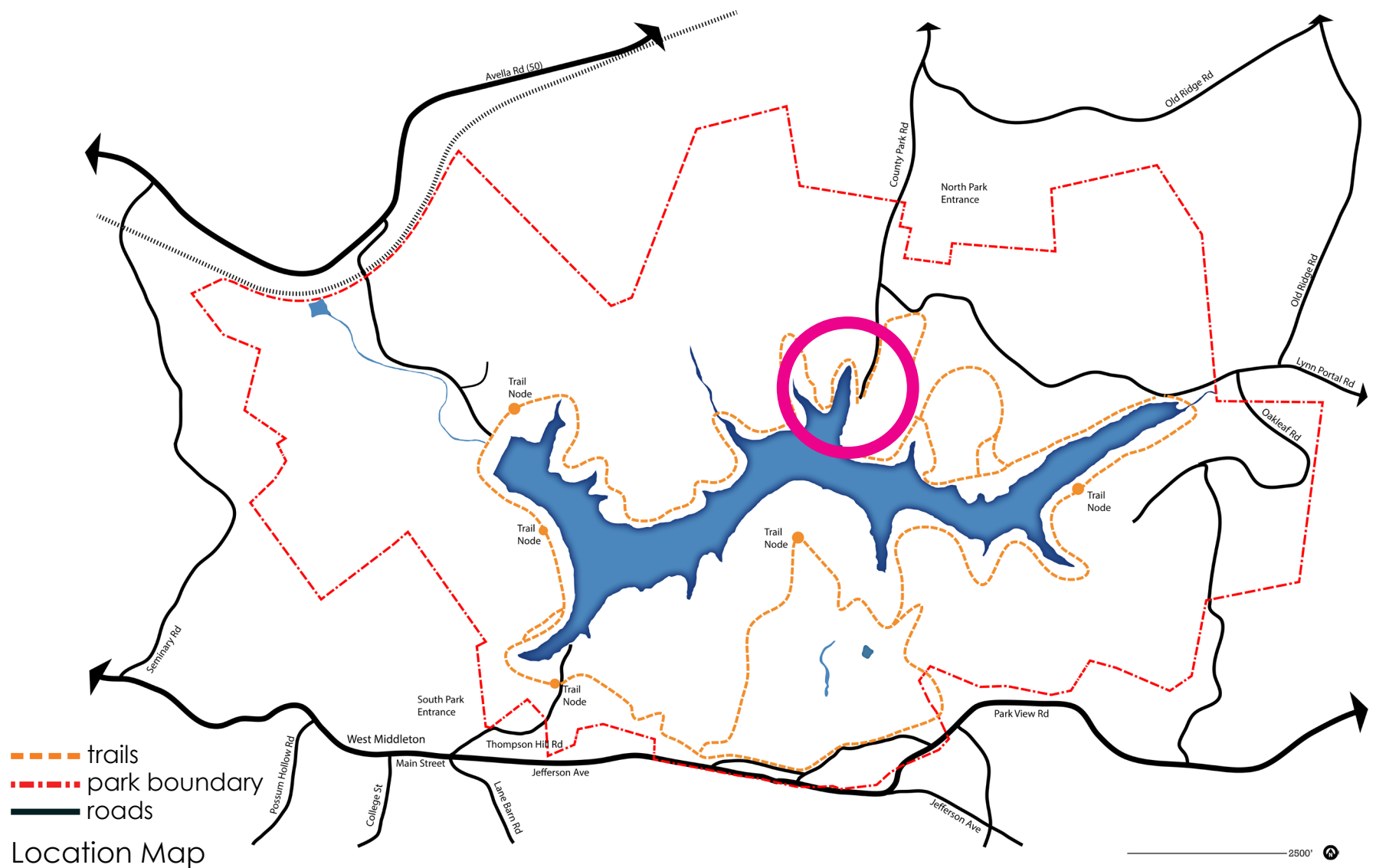
Play + Congregate + People Watch

An idea proposed early in the master planning process during the first community workshop, the lawn terrace and picnic area is proposed as a fresh and exciting addition to Cross Creek Park. Located within Discovery Cove, the lawn area is conveniently located adjacent to the existing surface parking lot, promoting accessibility to the water's edge. Within the lawn area, participants are provided opportunities to relax and observe the water, play and sunbathe on the manicured lawn terrace, and picnic at the water's edge.

A section through the site illustrates the relationship between the surface parking, shoreline, and the water's edge. In an effort to minimize surface runoff from the parking lot into the reservoir, the master plan recommends a passive stormwater management strategy that captures runoff from the adjacent impervious surfaces, conveying it through a series of rain gardens and bioswales, encouraging percolation into the ground. This green stormwater strategy will reduce the particulates and pollutants contained in the surface runoff from the parking areas, promoting a cleaner and more usable water resource for the community.

Features

- Drop off area and convenient access to parking lot
- Lawn terrace area for water observation, sun bathing, and picnicking
- Sun deck for picnicking, sun bathing, and events
- Connectivity to lakeside boardwalk and trails

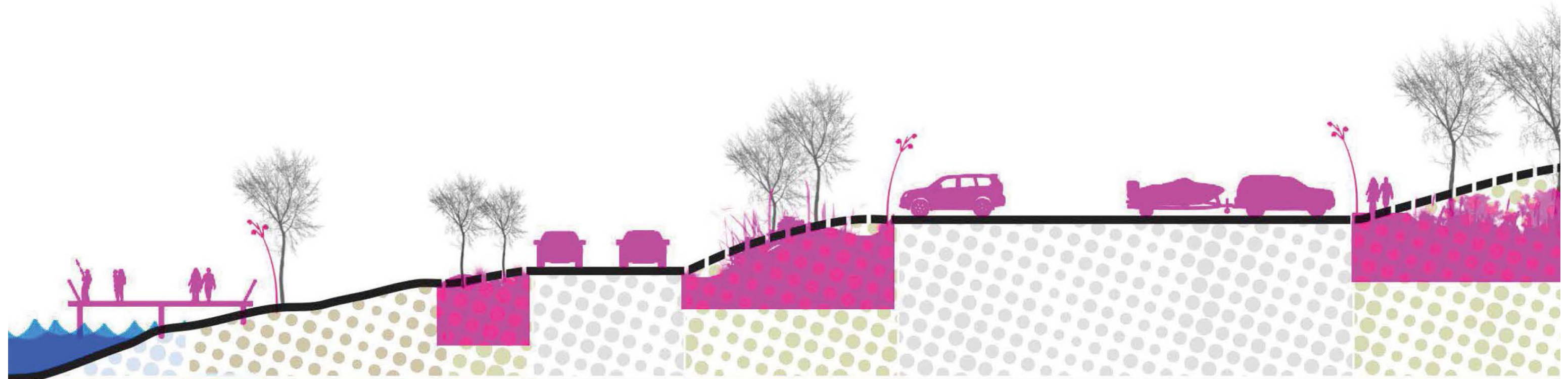


LAWN TERRACE & PICNIC AREA RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

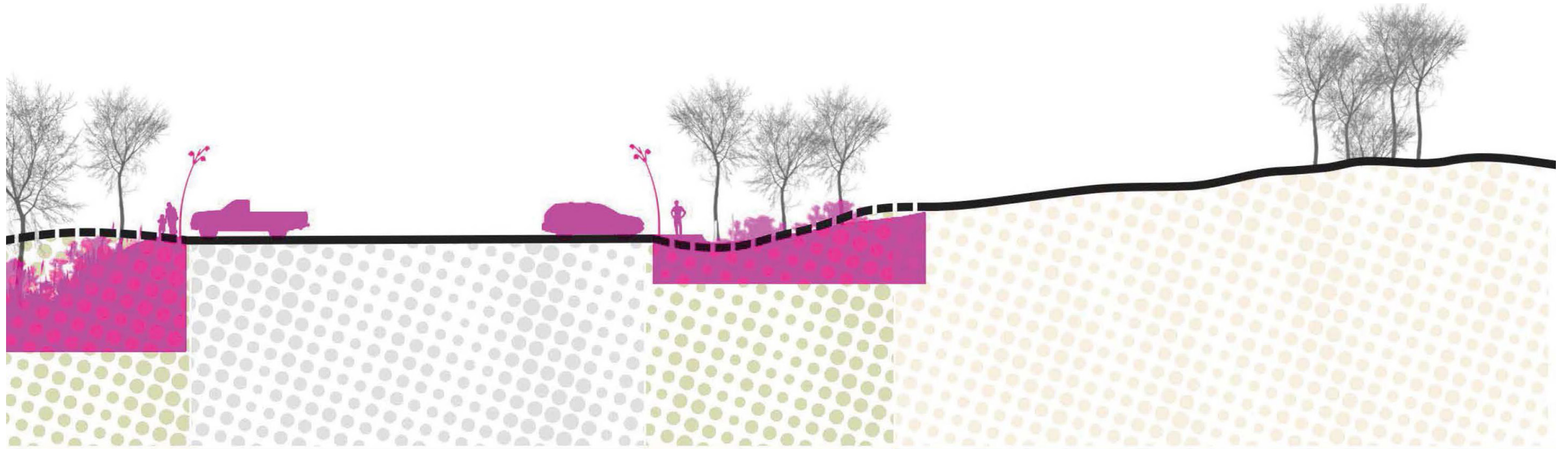
LAWN TERRACE & PICNIC AREA CROSS SECTION



	WATERFRONT		BOAT ACCESS	BIOSWALE	BOAT PARKING	BIOSWALE
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LAWN TERRACE & PICNIC AREA CROSS SECTION



BIOSWALE

PARKING

BIOSWALE

MEADOW



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER & FISHING PIER

Outdoor Learning Center and Fishing Pier

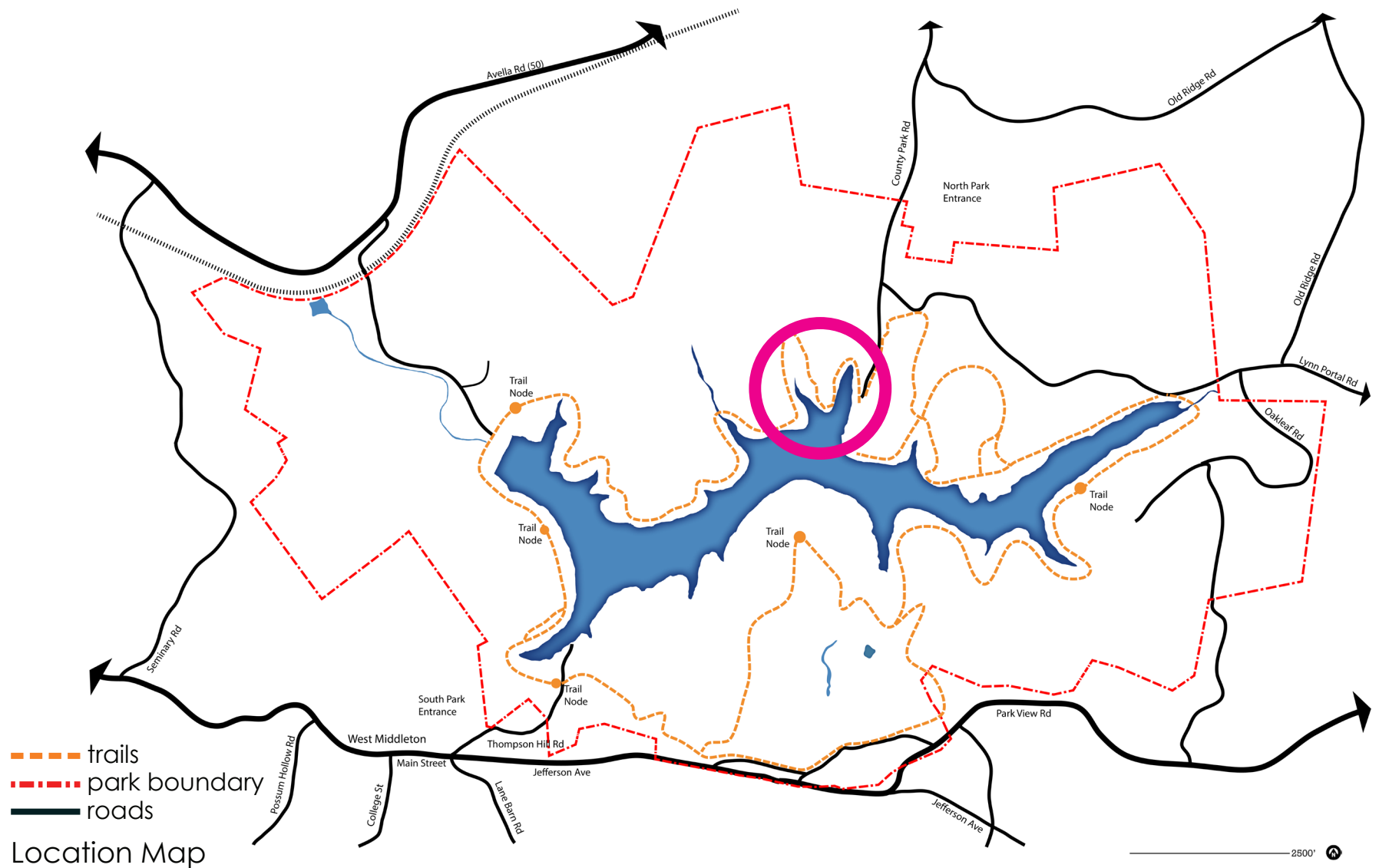
Educate and Discover

Brimming with a variety of wildlife habitats, natural resources, and diverse ecologies, Cross Creek Park is a community educational and recreational amenity for all ages. From local schools to adults and families, the park offers countless opportunities to engage with nature and be inspired by the beauty of the 2,830 acre park. Ranked highly throughout the community engagement process, environmental education should deliberately be celebrated within the park, providing a place for individuals and groups to observe nature, explore the variety of native plant communities found throughout the region, and enjoy the seasonal qualities inherent to the park.

The master plan recommends the development of a dedicated space within the park as a destination for individuals and groups to observe and participate, to discover and learn. The outdoor learning center is envisioned as a destination accessible by foot, car, and bus. Constructed out of simple materials (wood, steel, and stone), the shelter is designed as an open air structure positioned on the ridge of the hillside across discovery cove from the lawn terrace, boardwalk, and boat landing areas. This position offers a variety of ecologies for the visitor, as illustrated in the rendering on the opposite page. Woodland, meadow, and riparian edge all play a part in the discovery of nature, terminated at the water's edge with a fishing pier that floats above the surface of the water, providing another opportunity for kids and adults to engage with and observe the Cross Creek reservoir.

Features

- Shelter for individual observation and group gatherings, outdoor classroom
- Connectivity to trails and parking area (permeable pavement materials)
- Landscape restoration (woodland, meadow, riparian edge)
- Fishing Pier
- Interpretive and educational signage and graphics



Location Map

OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER & FISHING PIER RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER & FISHING PIER CROSS SECTION

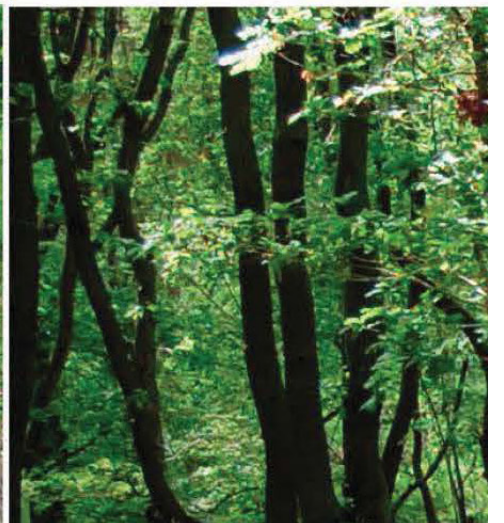


RESERVOIR

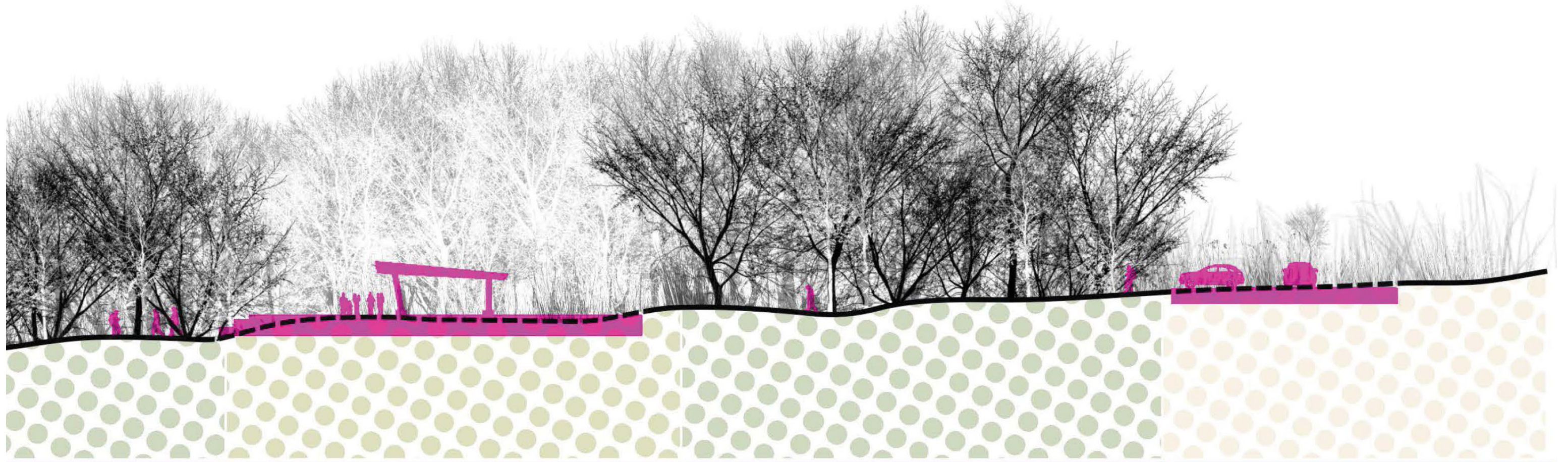
WETLAND

RIPARIAN

WOODLAND



OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTER & FISHING PIER CROSS SECTION



WOODLAND

GLADE

WOODLAND

MEADOW



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

SOUTH BLUFF & PICNIC AREAS

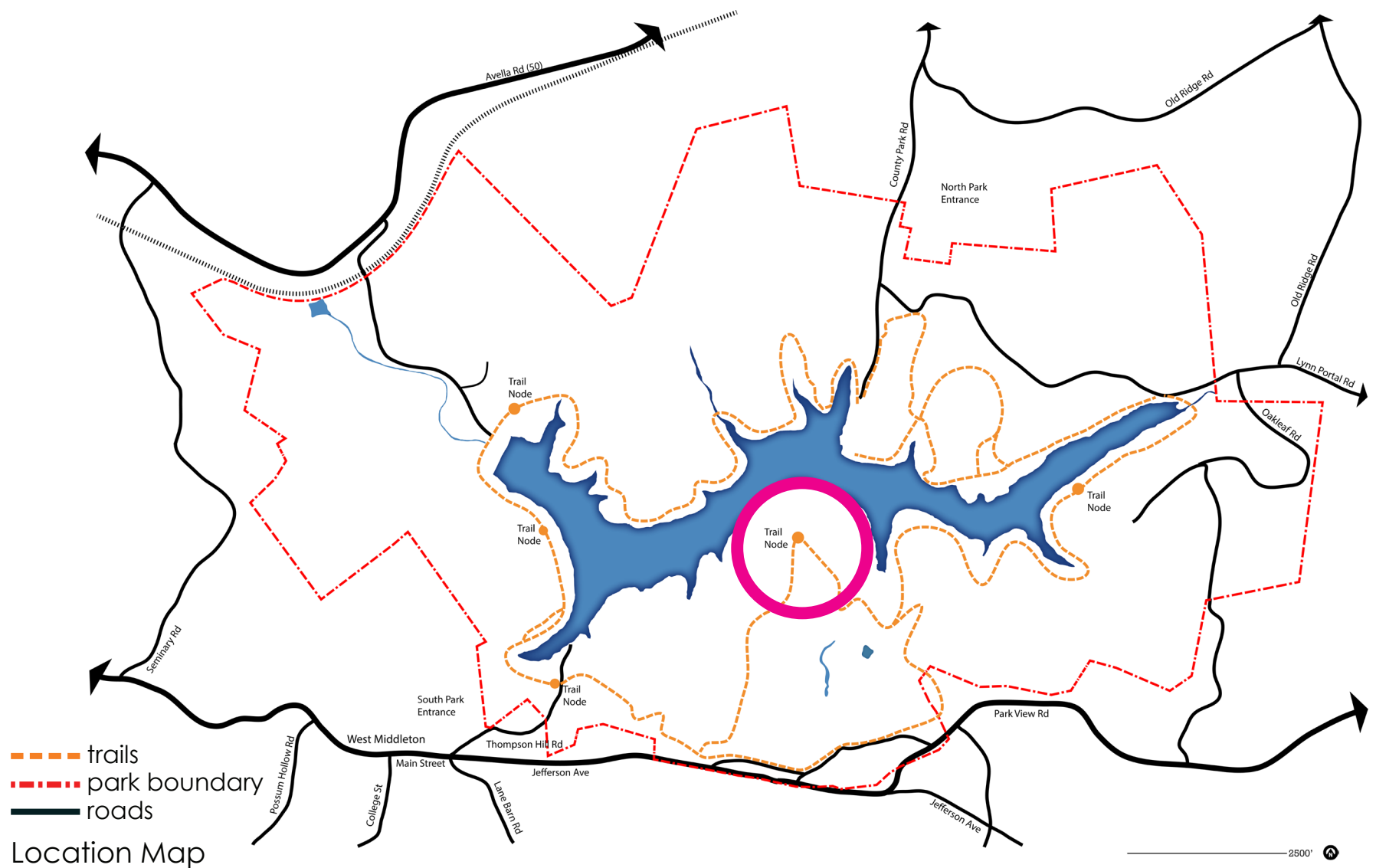
South Bluff and Picnic Areas

Explore and Observe

Although the northern edge of the Cross Creek reservoir currently serves and will continue to serve as the primary meeting place and “park center”, the southern half of the park provides a multitude of diverse landscapes and vantage points that should be promoted as destinations within the park. As trails and access to these areas are developed, the master plan recommends providing pavilions and shelters for picnicking and gathering. As illustrated in the rendering on the opposite page, these structures would take advantage of the open meadows atop these magnificent bluffs, offering a unique vantage point of the entire park and the rolling horizon in the distance. Constructed with a simple material palette, these shelters are intended to provide shade and shelter from the elements, and aesthetically integrate into the surrounding landscape. These shelters and picnic areas would be positioned conveniently along the planned ribbon of trails, paths, and roadways to encourage universal accessibility and convenient loading and unloading of vehicle passengers and items utilized for picnics and events.

Features

- Picnic shelters positioned to take advantage of views of park
- Accessible via multi-use trails and vehicle
- Play meadows for flying kites, bird watching, social gathering
- Comfortable and attractive furnishings locally made
- Seasonal vegetation and dynamic landscape ecologies
- Permeable surfaces for low-impact development
- Solar powered lighting for evening visibility and safety



SOUTH BLUFF RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

EVENT LAWN

Event Lawn

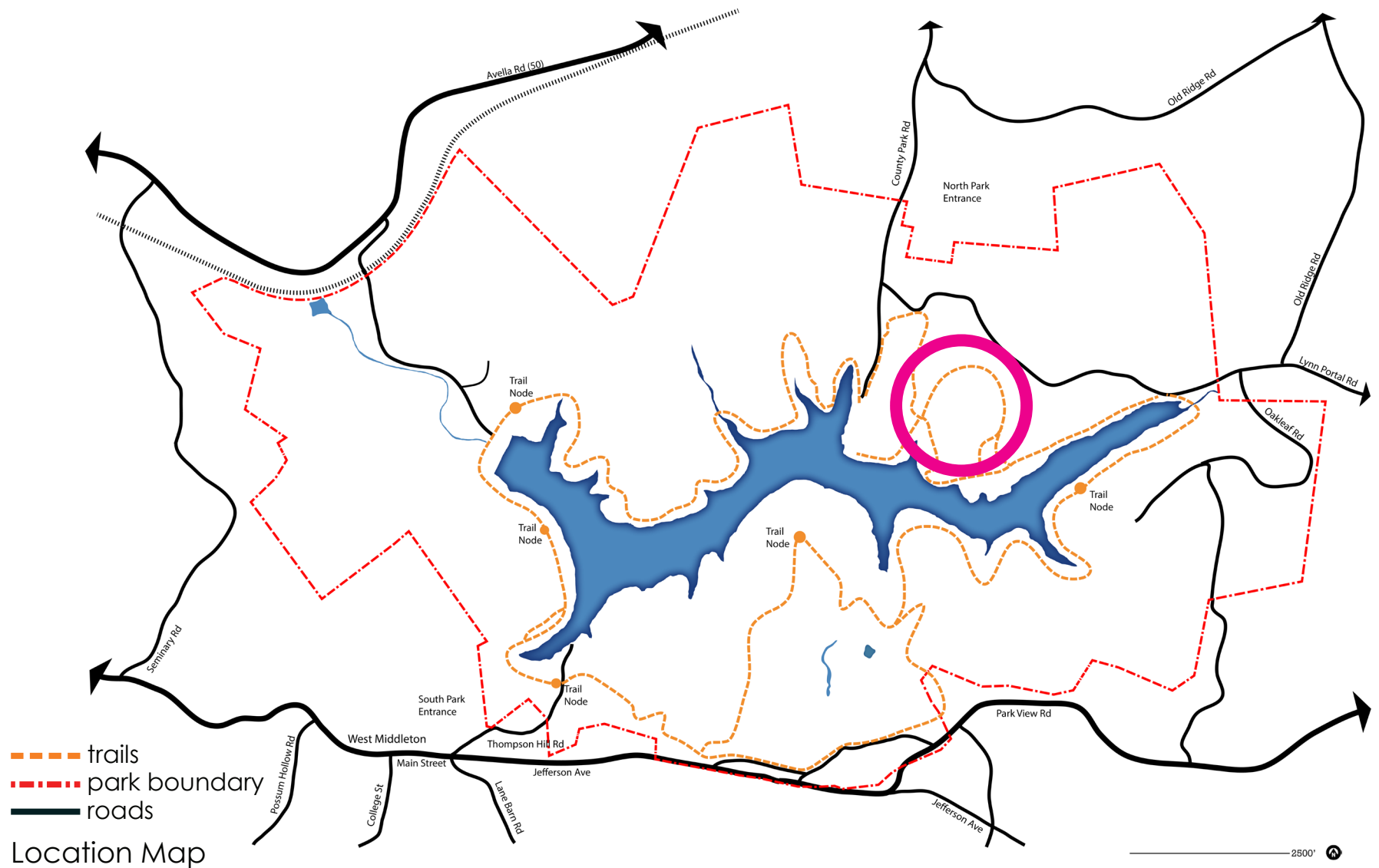
Performance + Community

The performance lawn is envisioned as an open area suitable for both large and small events. Located adjacent to the east of discovery cove, the performance lawn is prominently located along the water's edge taking advantage of the beautiful views of the reservoir and wooded landscape in the background. The site's natural topography also lends itself to promoting ideal views of the performance. The lawn is wrapped with a perimeter walking path, serving as both walking track and event staging and kiosk areas. The wooded perimeter also provides shade for park and performance participants/observers, and also serves as an acoustic buffer for projected sounds from the performance area.

While the performance lawn is located adjacent to existing parking, the master plan recommends additional surface parking to accommodate larger events. New surface parking should be permeable where appropriate to reduce the impact of surface runoff from rain events.

Features

- Accessible and convenient parking
- 6 acre lawn area
- Tree-lined perimeter walkway
- Oriented to maximize views of the landscape
- Positioned on sloped topography to maximize views to performance area



EVENT LAWN RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

NATURE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

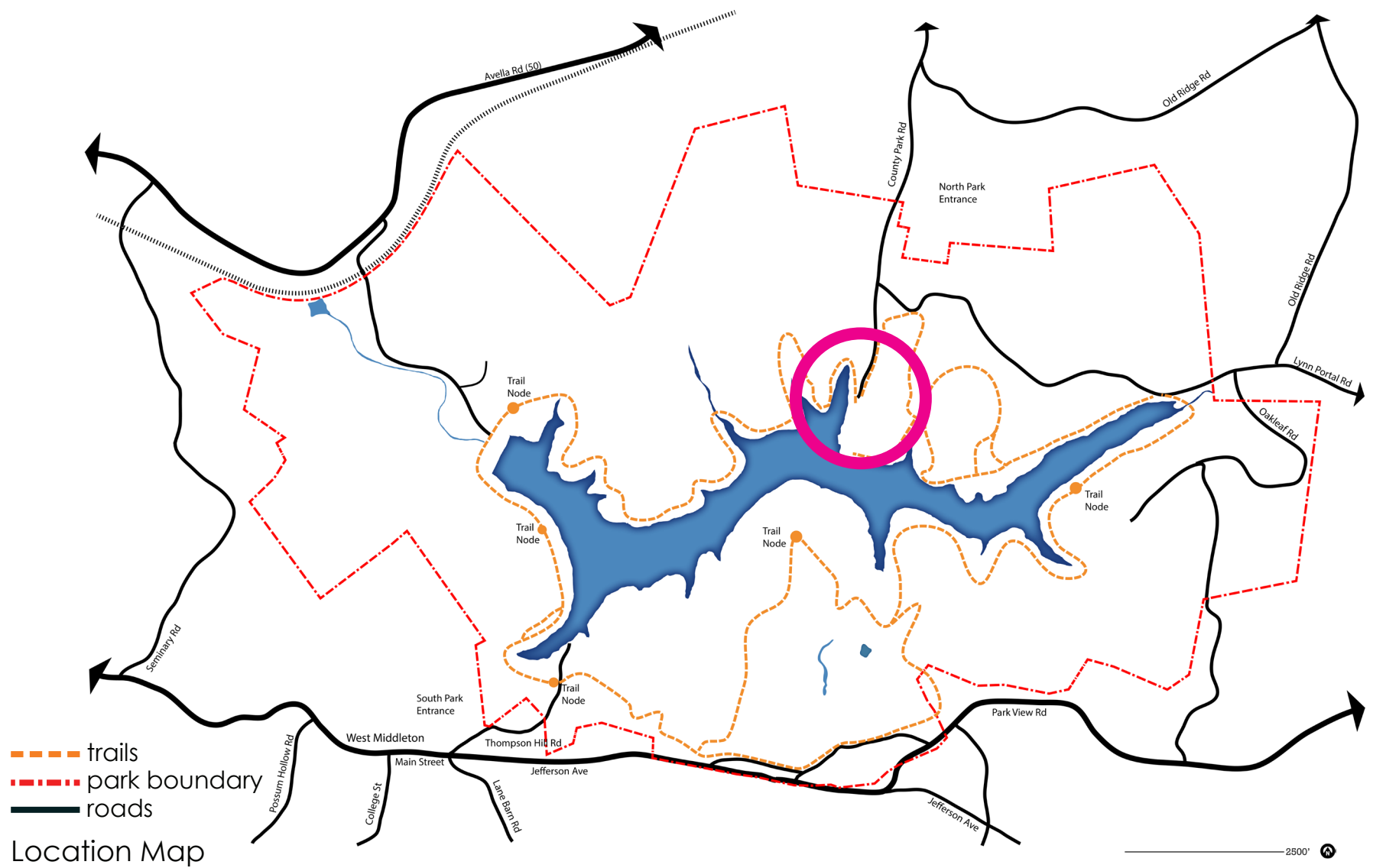
Nature Adventure Playground

Play and Discover

“Adventure Playgrounds” are outdoor habitats and natural ecosystems which are specifically enhanced to provide children and families opportunities to explore and play outdoors. Children are provided with natural materials such as boulders, rocks, logs, and water to connect with the natural environment and use their own creativity and imagination to engage in “hands-on”, unscripted outdoor play. The proposed adventure play site would be located adjacent to or in place of the existing playground structure and would provide an opportunity for children to interact in woodland, meadow, and riparian habitats.

Features

- Observation mound
- Climbing wall structure
- Balance beams
- Tunnels
- Accessible circulation - inclusive play
- Ageless play opportunities for kids and families



NATURE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPING

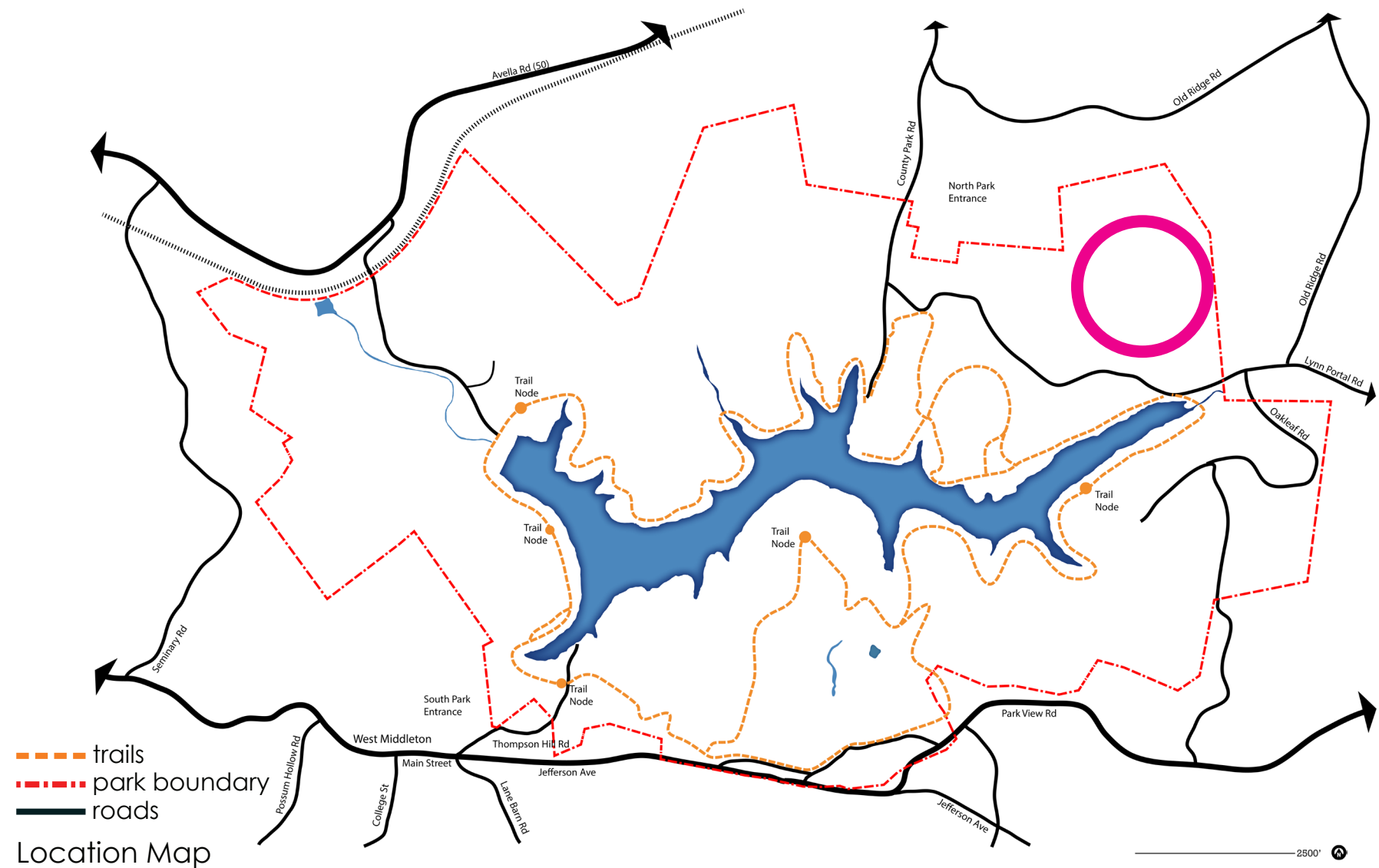
Organized Group Camping Area

Keep it Simple

Located in the northeastern portion of the park, the organized group camping area is envisioned as a series of camping locations in both the woodland and meadow landscapes. Here organized groups will be provided the opportunity to reserve a particular camping location and enjoy spending time outdoors and sleeping under the stars.

Features

- Secluded camping areas
- Trail connections
- Camp sites in various natural habitats (i.e. woodland, meadow, etc.)

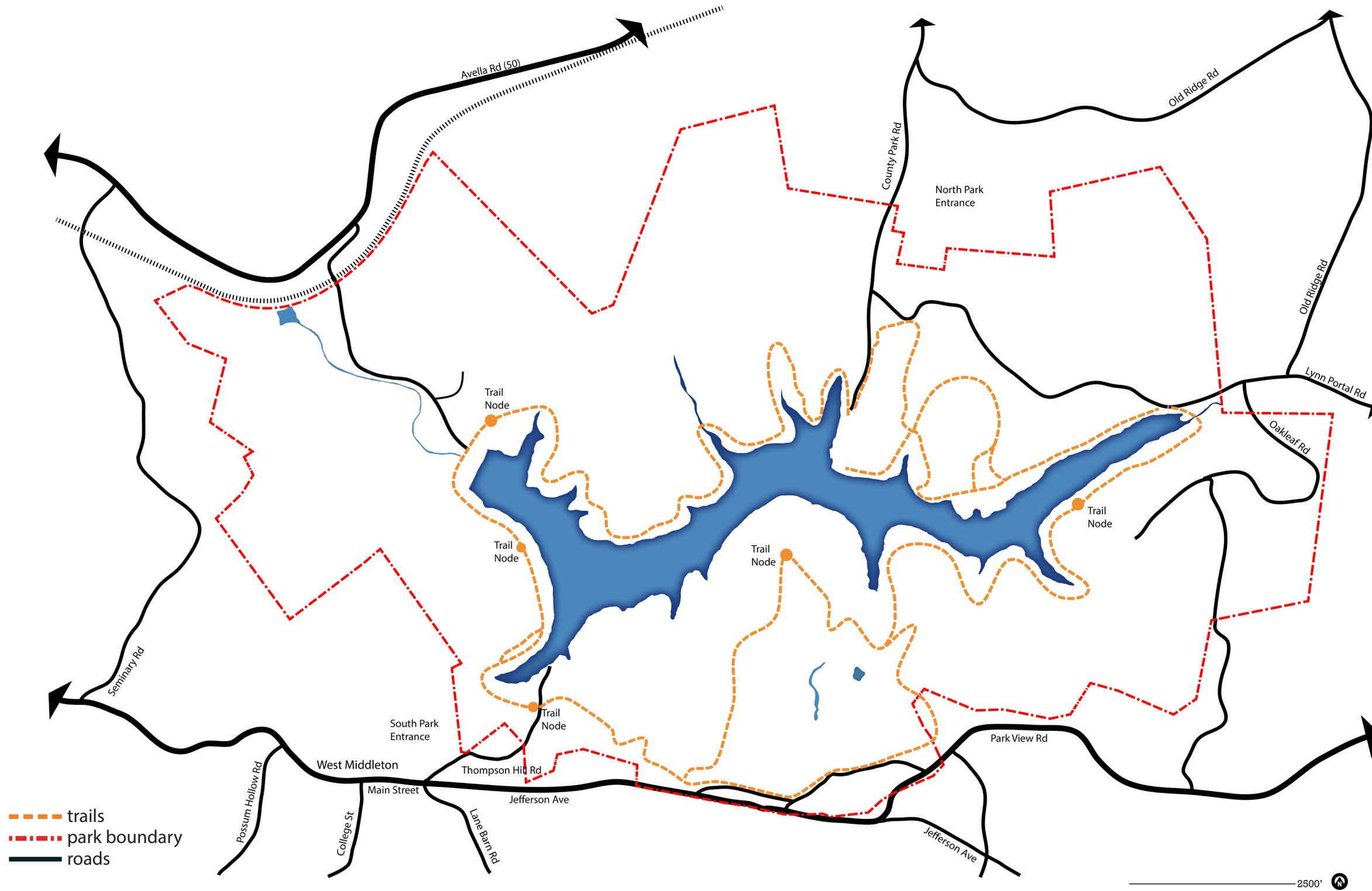


ORGANIZED GROUP CAMPING RENDERING



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

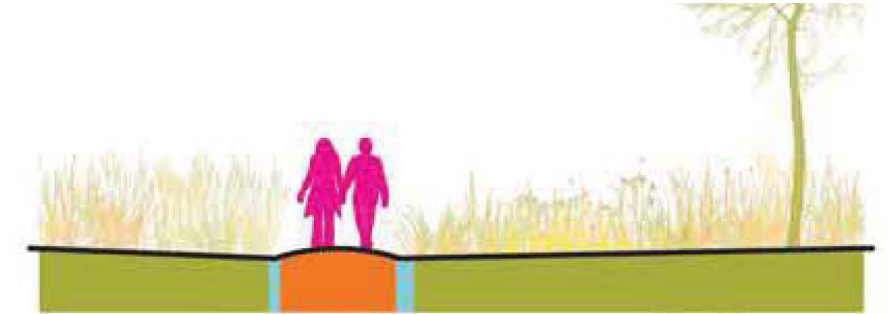
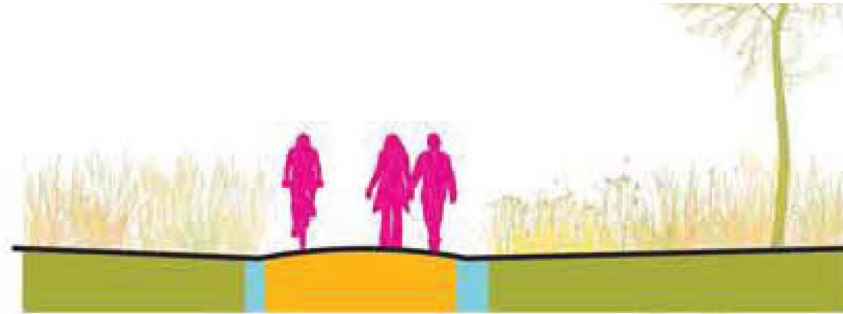
PARK CIRCULATION: TRAILS & PATHS



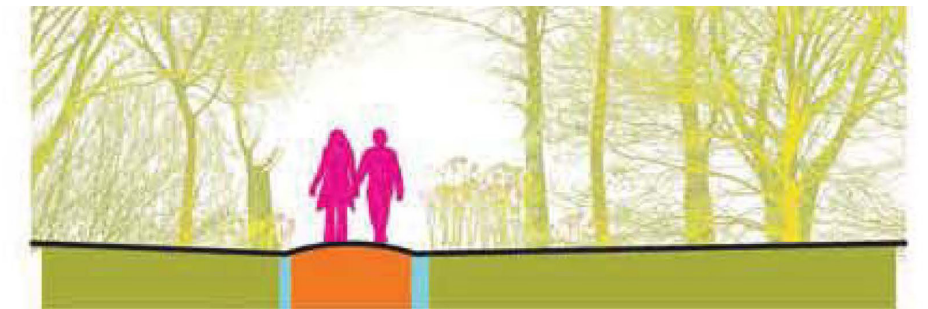
CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

PARK CIRCULATION: TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS

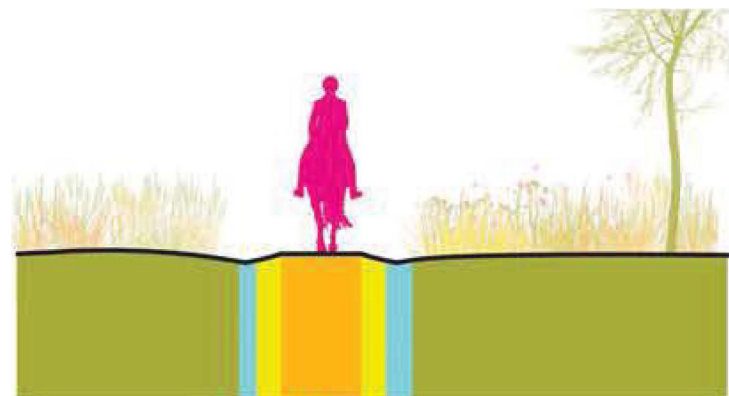
PRAIRIE
 SWALE
 MULCH FOOTPATH
 MULTI-USE TRAIL



WOODLAND
 SWALE
 MULCH FOOTPATH
 MULTI-USE TRAIL



WOODLAND/PRAIRIE
 SWALE
 4' NATURAL TRAIL
 8' CLEARED TRAIL



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

TRAIL TYPOLOGY

Upland Observation Meadow Trails

As trails and paths weave through the park, the existing meadows provide moments for the park visitor to view beyond the trail, and periodically observe the reservoir from above. The meadow trails should be composed of accessible surfaces (crushed limestone or mulch) to encourage participation and engagement from a variety of users. Placement of resting, educational, and exercise nodes should also be considered throughout the meadow trails. Meadow trails also serve as prime opportunities for bird watching. For this reason, the master plan recommends the construction of a few key observation areas and bird blinds for extended bird and wildlife watching.



Under Canopy **Woodland Trails**

Similar to meadow trails, the woodland trails extend that vision to embrace the diverse vegetation and landscape that compose the Cross Creek Park property. As the trails and paths weave through the trees and under the canopies, the visitor is provided opportunities throughout their journey to relax, education, and exercise. These nodes should be placed periodically throughout the trail as necessary and feasible, promoting a comfortable and relaxing hike or jog through the park.



CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

TRAIL TYPOLOGY

Lowland Views Lakeside Trails

Cross Creek Park offers nearly 7.5 miles of lake edge, weaving throughout the park from east to west. Although there is currently a trail along a portion of the bank linking the existing shelter and picnic area to the boat landing, the master plan recommends expansion of trails along the perimeter of the reservoir, promoting multiple opportunities for the park visitor to engage with the water. Placed periodically throughout this ribbon of paths and trails meandering around the perimeter are rest/viewing areas as well as exercise stations for hikers and joggers. These nodes should be strategically placed to take advantage of beautiful views and suitable topography. Benches, educational signage, and exercise equipment should be placed in these nodes to encourage interaction and opportunities to promote health and wellness for the Washington County community.



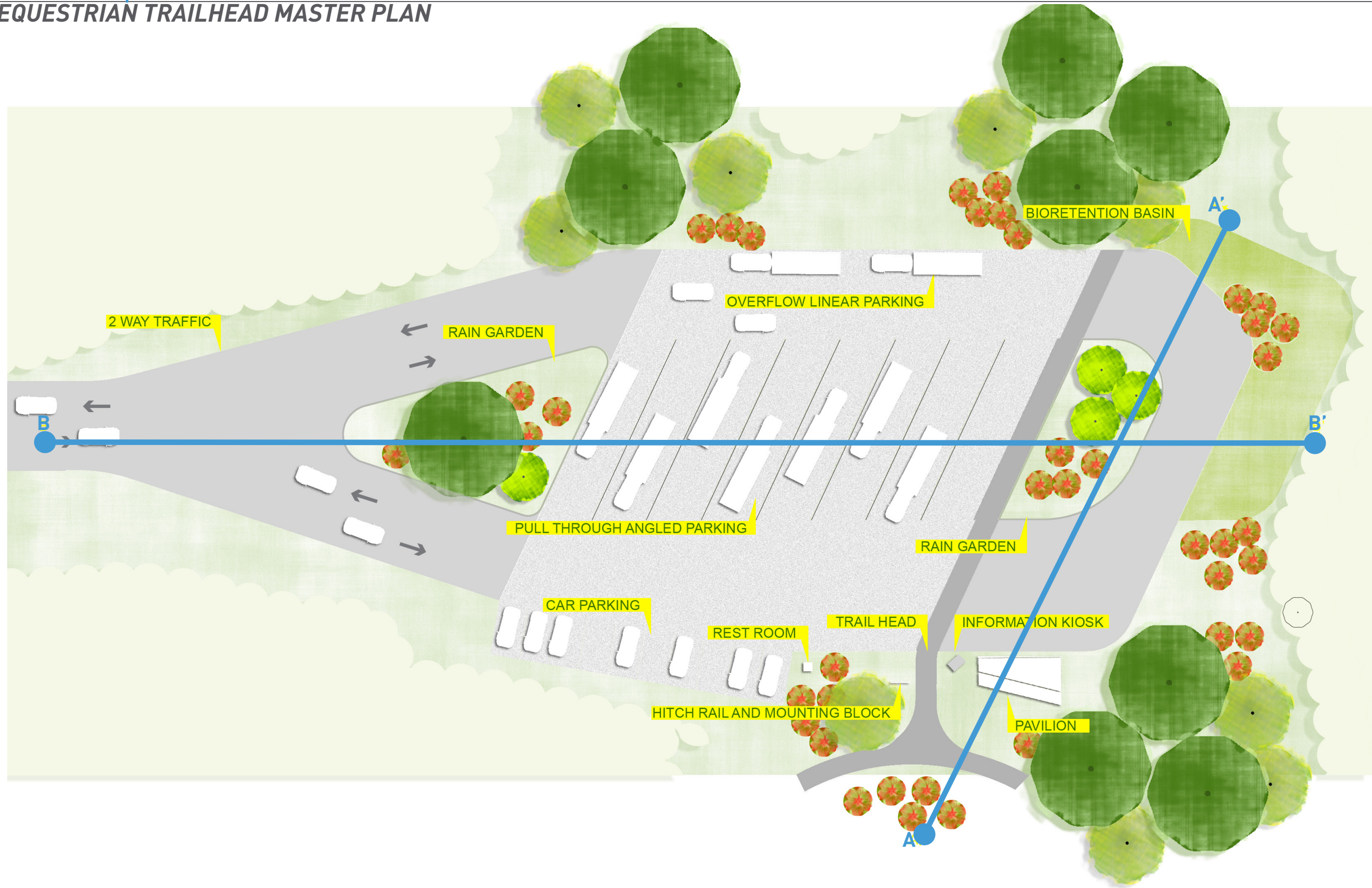
Under Canopy **Overlook Trail**

Similar to meadow trails, the overlook trails provide space for park visitors to take in the natural beauty of Cross Creek Park. Winding and weaving under the canopy, the trails will periodically open up to clearings. At the clearings, resting space will be provided for hikers and cyclists. There, they will be able to relax and enjoy the scenery. These nodes should be placed periodically throughout the trail as necessary and feasible, promoting a comfortable and relaxing hike or jog through the park.



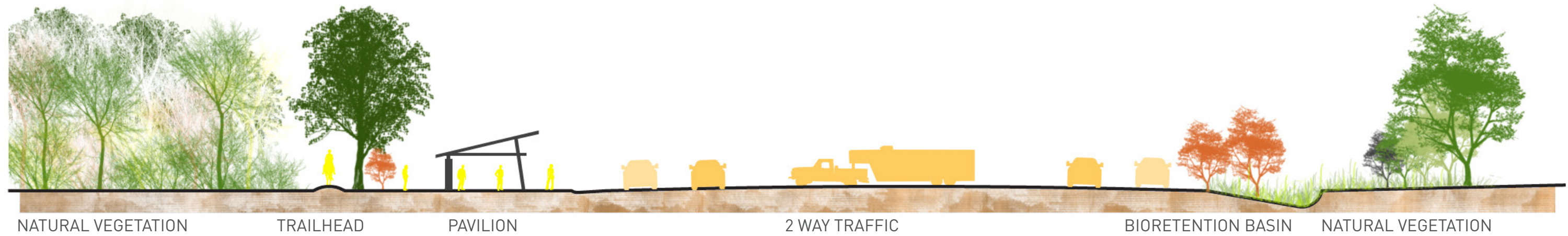
CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

TYPICAL EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD MASTER PLAN

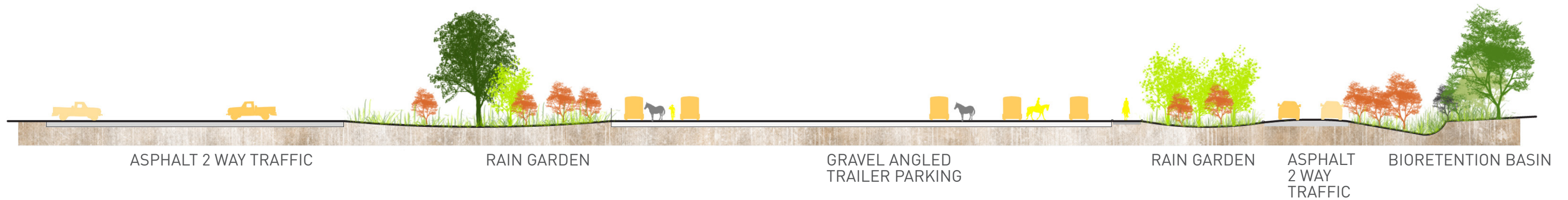


CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

TYPICAL EQUESTRIAN TRAILHEAD CROSS SECTION



SECTION A-A'



SECTION B-B'

CHAPTER FIVE | COMPONENT PLANS

WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

Navigating the Park **WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE**

Park signage must contribute to a thoughtful, comprehensive system of wayfinding. The object is to successfully direct the park visitor to and through the park. Each major segment of a visitor's travel sequence represents an opportunity to simplify and clarify key visitor decisions, as a pedestrian and a driver.

Sign Character

The most basic component of a sign program is the sign's shape, size, and proportion. The character itself has the capacity to convey an identity. A consistent character should be adopted for all types of signage throughout the park.

Materials

Careful selection of materials for sign construction is essential. Some materials connote tradition, others convey contemporary style. Materials and fabrication techniques go hand in hand, to produce economical, durable, and aesthetically pleasing systems.

Typestyle

There are thousands of typestyles to choose from and each has its own unique character. A proper typestyle should be selected to match the overall character of the park system. The Society of Environmental Graphic Design (SEGD) has a list of approved ADA compliant type faces. Once a typeface has been selected and approved, it should be used consistently throughout the system to create a unified image.

Graphic Layout

All of the elements that will be displayed on each sign type must be carefully considered. The manner in which each of these elements are arranged on the sign panel determines the look of the sign. Once the relationship of the graphic elements is decided upon, the layout should be employed for each sign type.

The purpose of the signage system is to provide the viewer/user with efficient, concise building identification, directional, and informational assistance, and regulatory assistance. The system will create an easily discernible sequence from the park entry to a final destination. The signage elements separate into four basic categories according to function of the information they provide:

Directional

These signs indicate directions for vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic. The signs should be placed at intersections of roads and trails. They should subscribe to a linear decision-making process that will provide information in a progressively more specific manner.

Identification

These identify a place or structure.

Informational/Educational

These provide park-wide information through an overall map of the park. These should be positioned in heavily trafficked areas throughout the park to assist in an overall understanding of the park to the park visitors.

Regulatory/Prohibitive

These signs communicate regulations and restrictions as they pertain to vehicles and/or pedestrian.

SAMPLE SIGNAGE CATALOG

