



Ditto Landing Marina *Riverfront Master Plan*

April 2015



Ditto Landing Marina :: *Riverfront Master Plan*

Overview

This Master Plan for Ditto Landing was formed over the course of almost a year, as a product of the Big Picture's "Citizen Academy on Ditto Landing", and in consultation with the Ditto Landing Governing Board, Madison County, and the City of Huntsville.

Based on public input, and internal discussions with the Board and representatives from the County and City, several governing principles for the future of Ditto were identified. These include:

- Maintain and enhance the natural setting and views
- Maintain and enhance the existing recreational program
- Add program that would be consistent with the recreational nature of the area
- Improve access to the facility for people within Huntsville, Madison County, and North Alabama
- Ensure financial viability and sustainability for the facility
- Use Ditto's inherent strengths to create a "destination" for visitors throughout the Southeast - Don't try to make Ditto something it's not

The resulting Master Plan at its core seeks to build up the recreational activities available on site, expanding and upgrading existing offerings while adding complementary uses. The Plan takes a phased approach to growth, to ensure that the infrastructure will be in place to support additional demand and use, and to ensure that revenue streams can be built up in parallel with required investment.

Overall Plan

The program can be broken up into three general "zones": The Riverfront Zone, the Camping Zone, and the Mountain Zone. In each are uses suitable to context, but connected to one another via improved roads, bike paths, and greenways to help create a cohesive experience.

Along the Riverfront, the focus is on taking advantage of the views and providing a variety of opportunities to enjoy the area. Improvements to the small existing trestle bridge will allow pedestrian and limited automotive traffic to cross. Upgrading the pavilion will allow Ditto to increase revenue by adding paying events to its agenda. Should discussions with Federal organizations prove fruitful, then long-term a restaurant could be located at the existing, unused State Docks.

Inboard on the site, the goals are to increase marina capacity, and improve/expand the camping facilities. Much of this will be contingent upon improving existing road and drainage infrastructure, which will be a priority.

On the far side of Hobbs Island Road, as the elevation increases, different types of program could be added. Targeted activities include zip line installations, a mountain bike course, and mountaintop cabins, of a scale similar to Monte Sano. The views from the higher elevations would be very attractive to guests.

Phase I

- Approximate timeline: 12-24 months
- Improve infrastructure: New entrance road, and amenitized stormwater retention
- Relocate existing campgrounds to allow for new infrastructure development
- Add lower-impact recreational program, including non-motorized and motorized boat rentals, and bike rentals
- Make aesthetic improvements to Kingston Pavilion
- Repair and open the small trestle bridge to pedestrian traffic
- Introduce small concert infrastructure on the lawn around the pavilion
- Make gateway and wayfinding improvements along Hobbs Island Road
- Identify existing green areas for preservation

Phase II

- Approximate timeline: 3-5 years
- Begin improving and expanding camping facilities, including RV accommodations
- Add camping infrastructure, including camp store, restrooms, and greenway connections
- Expand marina into existing lowlands
- Improve existing drydock and maintenance facilities
- Make capacity improvements to Hobbs Island Road

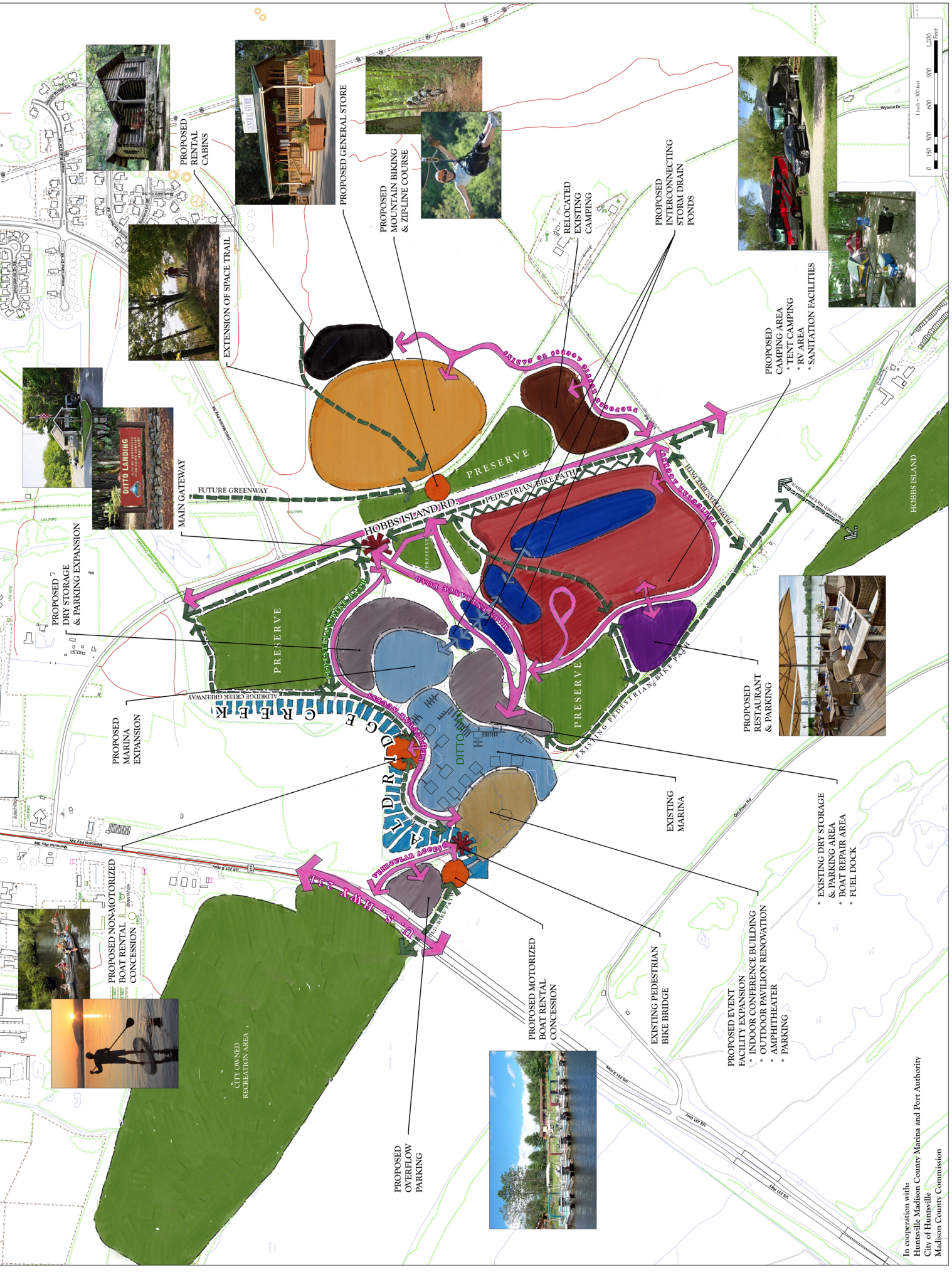
Phase III

- Approximate timeline: 5-10 years
- Create Welcome Center/Trailhead Node/General Store on Hobbs Island Road, across from the Ditto entrance
- Develop mountain program, including zip-line facilities, mountain bike course, and mountaintop cabins
- Expand drydock and maintenance capacity
- Rebuild pavilion into an event facility that could accommodate conferences, weddings and other special occasions. Excellent market for improved revenue stream
- Continue to expand and connect to surrounding greenways, including improved connection to Aldridge Creek greenway, the riverfront trail, the Spacewalk Trail, and potential connections along the rail line and along the eastern edge of RSA
- Work with Federal entities to allow for a riverfront restaurant at the State Dock site
- Connect to City-owned land to the northwest; develop into complementary recreation trails, and overflow parking. Look at improving access from 231 to the overflow lot
- Work with ALDOT to keep the existing southbound trestle bridge as a "Chattanooga-style" bike-ped connection into Morgan County
- Add bike-ped connection to Hobbs Island, and maintain as a preservation area with natural trails and education kiosk

A note on phasing: While many of the programmatic elements are phased due to their inherent requirements (such as needing infrastructure improvements in place beforehand), some of these elements may be accelerated as funding opportunities or partnerships allow.

For more information about the plan, or to learn how you can get involved, contact bigpicture@huntsvilleal.gov or visit www.bigpicturehuntsville.com

DITTO LANDING MARINA MASTER PLAN - OVERALL



In cooperation with:
Huntsville Madison County Marina and Port Authority
City of Huntsville
Madison County Commission