

March 2018

Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan Status Report

The MVVA team will share short monthly summaries of planning work completed and work ahead to keep everyone up to speed on the development of the Master Plan for Dorothea Dix Park. If you're interested in learning more, follow the links below to meeting notes and presentations.

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Summary of Activities and Work Completed

The MVVA team's work in March focused on the Master Plan theme the Park and the Site as we prepared for the March 22nd Community Meeting.

Ecology and Hydrology:

- The MVVA team learned about Raleigh's current invasive plant control program from Leigh Bragrassa, the program's coordinator, as well as how other municipalities, such as Cary, have found ways through prescribed burns to maintain large park areas successfully. Given Dix's location along regional greenway corridors, the diversity and quality of park ecosystems will have an impact on the greenway corridors, and visa versa as well.
- MVVA developed a concept for constructing perched wetlands at the site's hillsides to recall pre-development conditions of seeps and springs, support greater animal and plant diversity, and hold stormwater on the site longer.
- Sub-consultant AES compiled a presentation on site ecology ([LINK 1](#))
- Regional experts met at Dix Park on March 22nd to discuss how the park may become an important place in the state for restored habitats and environmental education. The MVVA team shared diagrams of existing and proposed park habitat types. ([LINK 2](#))

Landfill:

- The MVVA team continued discussions regarding proposed improvements to the Rocky Branch with representatives of the state's Dept. of Environmental Quality, who will coordinate the remediation of the municipal landfill at Dix Park.
- Sub-consultant Limnotech performed a review of landfill documents by others.
- A concept plan for all landfill impacts related to park improvements to be provided for state DEQ review by Fall 2018.

Landscape History:

- Sub-consultant STA researched examples of other sites where the history of the landscape was found to be just as or more significant than the buildings found there ([LINK 3](#)).
- Sub-consultant STA proposed a framework for decision-making regarding landscape preservation ([LINK 4](#)).

Utilities: Based on a recommendation from a Master Plan Advisory Committee member, the MVVA team researched examples of federal Base Realignment and Closure projects, which have important parallels to Dix Park regarding transitioning utilities and services from a centralized system.

March 22nd, 2018: Community Meeting 2

The MVVA team prepared materials and presented an update on all 6 of the Master Plan themes, with a primary focus on the Park and the Site. MVVA proposed new names for the main park landscapes; the names are informed by their existing characteristics, and historic and anticipated future uses: the Meadow, the Creek, the Grove, the Valley, the Ridge, and the Downtown Gateway. The names are helpful for describing and understanding a site in the process of becoming a great public park.

- MVVA presentation (LINK 5)
- Meeting notes and public responses to feedback questions (LINK 6)

March 23rd, 2018: Dix Park Site Walk with Advisory Committee and Work Group members (LINK 7)

March 23rd, 2018: Discussion with African American leaders regarding the Dix Park engagement process and planning a park for everyone (LINK 8)

April 2018: Upcoming Activities and Work to Do

The MVVA team's work in April will be focused on the development of materials for the Park and its Partners and the Park and its Buildings Master Plan themes.

For the Park and its Partners, the MVVA team will prepare an evaluation process so that potential partners can be considered and organized. The evaluation criteria for partners will be based upon the needs and goals of the future park, it will recognize known partners such as neighbors like NC State and help shape the formation of new partner organizations to support the park. The Master Plan Advisory Committee will be the first group to review the proposed partnership materials.

For the Park and its Buildings, the MVVA team will prepare criteria for evaluating the reuse and selective demolition of the site's buildings. To support this, the MVVA team will test a range of programs by category (educational and exhibit spaces, hotel/hostel, maintenance, etc.) for existing to remain buildings, build a physical model of the hospital complex to consider the future relationships of indoor and outdoor spaces at the Ridge of Dix Hill, and develop a general estimate of reuse by program type and square footage. Members of the Master Plan Advisory Committee prepared initial recommendations for building preservation in March and will be involved in reviewing MVVA team progress in April.

Funding – the revenue sources to support park development, construction, and operations – will be a factor in both park partnerships and building reuse. Funding will come from a range of public and private sources that may include: public/taxpayer support, philanthropic contributions, earned income through user fees/rentals, and value capture through real estate. MVVA team studies in April and continuing through the coming months will define priorities for the park: to what extent should it be publicly/taxpayer funded? What the ways in which revenue to support the park may be generated, and which are most compatible with the park's needs and goals?

April 12th, 2018, 3 PM: Sub-consultants from Suzanne Turner Associates will share their research on Dix Park

April 13th, 2018: City of Raleigh and MVVA present on the Dix Park Master Plan at the Leading with Landscape Conference, organized by the Cultural Landscape Foundation Conference (<https://tclf.org/leading-landscape-north-carolinas-research-triangle>)