



Mason Mill Master Plan Update



Prepared for:

DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Department

DeKalb County, GA



Prepared by:

WSP USA Environment and Infrastructure, Inc.

March 24, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mason Mill Park is a large 120-acre park with multiple amenities that attract children, hikers, cyclists, tennis players, gardeners, and seniors seeking various indoor and outdoor activities and crafts.

In March 2020, DeKalb County Parks and Recreation Department selected WSP to prepare a Master Plan update for Mason Mill Park, which had been originally created in May of 2009. The planning process included a study, an inventory of existing conditions, identification of opportunities and constraints, development and evaluation of alternative concepts for the recreational center, tennis shop and offices, naturalist's facility, and other park amenities. This updated master plan includes a modified tennis center pyramid, additional on-street parking, a new office/storage/restroom building for County's naturalist, an improved sidewalk connection to the Toco Hill-Avis G. Williams branch of the Dekalb County Library, and the addition of a dumpster along McConnell Drive.

Using available site information, the primary purpose of the plan was to evaluate the existing facilities, develop proposed schematic alternatives, conduct a license and parking study and to survey the Park's users. Based on input received from stakeholders and County Staff, the following amenities were considered priorities in the implementation of the Mason Mill Park Master Plan Update:



- Improved tennis center (modified pyramid)
- Additional on-street parking
- New office/storage/restroom building on trailhead
- Improved pedestrian circulation to library
- Addition of trash dumpster on McConnell Drive

SITE INVENTORY

Neighborhood Context

Mason Mill Park is a 120-acre Community Park located in the North Druid Hills/Toco Hills area of DeKalb County. The Park is surrounded by a mix of high-density and medium-density residential development, townhomes, condominiums, office parks and commercial corridors.

Neighborhoods near Mason Mill Park include Heritage Hills, Toco Hills, Creek Park Hills, Leafmore Hills, Sagamore Hills, Wilson Woods, University Heights, North Decatur Heights, Berkley Mews and Amanda Woods. The Clairmont Road and North Druid Hills Road commercial corridors lie within the immediate vicinity of the park. The Park is in close proximity to the Veteran's Administration Hospital, Emory University Hospital, Egleston Children's Hospital, Wesley Woods Geriatric Hospital, Emory University, and the Toco Hills shopping center.

To the southwest of the park are more traditional medium density single family residential neighborhoods. Schools within 1.5 miles of the park include Arbor Montessori, Medlock Elementary, Druid Hills High, Tamika High, Open Campus High, Cliff Valley Elementary, and Ben Franklin Academy. Churches within 1.5 miles of the park include Intown Community Church, Young Israel, Clairmont Presbyterian, Clairmont Hills Baptist, North Decatur Presbyterian, Scott Boulevard Baptist, Emory Presbyterian, Congregation Beth Jacob, St. Bartholomew's Episcopal, Peachtree Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, and Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

However, the predominant character of the areas immediately surrounding the park is residential. To the northeast of the park, the Toco Hills neighborhood consists largely of senior-age residents living in multi-family dwellings. To the southwest of the park, the Heritage Hills neighborhood contains medium-sized single-family homes in a well-established neighborhood.

There is an understood change in the demographics of the neighborhoods surrounding Mason Mill Park. In the past, the majority of residents in these neighborhoods have been senior-aged. However, the more recent demographic trends indicate that a larger percentage of young families have moved into the area.



Toco Hill/Avis G. Williams Library



Mason Mill Park Aerial Photograph



EXISTING CONDITIONS



Mason Mill Park has an asphalt parking lot with two entrances on McConnell Drive, one northwest of the existing recreation center and the other south of the tennis court facility.



Adjacent to the existing recreation and senior centers are two playground areas with a restroom building in between.



The existing Mason Mill Recreation Center is accessed from the park's parking lot.



The second floor of the building serves as the Mack Love Senior Center (Life Enrichment Services) and is accessed from the south elevation on McConnell Drive.





The Central Dekalb Senior Center is next to the Recreation Center on McConnell Drive.



The Tennis Pro Shop sits atop ziggurat viewing steps and is surrounded by 17 lighted tennis courts.



Interior of Tennis Pro Shop





Community Garden for the Mason Mill Garden Club is located north of the parking lot.



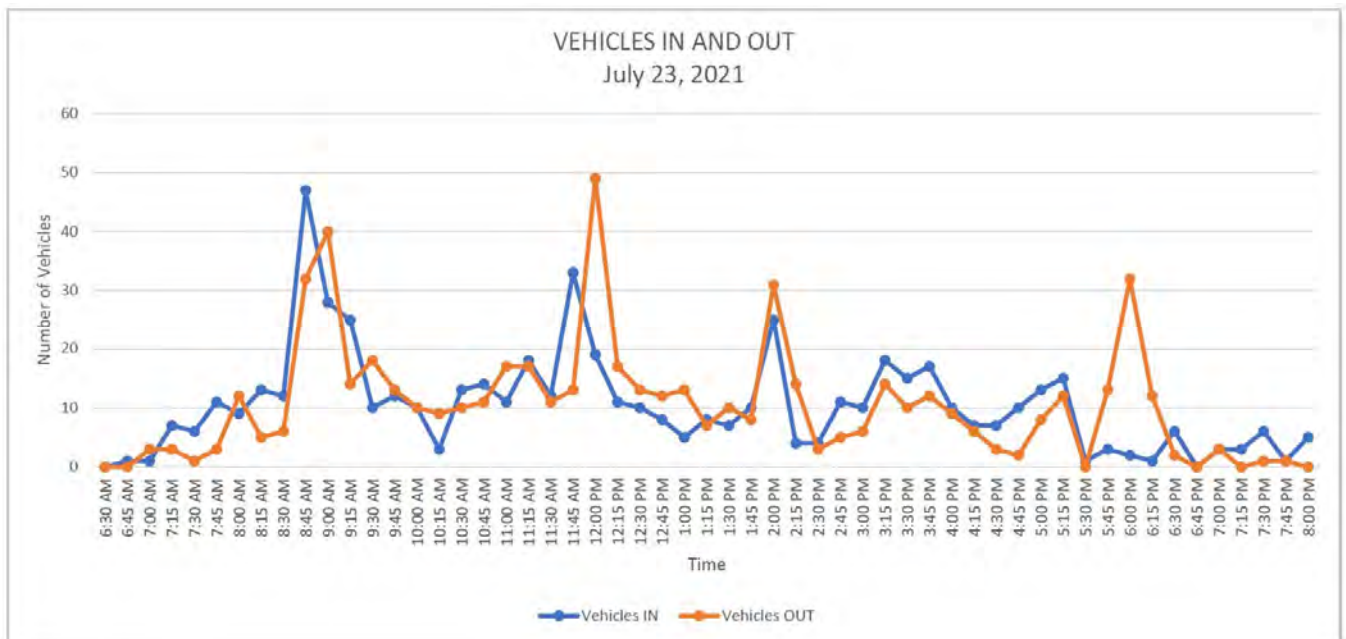
EXISTING PARKING STUDY

Currently, there is a total of 280 parking spaces at Mason Mill Park. Our team was tasked to prepare a parking study and to gather information on the vehicles entering, exiting, and parking for extended periods of time at Mason Mill Park from sun-up to sun-down. Tables included in the Appendix depict the results of License Plate Survey from both July 23 (Friday) and September 4 (Saturday – Labor Day Weekend).

License Plate Survey on July 23, 2021

WSP assigned one staff at the main entrance along McConnell Drive, and another staff at the park entrance at the end of McConnel Drive, intersecting with the subdivision entrance at Mason Mill Road. At midday, three WSP staffs arrived on site to replace the original two, and an additional staff to assist at the main entrance due to the volume of vehicle activities observed. Table I in the Appendix show the results of the License Plate Survey for July 23.

Below chart reflects the number of vehicles entering and exiting the park throughout the day:

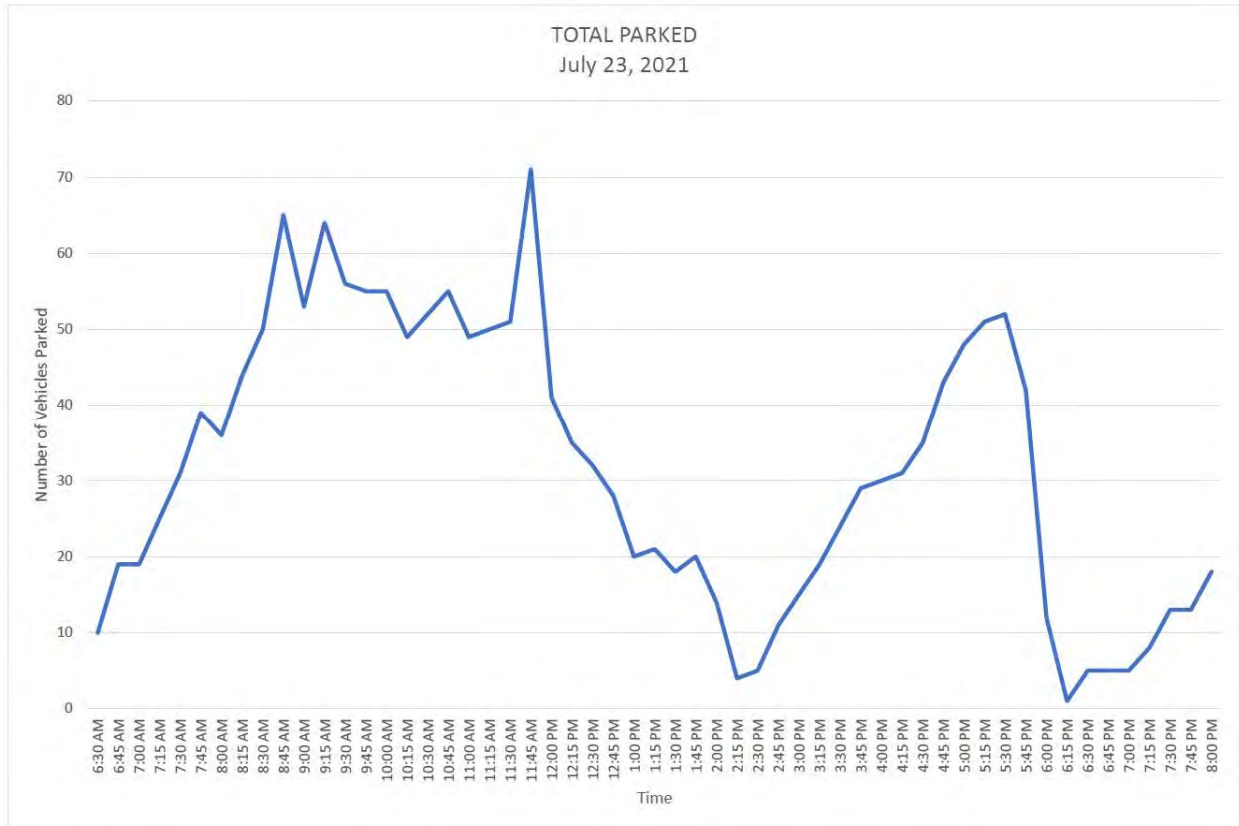


During the survey, it was also observed that several vehicles in and out Mason Mill Park were driving too fast. Many exiting cars even ignored the stop sign and continued the 90-degree turn into McConnell Drive without even touching the breaks. The observation was a clear hazard to pedestrians and other vehicles in the area. Some pedestrians and/or residents reiterated this concern to several of the WSP’s staffs on site. Traffic calming devices should be considered in Mason Mill Park.

That Friday when the License Plate Survey was performed, several events were taking place: a Pickleball Tournament, a Tennis Camp, and a Summer Camp for younger kids. For most of the day, many entered the park and never left (they remained parked), until the heavy rain moved in around 6:30 pm.



Below chart reflects the total vehicles parked at any given time during the survey:



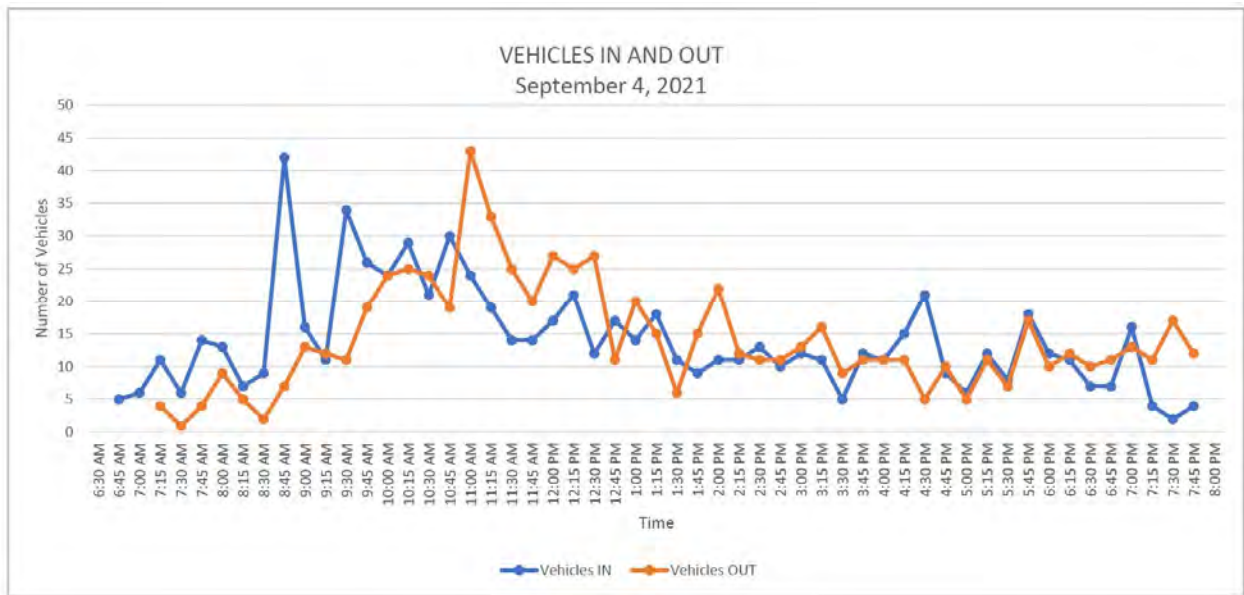
From the above chart, we can see that just before noon, the number of parked vehicles peaked to 71. The peak parking recorded from this day represents approximately 25% of the total parking capacity in Mason Mill Park. As stated above, the Park has a capacity of 280 available parking spaces.



License Plate Survey on September 4, 2021

WSP assigned two staffs at the main entrance along McConnell Drive, and another staff at the park entrance at the end of McConnel Drive, intersecting with the subdivision entrance at Mason Mill Road. At midday, three other WSP staffs arrived on site to replace the original three and collected surveyed license plates data until sundown. Table II in the Appendix show the results of the License Plate Survey for September 4.

Below chart reflects the number of vehicles entering and exiting the park throughout the day:

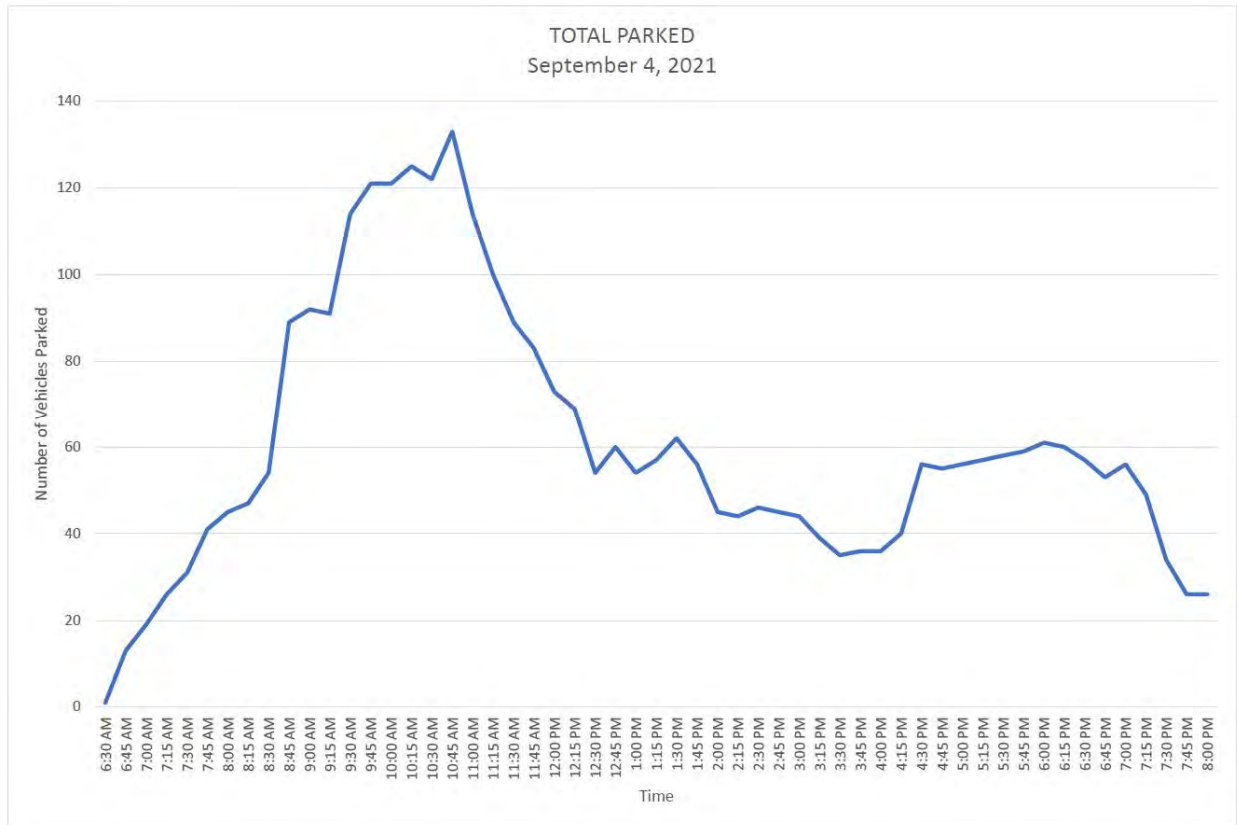


The County placed warning signs about the Parking Study along McConnel Drive and at both entrances. Even though the signs helped with decreasing speeding behavior of many drivers, there were still some drivers who ignored the signs.

Some pedestrians and park users pointed out that it was “unusually” quiet Saturday at the park, likely due to the Labor Day holiday and people traveling. Our team observed couple smaller tennis classes going on during that day; however, there was no any tennis tournament scheduled. The users confirmed that, when a tennis tournament is scheduled, the park is typically packed, and it can be difficult to find a parking spot.



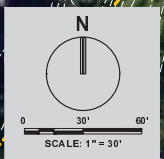
Below chart reflects the total vehicles parked at any given time during the survey. From the chart, we can see that just before 11 am, parking peaked at around 133 vehicles. The peak parking recorded from this day was approximately 48% of the total capacity of Mason Mill Mark.



OVERALL MASTER PLAN

In this section, the overall master plan is presented, then followed by the enlargements of each of the park areas where the improvements have been proposed.





Office, Storage and Restroom Building

The office/storage/restroom facility is located adjacent to the trail head. Its program includes a unisex restroom, a 144 SF storage space, accessible by an overhead coiling door, and an office for the Park Naturalist. The building has exterior masonry walls with a single slope standing seam metal roof.



Proposed office/storage/restroom building to be located near the trailhead south of the tennis facility

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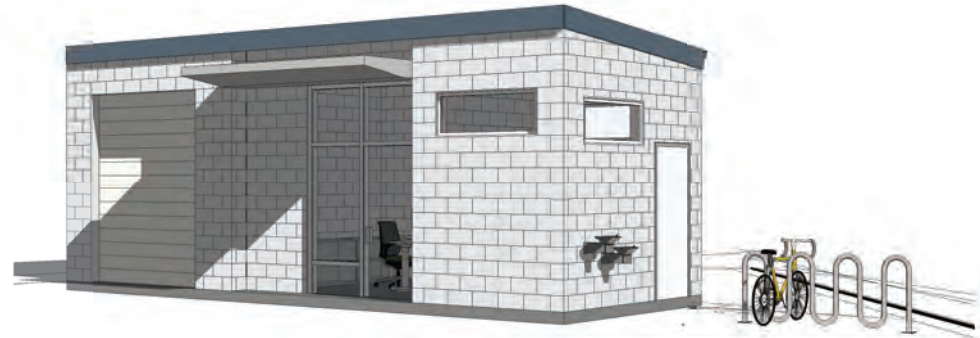
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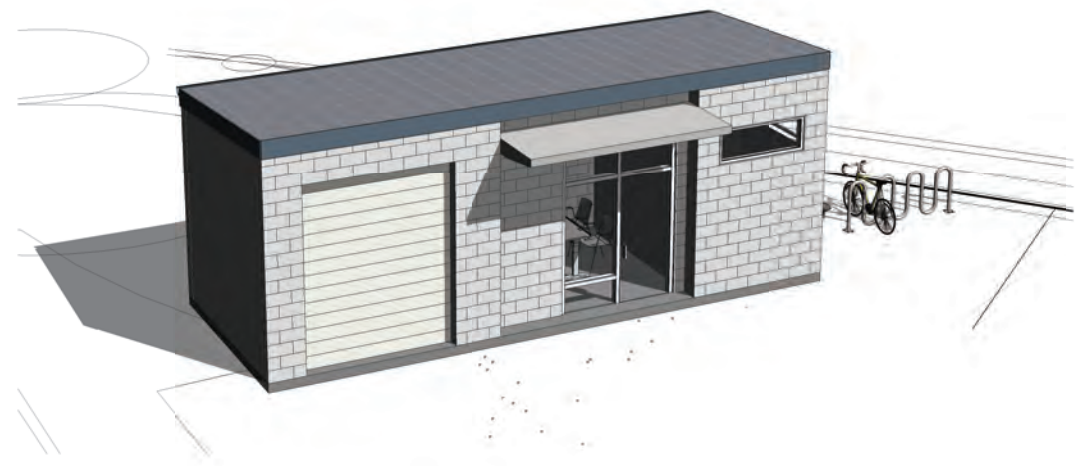
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12

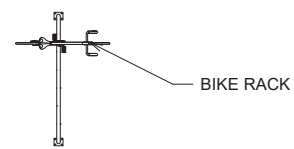
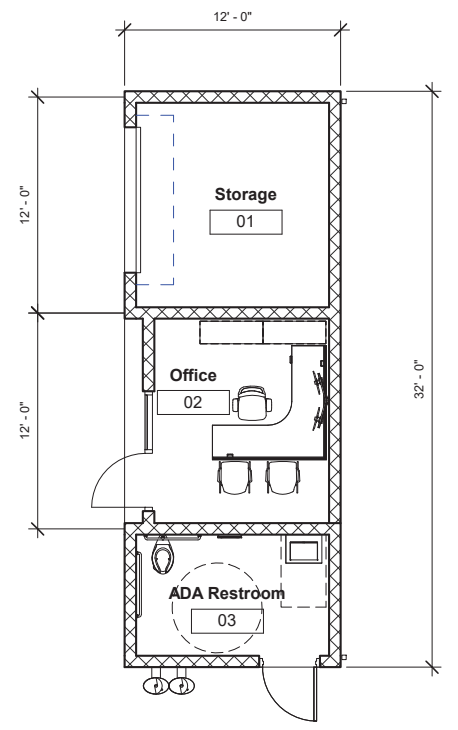
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② 3D View - 1



③ 3D View - 2



① FLOOR PLAN - RESTROOM/OFFICE/STORAGE
3/16" = 1'-0"

ENGINEERING/ARCHITECTURE:
wood.
 ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE, INC.
 1075 BIG SHANTY ROAD, NW
 SUITE 100
 KENNESAW, GA 30144
 TEL: (770) 421-3400

NOT VALID WITHOUT SIGNATURE AND DATE

PROJECT:
Mason Mill Master Plan - Update
 1450 McConnell Dr,
 Decatur GA 30033
DEKALB COUNTY GA
 Wood PROJECT No:
 6166201405

REVISIONS			
NO.	DATE	BY	APPR.

DESIGNED BY:	ON
DRAWN BY:	ON
CHECKED BY:	MI
IN CHARGE:	MI
DATE:	01/09/23

SHEET TITLE:
Jonah's Office/ Storage Plan

SHEET NUMBER:
A105
SHEET OF SHEETS

Concept Design

1

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Dumpster Area

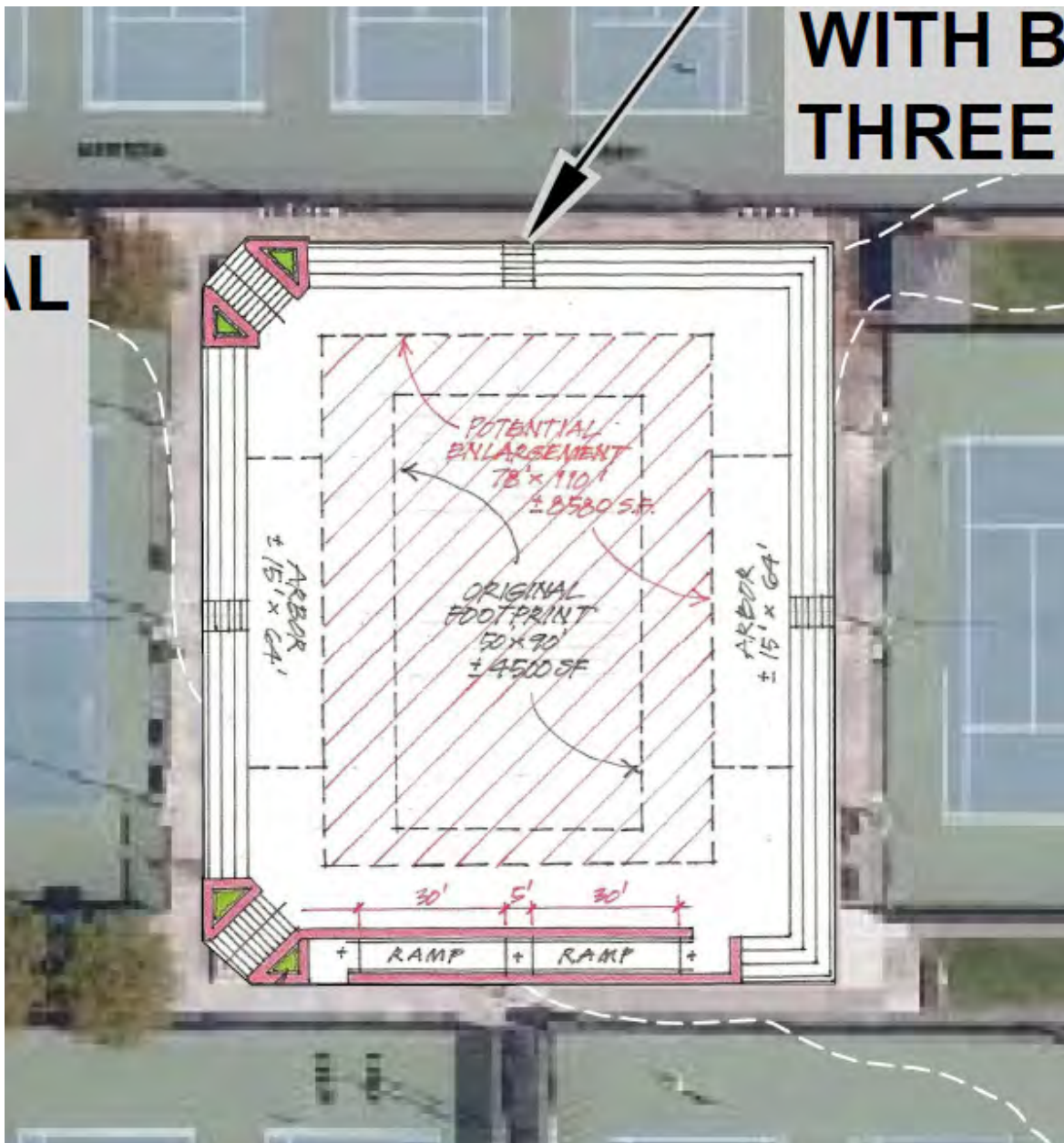
Across from the existing recreation center is an area for three parking spaces that will be converted into a pad for a new trash dumpster and enclosure.



Three (3) parking spaces to be removed and replaced with trash dumpster and enclosure.

Tennis Facility

Currently, the tennis pro shop sits atop a tiered concrete ziggurat surrounded by 17 tennis courts. This ziggurat and the existing pro shop will be demolished to build a shorter ziggurat, new offices and a pro shop.





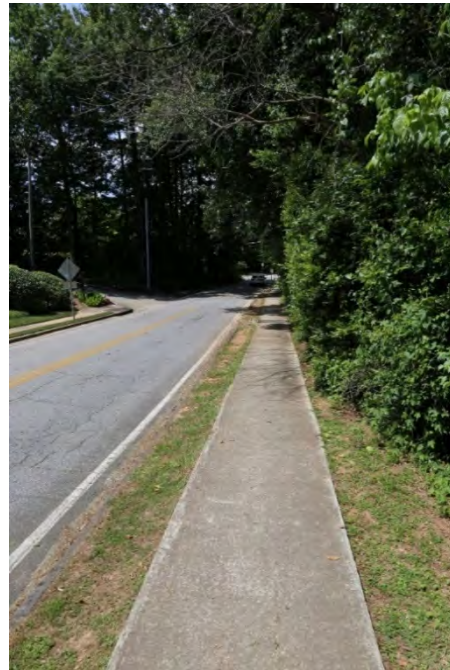
View of the existing tennis pro shop atop tiered concrete ziggurat

Sidewalk Improvements

The current pedestrian connection between the park and the library is a 4-foot sidewalk with a 2-foot grass strip along the curb. Cracking has also created an uneven surface. Proposed improvements include repair and widening of the sidewalk to five (5) feet.



Improved sidewalk along McConnell Drive

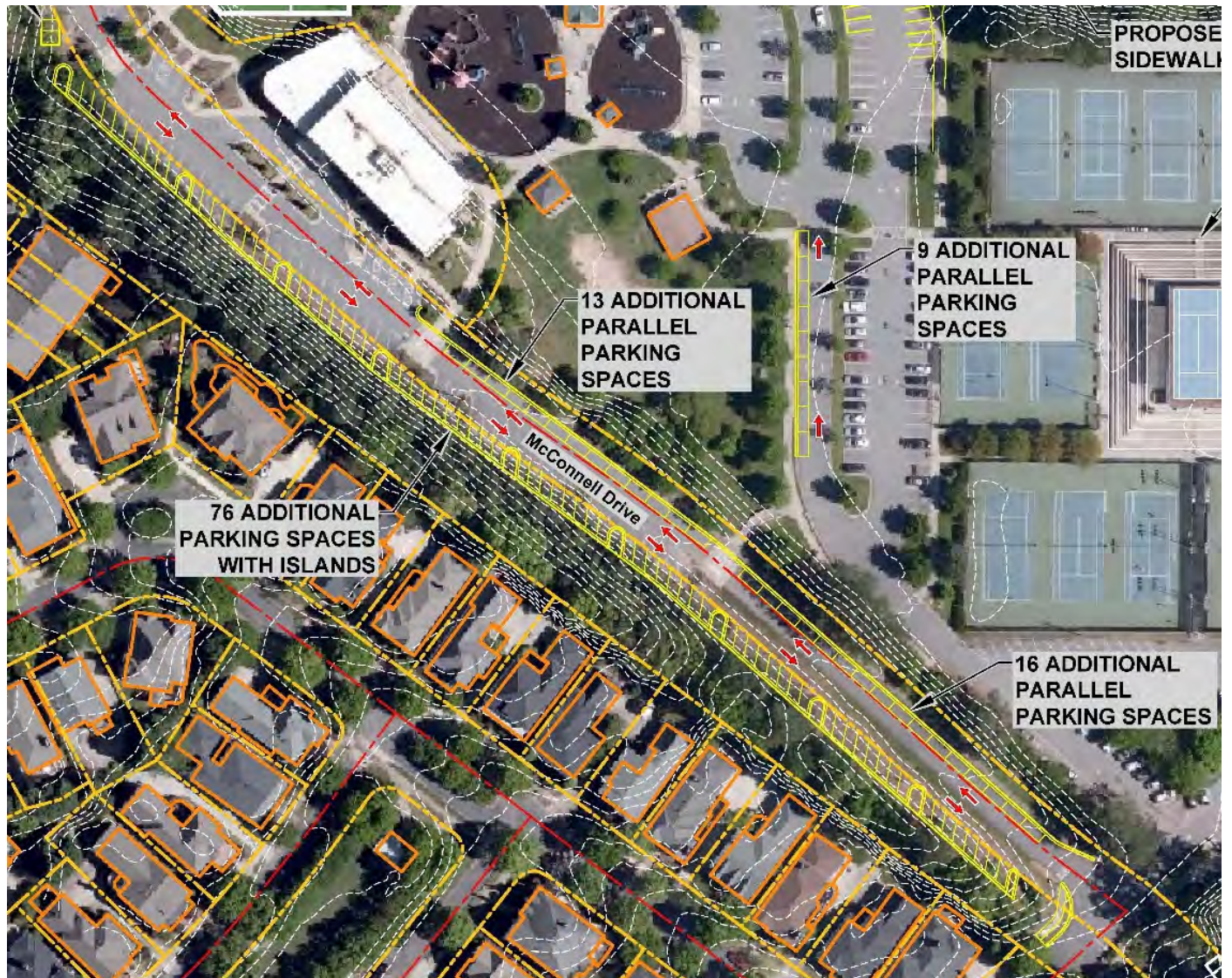


Existing 4-foot sidewalk



Additional Parking along McConnell Drive

Seventy six (76) additional angled parking spaces will be created on the south side of McConnell Drive while twenty nine (29) parallel spaces will be added on the north side. In addition, nine (9) new parallel spaces will be created along the drive aisle in the main parking lot.





*McConnell Drive looking west.
76 additional angled parking proposed on the left with 29 new parallel spaces on the right.*



*Main parking lot looking north
9 new parallel spaces proposed on the left side of drive*



IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on meetings with the stakeholders and County staff, the Master Plan proposes:

- A new tennis center pyramid with offices and tennis pro shop
- A new office/storage/restroom building at the trailhead
- Sidewalk improvements between the park and the library
- Additional parking along McConnell Drive
- Additional parking within the parking lot
- A new trash dumpster on McConnell Drive

The process can start with a feasibility study for the recommended improvements, then follow with the construction documents (design drawings and technical specifications) preparation, permitting and construction implementation.

Should a phased approach, due to budgeting constraints, be needed, tennis center pyramid with offices and tennis pro shop can be constructed first, followed by the new office/storage/restroom building at the trailhead.

Parking additions and new dumpster can be considered for the last phase of construction.



APPENDIX

Table I - License Plate Survey July 23, 2021

Table II - License Late Survey September 4, 2021



TABLE I

**Mason Mill Park
Parking Survey - July 23, 2021**

TIME	Parked	Vehicles IN	Vehicles OUT	Total Parked
6:15 AM	9	0	0	9
6:30 AM	1	0	0	10
6:45 AM	8	1	0	19
7:00 AM	2	1	3	19
7:15 AM	2	7	3	25
7:30 AM	1	6	1	31
7:45 AM		11	3	39
8:00 AM		9	12	36
8:15 AM		13	5	44
8:30 AM		12	6	50
8:45 AM		47	32	65
9:00 AM		28	40	53
9:15 AM		25	14	64
9:30 AM		10	18	56
9:45 AM		12	13	55
10:00 AM		10	10	55
10:15 AM		3	9	49
10:30 AM		13	10	52
10:45 AM		14	11	55
11:00 AM		11	17	49
11:15 AM		18	17	50
11:30 AM		12	11	51
11:45 AM		33	13	71
12:00 PM		19	49	41
12:15 PM		11	17	35
12:30 PM		10	13	32
12:45 PM		8	12	28
1:00 PM		5	13	20
1:15 PM		8	7	21
1:30 PM		7	10	18
1:45 PM		10	8	20
2:00 PM		25	31	14
2:15 PM		4	14	4



TABLE I (continued)

**Mason Mill Park
Parking Survey - July 23, 2021**

TIME	Parked	Vehicles IN	Vehicles OUT	Total Parked
2:30 PM		4	3	5
2:45 PM		11	5	11
3:00 PM		10	6	15
3:15 PM		18	14	19
3:30 PM		15	10	24
3:45 PM		17	12	29
4:00 PM		10	9	30
4:15 PM		7	6	31
4:30 PM		7	3	35
4:45 PM		10	2	43
5:00 PM		13	8	48
5:15 PM		15	12	51
5:30 PM		1	0	52
5:45 PM		3	13	42
6:00 PM		2	32	12
6:15 PM		1	12	1
6:30 PM		6	2	5
6:45 PM		0	0	5
7:00 PM		3	3	5
7:15 PM		3	0	8
7:30 PM		6	1	13
7:45 PM		1	1	13
8:00 PM		5	0	18



TABLE II

**Mason Mill Park
Parking Survey - September 4, 2021**

TIME	Parked	Vehicles IN	Vehicles OUT	Total Parked
6:15 AM				0
6:30 AM	1			1
6:45 AM	7	5		13
7:00 AM		6		19
7:15 AM		11	4	26
7:30 AM		6	1	31
7:45 AM		14	4	41
8:00 AM		13	9	45
8:15 AM		7	5	47
8:30 AM		9	2	54
8:45 AM		42	7	89
9:00 AM		16	13	92
9:15 AM		11	12	91
9:30 AM		34	11	114
9:45 AM		26	19	121
10:00 AM		24	24	121
10:15 AM		29	25	125
10:30 AM		21	24	122
10:45 AM		30	19	133
11:00 AM		24	43	114
11:15 AM		19	33	100
11:30 AM		14	25	89
11:45 AM		14	20	83
12:00 PM		17	27	73
12:15 PM		21	25	69
12:30 PM		12	27	54
12:45 PM		17	11	60
1:00 PM		14	20	54
1:15 PM		18	15	57
1:30 PM		11	6	62
1:45 PM		9	15	56
2:00 PM		11	22	45
2:15 PM		11	12	44



TABLE II (continued)

**Mason Mill Park
Parking Survey - September 4, 2021**

TIME	Parked	Vehicles IN	Vehicles OUT	Total Parked
2:30 PM		13	11	46
2:45 PM		10	11	45
3:00 PM		12	13	44
3:15 PM		11	16	39
3:30 PM		5	9	35
3:45 PM		12	11	36
4:00 PM		11	11	36
4:15 PM		15	11	40
4:30 PM		21	5	56
4:45 PM		9	10	55
5:00 PM		6	5	56
5:15 PM		12	11	57
5:30 PM		8	7	58
5:45 PM		18	17	59
6:00 PM		12	10	61
6:15 PM		11	12	60
6:30 PM		7	10	57
6:45 PM		7	11	53
7:00 PM		16	13	56
7:15 PM		4	11	49
7:30 PM		2	17	34
7:45 PM		4	12	26
8:00 PM				26

