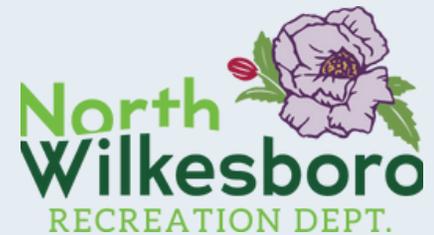




SMOOT PARK

2022 MASTER PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the generosity of the Wilkes Medical Center Foundation for funding and helping to make the creation of the Smoot Park Master Plan possible.

Community Partners

Heather Murphy, Jenn Wages

The Health Foundation

Linda Cheek

Wilkes Chamber of Commerce

Charlie White, RG Absher

Yadkin River Greenway Council

Thomas Salley

Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority

Greta Ferguson

North Wilkesboro Housing Authority

Ken Lyall

Wilkes Circles of Care

Elaine Boyd

Smoot Park Pool Association

Bert Hall

Elk's Lodge

Teresa Minton

North Wilkesboro Rotary Club

Terry Cleary

North Wilkesboro Kiwanis

Crystal Keener

Downtown North Wilkesboro Partnership

Dion Stocks

Wilkes Central High School

North Wilkesboro Elementary School

Takiyah McCathern

Central Wilkes Middle School

Project Team

Wilkes Medical Center Foundation

WithersRavenel

North Wilkesboro Parks Action Team

Town of North Wilkesboro Elected Officials

Marc Hauser, Mayor

Angela Day, Commissioner

Bert Hall, Commissioner

Otis Church, Commissioner

Andrew Palmer, Commissioner

Michael Parsons, Commissioner

Town of North Wilkesboro Staff

Meredith Detsch - Planning Director

Nelson Martin - Parks and Recreation Director

Larry Barnes- Parks and Recreation

David Webb - Public Services

Crystal Keener - Tourism Director

Mary Elizabeth Campbell- NC Fellow 21'-22'

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction
Aims

INTRODUCTION

local History and Identity
Purpose
Master Plan

DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

Income
Age and Disability
Race and Ethnicity

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

Current Park Conditions
Recent Amenities
Natural Amenities

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Survey
Tree Planting
Community Meetings

RECOMMENDATIONS

Accessibility, Safety, and Inclusivity
Master Plan

ACTION + PHASE PLAN

Phase One
Phase Two
Phase Three
Phase Four

APPENDIX

Site Plan Options A and B
2022 Town Parks + Recreation Survey
Survey Results
Supporting Maps
Demographic Data Visualized



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

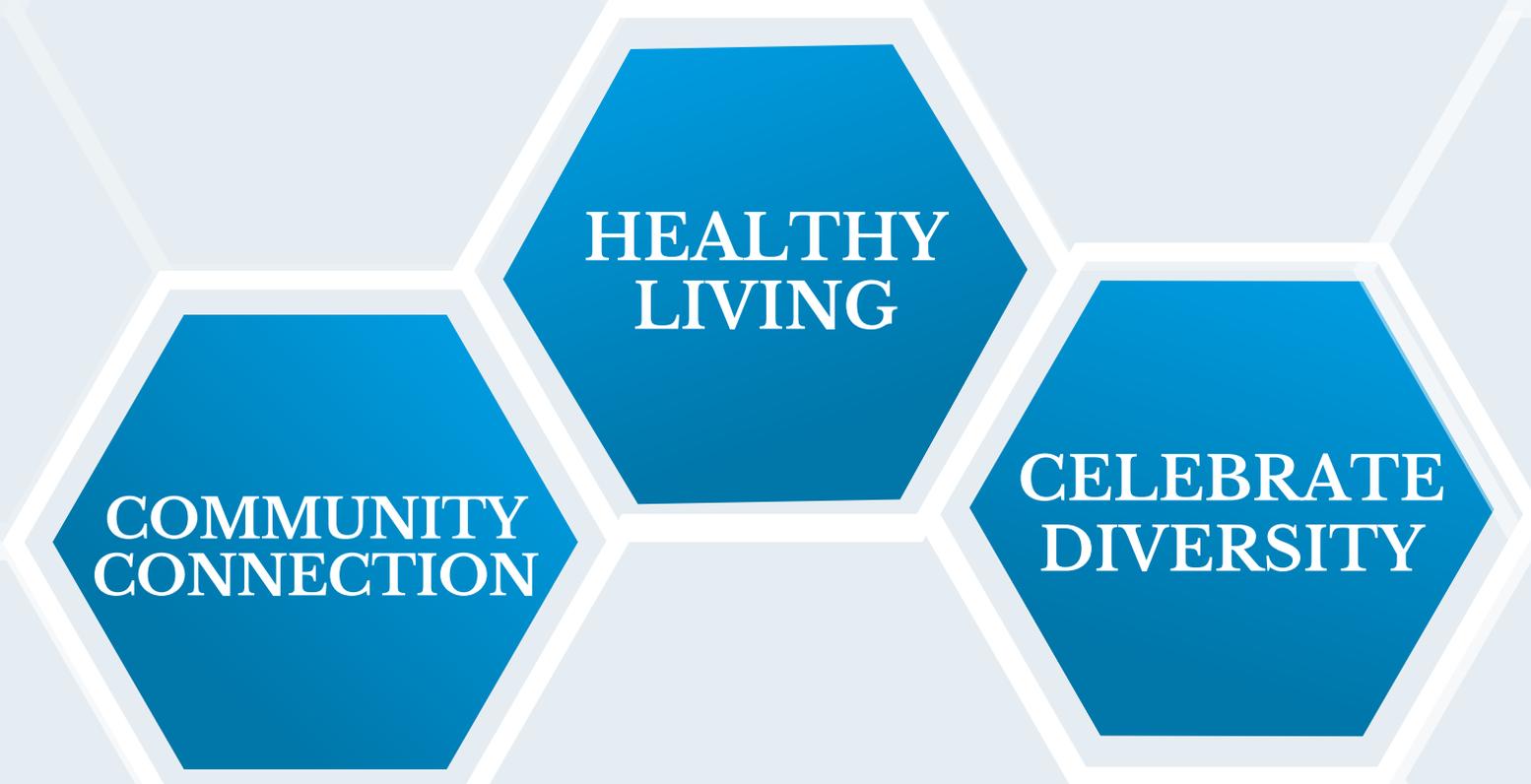
INTRODUCTION

The Town of North Wilkesboro's newest logo and motto, "living starts here" reinforces the Town's commitment to providing a high quality of life for a diverse population of residents, visitors and businesses. As part of this value system, the Town strives to provide a comprehensive range of parks, greenspaces, recreation facilities, and programs for residents and visitors to enjoy. These parks, facilities and programs add to the quality of life enjoyed by Wilkes residents and are made possible by visionary leadership, a commitment to excellence and community involvement.

AIMS

The Master Plan for improvements to Smoot Park reflects 3 primary Aims held by the Town of North Wilkesboro:

- Advocate for healthy living and lifestyles
- Provide opportunities for community engagement and connectedness
- Celebrate diversity by improving accessibility and inclusivity



COMMUNITY
CONNECTION

HEALTHY
LIVING

CELEBRATE
DIVERSITY

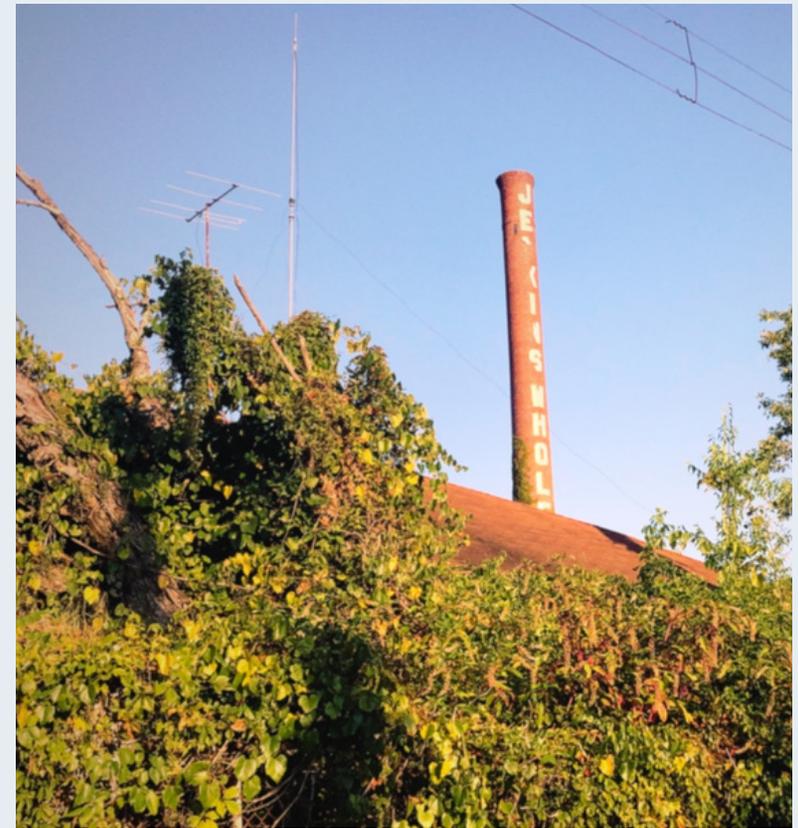


INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Smoot Park contains approximately 5 acres of land adjacent to the Yadkin River and North Wilkesboro's downtown. Named after the historic C.C. Smoot and Sons Tannery, the site was once the location of tannery executives' homes and known as Tanners Rest. Shortly after the flood of 1940, North Wilkesboro's Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to transform the grove into Wilkes County's first public park. The park opened in 1954.

The park sites along the Yadkin River, Yadkin River Greenway and, the Overmountain Victory Trail (OMVT). As part of the OMVT, backwoodsmen from the Wilkes and Surry county area who camped, at what now is Smoot Park, on their way to the Revolutionary War Battle of Kings Mountain in 1780.



While the flood 1940 devastated much of the low lying areas of town and the Smoot Tannery, the iconic smokestack still stand today as a historic landmark.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Master Plan is to understand the needs of Smoot Park, to identify the opportunities and constraints of the property within it, and to make recommendations for the future of the park based upon the findings during this process.

SMOOT PARK MASTER PLAN

Recommended improvements illustrated by the Master Plan include facilities that encourage active and healthy living, reflect community input, and improve accessibility. They also support county initiatives focused on the economic and health benefits of outdoor recreation and tourism. Park facilities, both existing and proposed, encourage healthy living, providing opportunities for swimming, skateboarding, basketball, walking, fitness activities and inclusive play. The plan also advocates for better connections to nature.

Smoot Park has served generations of North Wilkesboro and Wilkes County residents. The park boasts the only public pool and skate park in the County. It is largely considered a family park offering numerous and varied recreation facilities given its size. Over the years many of the facilities are worn out, not in compliance with accessibility requirements and unconnected.

The process conducted to prepare this Master Plan, engaged the community both in person and virtually. Over 400 residents participated in an on-line and print survey. Public input meetings and presentations to civic organizations helped staff understand the communities priorities. Local knowledge was instrumental to developing the shared vision defined by this Master Plan.



Existing buildings, particularly the restrooms in the pool house are out of compliance with ADA requirements. In addition, the playgrounds are not accessible or inclusive and many of the connecting walkways are not ADA accessible. By improving the park, the Town of North Wilkesboro will be providing the community equitable and inclusive opportunities for healthy living and simultaneously demonstrate their commitment to maintaining meaningful places in the community.

Improvements recommended by this plan will enhance existing recreation facilities valued by the community, make the park accessible to all, safer and more inclusive.

Improvements will also improve the park's contribution to county and regional outdoor recreation initiatives.



DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

DEMOGRAPHICS + TRENDS

INCOME

The median Wilkes County household income as of 2020 was \$44,980.00. In North Wilkesboro, 21% of residents fall below the federal poverty level, 40.5% are cost burdened (spending 30% or more of income on rent), and 7% are without a vehicle.

AGE AND DISABILITY

21% of Wilkes County residents are over 65, and that number is projected to grow in the next decade as our population ages and retirees locate to the foothills. In 2019, it was estimated that over 18% of the Wilkes County population was living with a disability (compared to the state average of 13.4%).

RACE AND ETHNICITY

4.7% of the county's population identifies as Black or African American. 6.5% of the county's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, and nearly half of our Lantinx community are under the age of 18. 87.6% of the county's population identifies as white alone.





INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

CURRENT PARK CONDITIONS

Facilities

Current facilities at Smoot Park include a public pool, diving well, splash pad, skate park, playgrounds, picnic facilities both large and small, volleyball court, story walk, river access including two small boat launches and a connection to the Yadkin River Greenway Trail, and other minor recreation amenities.

While various facilities are in good shape and can be renovated, several park features were recommended for removal and replacement by consultant WithersRavenel. These include the pool house, existing restroom buildings and large picnic pavilion.

Floodplain and Floodway

Much of the park is in the Yadkin River floodplain. The basketball courts are currently in the floodway of the river and are subject to periodic water damage which makes them difficult to maintain.



SPLASH PAD



SKATEPARK



BIG PLAYGROUND



MAIN PAVILION



MAIN PAVILION



PICNIC SHELTERS



OPEN SPACE



POOLHOUSE



VOLLEYBALL COURT

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

CURRENT PARK CONDITIONS

Accessibility and Inclusivity

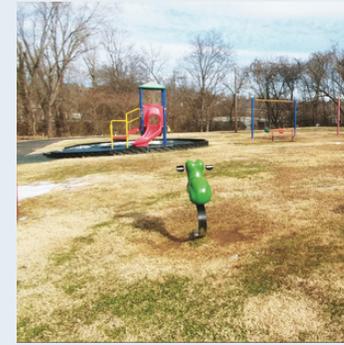
Accessibility throughout the park requires improvement. The playgrounds are currently not inclusive or accessible. The story walk is not an accessible trail and the buildings have accessibility issues. Making the park more inclusive is focused on play environments but also considers the need to provide a place for the Latinx community to play soccer. There are very few places to play soccer in the county.

Context

The park is bordered on the north by a creek and to the East by the Yadkin River. Land uses across Chestnut Street and associated parking to the south are light industrial and business including the Town's Waste Water Treatment facility. The park has a relatively undefined edge along the parking area. Main Street and an abandoned railroad corridor sets the western edge of the park.

Aesthetics and Entrance

The park currently lacks a sense of entry and arrival and would benefit from additional entry definition, signage, tree plantings, and landscape improvements.



SMALL PLAYGROUND



STORYWALK



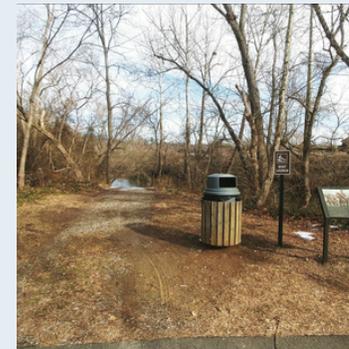
GREENWAY ACCESS



PARKING



ENTRANCE



RIVER ACCESS



BASKETBALL COURTS

INVENTORY + ANALYSIS CURRENT PARK CONDITIONS



INVENTORY + ANALYSIS RECENT AMENITIES

Story Walk and Bike Fix It Station

The Town partnered with The Health Foundation and the Wilkes County Library to create new amenities at Smoot Park in 2020 and 2021. Both organizations provided grant funding for the Story Walk and Bike Fix It Station

Euclid Avenue Trail

At the end of 2021, Healthy Wilkes Action Team and the Yadkin River Greenway Council helped the Town fund the Euclid Avenue Trail as a greenway extension from the North Wilkesboro Housing Authority towards Smoot Park.



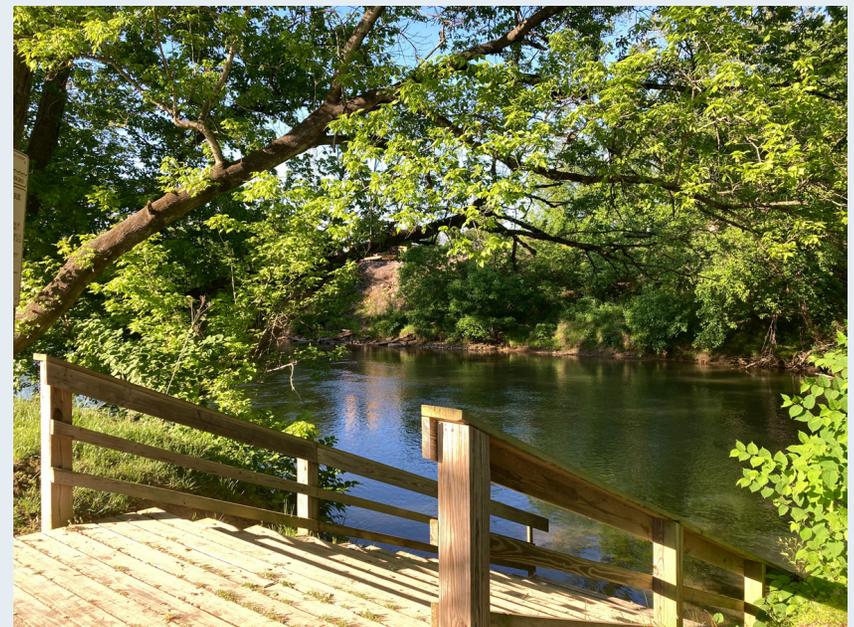
INVENTORY + ANALYSIS NATURAL AMENITIES

River Paddle Access Points

Smoot Park has two river access points for paddle sports. Paddlers have the option of choosing their own challenge level by using either the stair-built access along the fast-flowing current or the beginner-friendly gravel access alongside slower-moving eddy waters.

Historic Walking Trails

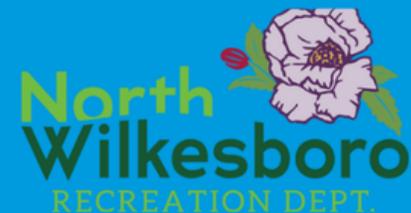
The park also is the western-most entrance to the Yadkin River Greenway trail and sits on the National Historic Overmountain Victory Trail. The Yadkin River Greenway connects Smoot Park to over eight miles of paved and natural surface walking trails.



WHATS YOUR
SMOOT PARK
VISION?

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

Public Meeting
5:30pm Tuesday Feb. 8
Town Hall & Zoom



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TREE PLANTING WITH NWA YOUTH

Town staff asked the North Wilkesboro Housing Authority (NWA) to help kick off the renovations at Smoot Park by planting four Red Maple Trees. The youth of the NWA enthusiastically pitched in.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Staff met with the following organizations to present the proposed Smoot Park revitalization plan and gather feedback:

- North Wilkesboro Housing Authority
- Wilkes Circles of Care
- North Wilkesboro Rotary Club
- North Wilkesboro Kiwanis
- Smoot Park Pool Association
- Town Board of Commissioners





RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESSIBILITY, SAFETY, AND INCLUSIVITY

Master plan recommendations enhance opportunities for healthy living by addressing the current condition of park facilities, accessibility, safety, and inclusivity. Recommended improvements include the following:

IMPROVED LIGHTING

CONSTRUCT FITNESS AREA

CLOSURE OF ENTRY TO TREATMENT PLANT FROM CHESTNUT STREET

IMPROVE PARKING AND DROP OFF FOR RIVER ACCESS

POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT OF BASKETBALL COURTS WITH MULTI-USE FIELD

REBUILD POOL HOUSE

ADD NATURE DECK

EXPAND SKATE PARK

REPAIR POOL AREA

CREATE OPEN SPACE

IMPROVE WALKS AND CREATE LOOP THROUGHOUT THE PARK

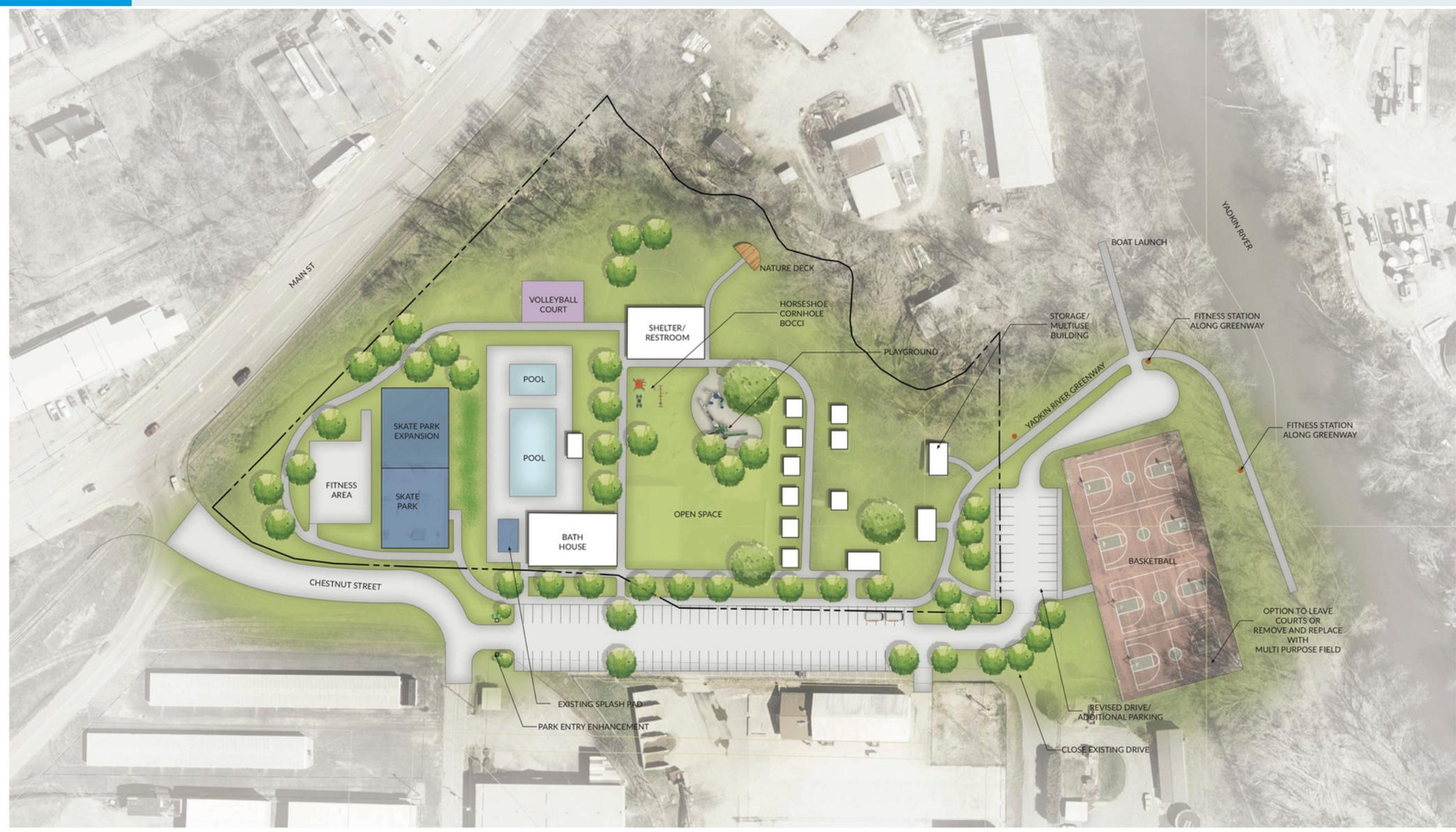
REFURBISH PICNIC SHELTERS

REPLACE PLAYGROUNDS

REPLACE PICNIC PAVILION WITH RESTROOMS

RECOMMENDATIONS

SMOOT PARK MASTER PLAN

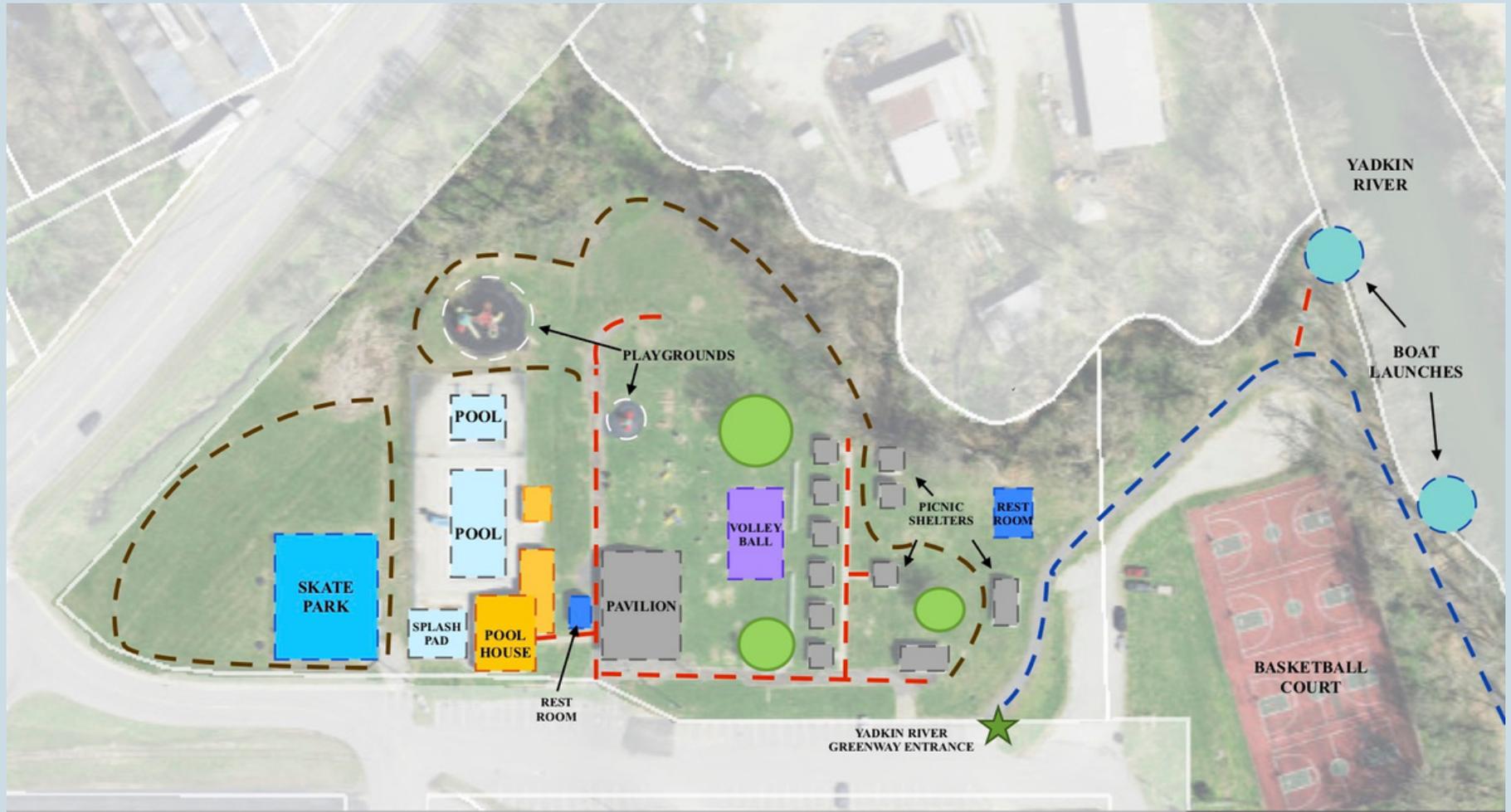




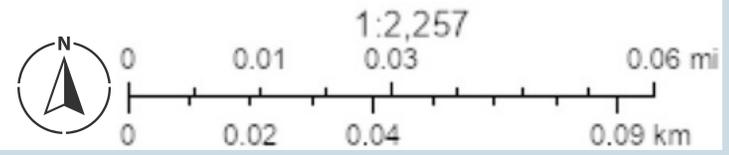
ACTION + PHASE PLAN

ACTION + PHASE PLAN

CURRENT CONDITIONS

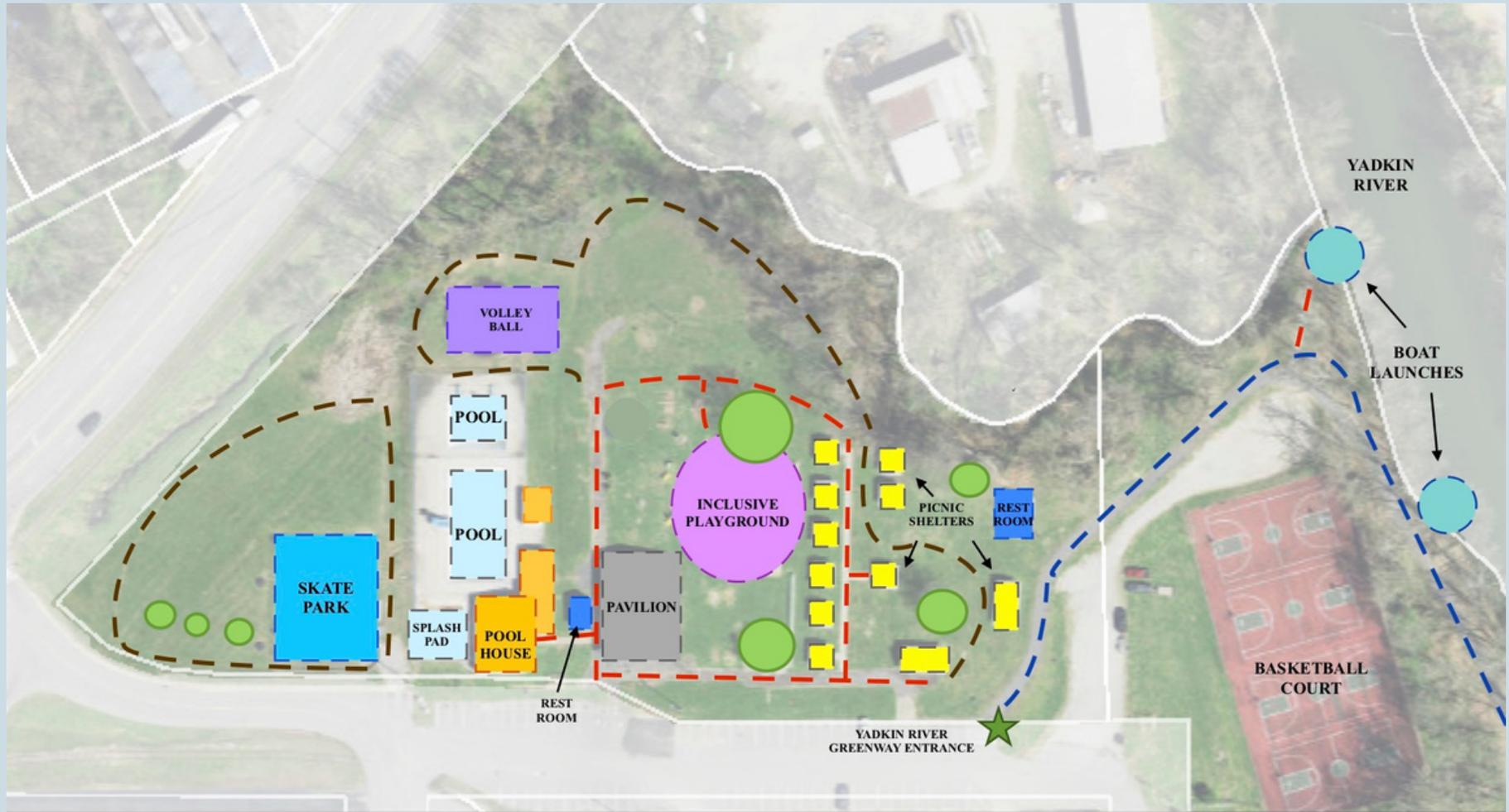


- — — Yadkin River Greenway Trail
- - - Storywalk
- - - Main Circulation
- Trees

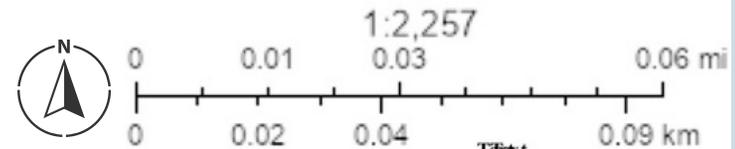


ACTION + PHASE PLAN

PHASE ONE



- Yadkin River Greenway Trail
- Storywalk
- Main Circulation
- Trees
- Painted picnic shelters



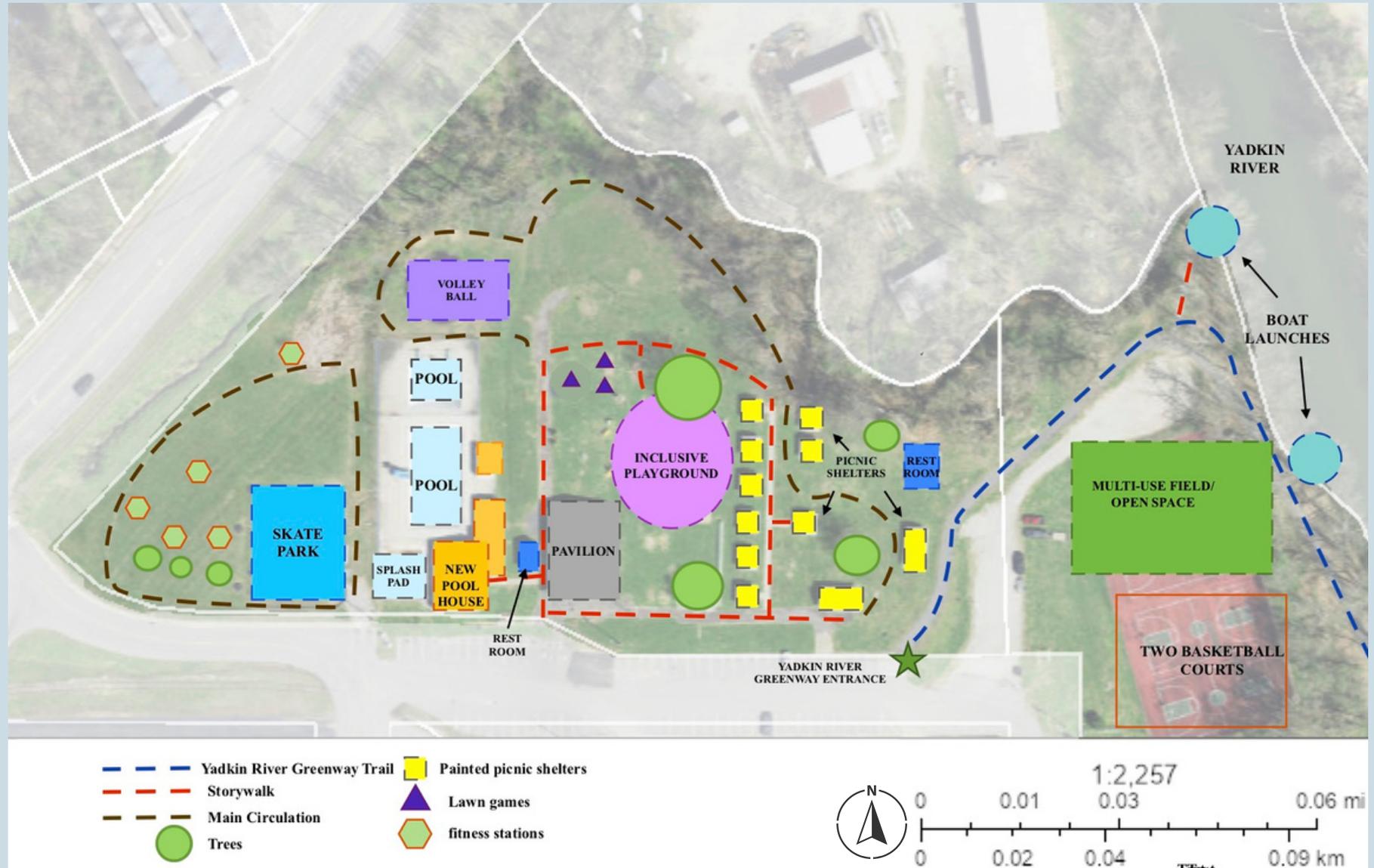
Objectives

- Inclusive Playground
- Volleyball Court/ Relocated Open Space

- Painted Picnic Shelters
- Initial Landscaping

ACTION + PHASE PLAN

PHASE TWO

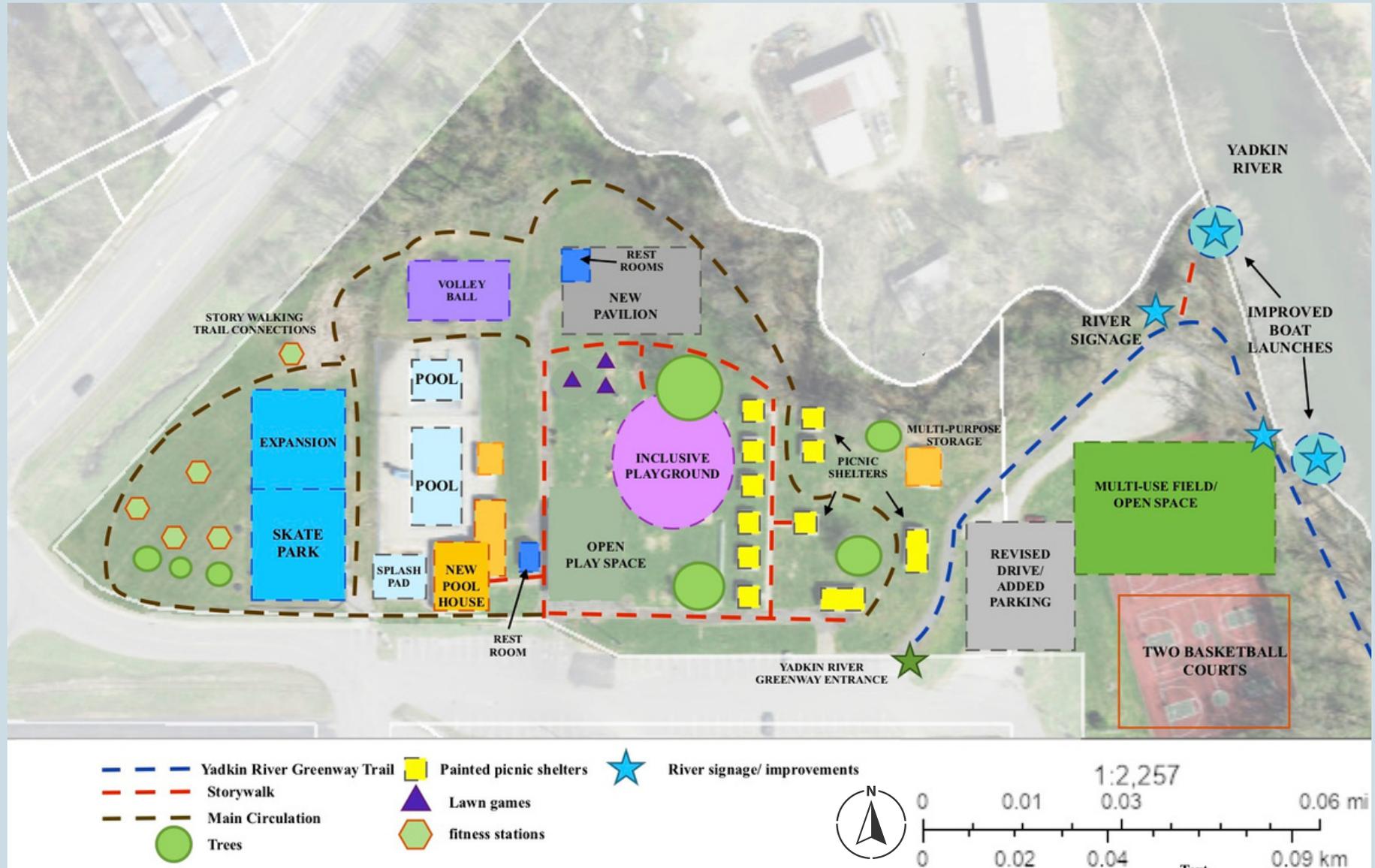


Objectives

- Pool house ADA renovation
- Pool Repair
- Lawn Games
- Half multi-use field/ open space
- Fitness Area/ Stations

ACTION + PHASE PLAN

PHASE THREE



Objectives

Skatepark Expansion

New Large Picnic Shelter

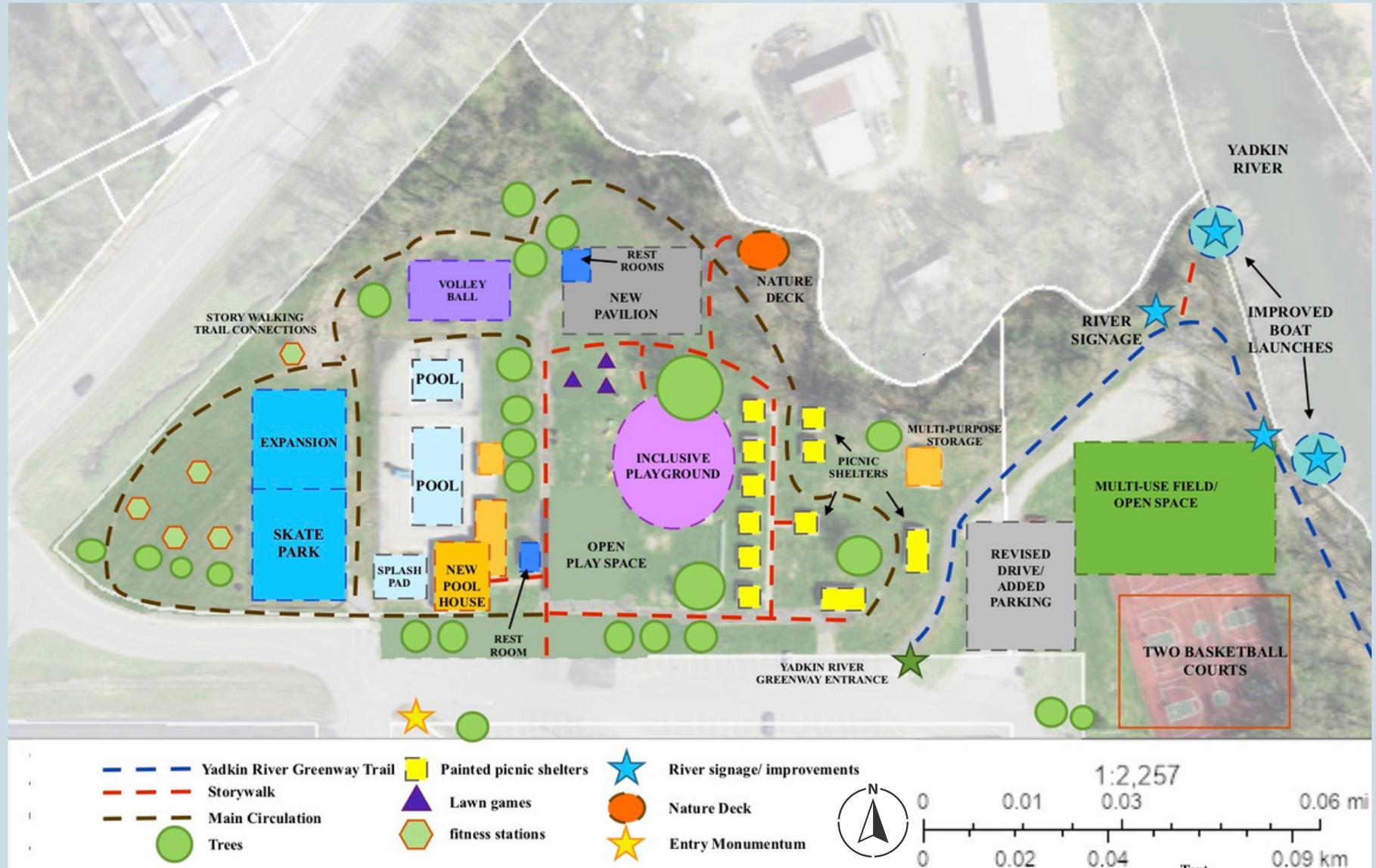
River Access Improvements

Story Walk Connections

Revised driveway/ boat turnaround and additional parking

ACTION + PHASE PLAN

PHASE FOUR

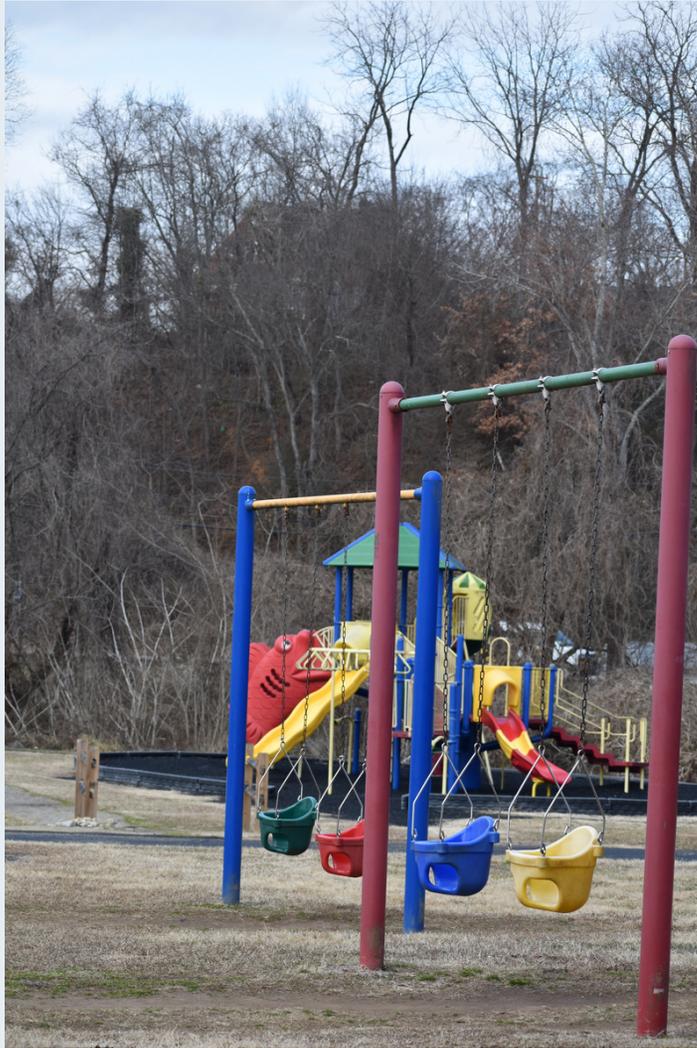


Objectives

Education/ Nature Deck
 Parking Lot Safety Improvements

Landscaping
 Entry Monument Sign

PHASE ONE



Older children lack a variety of recreation and play opportunities at the park.

INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

The play equipment has not been updated since the 1970s and is haphazardly scattered throughout the rear of the park. Parents are unable to easily supervise their children as the two main play structures for ages 2-5 and 5-12 are so far apart that it is impossible for one person to simultaneously look after a younger and older child.

Playground pieces lack a variety of options and require users to be able to fully step, climb, pull up, and grasp. Additionally, a lack of dedicated pathways and connections between the play equipment may exclude users who have trouble crossing uneven surfaces.



PHASE TWO



ADA POOLHOUSE RENOVATIONS

As the only public pool in the county, Smoot Park's pool house hasn't been renovated since its construction in 1974. The structure fails to meet ADA accessibility compliance. Users must enter through and use the pool house to check in, shower off and change, and store their belongings before entering the pool, diving well or splash pad.

ADA improvements would address:

- Bathroom remodel (Showers, Waterclosets, Sinks)
- Doorways
- Egress/Ingress
- Sidewalks
- Staff areas



POOL REPAIR

Additionally, the pump in the pool holds no pressure, which causes it to leak. Repair of the pool is a priority for maintaining the community's access to water-based recreation.

PHASE TWO

HALF MULTI-USE FIELD OR URBAN SOCCER PARK

Wilkes County's immigrant population (predominantly Hispanic and Burmese) lacks access to culturally relevant forms of recreation. Hispanics make up 6.5%, over half of whom are under the age of 18.

While soccer is a popular form of recreation within Latin American culture, no soccer fields exist within North Wilkesboro or the immediate vicinity. Players' use of the Memorial Park tennis courts for half court soccer games demonstrates the community's desire for a flexible playscape.



SOCGER FIELD IN BAY AREA CA (SOURCE: URBAN SOCCER PARK)



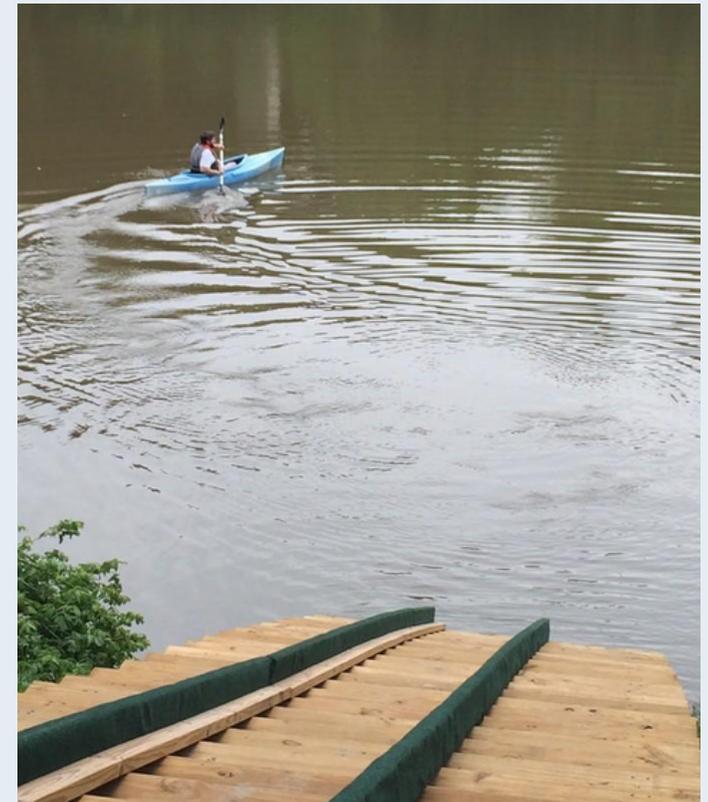
Smoot Park's basketball courts are an underutilized amenity that could fill this gap by converting the area to a natural surface. Because the area is partially located in the floodplain, continual repairs to the current surface are costly and unsustainable, making this a practical improvement for visitors and maintenance crews alike.

PHASE THREE



YADKIN RIVER ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

The two access points at the park provide the perfect midpoint stop for kayakers, canoeists, and tubers as they make their way from the Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir to Elkin. The first put in/take out features stairs leading to the water's edge, accessible from the greenway. The second put in/take out is located along an eddy downstream from the stairs.



RAMP RIVER ACCESS SOUTH FORK CATAWBA RIVER BLUEWAY (SOURCE: CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL)

PHASE THREE

SKATEPARK UPGRADE AND EXTENSION

Based on the public's feedback, we plan to double the size of the current Skate Park and use concrete formed challenge courses instead of a built environment.



CURRENT SKATE PARK



PROPOSED CONCRETE FORM PARK
(SOURCE: NAGS HEAD YMCA)

PHASE THREE

NEW DUAL USE PICNIC SHELTER

A new, larger picnic shelter with bathrooms and outdoor sinks will better and more efficiently serve patrons. Its location will be moved to the rear of the park in order to maximize open, green space adjacent to the inclusive playground.



PHASE FOUR

PARKING LOT IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements to the parking areas include reconfiguring the lot into a cohesive parking lot layout with the addition of trees. Additionally, the plan proposes to close the street at the terminus of the park and re-routes trucks to the Waste Water Plant through Vance Street.

EDUCATION NATURE DECK/ POLLINATOR GARDEN

The plan proposes interactive educational elements such as a wildlife viewing deck or pollinator garden. Nature education engages users of all ages and encourages appreciation for the environment and local wildlife.

ENTRY MONUMENT SIGN

Improved signage at the entrance of Smoot Park will further establish a sense of place and separate the space from adjacent traffic. Clear signage and reconfiguration of the parking lot's edge will deter cut-through traffic and improve the safety of the site for pedestrians.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping elements include installation of trees, shrubbery, and flowers throughout the park. Community volunteer days will provide opportunities for the public to directly contribute to Smoot Park's transformation.





APPENDIX

FEBRUARY PUBLIC INPUT MEETING OPTION A

