

Item Title: Approval of Schematic Design for Lake Myra County Park

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners approves Schematic Design for the new Lake Myra County Park.

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Board of Commissioners reviews and approves Schematic Design for all new construction projects. This is an important milestone in the development of a building, park or other major project.

Background: The 2003 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified an unmet need for County Park facilities and services in eastern Wake County. In 2007, the County acquired land for a County Park adjacent to Lake Myra in Wendell. The 2008 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan supported the need for a county park in this area.

As the park remained a priority for the County, funding for the design and construction of Lake Myra County Park was included as part of the successful 2018 Parks, Greenways, Recreation and Open Space (PGROS) bond. On July 8, 2024, the Board of Commissioners adopted the Master Plan for the future Lake Myra County Park.

Strategic Plan: Growth, Land Use and Environment Goal 3: Protect 1,000 Acres of green space, including open space, parks, greenways, farmland and forests by 2029.

Fiscal Impact: Funding for the design and construction of this project was previously appropriated in the Parks, Greenways, Recreation and Open Space element of the County Capital Improvement Fund.

Additional Information:

Wake County's 2003 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified an unmet need for County Park facilities and services in eastern Wake County. In 2007, the County acquired approximately 218 acres for a County Park adjacent to Lake Myra in Wendell. A master plan was developed in 2009 through a community engagement process, but the plan did not move forward due to economic conditions and no available funding. Funding for design and construction of Lake Myra County Park was included in the successful 2018 PGROS Bond. Due to significantly changing land use conditions and growth in the area, a new Master Plan process was started in 2023.



Susan Hatchell Landscape Architecture was selected as the landscape architectural firm and lead design consultant to prepare a comprehensive Master Plan for the development of Lake Myra County Park. Throughout the 14-month master plan process, the team gathered input from the community, stakeholders, Wake County staff, non-profit organizations, and the towns of Wendell and Knightdale. This effort and community engagement process produced a detailed site analysis, explored opportunities and constraints, and continued to draw excitement from the community via community meetings and surveys.

The core values and principles developed during this design and engagement process included opportunities for experiencing nature, passive recreation, connectivity, exploring, protecting and restoring natural systems, and balancing built and natural systems. These core values and principles support the recreational needs of the

surrounding communities and align with the Wake County Parks, Recreation and Open Space mission and core services of recreation and leisure, open space and educational opportunities.

Lake Myra Park is somewhat unique in that the park land is separated by Lake Myra itself. The park will thus have development on both its East and West sides. The Schematic Design plan for Phase I of the new park includes: A Park Center (including offices and classrooms), Picnic Shelter / Restroom, Maintenance Facility, Boat Facility, and Fishing Platform on the East side. A major Boardwalk crosses Lake Myra to connect the East and West side. The West side includes a Picnic Shelter / Restroom and Parking. General site programming and amenities include paved and unpaved trails, small boardwalks, open play areas, constructed wetland, playground, educational displays, parking, disc golf course, public art, and prairie and native plantings. The majority of the Phase I development will be focused on the East side.

While the County owns the land where the park will be developed, Lake Myra is privately owned. Conversations with the landowner have led to agreement on the type and level of public access to be allowed on the lake. An agreement between the landowner and the County is being finalized which will come back to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

The Schematic Design has been presented to both OSAPAC (Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee) as well as the Energy Advisory Committee and both committees have endorsed and unanimously supported the project.

Total on-site development and building construction for Phase I are estimated to be \$21 Million dollars. The project is funded through the 2018 PGROS Bond and funding for the project is currently appropriated through the latest bond sales. Final design documents are scheduled to be completed by first quarter 2026 with the park scheduled to open in the third quarter 2027. Staff requests that the Board of Commissioners review and approve the schematic design for Lake Myra County Park.

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. Phase I – Site Plan Rendering
3. Phase I – Park Center Building Rendering
4. Phase I – Park Buildings Renderings