

# Dorothea Dix Park

## Master Plan Joint Workgroup Meeting

Date: Sunday, November 5, 2017  
Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
Location: Ended at The Big Field at Dix Park

### Meeting Summary

On Sunday, November 5, the Dix Park City Staff held a walking and biking meeting to analyze access to Dix Park for pedestrians and bikers. The meeting comprised of six groups, each of which started at a different point in the city. The four walking groups starting locations were the NCSU Bell Tower, Fletcher Park, Chavis Park, and the Capitol Building. The biking groups started at Walnut Creek Wetland Center and Lake Johnson. The attached map details each of the starting points and routes to Dix Park. During each group's journey to Dix Park, the group members recorded notes and pictures of areas for improvement to make access to Dix Park safer, easier, and more desirable.

Those thoughts and ideas are detailed below.

#### Fletcher Park Walk

- Need entrance gateways for all modes (monumentation for bike/ped and auto)
- Better sidewalks in and leading up to the park
- Park and ride to and from other parks (a downtown park trolley system?)
- Want skywalk or tunnel over Western Boulevard or connecting Rosengarten
- Rosengarten Greenway should follow the creek and be a priority connection
- The stream should be daylighted the whole way
- The City owned parcels on the Boylan-side of Western should become extensions of the park
- Need safe above/below/at-grade crossings
- The intersection at Boylan and Western is not safe or friendly
- The countdown clock needs to be longer
- There is a dangerous blind curve heading east
- Need wayfinding through the City and to Dix Park
- Need wayfinding within the Park

#### Bell Tower Walk

- When you're in a new city and need to make sure you're heading toward a major landmark, such as the airport, you look for those signs that have an airplane icon, probably pointing in the direction you should go. Could we do something like that for Dix Park? Not sure what the logo could/should be, but something instantly recognizable as the Dix Park logo to let walkers and bikers know that they're on the right track would be helpful.
- Another option (though probably more difficult to pull off) would be something like what DOT has done out on I-40. If you're coming from Durham to Raleigh, as you approach the Wade Ave exit there are red, white, and blue I-40 emblems painted on the road to tell you which lanes to be in. Something like that painted on the sidewalks could work for the multiple routes to Dix.
- I can't speak for the other groups and their origination points, but starting on the NC State campus and walking along Western felt safe the entire time. I would do it at night without any worries, or at least with no more worries than walking anywhere else at night.
- Several of the people didn't know what the Big Field was and at least one had been to it, but didn't realize it was called the Big Field. Map holders at the main entrances to the Park might be a good idea to help people identify the major points within the Park property.
- I know this one is getting down into the weeds, but dog poop bag dispensers would be advisable for obvious reasons.
- Given the number of possible activities that could take place at the Park, I would be strongly against limiting certain activities to specific locations or times, at least initially. For example, I've heard an idea floated that drones should be prohibited except for certain areas and/or certain times. My own feeling is that unless an activity requires a specific space (e.g., a soccer field with its defined borders and specifically located goals), the activities should coexist. I don't think we should favor one activity — say, touch football — over another — say, picnickers. In general, I think pretty much all nondestructive or non-dangerous activities should be allowed initially and only dialed back if/when it becomes necessary.
  - There is no sidewalk by Kate's Street. It just ends. The turn across Pullen is very dangerous. There should be bollards or something to project the pedestrians on the sidewalk by Western Boulevard.
  - Bilyeu Street needs a sidewalk.

#### Chavis Walk

- Down Lenoir Street - There is more bike parking available, especially at Red Hat
- South Street - Bike lanes were a plus but did not stretch the whole length
- Fayetteville Street - Not designated lane for bikers (this is fine when there is little traffic but not okay on weekends)
- Boylan - Felt cramped and unsafe for biking, the left turn on south and the blind curve was very unsafe. The parking on Boylan made it a blind turn (maybe change parking rules there?) (add a bike lane?) Bike lanes should be a different color to differentiate

- From the East side of DTR, crossing the main six roads is inevitable - Person, Blount, Wilmington, Salisbury, McDowell, Dawson. We walked Lenoir, and there are needs to install crossing buttons for pedestrians at a couple of those intersections. Attention to sidewalks and their condition [and width] is also important in all areas leading to the park.
- I'll note here, I'm an advocate for bridges and tunnels to allow walkers, runners, and bikers get from one side of major roads to the other. While costs will certainly enter into the final designs and implementation, I do hope that multiple areas of the park can benefit from these types of the methods of access.
- The street crossing near Jamaica Dr on the north east side of the park has a button for crossing over to the Greenway. It works well.
- Crossing Western. I've heard about a potential bridge near Pullen Park. That would be excellent. Would also welcome and advocate for a bridge from the Boylan Heights area, closer to DTR. Not sure how and exactly where, but it would be useful. We walked down S. Saunders, but if a bridge were in Boylan, the route could go into Boylan Heights and then across to the park
- The greenway connector at the Exxon gas station, south [east], is difficult. Could use sidewalks that go north for access into Goode St. Maybe even extend the greenway on the park side to go from Centennial Pkwy as far as possible to the north east corner.
- Also, some may not realize, that the trail also has an option that goes under Lake Wheeler with a right turn that leads to the Centennial Bikeway Connector. This goes safely up to Blair Drive and into the west side of the park, and avoids crossing Lake Wheeler and then Farmers Mkt Dr.

#### Capitol Walk

- The intersection from the Capital across Morgan was great. All of Fayetteville Street is very pedestrian friendly.
- Market & Exchange Plazas (and the Capital, City Plaza, and Memorial would all benefit from increased signage to make people aware of the existence and close proximity of the park).
- The crossing at Lenoir is good, but the sidewalk through the parking lot to South needs improvement.
- Making the right at Memorial, the sidewalk east of Salisbury becomes considerably more narrow (3ft vs 25ft on Fayetteville) – tough for a group or anyone going opposite directions.
- The street between Salisbury and McDowell is fairly steep
- Is there an opportunity for a “trail” marker down this pathway?
- Intersections at McDowell and Dawson are rather threatening feeling for pedestrians and the signals are not long enough for anyone but able-bodied adults, and even that is at a fast pace.
- Walking under the rail bridge there is unpleasant. Narrow, broken sidewalks, broken glass - would benefit from public art or under-bridge painting/lighting.
- Even on a Sunday afternoon we ran into a handful of other peds on our way.
- Eastbound South/Dawson has a pedestrian island, westbound does not
- One side of the sidewalk was closed for construction

- Sidewalks between Dawson and Salisbury are narrow with steep drops towards the housing development. Sometimes a few inches between the pavement and the surrounding ground.
- Noticed 2 bus stops on the entire route – shelter on South between Dawson and Salisbury.
- Only a sign on Boylan.
- Sidewalk between Salisbury and Boylan is closed on the south side and nearly impassable
  - on the north side. Most people choose to walk in the street instead.
- Sidewalk headed south on Boylan needs improvement as well.
- Entire intersection at Boylan is frightful and unpleasant as a pedestrian. No protection
  - crossing Boylan. Very short signal time crossing Western.
- Initial view into the park is the stream, concrete, and generally unpleasant. Also greeted
  - with no sidewalk at this entrance as you head up the very steep hill street.
  - Pedestrian route is away from the road.
- No signs indicate that this is a public park nor that it is currently open.
- Once inside, signage doesn't help identify areas for recreation, open space, etc.
- Nothing in the park gives you an idea of the future of it. If you don't know what's going to happen, it looks like a rundown and unsafe place to be. No information about getting engaged.
  - engaged.
- Roads are in terrible condition.
- Fences need to come down.
- No sense of distance/wayfinding in the park – once you're inside you're still a half mile from 'the big field' but you don't know that if you've never been, nor why you should keep walking through a deserted mental hospital.
- Bridge at Umstead is in poor aesthetic condition.
- Bike/ped/vehicle routes unclear in the park and sidewalks are intermittent.

### **Biker's comments**

- Long Term Interventions:
  - Overpasses/underpasses – "I usually ride with an 8-year-old and trail to street transitions are terrifying"
  - explain the uphill problem in the park from the greenway to Adrienne
- Short Term Interventions
  - Warning Signs- "you are approaching a street"
  - Flashing light crosswalks
  - Straight crosswalks with no dividers/barriers to maneuver bikes through
  - Periodic air pump stations
- Greenways should have safelight stops like those on NC State's Campus. The ones at NC State connect to the campus police, the greenway ones should connect to Raleigh Police.
- Water fountains along the greenway
- Tunnels along the greenway need to be better lit. The lights are burnt out and dangerous.
- They should also have a pedestrian walking lane.

- Quick Fix Stations- Stops with quick fix tools along the greenway would be great incase people have bike problems
- Bathrooms along the greenway
- The Walnut Creek Ride crossed four roads. There was no pedestrian crosswalk light at two of them and cars don't stop at crosswalks there. Crosswalks also need to be normalized (see crosswalk on Garner Road)
- Landscaping buffers along the industrial properties like the old car yard that is surrounded by a barbed wire fence (Rocky Branch Greenway Trail)
- The Wilmington Street crossing goes across 6 lanes of traffic. Although the roads are not very busy, the crossing for pedestrians should be made safer.
- SIGNAGE
  - Once you enter Dix Park via the greenway near South Saunders, there is no indication that you are actually in Dix Park. Signs along the greenway should tell that you are going towards Dix Park (add to existing greenway signs like the ones that point towards the art museum)
  - Once in Dix Park, there is no signage of where to go. Simple signage to the Big Field, Flowers Field, Soccer Fields, etc. would be incredibly helpful
- Create signs that inspire and inform people about “the way to Dix Park” along the greenway trails
- Temporary murals/public art along the greenway to raise public awareness about Dix and send people that way.
- Create transportation to Dix for outlying places for low income communities and or others for which transportation is an issue.
- Crossing over Garner Road needs a flashing light crossing
- Need lights in first tunnel near Hammond Road