

MEETING MINUTES / 3 PAGES/ SENT BY EMAIL

Project: Dix Park Master Plan
Date: October 4, 2017
Meeting: Dix Park Master Plan Advisory Committee
Prepared by: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. (MVVA)
Participants: Dix Park Advisory Committee; City of Raleigh staff;
MVVA: Matt Urbanski, Adrienne Heflich, Austin Javellana
VHB: Don Bryson, Lauren Blackburn

PURPOSE Review of draft materials for the 11/16/2017 Community Meeting
Park and the Region, Park and Transportation Focus

A. Presentation by MVVA: Matt Urbanski (MU)

- a. Park and the region proposals:
 - i. There is a complexity found in the natural places across the Piedmont, tied to underlying geology and expressed through a range of habitat types, plants and animals, topography and water features. This regional complexity is not always evident or celebrated on the Dix site today.
 - ii. Through study of natural features unique to the region, the park planning process will suggest ways in which landscape complexity can be restored or created anew at Dix Park.
- b. Key park and transportation proposals:
 - i. Transit:
 - 1. Linking into the R-Line circulator or other bus routes to Dix via Union Station
 - 2. Coordinating with potential bus rapid transit
 - ii. Pedestrian and bike focused:
 - 1. Using Lenoir Street as an important East-West connector for pedestrian, bikes across downtown and from Dix to Chavis Park
 - 2. Improving pedestrian access along S. Boylan Ave. + across Western Blvd.
 - a. Suggested landbridge across Western Blvd. to GMS and Pullen Park beyond
 - 3. Welcoming connections to all greenways at Dix

4. Shifting dominant ped/bike traffic along Lake Wheeler into the park (as opposed to along roadway edge)
- iii. Road focused:
 1. Introduction of a new site circulation system (“the loop”) that organizes traffic of all kinds safely, allows visitors to move through the range of landscape types present on the site, improves navigation/way-finding, and is sited at a consistent elevation (necessary for accessibility and good for comfort)

B. Q&A, Comments

- a. Commenter asks what does the design team think about the active railroad through the middle of the park and how will it be addressed?
 - i. MVVA: 2 new elevated rail crossings with bridges are currently proposed; we think that with proper consideration the active rail line could be an interesting asset, as opposed to a drawback
 - ii. Don Bryson, VHB (DB): offers that removing an existing at-grade crossing of the tracks, which the current plan includes, should be welcomed positively by rail operators
- b. Commenter notes that today, Lake Wheeler Road is not safe or effective for pedestrian and bike travel
 - i. MVVA: Agreed. Detail of the current proposed plan is that the pedestrian and bike route along Lake Wheeler winds into the interior of the site, as opposed to being set at the roadway edge. This will allow for a more park-like experience, as well as potential to lessen existing steep grade change and make a smoother route.
- c. Commenter notes that existing major roads like Wade Ave and Western Blvd. are unpleasant and crowded during rush hour. Recommends that design team study vehicle flow on the park roads.
 - i. DB: agreed that vehicle volume analysis on proposed park roads is an important study that needs to be done as a part of the planning process.
 - ii. MVVA: notes that access/use of park roads could be limited by time of day or vehicle type.
- d. Commenter notes that Dix’s proximity to Pullen Park and connections between the two should be emphasized earlier in the presentation and more boldly. Potential to utilize/connect to Reynolds Coliseum Park Deck at NC State.
- e. Commenters note that park relationship to State Farmers Market and Norfolk/Southern rail corridor could be more developed.
 - i. MVVA: Acknowledged – design team to review specific proposals directly with State Farmers Market and railroad stakeholders, prior to making suggestions publically
- f. Commenters asserted the need to be sensitive to neighbors, such as the Governor Morehead School, and how potential future changes to adjacent properties are

characterized and suggested. One commenter acknowledged that the Governor Morehead School, as an institution and how it uses its grounds, will change over the next decades and therefore, the park effort should enter the conversation with GMS on those terms and find program solutions that benefit both the school and the park.

- g. Commenter requests/suggestions: (1) greater specificity, a zoom in plan, at major entrances; (2) illustration of how transportation routes relate to topography; (3) clarification about how MVVA has presented the loop (is it an abstract idea versus a firm, proposed location); (4) more legible slides, grounded in clear site context and with larger text; (5) relationship of proposed changes to opportunities for accessibility and accommodating all users; and (6) a need to target/craft planning messages to a public audience
 - i. MVVA: these are insightful observations and we will revise our work

C. Informal Discussion Notes, via VHB in-person at the meeting

- a. Direct encouragement from commenters for greater connectivity across the railroad @ W Morgan St. Potential to go under the railroad at W Morgan and link to roads on the GMS property and possibly westward to Ashe/Pullen Park.
- b. Received some suggestions to reduce priority of discussions of rail (including commuter, but especially LRT), on the grounds that these are not definitive plans, nor are they particularly relevant to the Dix site.

D. Next Steps:

- MVVA to make revisions to presentation, particularly in light of comments listed above under B.g.; Revised presentation materials will go before the Master Plan Executive Committee prior to November public meeting
- Advisory Committee to offer comment/review the park and transportation goals as composed by MVVA

End of Notes

These meeting notes are recorded as understood. Please respond to Adrienne Heflich, MVVA (718.243.2044) with comments within 5 days of receipt.