



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
North Carolina

Historic Latta Place Project Update

Mecklenburg County Government

Park and Recreation

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Introduction

In June of 2021, Mecklenburg County opted not to renew its contract with Historic Latta, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization that had operated the site since the 1970s.

Mecklenburg County staff and community partners have since completed the first two phases of a three-phased site reopening project.

Summer 2023 marked the beginning of Phase 3 (Implementation).

Latta Place Revisited

Phase 1

Discovery

Summer 2021 – Winter 2022

- Community Partner Outreach
- Mission Statement Development
- Public Input - Initial Survey
- Benchmarking
- Site Assessment



Phase 2

Blueprinting

Spring 2022 – Spring 2023

- Interpretive Master Plan
- Community Engagement
- Archival Research
- Key Informant Identification
- Story Collection



Phase 3

Implementation

Summer 2023 – Summer 2026

- Phased Site Reopening



Presentation Outline

- Summary of Phase 1 and 2 Activities
- Summer 2023 Updates
- Proposed Implementation Timeline



Phase 1 Summary: Discovery

The goal of Phase 1 was to collect information about Latta Place and other key historic sites to understand what the scope of the project would be.

Community Partner Outreach

- A diverse team of community partners including historians, museum professionals, activists and descendants was assembled.

Mission Statement Development

- Staff and community partners developed a mission statement based on peer-reviewed research and public input.

Statistically Valid Survey

- A statistically valid survey gathered input from 917 County residents about their awareness of and interest in the site.

Benchmarking

- Staff and partners conducted visits to 18 historic sites across the southeast.

Site Assessment

- A site assessment revealed the need for ongoing onsite maintenance while the site is closed, including extensive structural repairs to the historic house.



LATTA PLACE

Truth | Transparency | Compassion | Transformation | Unity

Latta Place Mission Statement

Staff and community partners developed a vision statement for the site based on research and public input.

We believe it is our duty to tell the truth.

We resolve to practice transparency in all that we do.

We are dedicated to providing:

A transformational and engaging experience featuring holistic storytelling filled with truth and empathy.

An educational experience, giving voice to a multitude of historical perspectives.

A bridge between the past and present through historical interpretation.

An essential resource to the residents of the greater Charlotte/Mecklenburg community and beyond.

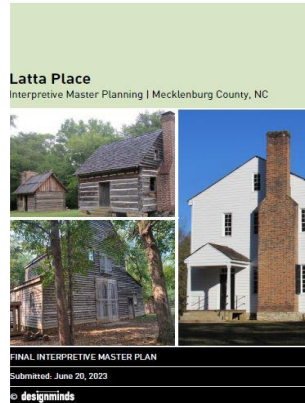
A visit that inspires self-examination and application of knowledge.

A hub for the promotion of historical research and peer-reviewed scholarship.

A welcome to all visitors with the intent of fostering dignity, while respecting the natural environment in which Latta Place is located.

Phase 2 Summary: Blueprinting

The goal of Phase 2 was to complete an interpretive master plan that provides a framework for programming at Latta Place.



The **Interpretive Master Plan** establishes a framework for how visitors will connect to the deep, complex and often emotional stories associated with Latta Place.



Community Engagement during Phase 2 grew out of the recognition for the importance of direct community input into the way in which history is presented at the Latta site and beyond.



The County contracted with Johnson C. Smith University to compile a **thorough documentation of the history** of Latta Place within the context of the surrounding northern Mecklenburg County plantation district.

Latta Place Interpretive Themes

These themes will guide programming and interpretive programming at historic sites across Park and Recreation's inventory.

Perspectives of the Enslaved

Enslaved Black workers, many of whom were trafficked from Africa or the Caribbean, lived, worked and died at this site. They brought with them their own knowledge, skills and beliefs that have impacted the social fabric of the region.

Inequality Reflected in the Built Environment

The built environment of Mecklenburg County reflects structural inequality that has been established through decisions made over time and into the present. Despite living under violent conditions, enslaved Black and indigenous people formed communities, worshipped together and created families. The labor and craftsmanship of these enslaved workers is responsible for many structures that demonstrated the wealth and status of the ruling class during the 18th and 19th centuries. Descendants of these communities still call Mecklenburg County home and continue the cultural traditions and histories of their ancestors.

Utilizing Natural Resources

Mecklenburg County's land has sustained generations of people, beginning with indigenous groups such as the Catawba Nation. At Latta Place, later generations came to value the land for its potential to support commercial agriculture. Now, careful planning and management help ensure the protection of this landscape into the future.

Indigenous Perspectives and Experiences

Historic Latta is located on the ancestral lands of the Catawba Nation, who have called this region home since time immemorial. Today, the Tribe maintains strong ties to the land and their ancestors.

Lasting Legacies

Systemic racism is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial group inequality. The preservation and interpretation of historic sites allows County residents to understand the past and work toward healing.

Summer 2023 Updates

As the project moved from Blueprinting to Implementation, key milestones were achieved to ensure a successful Phase 3 execution.

A **Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) analysis** was conducted in partnership with the UNC Charlotte Anthropology Department.

A **Communications and Marketing Plan** is under development.

A **Request for Qualifications** for a project team to complete identified capital improvements at the site was released and consultant selection is underway.

A **Historic Site Manager** job description is under development. This position will be advertised in November.



Phase 3 Projected Timeline: Implementation

Phase 3 is a partnership with Mecklenburg County Asset and Facilities Management that will conclude with the site's Grand Reopening.

