



RIVERLANDS MASTER PLAN

SUGAR HILL, GEORGIA

DECEMBER
2024

PREPARED FOR:



MASTER PLANNING CONSULTANT:



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WE ARE THANKFUL TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE DESIGN AND REVIEW PORTIONS OF THIS PROJECT. DUE TO THE COMMUNITY'S PASSION AND INPUT, AS WELL AS THE CITY'S LEADERSHIP, THE FUTURE OF RIVERLANDS WILL BE A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY SPACE THAT WILL SERVE ITS PEOPLE.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Brandon Hembree - Mayor
Joshua Page - Council Member
Gary Pirkle - Council Member
Meg Avery - Council Member
Alvin Hicks - Council Member
Taylor Anderson - Council Member

CITY STAFF

We would like to acknowledge and give thanks to the entire City staff that has supported and given valuable input during the Riverlands master planning process.

Special thanks to:

Paul Radford - City Manager
Artagus Newell - Planning Director
Troy Besseche - Assistant City Manager
Claire Weatherly - City Planner/Staff Liaison to Riverlands Authority
Andy McQuagge - Parks and Recreation Director

RIVERLANDS AUTHORITY BOARD

Denise Hoell - Chair of Board
Mark Hagen
Sheri Emigh
Taylor Anderson
Lexie Crowson
Steve Graessle
Mark Gernazian

DESIGN TEAM



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

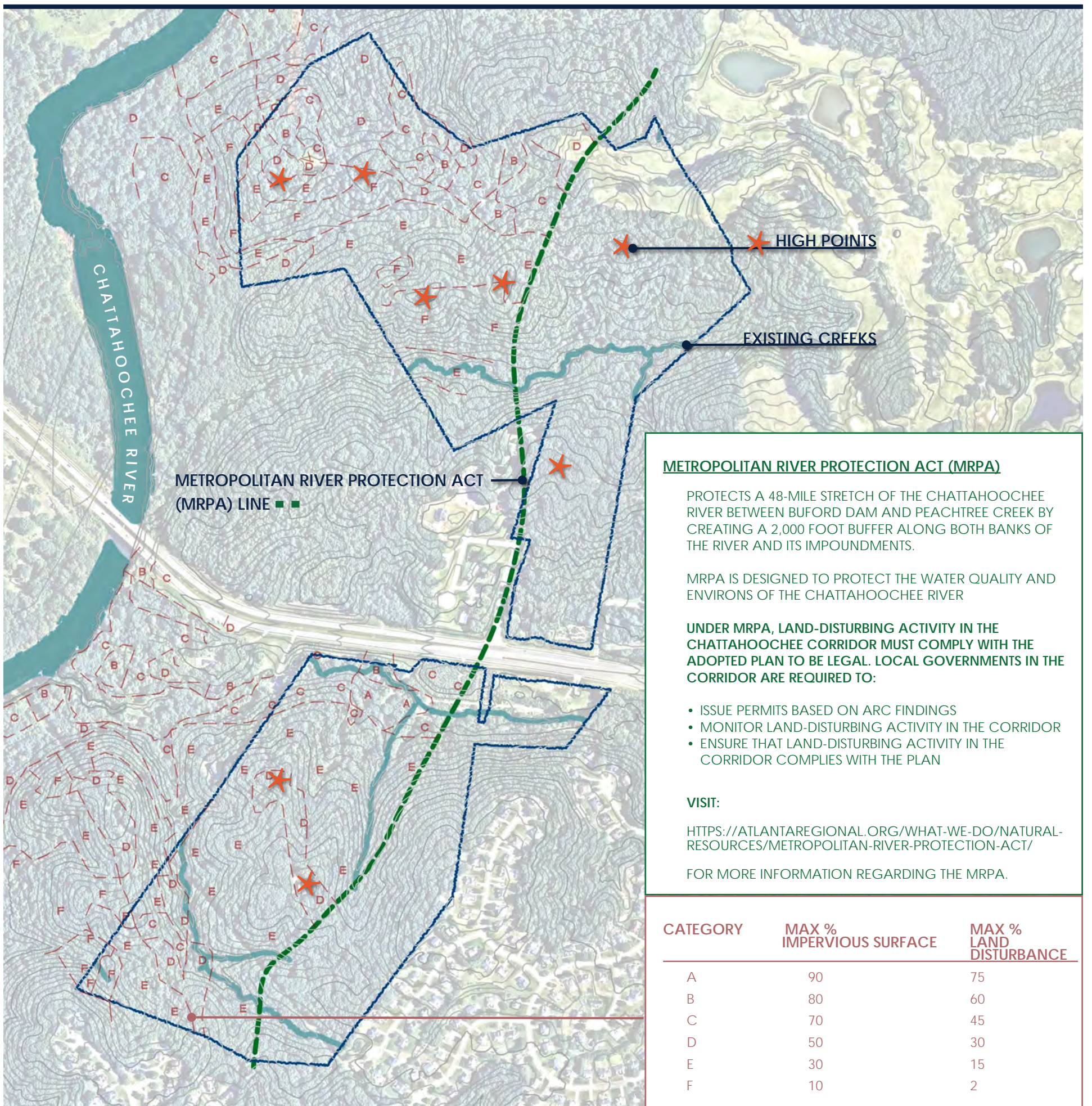
Introduction

The Sugar Hill Riverlands consists of 160 acres of land to the north and south of Cumming Highway. Just east of the Chattahoochee River, the Riverlands will prioritize greenspace and recreation amenities while including new commercial opportunities. Commercial opportunities will include retail, hospitality, and restaurant/dining.

This master plan has been designed with input from the community, market data, and programming analyses to ensure it meets the needs and desires of the citizens of Sugar Hill. The goal of this planning effort is to create a vibrant community space that offers both economic opportunities and recreational amenities.

Key planning points

1. Utilize high points for nature outlooks and backdrop opportunities
2. Utilize low slope/flat areas and ridges for vehicular circulation
3. Avoid the steepest slopes
4. Minimize stream crossing and impacts
5. Take advantage of unique areas and view opportunities
6. Minimize conflicts with and leverage the opportunities created by the existing city-owned golf course
7. Apply the **METROPOLITAN RIVER PROTECTION ACT (MRPA)** standards to enhance water quality through the minimization of land disturbing activities



METHODOLOGY & FINDINGS

Summary

The project team facilitated public input meetings, open houses, and presentations. These events were intended to provide a collaborative platform for the community to share their ideas and provide feedback. Different master plan scenarios were presented to residents and stakeholders, and through these sessions, the design team identified the priorities that would guide the master planning process.



Open House 1

City of Sugar Hill hosted two identical open houses in June 2024 to provide background information on the property and receive input from community members on programming opportunities.

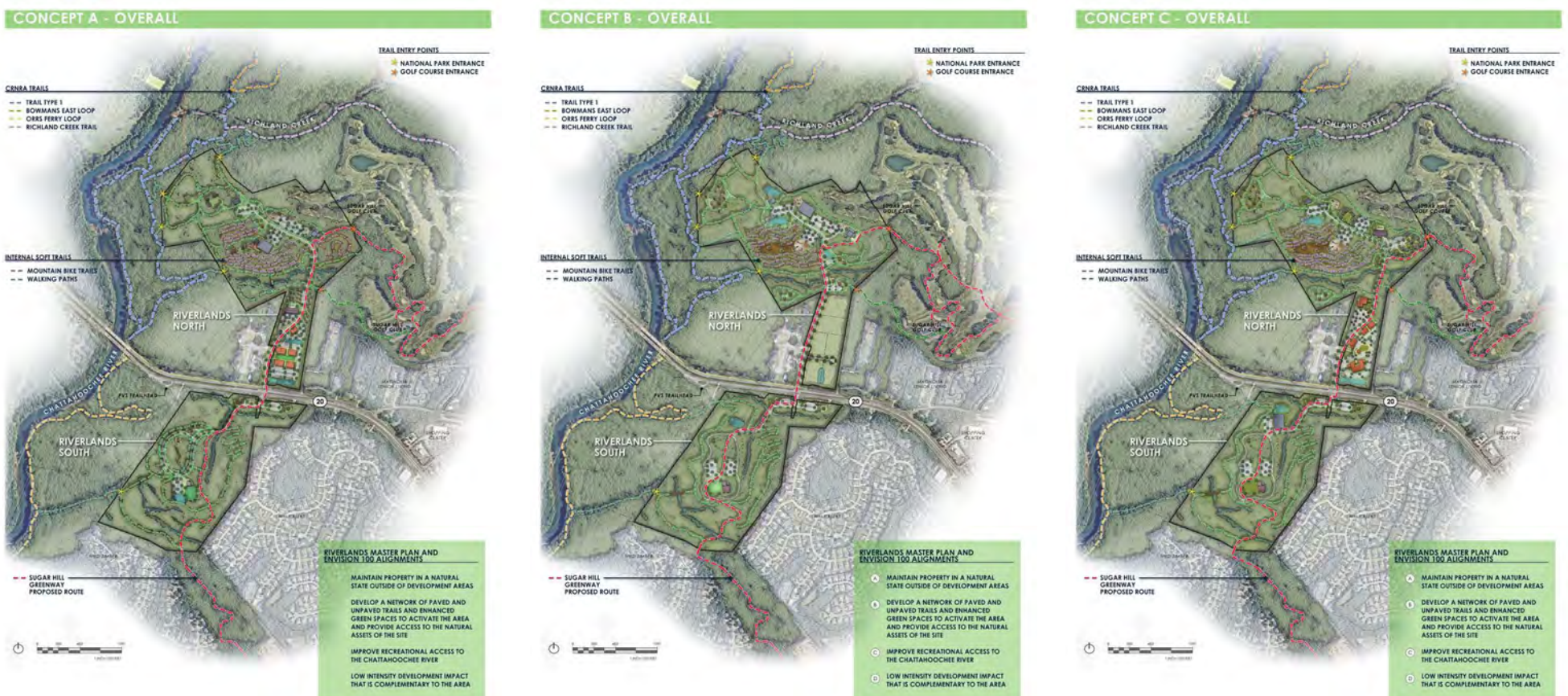
Design Process Round 1 & Public Meeting

In preparation for the second public meeting, the teams focus was to gather maximum feedback from the development authority directors regarding the opportunities of the future development. Prior to the meeting, three different concept plans (shown below) were designed to reflect the feedback given by the City, the citizens, and National Parks Service. This included precedent imagery to give the viewer a sense of scale, programming, and themes that they could imagine within the Riverlands.

Design Process Round 2 & Open House 2

The third and final meeting included a presentation of the final draft concept plan that was refined in response to the second public meeting and additional meetings with the City of Sugar Hill and stakeholders.

Design Process - 3 Scenarios



PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Public Input from Previous Plans

- Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace Master Plan



Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace Master Plan

Public involvement, completed in 2022, was comprised of a survey and stakeholder interviews. Key takeaways include:

<p>Top 5 activities respondents are most likely to participate in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walking 2. Hiking 3. Swimming 4. Dog Park 5. Playground 	<p>86% of respondents chose the following as the greatest benefit of greenspace preservation:</p> <p>Access to nature or escape from urbanized environment.</p>	<p>Top 5 amenities respondents would like to see at parks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trails/Paths 2. Shade and Trees 3. Bottle Filler Water Fountain 4. Dog Park 5. Bathrooms
---	---	--

- Envision 100 - Sugar Hill 2039 Comprehensive Plan



ENVISION100 Comprehensive Plan Update

Public involvement, completed in 2023, was comprised of a survey, community roundtable conversations, and open houses. Key takeaways include:

66% of survey respondents chose Parks and Greenspace as what they love most about their daily life in Sugar Hill.	48% of survey respondents chose Parks and Greenspace for ways daily life in Sugar Hill could be better.	76% of survey respondents chose Parks and Greenspace as high for personal level of importance.
"Trees and Wildlife" was the top choice for being most significant over the next 15 years to survey respondents at 88%.	Open house participants overall supported more greenspace and enhanced usability of existing greenspace.	Open house participants and roundtable participants showed support for passive recreation such as walking or jogging.

Riverlands Open Houses - June 2024

The City facilitated open houses at the beginning of June to offer community members the opportunity to review and comment on different programming options for the Riverlands. Attendees shared their input by placing stickers indicating that they "love", "hate", or feel neutral for each opportunity presented. Attendees were also able to leave comments on the programming and plan. The results are shown in the table below:

Program Options	Green - Love	Yellow - Neutral	Orange - Hate
Paved Paths	31	10	21
Unpaved Paths	75	1	0
Nature Center	29	4	13
Recreation Retail	8	9	28
Botanical Garden	30	6	7
Community Garden	7	14	12
Glamping	3	9	40
Restaurants	30	3	31
Mountain Biking Trails	45	11	4
Event Center	17	6	42
River Activities	59	4	5
Picnic Areas	58	8	10

Comment Responses from June Open House

"Beautiful land, keep it as natural as possible!"

"No fast food restaurant. I would also like safer access to the river to be able to fish or just sit and relax"

"Event center/recreation/any retail - no big chains keep it small local shops *locally owned*"

"Nature Center, Interactive Playground for Kids"

"Areas on the river for various activity fishing, camping, kayak, dog swimming area"

"If unpaved trails are developed provide "off road" wheel chairs for disabled."

Riverlands Open House - November 2024

A final draft plan was presented at the November Open House for review by the community. Three draft scenarios were presented to the Riverlands Authority and were narrowed down to create the final draft.

Through the Open House there were:

- 25 Completed Surveys
- 61 Open House Attendees

Question & Comment Responses from November Open House

"Are there any recreations uses/ amenities contained in the current draft concept plan that you would like to see added, omitted or modified? If so, please list and let us know why."

"More mountain biking trails"

"I like the idea of restrooms or covered rest areas where the current home stands in the south side of the plan."

"Minimize commercial space to the exceptional niche-y special and unique"

"I like the idea of the commercial village center but I would like to see it smaller to have more nature"

"More buffer around dirt bike park"

"Do you have any comments regarding the areas designated for commercial use?"

"Make this area unique with a good development plan . Restaurants would be a plus. Possible spot for running/bike shops, a high end gym . Maybe make it a 2nd phase to make sure the right developer is there"

"Keep it small"

"I think some commercial space and a restaurant there would be fantastic"

"Can any of the items be stream/creekside for a riverwalk feel?"

"Share any comments you may have on the implementation of the plan!"

"Continue to engage the community to bring more awareness"

"Excited about how the plans can support the students in our schools"

"Make all aspects of the mountain biking and dining exceptional. Create it and people will come!"

"Would like to see it broken down into phases each phase reviewed by public comment before beginning next phase."

"The sooner the better"

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

CRNRA TRAILS

- TRAIL TYPE 1
- ORRS FERRY LOOP
- RICHLAND CREEK TRAIL

INTERNAL TRAILS/PATHS

TOTAL TRIALS: 6.8 MILES

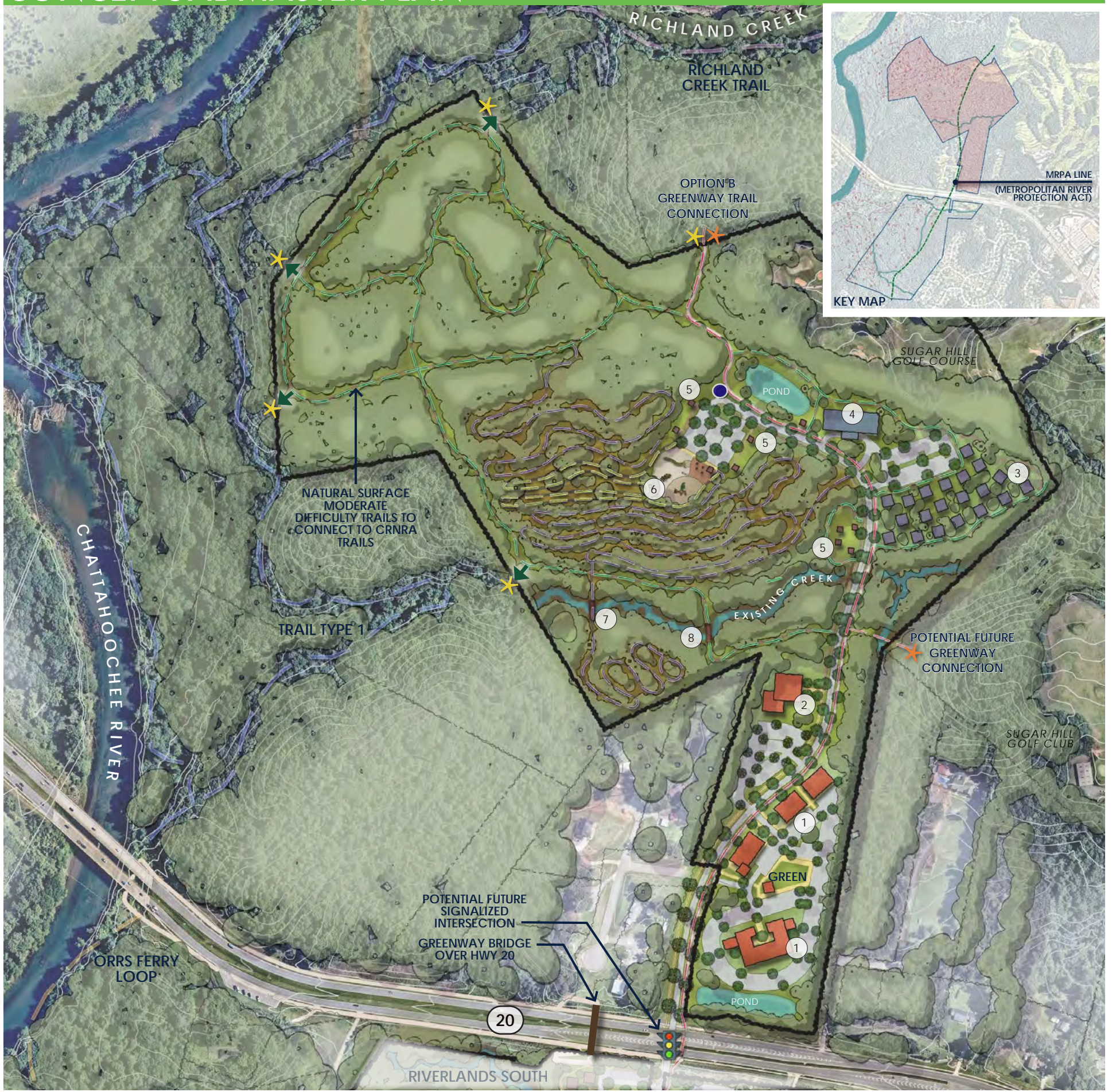
- ADVANCED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS (2.0 MILES)
- BEGINNER MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS (0.5 MILE)
- HIKING/BIKING PATHS (4.3 MILES)
- ← CRNRA PEDESTRIAN TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- TOTAL GREENWAY: 1.2 MILES



RIVERLANDS MASTER PLAN AND ENVISION 100 ALIGNMENTS

- (A)** MAINTAIN PROPERTY IN A NATURAL STATE OUTSIDE OF DEVELOPMENT AREAS
- (B)** DEVELOP A NETWORK OF PAVED AND UNPAVED TRAILS AND ENHANCED GREEN SPACES TO ACTIVATE THE AREA AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE NATURAL ASSETS OF THE SITE
- (C)** IMPROVE RECREATIONAL ACCESS TO THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER
- (D)** LOW INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT IMPACT THAT IS COMPLEMENTARY TO THE AREA

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



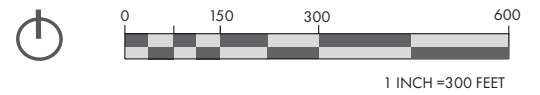
NATURE THEMED PLAYGROUNDS



RENTALS: HOTEL/HOSPITALITY



COMMERCIAL VILLAGE CENTER



KEY ELEMENTS

- POTENTIAL NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE
- GREENWAY CONNECTION
- CRNRA PEDESTRIAN TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- TRAILS NORTH: 4.5 MILES TOTAL
 - 2.0 MILES OF ADVANCED MOUNTAIN BIKE COURSE
 - 0.5 OF BEGINNER MOUNTAIN BIKE COURSE
 - 2.0 MILES OF HIKING/BIKING PATHS
- GREENWAY NORTH: 0.6 MILES TOTAL
- MAINTENANCE FACILITY
- 40,000 SF OF RETAIL/COMMERCIAL
- 8,000 SF RESTAURANT AT HIGH POINT
- 20 RENTALS (HOTEL/ HOSPITALITY OPERATED) OVERLOOKING CREEK & GOLF COURSE
- GENERAL RECREATION BUILDING/RESTROOMS
- PICNIC AREAS
- LARGE NATURE THEMED PLAYGROUND
- MOUNTAIN BIKE BRIDGE OVER EXISTING CREEK
- PEDESTRIAN/BIKE BRIDGE OVER EXISTING CREEK

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



NATURE CENTER - MATERIALS THAT BLEND WITH NATURE



FOLLY STRUCTURE



COVERED BRIDGE AT ENTRY CREEK CROSSING

KEY ELEMENTS

- POTENTIAL NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE
- GREENWAY CONNECTION
- CRNRA PEDESTRIAN TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- TRAILS SOUTH: 2.3 MILES TOTAL
- HIKING NATURE PATHS
- GREENWAY SOUTH: 0.6 MILES
- MAINTENANCE FACILITY

- 1 GREENWAY BRIDGE
- 2 ROPE BRIDGE ACROSS RAVINE
- 3 FOLLY STRUCTURE ON HIGH POINT
- 4 PICNIC AREAS
- 5 TWO-WAY ROAD (ALONG EXISTING DRIVEWAY) TO TURN AROUND LOOP
- 6 POTENTIAL ROAD LOOP OPTION
- 7 FUTURE PUBLIC AMENITY
- 8 ANGLED PARKING OFF OF ENTRY DRIVE (20 SPACES TOTAL)
- 9 NATURE CENTER AT ENTRY WITH VISIBILITY FROM HIGHWAY 20
- 10 TRAILHEAD PARKING WITH PICNIC AREAS AT HWY 20

CONCLUSION



This plan reflects a comprehensive approach with extensive involvement from residents and stakeholders. The success of any planning document lies in its implementation. The master plan presents a community-driven vision that can be executed in phases, ultimately enhancing the recreational assets within the community.

"Make all aspects of the mountain biking and dining exceptional. Create it and people will come!"

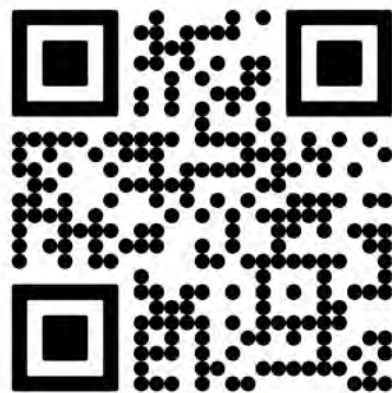
"I love the focus on nature and green space and I hope that the Sugar Hill Greenway will eventually be connected to this space. It would be an amazing compliment to our community."

"Hurry up and build it!"

"Love the idea as a whole, so often I have to drive far to get quality hiking areas and it would mean so much to have this in Sugar Hill."



Previous Master Plans



National Parks Plans



Full Size Master Plans