

Dorothea Dix Park

# Plaza & Play

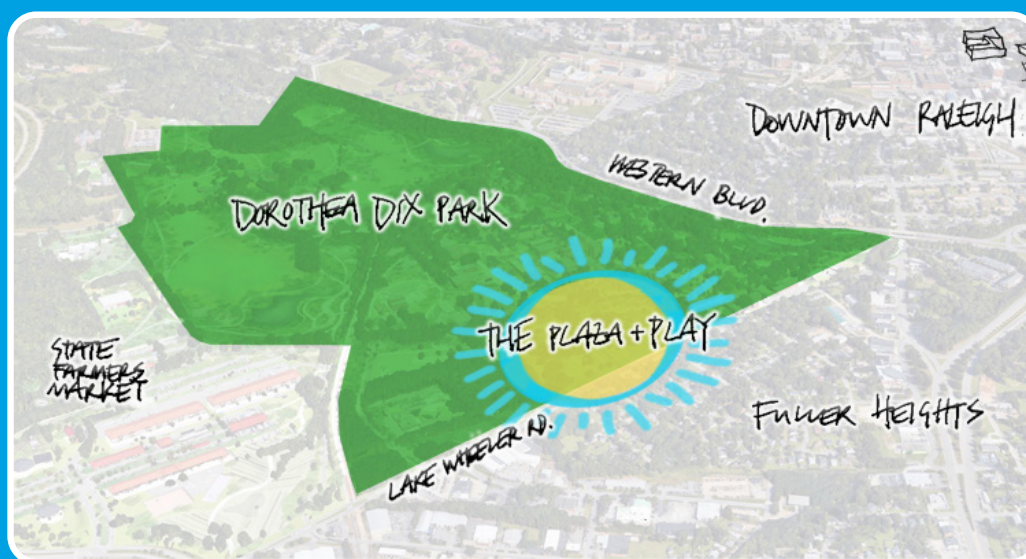
**Public Engagement Report 01**

*December 2020*

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

Dorothea Dix Park is the site of one of the most exciting new park projects in America. The 308-acre site blends historic architecture and rich landscapes into a unique destination in the heart of Raleigh, North Carolina. The effort to create Dorothea Dix Park is a public-private partnership between the City of Raleigh and Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy. The City owns and operates Dorothea Dix Park. The Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that exists to support the City in its efforts, serve as its philanthropic partner, and help ensure the creation and long-term success of Dorothea Dix Park. After many years of planning, the City of Raleigh has the extraordinary opportunity to make Dorothea Dix Park one of the most spectacular public spaces in the country.

The Plaza & Play is the first project to be implemented from Phase 1 of the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan and will become the main entrance to Dix Park along Lake Wheeler Road, welcoming visitors from around the City and across the State. The project aims to establish an iconic, inviting, and inspiring public space for all ages and abilities.

## Plaza & Play

Spanning 12.5 acres, the Plaza & Play aspires to be an inviting and inspiring civic jewel for the City of Raleigh. The design will introduce world-class play spaces, gardens, and gathering spaces while celebrating the site's history through rehabilitated buildings and cultural landscapes. The Plaza & Play will relocate a main entrance of Dorothea Dix Park to Lake Wheeler Road in order to improve access for all visitors traveling from surrounding neighborhoods or Downtown Raleigh by foot, bike, car, scooter, or wheelchair and those using regional transportation networks.

Once inside the park, the gently sloping pathways bring visitors of all abilities from the new plaza into the heart of the park. The grand entry plaza will do more than just announce arrival—it will also be an active zone at the park's edge featuring elements such as a civic water play feature, swings, concessions, and grilling facilities. Creating an environment with universal appeal, Plaza & Play will provide Raleigh with an engaging meeting point for those who want to gather with friends for a coffee or a bite to eat and an accessible play area without a lengthy hike deep into the park.

The Project design will build from analyses, priorities, and recommendations as defined by the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan, approved by the Raleigh City Council on February 19, 2019. As excerpted from MVVA's RFQ submission dated December 16, 2019, the purpose of the Project is to "provide a highly visible public face for Dorothea Dix Park and help lay the foundation for implementing the full Master Plan [including] the creation of an entry to the park that is clear, inviting, democratic, and inspiring; the introduction of play spaces, gardens, gathering spaces, and cookout facilities; the sharing of site history through rehabilitated buildings and cultural landscapes; [and] the connection to various modes of transportation" as well as to Dix Hill, Fuller Heights, and downtown Raleigh.

The Project will be composed of four (4) Phases:

- Pre-Design Services
- Schematic Design
- Design Development
- Construction Documentation

## Plaza & Play Engagement

This report documents Engagement during the Pre-Design and Schematic Design phase of the Plaza & Play project. [Publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay) is the online hub for public engagement activities related to the design process of Dorothea Dix Park's Plaza & Play. To learn more about design progress for the Plaza & Play area at Dix Park, visit [www.dixpark.org](https://www.dixpark.org).

# Engagement Summary

## Engagement

Following public health and safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Raleigh's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department and the design team, led by Michael Van Valkenburg Associates, kicked off the Plaza & Play project with a series of virtual engagements. The focus of the engagement efforts is three-fold: 1) To hone in on the specifics of the 12.5 acre Plaza & Play site, 2) To understand any changes in context or public sentiment since the Master Plan engagement and 3) To continue to generate excitement and momentum for the implementation of the Dorothea Dix Master Plan.

During the Pre-Design and early Schematic Design phases of the Plaza & Play, we employed the following methods to engage the public in multiple formats:

### Virtual Surveys, Information Sharing & Interactive Feedback

Linked from the [dixpark.org](http://dixpark.org) website and hosted on the engagement hub [publicinput.com/plazaplay](http://publicinput.com/plazaplay) the public was invited to learn more about the Master Plan work completed to date by watching videos or flipping through the PDF Executive Summary. The public shared feedback and aspirations for the Plaza & Play through a 5 question, Pre-Meeting Survey, email dialogue and an interactive Post-It Activity. The comments shared are discussed in the following pages.

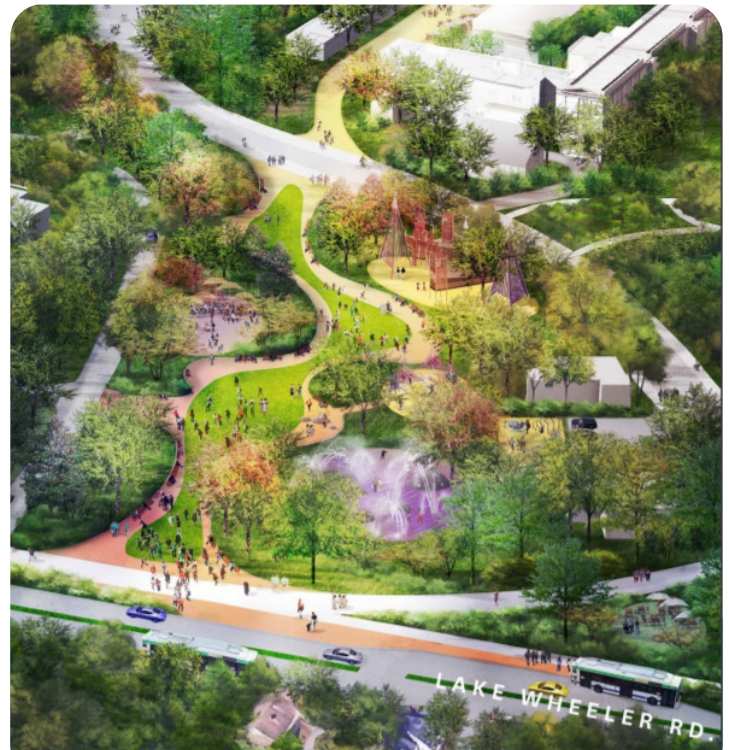
### Large Format Virtual Public Meeting

The City of Raleigh conducted outreach (described in the following pages) to invite participants to join a large format virtual public meeting. More than 350 people attended the public meeting broadcast via [publicinput.com/plazaplay](http://publicinput.com/plazaplay). The meeting offered a live and interactive means for the public to directly engage with the design team and the City. Attendees were encouraged to participate in two interactive live polls, to submit questions throughout and to follow-up with feedback via post-meeting survey and email.

### Focus Group Meetings

These small format meetings allowed subject matter experts to dive deeply on the six key themes of Plaza & Play: Wellness & Play, Food & Commerce, Gardens & Ecology, Arts & Culture, History & Reflection and Community Leadership & Stewardship. Focus group members were drawn from the Dix Park Community Committee, and with others in the community with relevant areas of expertise.

*The comments and feedback collected during this first round of engagement informs the Schematic Design phase currently in process. More details on how the feedback is incorporated into the design reported back to the larger community in the coming months.*



Plaza & Play concept image from the  
Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan



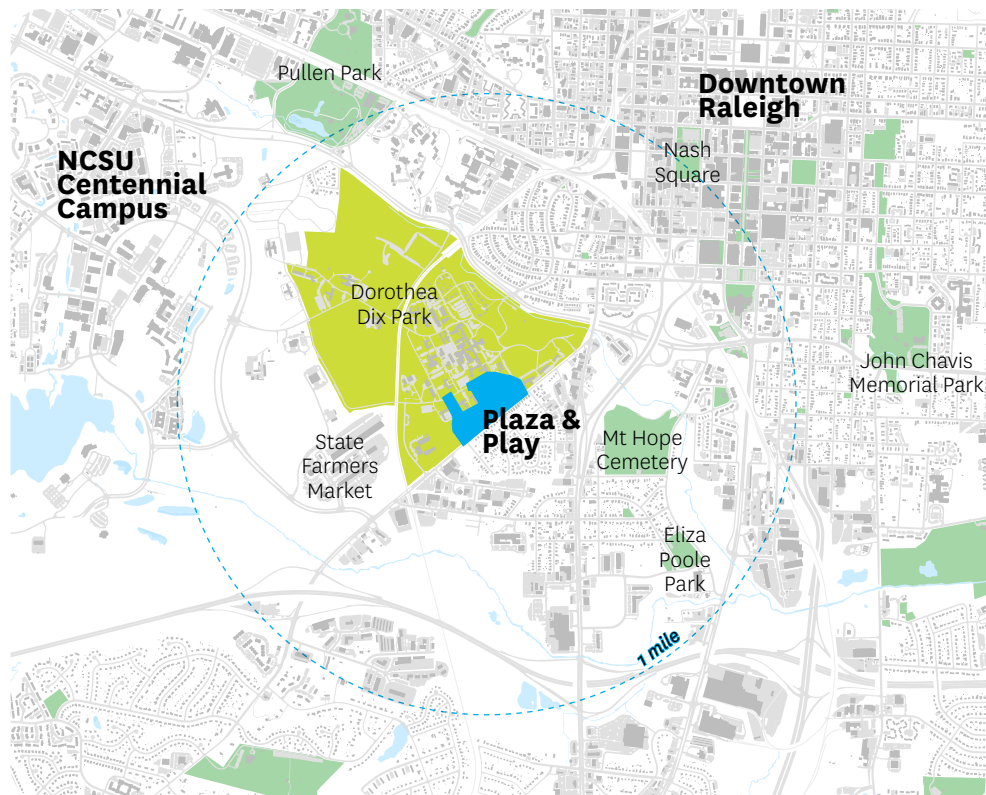
## Pre-Meeting Survey

As the Dorothea Dix Park Plaza & Play project kicked off, we invited the public into the design process to share feedback via a 5 question survey hosted on [publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay). "Big-picture" questions framed the opportunity at hand and offered a way into the project for citizens of Raleigh to begin carrying the valuable work done with the Dorothea Dix Master Plan into the future. The survey launched on September 14, 2020 and stayed open until October 6, 2020.

1. What is your favorite garden or nature area in North Carolina, and why is this place special to you?  
(157 comments)
2. What is your favorite public gathering place in Raleigh (such as a plaza, outdoor amphitheater, or picnic area) and why is this place special to you?  
(143 comments)
3. When you head to a North Carolina park for play and fun outside, what is your favorite activity to do?  
(155 comments)
4. Is there a garden, gathering space, or play experience missing from the Triangle's parks today that you would like to see added?  
(108 comments)
5. As the Dix Park process moves forward: What are you most concerned about? And most looking forward to?  
(144 comments)

### Pre-Event Survey Data:

- 5 Question Survey on PublicInput.com
- Open from to September 14, 2020 to October 6, 2020
- 707 Total Comments across 5 Questions



**Plaza & Play at Dorothea Dix Park**

## Public Meeting 1 Outreach

The City of Raleigh department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources led the marketing and outreach efforts to direct residents to engage with the project. These efforts included the following:

### Email Outreach

#### Email #1 on 9/14

Subscribers = 28,911  
Opens = 4,506  
Link Clicks = 301

#### Email #2 on 10/5

Subscribers = 28,705  
Opens = 4,182  
Link Clicks = 185

#### Email on 9/30

Subscribers = 28,705  
Opens = 4,231  
Link Clicks = 55

Downtown Raleigh  
Alliance email on 9/29

### Social Media Outreach

#### Dix Park Conservancy

Facebook = 1,300+ Followers  
Twitter = 3,500+ Followers  
Instagram = 15,100+ Followers  
5 days of Facebook and Instagram Ads  
Paid Ads Reach = 14,948

#### Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources

Facebook = 15,000+ Followers  
Twitter = 17,600+ Followers  
Instagram = 11,000+ Followers

#### City of Raleigh

Facebook = 24,000+ Followers  
Twitter = 108,300+ Followers  
Instagram = 16,200+ Followers

### Traditional Media Outreach

- Media alerts sent 9/15 and 10/5 to 40+ media contacts
- Posted on Raleighnc.gov: News Article, Event and link to Dix Park Page
- Printed in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Newsletter 9/18 reaching 13,800+ subscribers
- Printed in the The Loop (City of Raleigh Employee News) reaching 4,000 full-time and 3,000 part-time employees
- Printed in the Utility Bill Newsletter reaching an average of 194,000 households in Raleigh, Garner, Knightdale, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell, and Zebulon

### Print Collateral

Four large format banners were hung in the park on 9/18

200 postcards with kid's activity on the back were shared with 10 recreation centers throughout the City through the REC, Recreation and Education Center, Program. The Recreation and Education Center (REC) program is designed for elementary and middle school students participating in traditional, year-round and modified school calendars, home school students, and participants enrolled in virtual learning. This program strives to provide a fun environment modified for the safety of staff and participants.

List of centers and number of fliers given are in parentheses:

Jaycee (28), Laurel Hills (24), Marsh Creek (14), Method (12), Roberts (8), Worthdale (15), Barwell (10), Biltmore Hills (8), Brier Creek (32), Millbrook (22)

7 volunteers and 3 Conservancy staff distributed 500 door hangers and flyers with Plaza & Play and Edge Study information to Walnut Terrace Apartments (100), Fuller Heights Neighborhood (200), Caraleigh Neighborhood (200)

## Public Meeting 1, Virtual Format

Public Meeting 1 was the first of two virtual public sessions that inform the predesign and schematic design phases of Plaza & Play. A third public meeting will take place during design development phase. Public Meeting 1 was broadcast on [publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay) the evening of October 7, 2020 from 6:30-8:00PM. The virtual meeting offered an opportunity for residents to learn more about the Plaza & Play project from the design team, Michael Van Valkenburg Associates, and representatives from the City of Raleigh. Public attendees participated in a series of live poll questions to gauge immediate feedback to ideas presented by the City and the design team and they shared comments and questions throughout the presentation.

The meeting moderator, Mickey Fearn, contextualized the project offering an opportunity for members of the public to serve as an early voice in shaping the future programming and design of the Plaza & Play project. The video capture of Public Meeting 1 is available for viewing on [publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay) and the Dix Park YouTube channel [youtube.com/dixpark](https://youtube.com/dixpark).

## Public Meeting 1 Data:

- 357 Registered Attendees  
See map on page x for locations of where attendees participated from
- Participant location map generated by collecting user IP addresses and cell tower pings for user log-ins.

## Virtual Public Meeting 1 Poll Results

During Public Meeting 1 attendees were asked the following questions in series of live polls. Interested members of the public who were unable to join Public Meeting 1, were encouraged to share their poll responses via a post-event survey, which ran from October 8 through October 23, 2020.

1. How would you like to travel to the Plaza & Play?  
103 Respondents during PM1, 16 post-event responses
2. What types of play are most important to you?  
115 Respondents during PM1, 16 post-event responses
3. What landscape elements are most important to you?  
114 Respondents during PM1, 15 post-event responses
4. What Plaza & Play elements are you most excited about?  
114 Respondents during PM1, 16 post-event responses
5. What's the most important thing to add to Dix Park now?  
106 Respondents during PM1, 16 post-event responses

See Live Poll Data on pages 29 and 30.

## Comments and Q&A during Public Meeting 1

During Public Meeting 1 attendees were invited to submit question and comments throughout the evening via the comment function on [publicinput.com](https://publicinput.com). The City of Raleigh and MVVA responded to questions after each meeting segment, and during an expanded Q&A session moderated by Mickey Fearn at the conclusion of the meeting.

## Public Meeting 1 Data:

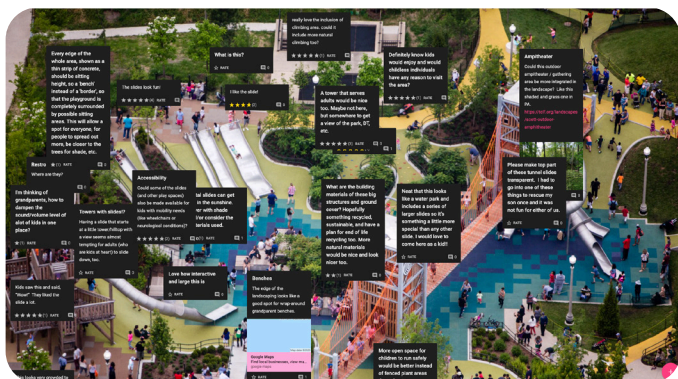
- 79 comments during the Meeting
- Comments were captured and responses are posted on [publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay)
- See full comments and answers on pages 32 - 38.

## Key Takeaways: Concerns, Intentions, and Questions

The 'Key Takeaways' summary on pages 9 - 12 includes frequent comments, concerns and aspirations for the Plaza & Play project as shared by the public during the Pre-Meeting Survey, Public Meeting 1 Q&A and comments via email exchange.

## Post-It Activity

The Post-It! activity, available on [publicinput.com/plazaplay](http://publicinput.com/plazaplay), invited participants to, "Imagine a place...share your thoughts and inspirations on a virtual post-it by clicking any of the sample park images below." See full comments on page 14 - 18.



## Sketch-It Activity

The Sketch-It! activity invited participants to sketch or write ideas on the following images and send them back to [plazaplay@publicinput.com](mailto:plazaplay@publicinput.com).



# KIDS!

## How do you like to play outside?

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

Sketch or write your favorite way to play in the space above.  
Snap a pic and share with #plazaplay or  
email to: [plazaplay@publicinput.com](mailto:plazaplay@publicinput.com)



## Focus Groups Round 1 (of 2)

The City of Raleigh, MVVA, and 313c met with six Focus Groups over the course of two 90-minute virtual meetings on October 19 and 20. Each Focus Group session included dialogue with the full group and a breakout session for each small group discussion. Focus Group members were drawn from the Dix Park Community Committee, and others in the community with relevant areas of expertise. Each Focus Group member participated in one of the six Focus Group breakout conversations. These meetings are the first of a two-round series of meetings with the Focus Groups. The second round of meetings is scheduled to take place in December 2020.

### Focus Group Session Monday, October 19th | 6:00 – 7:30PM

The first Focus Group session focused on three of the six topics: Wellness & Play, History & Reflection and Food & Commerce. A comprehensive summary of the dialogue is included in the attached Focus Group Summary document.

#### Wellness & Play

Mission Statement:

*Ensure that spaces at the park support physical, social, and mental well-being for everyone, with a focus on play.*

#### History & Reflection

Mission Statement:

Create spaces where education and critical conversations about the site's history can occur.

#### Food & Commerce

Mission Statement:

Ensure that spaces at the park support Raleigh's food culture, with a focus on hosting shared meals at the park for groups and families, drawing new connections to the site's agricultural history, and supporting locally owned businesses.

### Focus Group Session Tuesday, October 20th | 6:00 – 7:30PM

The second Focus Group session focused on the final three topics: Arts & Culture, Gardens & Ecology and Community Leadership & Stewardship. A comprehensive summary of the dialogue is included in the attached Focus Group Summary document.

#### Arts & Culture

Mission Statement:

Ensure that spaces at the park support and host art and cultural events and activities that bring a wide range of visitors to the park.

#### Gardens & Ecology

Mission Statement:

Celebrate and restore the diversity and range of Piedmont landscapes, ecologies, and Triangle-region garden traditions at the park.

#### Community Leadership & Stewardship

Mission Statement:

Ensure that park spaces are inclusive and welcoming to visitors that represent a range of backgrounds, geographies, abilities, interests, and ages.

### Focus Group Data:

Oct 19 | 27 Total participants: History & Reflection (11), Food & Commerce (6), Wellness & Play (10)

Oct 20 | 26 Total participants: Arts & Culture (6), Gardens & Ecology (10), Community Leadership & Stewardship (10)



[publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay)  
Pre-Meeting Survey

# Key Takeaways

## Pre-Meeting Survey Comments

As the Dorothea Dix Park Plaza & Play project kicked off, the public was invited into the design process to share feedback via a 5 question survey hosted on publicinput.com. The “big-picture” questions below framed the opportunity at hand and offered a way into the project for participants to begin carrying the valuable work done with the Dorothea Dix Master Plan into the future. The survey launched on September 14, 2020 and stayed open until October 6, 2020.

1. What is your favorite garden or nature area in North Carolina, and why is this place special to you?
2. What is your favorite public gathering place in Raleigh (such as a plaza, outdoor amphitheater, or picnic area) and why is this place special to you?
3. When you head to a North Carolina park for play and fun outside, what is your favorite activity to do?
4. Is there a garden, gathering space, or play experience missing from the Triangle’s parks today that you would like to see added?
5. As the Dix Park process moves forward: What are you most concerned about? And most looking forward to?

The summary below highlights frequent comments and concerns organized by topic/category, and supported with quotes as shared on publicinput.com/plazaplay.

## Citizen Design Ambitions | Frequent Sentiments & Intentions

### Civic Wonder

- “Looking forward to a civic wonder.”
- “An oasis in the middle of the city.”
- “Different areas with different feels, and they're all magical.”
- “I think it's great that it's a living laboratory while at the same time being a community oasis.”
- “Trails that lead to more interesting stopping points, gathering spaces.”
- “It's quiet, there are interesting things to look at and discover.”

### Water Feature

- “Raleigh should have a grand fountain or interactive water feature. The lack of water is probably my biggest dislike of Raleigh.”
- “A large, impressive, fountain that kids can play in would be great in Raleigh's hot summers. If we could tie into a natural area, like a creek, I think it would be really spectacular.”
- “There's something about moving water.”
- “I hope there can be more than one large water feature and not just for little kids.”

### Natural Spaces & Gardens

- “Public gardens where citizens/kids can volunteer and learn.”
- “Offer areas that are unique to the geology, cultural, biodiversity of NC.”
- “More natural playscapes, obstacle courses.”
- “A larger botanical garden with kid space.”
- “I look forward to a place for gardens, hopefully including native plants and possibly a demonstration kitchen garden.”
- “The restoration of the ecology and improvements to the park across the different areas.”
- “Love how the gardens have different sections with different themes to them and how they wind together in a natural, non-linear way. It's fun to meander and get lost exploring. It's special to me because I've spent time there enjoying the change in seasons especially Spring and Fall.”
- “It would be nice to have an area devoted to NC wildflowers. The sunflower field is great, but wildflowers can be enjoyed the bulk of the year. You could have paths through the field(s) and clearings of different sizes for family picnics or just to lay a blanket on the grass. An area devoted to milkweed would be nice.”
- “Feel like there is a massive opportunity to better connect - to make this a pathway of learning and evolution for the whole region. Center for Sustainable Farming Systems is a group at NCSU that has not yet been involved, for example.”

### Diversity of Opportunities

- "It has a diversity of experiences in a compact environment."
- "The diversity of people that use the space."
- "Water activities, picnics, food trucks, cultural exhibits, walking, biking, picnicking, cycling, jogging, places of respite, opportunities to look at a beautiful view."
- "Somewhere cool for teens to go - zip lines, skate park, climbing walls, and places for small acoustic music gatherings."
- "Rock climbing is really popular around here, and it would be cool to have some low rock formations for outdoor bouldering."

### Community & Civic Gathering

- "I'm most looking forward to this being a space where all kinds of people feel welcome and want to / are able to visit."
- "It has great potential to bring our diverse community together."
- "Accessible park for multi-generational gatherings."

### Play

- "With my grandchildren, I like a playground and lots of wide-open fields so we can run around and play."
- "I would love to see outdoor playground equipment for adults at parks."
- "Do we have enough play area for disabled children?"
- "There is nothing quite like a nature inspired play space with tree-houses, forts, rope walks, log, teeter-totters etc."
- "A creative playground area and some sculptures."

### Food

- "Adult food options near a park."
- "I am looking forward to it engaging with the Farmer's Market and enlightening the public about inclusion."
- "An agricultural experience so kids can experience where their food comes from and get their hands dirty."
- "Cafe in an open area with cafe tables."
- "Proximity to neighborhoods, retail and dining, that would allow you to patronize other local businesses before or after your time in the park."

### Cultural Experiences

- "Parks with more temporary art installations or programming."
- "Outdoor theater, outdoor exercise area."
- "I love performance art and hope that Dix Park is a place where artists can express themselves."
- "It would be great to have some stargazing events where they could turn off the lights in one area. I have gone to local parks or trails but sometimes the streetlights are too bright."
- "More music in the park (at Dix), bring a lawn chair."
- "Looking forward to events at the park and more sunset evenings, preserve those views!"

### Community Input & Great New Design

- "The community meetings during the master plan were really valuable for the public to be part of the iterative design process and for the out of town designers to learn what is special about our place."
- "I'm looking forward to a really creative and engaging design process that brings new and different ideas to Raleigh."
- "Really looking forward to more interesting defined spaces being established inside the park."
- "I am most looking forward to the moment when we see multiple projects come to fruition and support each other. The park has an exciting opportunity to support its own ecosystem of activities, businesses, and communities. I really think people will coalesce around the framework we provide and turn it into a self-sustaining nexus of ideas and energy for the city."

### Streetscape & Access Improvements

- "Most looking forward to the improvements off Lake Wheeler."
- "Look forward to connectivity by transit and bike paths/greenways."
- "There are some quick wins that I think could be implemented, like repaving roads, improving signage, and opening a bathroom facility."

## FREQUENT CONCERNS

### Schedule & Support

- "I am most concerned that the project will experience eroded support as time passes. It's going to take a long time to realize the dream. Effort needs to be put into maintaining awareness and excitement."
- "Concerned it will take too long to come to fruition."
- "Concerned that building preservation will slow down the actual work."
- "Cost and availability of funding is a concern - especially as all public funding is tighter due to Covid-19."
- "I am concerned it will be expensive to maintain for the City and therefore costly for users."

### Bold Vision

- "I'm most concerned that the grand vision for Dix Park won't happen and we will get a watered-down version."
- "While I feel that something for everyone is a noble idea and a logical goal, I hope that doesn't mean that we won't take risks in this next stage."
- "I'm most concerned that the focus will be shifted from the larger vision and goals of the master plan. It's easy in a large phased project like this to get caught up in implementing or funding one aspect of implementation - and then the overall goals are lost."

### History

- "I am most concerned that history of the land will be forgotten and hope the park will continue to incorporate the legacy of the land to provide healing and rest."
- "Most concerned about the continuing lack of recognition that it is a 'Site of Conscience' with a vitally important three-chapter history to illuminate. Looking forward to this major shortcoming becoming emphatically rectified."
- "Maintaining historical understanding of the site and making inclusive spaces for a wide variety of visitors and their different needs."
- "I don't feel like we yet have a handle on how to express and translate the social historical context in a way that will really make this park nationally significant. I am optimistic we will get there."

### Access

- "Most concerned about accessibility for all."
- "Making sure it is inclusive and "not just for white folks."
- "I am concerned about Dix having the ability for folks to easily access the park without a car and creating seamless transitions for the planned BRT corridor. Our family pretty much bikes and buses exclusively and would love to be able to have as many car-free trips / locations as possible in Raleigh."
- "I'm most concerned about whether I will be able to access the park safely without driving there. It is within walking distance of my apartment, but I haven't walked there yet because of the difficulties crossing Western Blvd."

### Neighborhood change

- "I am very concerned that the park will change the character of the surrounding neighborhoods."
- "I'm most concerned about integrating the space into nearby communities in an accessible way that welcomes everyone regardless of their background."
- "Concerned desires of out of town tourists will be prioritized over Raleigh resident park visitors. I hope the area won't be consistently reserved for special (i.e. corporate sponsored/ paying) events or road races."

#### Over development

- "I'm concerned about the park losing some of its natural, untouched areas, but there's so much space and now I know that there's a great plan to balance the natural and urban parts of the park."
- "That it doesn't become too cluttered with "stuff." Look forward to its current natural features being enhanced."
- "I'm concerned about too much imposed structure which may limit imagination and contemplation and requires a lot of continuous maintenance."

#### Traffic and parking

- "Too much space being devoted to accommodating cars/parking."
- "Most concerned we will attempt to make it too manmade, too pristine. The joy of the park is in its expansiveness and raw natural quality that can't be seen in other Raleigh areas."
- "Traffic and parking. We don't historically scale well as a city and we're about 10 years behind where we should be on a transportation plan. Lake Wheeler is already a hot mess and Dix Park parking is limited on a busy day. Making sure the park is accessible to residents via multi-modal transportation as well."
- "I'm concerned about the increase of vehicle traffic in and around the park."
- "It's a bit secluded, not easy to walk to. I'm concerned parking will become a headache because there aren't strong public transportation options for people. "

#### Safety

- "I'm most concerned about safety in Dix Park."
- "Safety for visitors of all demographics."
- "New ways to think about safety in light of racial injustice and Covid-19."

#### Overshadowing other parks

- "Making sure all the money doesn't go to Dix. I live in North Raleigh and our parks are aging. It's not fair that all the new stuff is going in south Raleigh like Chavis and Dix."
- "Think about ways that Dix Park, starting with Plaza & Play might amplify resources and opportunities at parks citywide."

#### Missing Elements

- "Concerned that there hasn't been more discussion about a new public skatepark/plaza."
- "Desire for a dog park."
- "Interest in a disc-golf course."



Comments & Responses

# Post-It! Activity

*hosted for public comment via [publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay)*



# Post-It! Activity

Respondents were asked to “Imagine a place...share your thoughts and inspirations on a virtual post-it by clicking any of the sample park images.”



## Comments & Responses



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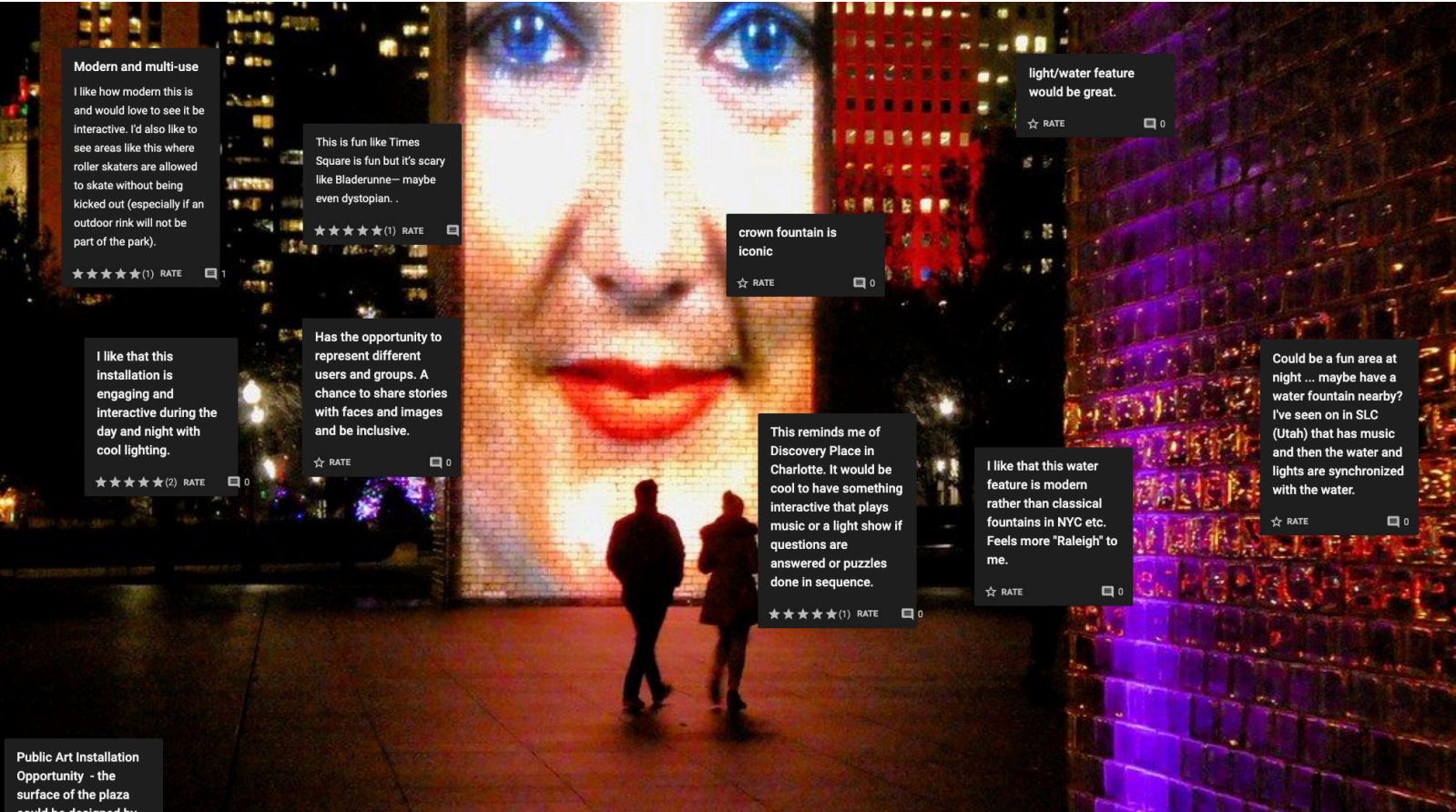
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## Comments & Responses

MEETING NOTES

# Focus Groups

ROUND 1 of 2

## Focus Group Meeting Notes

The Plaza & Play project Focus Groups are comprised of members drawn from the Community Committee and additional experts recommended by the City of Raleigh. The City and Design Team brought the Focus Groups together to enhance the park vision, increase community feedback, share resources and activate networks to enhance the impact of the Plaza & Play project. Organized around six topic areas, the Focus Groups offer an opportunity for local experts to share their knowledge with the Design Team and City of Raleigh in focused discussions directly relevant to the park. The quality and character through which these themes materialize into the programmatic elements of Plaza & Play will set Dix Park apart from other parks in and around Raleigh, and honor a commitment to the three Core Principles of the Master Plan - Open Up and Connect, Build From What Is There, and Offer Something for Everyone.

## October 19, 2020

### Wellness & Play

The Wellness & Play Focus Group discussed the following questions:

1. The Plaza and Play will be a year-round destination. Describe your ideal spring, summer, fall, and winter activities as they relate to Wellness & Play.
2. We heard through Master Plan engagement efforts that areas that allow for play of all ages together was important at the park. How might play areas at Dorothea Dix Plaza and Play Area be welcoming to multiple age groups?
3. We heard through the Master Plan engagement efforts that water, in the form of a fountain, was an important element to include at the park, due to water's healing powers, the cool comfort of it on hot days, and the fun of playing in it. How can a fountain at the Plaza & Play offer something for everyone?

The following conversation notes were captured in response to the three focus group questions, and have been subsequently grouped into four categories of feedback.

#### WATER & WEATHER

- Water for kids to play in during warm weather, fountains, consider the impact of use and cleaning mechanisms.
- See example at the Denver Children's Museum. When the water is not running the fountain becomes a climbing structure. Notion that the one space and/or feature extends across all seasons and weather.
- A shade structure- extends life of a park. See examples at: Tumbalong Park
- Not kids that do not want to be outside in rain and cold. How do you have a comfortable space for parents so kids can go outside in elements?
- How can we get families outdoors in the winter?
- Dix Park is a destination for sledding- how to build on that?
- Harness the elements for imaginative play opportunities, for instance using air and wind to play with kites • Kite festival that respond to the elements, air, water, and respond to natural landscapes
- Engage parents in play through elements.
- Rain and snow. Reduce rain and snow to make spaces self. Example... remove water from slide so it is not wet... self-sufficient way to make play areas safe. Make part of play.
- Using sound, rain, dipping. Sound & Music- use in parks and not take up a lot of space.

#### ALL AGES

- Age separation vs multi-generational play. Families stay together in same space. One space connects to all ages. Opportunity for self-selection and various roles to play out in a shared space.
- Play spaces with different levels- vertical and skill-based. Play spaces for all ages. Safe for all ages
- Diversity of opportunity. Across age groups, seasons, etc. Equals diversity of visitors.
- Self-directed play- limited in and out to access play areas. Controlled environment but does not look like a cage.
- Parent and Grandparents. Multiple generations.
- Pirate ship park- Example of play... generations (Look at the pirate ship park in DC, has adjacent workout spaces for parents to spend time with children)
- A 7 year old and 13 year old play together and take on different roles with varying levels of difficulty
- How to create adjacent spaces for parents

### IMAGINATIVE PLAY

- Creating spaces for the imagination. Not assuming people need instruction. Meeting inclusion and welcoming needs. Experiences that are not prescribed. Imagination to take flight.
- Design gives permission to parents to let their kids play (self-directed). More desire for self-directed play. How does design allow for this? Elements designed around safety and comfort balancing safety.
- Give youth the tools to be self sufficient
- What happens when the space is not programmed?

### EDUCATIONAL/PLAYWORK

- How do parents and children discover/learn about history together?
- Creating interactive space to connect to the rest of the park. Plaques that you open that have a question and you have to figure out the answer. Scavenger Hunt that ties in the rest of the park.
- Play is the way to tackle tough topics. Notion of 'Playwork'
- Play allows you to wrap in inclusion and play.
- Print materials in different languages. Tell stories in as few words as possible.
- Storytelling- engage cultural awareness - songlines. Songlines connect spaces. Engage different cultures to express mission
- Play can allow children to experience culture. Participation in cultural events. Experience culture & history and to reflect.
- Add History within play
- Embed interactive space for families, help people connect to the rest of the park.
- Create programmatic opportunities like a scavenger hunt for people to move through all spaces
- Stewardship can be play
- Play can be a way to tackle tough topics
- Publish signage in multiple languages, storytelling to engage different cultures.
- Park in downtown Sydney as example
- Creating spaces for the imagination to take flight

## History & Reflection

The History & Reflection Focus Group discussed the following questions:

1. We heard through the master plan engagement efforts that sharing the complex history of labor on the land by patients and by enslaved people are important aspects of the site history to retain and share. Do you agree? What do you think are the most important aspects of the site's history that visitors to the main entrance to Dix Park should be presented with?
2. What is the most important feeling that visitors should have after learning more about the site's history at Plaza and Play (awe, curiosity, inspiration, reverence, etc.)? In other words, what is the desired impact to visitors after they learn more about the site's history at the Plaza and Play project?
3. How can areas for history and reflection be maximized in the park? How can we create opportunities for new and future stories to be told? How might we best keep content fresh and draw repeat visitorship?

The following conversation notes were captured in response to the three focus group questions, and have been subsequently grouped into three categories of feedback.

### History as a Fundamental Driver for The Plaza and Play Experience

- These elements of history are fundamental driving aspects of why the park is an aspect to be understood in relation to contemporary issues. Would like to elevate the language of the question.
- Have a connection, history is relevant, and it matters, it connects us to today.
- Framing in terms of layers of indigenous people, enslaved labor, mental health and wellness - so many stories to tell. Thinking of children's museums, there are ways to try on various labor roles (workers, patients by jackets, hats, so on). Want people to slow down so their experience says 'this is a different place,' time to be slow and reflect. School children visiting and having a chance to slow down and pause.
- We'd prefer if the history is not frozen, it is a living space, history should be 'living' and folks can bring something to the space. The space doesn't tell them everything. People can go in, discover and contribute. Being there was important to the space. Part of that is telling all the intricate stories.

- Recognize the history is very deep, there is a whole bunch. You won't get it all right here, right now. You will be intrigued to find it all - as an example - on a 'memory walk:' a trail as a vehicle for integrating it all. People can learn and know history isn't over. We are part of history by creating the park. There is a lot, it is rich and deep and raw.

#### Achieving accessibility and Relevance for All

- All these words point to connection. Imagine folks coming back over a lifetime. To come back, you have to have some sort of connection to it. Get feeling of belonging and connection. Awe, curiosity feeds into that. Relationship shouldn't be unmoved by learning the Hunter Family story. There are other stories too others should learn from. Connecting from the inside and outside. Community that is right there needs to be connected to the site, the neighborhood
- We don't want to hide away from the history. It is and should be integrated it into the park itself- walkways and trails, up to the buildings. Place of healing at the grove. Honoring the Native Americans. People should first see others being honored at the entrance to the park.
- Knowing your presence has a use, for instance going to Times Square, you put your wish on confetti and it is dropped on NYE. A way this could be applied to Dix Park ... you are going to plant trees, to approach the broader vision. How can you help repair what was done to the people who inhabited the site? Is there a way to engage people in that?

#### Creating a Venue for Orientation and Ongoing Interaction

- Is it possible to channel all visitors who are unfamiliar with the site to the P&P? Isn't ideal that all visitors be brought to the visitor's center (Buffaloe House)?
- All 6 focus topics are important for entire park but also for Plaza & Play. How do we elevate with signage and participation throughout the park that these are themes that will happen at P&P but also throughout the park? Could use a welcome marker (Buffaloe House) and historical markers throughout the park from as a way to show history throughout the park
- One goal could be to engage all the senses: how do all people have the opportunity to engage all of their senses at Plaza and Play? Using design as a multi-sensory strategy for drawing people in to experience Plaza and Play.

## Food & Commerce

The Food & Commerce Focus Group discussed the following questions:

1. Imagine the Cook Out Zones . . . Who uses these areas, How do they arrive? What do they bring? What might they want to buy at the park or nearby? What essential facilities and elements should be provided?
2. How can we integrate the State Farmers Market into people's visits at the Plaza and Play?
3. How can we honor the richness of Raleigh's food culture in the park?

Note, the third prompt served as the core of this conversation.

#### EXAMPLES

- Moore Sq., Square Burger as a fixed option, as opposed to a smaller less formal use, other opportunities for other community/food involvement. More chaos, more vendors but also more garbage and more noise. (Moore Sq. original plans different than planned options.)
- Like the Charleston example, outdoor vendor market/alley as a great way to showcase folks that want to sell at the park.
- Name 'Cook Out' term has potential for confusion with the restaurant, consider renaming.
- Not sure of cook out use for this space, similar use at Pullen Park, nearby.

#### CONSIDERATIONS

- Dix Park feels overwhelming for a lot of people. Communication/involvement is critical to project success, authentic communication. Instead of people being told what is going to happen, community involved in the process.
- Cost and affordability are important to consider. Allow people to bring their own food.
- Go big on food options, picnic areas, spaces covered from the sun.
- Hard to put both cookout zones and smaller gathering areas.
- Consider resilience strategies based on COVID.
- Are we focused on a primer food experience? Or a more family-oriented picnic area?



- Access for all sizes of business a major concern for many people.
- Reinstate festival use at the park.
- Flexibility of the space is critical for all types of folks.
- Goal is to reach as many people as possible with food.
- Provide as many tables as possible.
- A community garden or demonstration could be an interesting addition to the project or a later phase of Dix Park.
- How much space is dedicated for the cookout zones? If there is interest in making the space family focused, it will require a lot of space.

## October 20, 2020

### Arts & Culture

The Arts & Culture Focus Group discussed the following questions:

1. What is the most important feeling that park visitor should have after encountering art elements at Plaza & Play (awe, curiosity, inspiration, etc.)? In other words, what is the desired impact to visitors after they encounter art at the Plaza & Play?
2. With Raleigh's growth comes increasing diversity and the need for places where different cultures can be highlighted and celebrated. What does an engaging gathering space for multi-cultural festivals, music performances, and art shows for all ages and abilities look like at the Plaza & Play? In your answer, consider which things should happen early on at the Plaza & Play.
3. What kinds of existing local groups might be great co-sponsors of events, such as: community theater, choirs, bands, art museums, or other? What sorts of new events and groups could be formed in partnership with the park?

#### Exploring Arts & Culture as a Vehicle for Site History & Heritage

- In consideration of Dix Park's designation as a 'site of conscience,' we need to acknowledge that Plaza and Play not just a playground. Dix Park has a deep history that resonates with so many diverse groups (women, African Americans, indigenous Americans, gay activists, etc.). We want people to think of it and experience it as more than just a playground.
- Still thinks of it as health & wellness site and the uncomfortable history that comes along with that, really need to acknowledge that. Art has the ability to acknowledge that and to celebrate how far we've come as a welcoming place for everyone, including those with mental health challenges.

#### Arts as Means of Exploration and Reflection

- One of the things about this is space is it gives us the ability to try out some stuff, it does not have to be 'complete' when it opens. The buildings to the west offer good space to the park. Master Plan mentions public private partnerships. Let's try that out at this scale. Activation that can be in their first space (WPA buildings). Go into this experimentally and go into more specified at a later date.
- When you think of art (in general) has natural propensity for reflection, art lends itself to reflecting and connecting some kind of experience with that piece or that feeling. Connection, reflection, thoughtful engagement are important feelings that visitors should have
- Art and culture can facilitate healing. Don't want to specify solutions, but water provides an opportunity for healing. People can experience healing through art, art that is interactive for people to touch and manipulate. There will be a lot of pressure to accomplish a lot with art in the P&P. We must recognize that there's a lot to do: many goals to achieve within many areas throughout the park

#### Arts & Culture as an Authentic Expression of Place

- This place needs to be about Raleigh
- An incredible thing about Dorothea Dix Park and Raleigh an opportunity to celebrate NC/Raleigh's unique geology, climate, natural features. Perfect final form of Plaza & Play artwork could be to acknowledge some of the things that are truly unique about Raleigh. Along with local artists who are well-versed in all things local, include collaborations with national artists to create a juxtaposition. Other great places have a mix of unique and local with national and bringing the rest of the world in
- Is there anything in the Gathering Place park in Tulsa that acknowledges the 1930 massacre? (Adrienne- there is

not. That was a choice made by our client). We are really interested in what Raleigh wants in this park. Acknowledge the hospital, Native American past, etc. (Adrienne - yes, we are interested in what Raleigh wants. We will not be replicating models from other places.

- Building Trust with Local Residents What should be considered early on- get people and community on the immediate outskirts involved. There is still mistrust and fear of being misplaced. We need to get them involved and to be very transparent with them.
- Agree to build trust early on with local residents and groups. Hopeful for different forms of art than can happen throughout the park. Storytelling corner, plays for kids, puppet theater.
- Value to spontaneous things that happen outdoors in relation to what is happening. Inviting people to have their own experiences and make their own contributions to Plaza and Play
- Native American celebration that was standing room only. People are starving for arts and culture events in the area. Plan and they will come, for sure. Rich hip hop culture here, poetry (Phonte, Rhapsody)
- I agree with the hip hop! So many performing artists originate from here. Feels atypical being southern mid-sized city. Every single genre is represented from within the triangle. This cultural offering will resonate with African Americans and other local communities
- Others to connect with: Community Music School. Association of Black Story Tellers.

#### Future Concepts for Programming & Activities to Activate Plaza and Play

- Intimate performance space is missing in Raleigh, size crowd not King's Barricade or Ritz.
- Could the Clark Building provide some spaces for some of these things?
- Example of street opera in Brightleaf Square, this area could be of similar size and feel
- Festival wise- we have a gap for children, we don't have a children's theater. We are missing art festivals geared toward children.
- Could the chapel serve some of this? (Charles' comment above)
- In the 80's and 90's, Artslosure was blues & jazz festival. This programming could be great in Dorothea Dix Park
- Jazz. Sipping cappuccino, bistro style tables and chairs while listening to music. I always comes away from Raleigh festivals feeling inspired. Plaza and Play can act as an the welcome/arrival zone of bigger festivals that are hosted throughout the Dorothea Dix Park
- Example of football player and artist. (Didn't catch his name)
- Art of Cool' festival was amazing (in Durham), centered in R&B
- ALL the colleges and universities of the area are potential partners at Plaza and Play / Dix Park. So diverse in size, missions. Print, music, drama, programs, etc.
- Some of the festivals that are downtown that could be at Plaza & Play. Virtual pow-wow this year from smallest Native American tribe (confirm name). Putting an effort toward smaller groups like that. So that people know that coming into the park on any Saturday there will be something happening. And it can be
- a way to share and experience various cultures
- Some people may welcome the acreage to Dorothea Dix Park for large festivals, the downtown ones get so crowded. Gives them space to interact and move, have kinesthetics involved. The open green space to experience some things
- The Brown and Clark Buildings that are carved out of the site should be programmed to support visitors (restrooms, concessions and so on). The carve out of the two existing buildings makes me nervous. We will need new buildings, so it there a potential for these to go away? Hoping not. The U-shape makes them very flexible -do the planning now so when you do get it, you are ready to go.

### Community Leadership & Stewardship

The Community Leadership & Stewardship Focus Group discussed the following questions:

1. What does Community Leadership & Stewardship at this park mean to you and how can this be fostered through the Design & Implementation?
2. How can the Plaza and Play portion of Dix Park create a sense of community that enhances the feeling of welcome and safety for all park visitors? How can park access be shaped to improve equity, indoors and outdoors?
3. What are some examples of volunteer events or volunteer programs that you have experience with, that contribute positively to the stewardship of a particular space? What from those examples should inform volunteer stewardship programs at Dix Park?

- Create opportunities for different levels of engagement over time, in parks programs specifically.
- Offer innovative longitudinal engagement opportunities, site-based engagement as one main aspect
- Inspire folks to take ownership of the park, help folks understand they are a part of the success of the park • Consider the example of badges or stickers, for instance merit badges at National Parks and kids earning Jr. ranger patches based on activities
- Create opportunities to build and foster different levels of leadership. The final level is to let go and trust others to have success.
- Offer hands on experience to nurture connection with the land.
- Secret Dream: Elaborate program that includes residential program in the summer
- Levels of engagement vary over time, would be great to have a community board at the site or drop-box, a physical thing that people can interact with and share ongoing feedback.
- How might the community create opportunities for ownership that how does that fit within the role of the City and the Conservancy?
- Zoos, museums locally have programs such as citizen science that allow people to participate in stewardship practices.
- 'AmeriCorps' like program that fits with Raleigh and is appropriate, gives people ownership and buy-in.
- Raleigh Parks Corps – create a multitude of opportunities and experiences
- Potential to create partnership with other parks across Raleigh to spread the love that is going to Dix Park in general and not create a vacuum.

#### THINK BEYOND ADA ACCESSIBILITY | RE-THINKING SAFETY & ACCESS

- Need to be sensitive to all views and experiences with the history/legacy of the land
- All engagement opportunities should be accessible (programming, garden spaces).
- Importance of accessibility. For instance, a garden with varying elevations such that it can be accessed at a seated level in addition to the basics of paved sidewalks and access ramps.
- Does the design team have a disability expert beyond ADA compliance? Or could additional support need to be brought in?
- The Mayors Committee represents a wide range of abilities, could lend lived experience to the project.
- Those without lived experience have no idea about the realities of day to day experience. Committee that represents minorities and their experience is crucial to the project.
- I think this part of the process will be to think about safety in a new way. Unfortunately, Dix Park doesn't exist in a vacuum away from politics and current events. The events of Central Park with the bird-watcher and the tension in Raleigh between the police and the community (which Dix Park is wrapped up in) are on my mind. I would offer that we should discuss public safety more in depth and would love to research innovative ways we can make the park feel safe for everyone.
- May be a good place to start with defining what 'safety' can mean at Dix Park

#### OFFER CROSS-GENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- I believe this speaks to the opportunity of the park, to facilitate programming, multiple generations and abilities should be able to participate together in shared activity is also the reality that various communities are bringing a multitude of experiences.
- This is a real potential for learning and connection. Potential to provide the 'exposure' to other types of lived experience. All types of potential partnerships across all ages.
- We have to determine how to put a 'heart' in this park. This park is unique is neighbors (Healing Place or Healing Transitions) and the Farmer's Market, and NCSU (significant potential here including accessibility technology). Dix Park as a Site of Conscious, and the additional interpretation opportunities from this partnership.
- Importance of 'Sites of Conscience'

## Garden & Ecology

The Gardens & Ecology Focus Group discussed the following questions:

1. The Plaza & Play is meant to be a year-round destination. Describe your ideal spring, summer, fall, and winter activities as they relate to Gardens and Ecology.
2. How can opportunities for environmental awareness and education be introduced? Educational opportunities may include tours led by naturalists, garden visits, way-finding and signage and community gardening classes.
- 3) Restored natural landscapes require intensive stewardship in the early "establishment" period and continued stewardship over the long-term.
3. What are the best ways to foster year-round horticultural stewardship?

Q1:

- One of the main things... plaza and play, relative to play, shade is missing. It needs to be cool. People leave Raleigh in the summer. Focus on shade, zephyrs in the summer. Entrances have shade. Allees of trees as part of the entrance.
- KidsTogether in Cary, highly shaded. Great in the summer. Garden ecology of that place is really nice large trees. Cooling features including water, rubberized mats. KidsTogether is a model summer playground.
- Good bones with the canopy trees. Need a succession plan for trees. Needs to be part of the design, existing and planning for future shade.
- Water features intrigue people year-round. Artificial streams, play fountains. Incorporate nature throughout. Include edible landscapes.
- MVVA needs to visit Will's yard. Get the cultivators list from Will. The Asian persimmon is a beautiful edible (and sweet). The native persimmon is sour.
- Seasonality of plants is important. NC has species that fruit year-round.
- JC Raulston Arboretum, moonlight event is great. Music, s'mores, etc.
- Light the Woods with Sound was a great tree/art event.
- Carnivorous plants are fascinating. They thrive in NC. NC Botanical garden in Chapel Hill has a great selection.
- Water features are great attractors for people and critters (birds, butterflies, etc.)
- Brie Arthur is another local person that also has a great edible garden that she gives tour.
- The way to engage people in the seasons is plants. Blooms, color, fruits, etc.
- Are carnivorous plants of the Piedmont?
- A diversity beyond the region is a good thing.

Q2:

- Great to include a wide variety of plants, trees, flowers, shrubs that represent diversity of NC from west to east. Make a selection that is beautiful and diverse.
- Educate on NC's ecosystem and climate change. Build a place that attracts pollinators/birds/etc.
- Partnerships will be key to successful stewardship program. Audubon, NC State.
- What can we be doing to grow the trees/shrubs now to have them ready at a more advanced stage? Early implementation-- partnerships with private nurseries and NC botanical gardens. Work on structuring an agreement to get plant material in the ground.
- Take the Tom Earnhardt tree list and develop a more user-friendly guide and get ideas about what we are talking about. Farms are willing to grow on speculation for Dix.
- Share the list with the focus group to get feedback
- The list needs to be updated and discussed. There is room for improvement. Need to add shrubs, exotics, etc. Did add cultivators of native species to include plants with attributes that are hardier.
- Diversity of plant materials is key.
- Educate on the ecological advantages of different types of maintenance techniques that can be taken back to the home gardener.
- Signage is important to show environmental/ecological benefits of plants. Include it in Spanish (QR code) or on-sign itself.
- NCSU has done work with individual pollinator houses. Native bees.
- Form, texture, size is important. Medicinal plants would be great. For example, elderberry.
- Harvesting plants on site, vendor opportunities. Plant sales.
- Bring people together around plants. Event-based, rose-garden soiree. Blueberry maze!!

- Create events around plants.
- Partner with the Arts Centers.

Q3:

- We need a maintenance group that is not just blow and go.
- We have a big leaf magnolia tree at Dix. Its special and lovely! They like wetter soils.
- Need to consider a variety of textures in our plant choices.
- Texture is important in every season.
- Aralia spinosa, Devils walking stick. Spiny with frilly leaves.
- Osage orange hedge used to line the Dix site. A natural bug repellent. they are aggressive
- Design with plants, pollinators, birds, in mind.
- High school groups would be great to use to help maintain the areas. Ecology clubs, etc
- Plant rails are really important. Not visually disruptive.
- Native persimmon-- local nursery, 100 miles away.
- Figs and pomegranate also grow well here.
- Comfortable and attractive for all seasons
- Shade for summer
- Plants are the key
- Which plants? Native or a mix?
- Partnerships with local organizations can pay dividends for the park.

MEETING NOTES

# Poll Results

ROUND 1 of 2



# Live Polls

Conducted during Meeting 10/7/2020 and available on the Post-Event Survey on publicinput.com from 10/8-10/23.  
The left hand side shows Virtual Public Meeting #1 live poll results. The right hand side shows Post-Meeting Survey results.

## 1) How would you like to travel to the Plaza & Play?



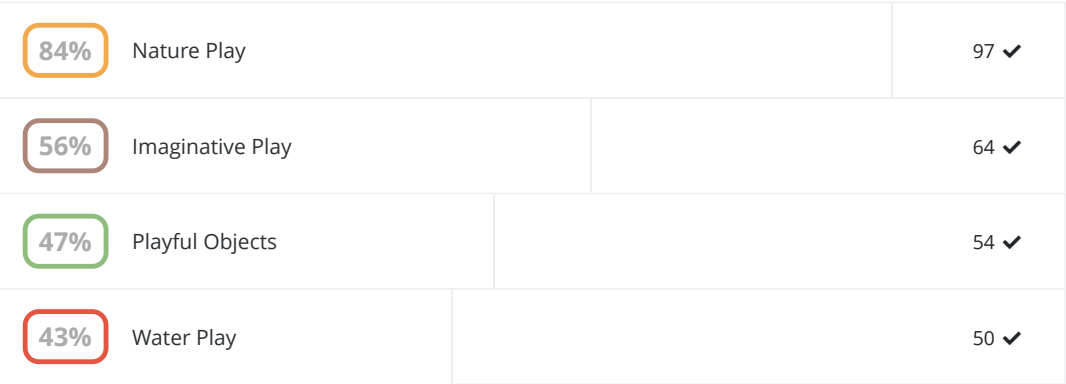
103 Respondents

Virtual Public Meeting #1 Results



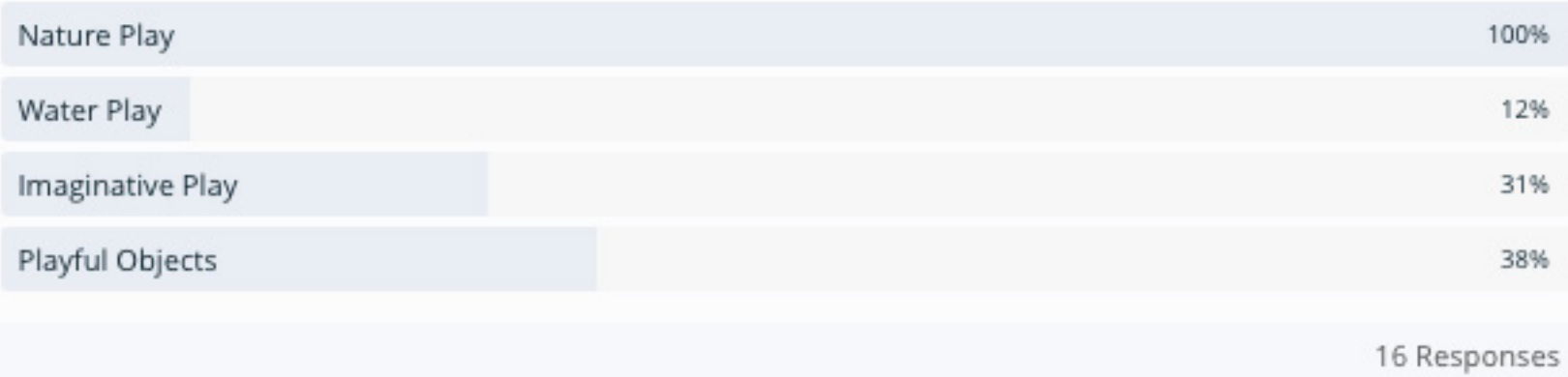
Post-Meeting Poll Results

## 2) What types of play are most important to you?



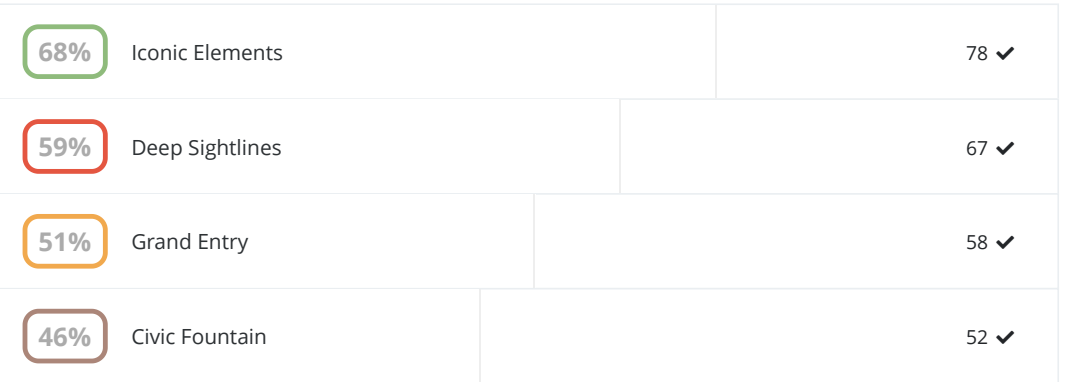
115 Respondents

Virtual Public Meeting #1 Results



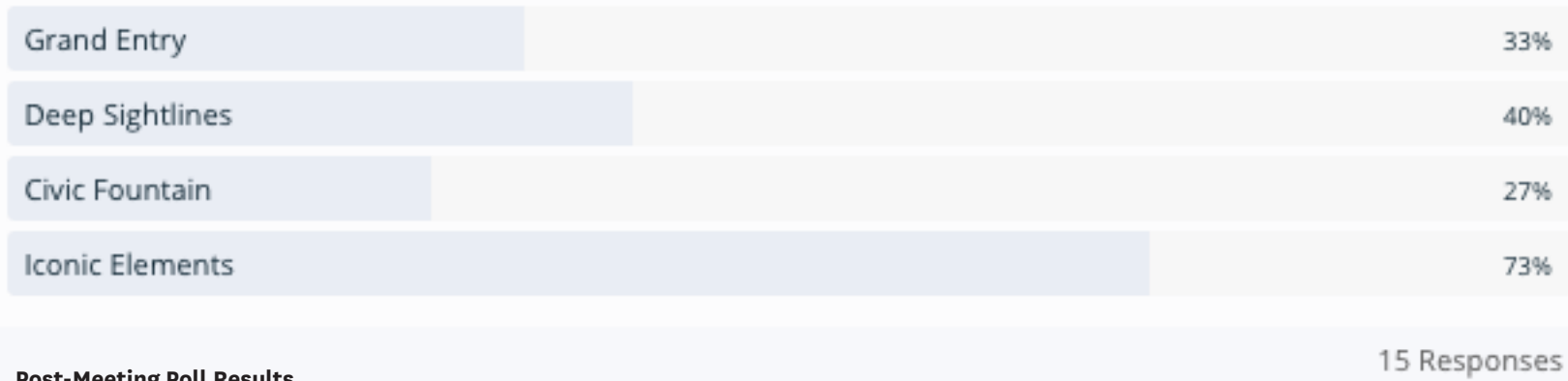
Post-Meeting Poll Results

## 3) What landscape elements are most important to you?



114 Respondents

Virtual Public Meeting #1 Results



Post-Meeting Poll Results

# Live Polls

Conducted during Meeting 10/7/2020 and available on the Post-Event Survey on publicinput.com from 10/8-10/23.  
The left hand side shows Virtual Public Meeting #1 live poll results. The right hand side shows Post-Meeting Survey results.

## 4) What Plaza & Play elements are you most excited about?

49%	Gardens	56 ✓
48%	Innovative play for all ages	55 ✓
45%	New entrance to Dix Park with civic fountain and plaza	51 ✓
41%	Public art and/or cultural programs	47 ✓
32%	Multimodal paths, parking, and access	37 ✓
27%	Gathering / cookout spaces	31 ✓
26%	A new park pavilion with bathrooms	30 ✓
25%	The rehabilitated historic house with concessions	29 ✓
4%	Bus drop off	5 ✓

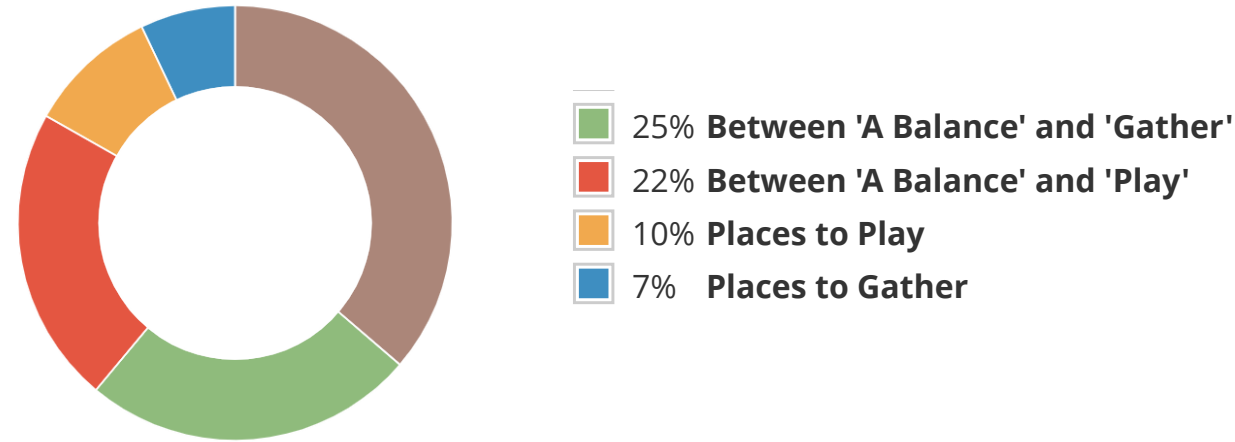
114 Respondents

Gathering / cookout spaces	25%
Multimodal paths, parking, and access	50%
New entrance to Dix Park with civic fountain and plaza	38%
Innovative play for all ages	62%
A new park pavilion with bathrooms	50%
The rehabilitated historic house with concessions	44%
Public art and/or cultural programs	50%
Bus drop off	12%
Gardens	69%
16 Responses	

Virtual Public Meeting #1 Results

Post-Meeting Poll Results

## 5) What’s the most important thing to add to Dix Park now?



106 respondents

Virtual Public Meeting #1 Results

Places to play	0%
Places to gather	100%
16 Responses	

Post-Meeting Poll Results

Comments & Responses

# Public Meeting #1

## Plaza & Play

### MVVA response to Q&A during Public Meeting #1

Public Comment Submitted: Love the walkways at the Museum of Art . Would love to see holiday light displays, both drive through and walk through during Christmas time. Duke Gardens; beautiful areas to walk , sit , take pictures. Concerned about safety. Looking forward to outdoor get - togethers with family and friends.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thanks for these recommendations. Your feedback is being compiled with all the comments from the event and will be reviewed as we work towards a preliminary design concept. Safety is a shared concern of ours and we are working to create a safe distance between Lake Wheeler Road and the public spaces envisioned for the project.

Public Comment Submitted: The Arboretum- It's so beautiful and peaceful. I love that the kids feel free to run around and enjoy themselves. Walking and feeding the ducks. Walnut Creek-It's just so fun ! I am most looking forward to having events at the park where families can come together.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thanks for sharing these insights!

Public Comment Submitted: Given the location of the Plaza and play area immediately across from Fuller Heights, and the city's vision of a park for everyone, what is the timeline to create direct access from that neighborhood to Dix? Is the plan to include a traffic light @ Grissom & Lake Wheeler?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: A welcoming entrance to Dix Park is being developed as part of the design process to accommodate visitors travelling from the adjacent neighborhoods by foot, bike, car, and bus. At this time, the specifics of whether a traffic light will be included for the road and park intersections is undetermined, however such elements are being analyzed by the Design Team for the Plaza & Play, as well as other city departments such as Transportation, Planning, and the Urban Design Center.

Public Comment Submitted: Neat platform!

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thanks for this feedback!

Public Comment Submitted: Hi Will there be any consideration of grills and seating areas?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: The Plaza & Play project is planning to host areas for grilling and seating areas for gatherings and celebrations.

Public Comment Submitted: Love the idea of the land bridge for connecting nature back in this area and having another option for accessing the park. Given the scale and expense of that project, I think it's vital to prioritize facilities like sidewalks, multi-use paths and robust multi-modal connections as a 1st step before that expansive step (the land bridge) is taken. Especially feel it's important to create an all ages and abilities, multi-modal connection to Chavis so that all have easy access to this park and can access it sans car.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: The Master Plan sets a long-term vision for the park which will be constructed in phases, with the land bridge being a separate project from the Plaza & Play, and is currently a deferred phase 1 project. The start and completion of other projects and connections will depend on a variety of factors including project feasibility, costs, funding and fundraising, and existing leases. The City is currently working on multi-modal connections and multi-use pathways, for example connecting to the Farmers Market, the eastern edge of the site/Rocky Branch Trail, and between Chavis Park and Dix Park.

Public Comment Submitted: I have enjoyed many events hosted at Dorothea Dix Park in the past, however, I think it should be priority to get permanent public restroom facilities (specifically accessible ones!) available sooner than later. Public Restrooms are often the most important amenity in a park. Many people will avoid using a park or revisit it less often if restrooms are either unavailable or inadequate. Thank you for taking suggestions and hosting this public meeting online :)

## Plaza & Play

### MVVA response to Q&A during Public Meeting #1

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: We could not agree more and are exploring permanent and accessible restroom facilities as part of the Plaza & Play project. Thank you for your feedback and joining the event.

Public Comment Submitted: This live survey is innovative and highly appreciated. Any thoughts or considerations on the descendants whose ancestors were enslaved there?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you! We are familiar with the City of Raleigh's Roots of Hope documentary and there is continued research being done to uncover more stories. We will be engaging with the Plaza & Play project's Focus Groups for meaningful ways to honor the different layers of the site's history in the future of Dix Park, and how this legacy may apply/be expressed within the Plaza & Play project more specifically. Please feel free to contact us with ideas or visit the links below!
  - COR Museum exhibit: From Plantation to Park: The Story of Dix Hill
    - <https://www.cityofraleighmuseum.org/exhibits.html>
  - Dix Park Conservancy Legacy Committee Report
    - <https://dixpark.org/article/dorothea-dix-park-conservancy-legacy-committee-report>
  - City of Raleigh Documentary Roots of Hope: Rediscovering the Legacy of John Hunter
    - <https://dixpark.org/article/roots-hope-rediscovering-legacy-john-hunter>
    - Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNRviiVhiMI&feature=youtu.be>
  - Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan, Appendix: Landscape History
    - [https://dixpark.org/sites/dixpark/files/2019-01/APPENDIX II\\_Landscape History-STA\\_0.pdf](https://dixpark.org/sites/dixpark/files/2019-01/APPENDIX II_Landscape History-STA_0.pdf)

Public Comment Submitted: Given the interest in driving, I worry that some park space will be sacrificed for parking lot space. The Boston Common has underground parking. Is that an option here? In regards to Matthew's comment about plant suggestions, Juniper Level Botanic Garden might serve as a great local resource if needed!

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for your question and suggestions! We are looking carefully at current/projected short and long term parking needs, comparable projects in the area, capacity projections related to the anticipated growth of Raleigh, and well as available adjacent lots serviced by shuttles to accommodate the specific vehicular parking needs for the Plaza & Play. Providing adequate parking in this context while ensuring that a parking lot does not take up too much land of the project is of top priority.

Public Comment Submitted: Will there be sidewalks catering to the adjacent neighborhoods in place prior to Plaza & Play opening? (Goode Street, Biggs Drive, Lake Wheeler)

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Great question, thank you. The Dix Park Master Plan acknowledges that Lake Wheeler Road should be improved to serve the park and the City's overall mobility goals. The current City of Raleigh Street Plan calls for Lake Wheeler Road to be improved as a 2-lane divided roadway with a sidewalk and multi modal path on both sides. At this time, there is no funding identified for the project. Other techniques to create multi-modal paths are being explored on roads within Dix Park, such as Biggs Drive and Goode Street, which are outside of the project but will be addressed in future phases.

Public Comment Submitted: Why was Lake Wheeler chosen as the first main entry to develop rather than one using Hunt Drive, which seemingly has been the entry most people are familiar with and presents a somewhat more dramatic entry point.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Great question, thanks. The Plaza & Play area along Lake Wheeler Road was chosen by the City as the first phase for implementation because it is the only park edge that is at-grade/at-level with the adjacent neighborhood and road to invite people in with a visible grand entry.

Public Comment Submitted: On a related note, the parking lot at the NC Museum of Art does a great job of transitioning into the space.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: A very important quality of any parking lot and good to know; we will look at that for inspiration!



## Plaza & Play MVVA response to Q&A during Public Meeting #1

Public Comment Submitted: Can the restoration of Rocky Creek be incorporated into the gateway?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: The physical location and characteristics of the work of the restoration of Rocky Branch and the Plaza & Play warrant them to be separate projects. The feasibility study for the enhancement of Rocky Branch is pending several grant awards. The City hopes to have an announcement on these grants soon.

Public Comment Submitted: If 55 % of survey said they are driving - I'm confused on how parking lots which are not at the gateway - allow the gateway [Plaza & Play] to be a park entrance

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for your question. We are looking carefully at current/projected short and long term parking needs, comparable projects in the area, capacity projections related to the anticipated growth of Raleigh, and well as available adjacent lots serviced by shuttles to accommodate the specific vehicular parking needs for the Plaza & Play. Providing adequate parking in this context while ensuring that a parking lot does not take up too much land as a park entrance is of top priority.

Public Comment Submitted: I would like to see outdoor exercise equipment for adults near the children's playground. See this link, <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2015/06/city-museum>

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for your suggestion! We will take a look.

Public Comment Submitted: Very grateful for the sensitive, thoughtful approach and process of the MVVA team. Love your descriptions, Matthew Urbanski! Reflects real caring.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you very much!

Public Comment Submitted: I'd highly recommend visiting the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill if you haven't already. Great place to learn about the different plant communities in the state.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Excellent suggestion, we look forward to a visit.

Public Comment Submitted: He showed some equipment for adults, but I would like to see equipment designed specifically for adults, <https://goric.com/playgrounds-for-adults-the-dirty-dozen-of-fun>

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for sharing this resource. We will take a look.

Public Comment Submitted: Is the farmers market going to be connected at all? Are they involved in planning the connection?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Very important question. We are actively working with the City to coordinate between this project and the Farmers Market to maximize connections through pathways, roadways, and bike ways. The Master Plan includes a multi-use path to connect the eastern edge of the Park to the Farmers Market. A portion of the multi-use path will be included in the Plaza & Play. The full buildout of the multi-use path will be completed in a future phase to provide connectivity to the Rocky Branch Greenway and the Farmers Market.

Public Comment Submitted: The pandemic has heightened our awareness of our need to feed the hungry and to make that food fresh and nutritious. Might it be a good idea to include agriculture in those horticultural gardens Matthew mentioned? Via community gardens and/or urban food forests? Will there be anything geared towards the history of Dix park regarding the enslaved person who were on the land?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for these excellent points. We are familiar with the City of Raleigh's Roots of Hope documentary and there is continued research being done to uncover more stories. We will be engaging with the project's Focus Groups for meaningful ways to honor the different layers of the site's history in the future of Dix Park, and how this legacy may apply/be expressed within the Plaza & Play project more specifically. We are also exploring ideas for incorporating food into the project. For more information about the historic work being done:

## Plaza & Play

### MVVA response to Q&A during Public Meeting #1

- COR Museum exhibit: From Plantation to Park: The Story of Dix Hill
  - <https://www.cityofraleighmuseum.org/exhibits.html>
- Dix Park Conservancy Legacy Committee Report
  - <https://dixpark.org/article/dorothea-dix-park-conservancy-legacy-committee-report>
- City of Raleigh Documentary Roots of Hope: Rediscovering the Legacy of John Hunter
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Public Comment Submitted: I hope you don't depend upon any of the poll results because it was going so fast. And it's so technologically advanced that a lot of the people that I might use the park. For example underprivileged people would not be able to respond.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for this point. We encourage folks to connect in the event's live polls at their leisure by participating in the post-event survey located on the [publicinput.com/plazaplay](https://publicinput.com/plazaplay) website. We are also working with the City to maximize ways to connect with people who may not have internet access, such as sharing information in the water bill mailers, with Raleigh Park's REC program parents, and placing banners throughout Dix Park. We hope to also gather feedback through the project's Focus Groups and future engagement with community members. Please feel free to contact us with additional ideas!

Public Comment Submitted: Are you considering access from the Farmer's Market area?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Very important question. Yes, we are actively working with the City to coordinate between this project and the Farmer's Market to maximize connections through pathways, roadways, bike ways, and programs/activities. The Master Plan includes a multi-use path to connect the eastern edge of the Park to the Farmers Market. A portion of the multi-use path will be included in the Plaza & Play. The full buildout of the multi-use path will be completed in a future phase to provide connectivity to the Rocky Branch Greenway and the Farmers Market.

Public Comment Submitted: Building off a prior question. Are there plans to cut down any mature trees?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: It is a top priority to preserve all or most of the site's existing mature trees. Coordination with the future Lake Wheeler Road improvements and Duke Energy Transmission Line Easement may conflict with these trees, so we are working closely with the City on next steps for maximizing tree preservation.

Public Comment Submitted: Does the pandemic change any initial design plans? For example, are playgrounds and gathering spaces a good idea for a post-pandemic world?... of course, any park is a gathering space and play space. I just wanted to know whether the pandemic has affected any design elements or initial ideas. I'm not sure I've heard anything about health and safety.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Health and safety are of great consideration in designing public spaces and gathering and play has certainly changed during the pandemic. Consideration of these changes is part of the design process.

Public Comment Submitted: Have we already gone over the dog park changes?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Yes, but happy to revisit this topic. The current dog park was designated as temporary from the start knowing that the former athletic field location is part of the Plaza & Play project area. As we move forward with the Plaza & Play design process, staff is working on finding a new location for the dog park. For more information on the temporary dog park, visit <https://dixpark.org/dogpark>

Public Comment Submitted: How will fuller Heights residents be affected? will it remain intact?

## Plaza & Play

### MVVA response to Q&A during Public Meeting #1

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Great question, thank you. During the development of the Master Plan for Dix Park, impact to the neighborhoods around the park was widely discussed and warranted. Concerns include gentrification – that newcomers, not existing residents, would benefit most – and that rising housing prices would lead to displacement. As a result, Raleigh City Council allocated funding and directed Planning staff to develop an independent study: The Dix Edge Area Study. This area study will explore issues and opportunities regarding the naturally occurring affordable housing in the area, transportation and public transit related to how the surrounding communities may be impacted by the investment planned for the park, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), the area’s designation as an opportunity zone, proximity to downtown, and other regional growth pressures. The goal of the Dix Edge Study is to explore these issues and address community concerns and develop strategies to mitigate displacement and gentrification, improve the transportation network for all users, address the health of the creek and stormwater, and create policies to encourage good urban design. It is necessary that this study is separate from the design and construction of Dix Park as it allows the focus to remain on planning for the future of the Caraleigh, Fuller Heights, Carolina Pines, Wheeler Park, Oleander Park, Walnut Terrace and Gateway Park neighborhoods. The Planning and Development Services Department at the City of Raleigh is leading the Dix Edge Study. For individuals interested in the larger issues of The Dix Edge Study, participation in this planning effort is encouraged. More information on the Dix Edge Area Study can be found on the project webpage here: <https://raleighnc.gov/dix-edge>

Public Comment Submitted: What elements will be incorporated for young adults, adults, and seniors to engage in “play” or time spent without purpose?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: We are actively exploring ideas for this sitewide at the Plaza & Play, including the Civic Fountain, Play Gardens, Picnic Terrace, year-round programs and activities, and more. We welcome any particular suggestions you may have at this time!

Public Comment Submitted: In referencing history, you only mentioned the Dix Hospital chapter and not also the preceding chapters of a plantation with enslaved African Americas and an earlier Native American history. What has been the scope of MVVA's research of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, And how will the Park's entry plaza provide a holistic orientation that it needs to provide?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for these excellent points. We are familiar with the City of Raleigh's Roots of Hope documentary and there is continued research being done to uncover more stories. We will be engaging with the project's Focus Groups for meaningful ways to honor the different layers of the site's history in the future of Dix Park, and how this legacy may apply/be expressed within the Plaza & Play project more specifically. For more information about the historic work being done:
  - COR Museum exhibit: From Plantation to Park: The Story of Dix Hill
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    - <https://dixpark.org/article/roots-hope-rediscovering-legacy-john-hunter>
    - Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNRviiVhiMI&feature=youtu.be>
  - Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan, Appendix: Landscape History
    - [https://dixpark.org/sites/dixpark/files/2019-01/APPENDIX II\\_Landscape History-STA\\_0.pdf](https://dixpark.org/sites/dixpark/files/2019-01/APPENDIX II_Landscape History-STA_0.pdf)

Public Comment Submitted: Earlier, you mentioned a walkway along Lake Wheeler, connecting the park to the Farmers Market. Will that extend north to the Rocky Branch greenway as well?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Yes, the multi-use path will connect the eastern edge of the park with the Rocky Branch Greenway as well as to the Farmers Market at the western edge of the park. The Plaza & Play will include a portion of the multi-use path and the full build out of the multi-use path will be in future phases and potentially as part of Lake Wheeler Road's future expansion.

Public Comment Submitted: Yes, the Washington Square Park model is what we need at Dix Park Nice I am from Newark so been there

## Plaza & Play MVVA response to Q&A during Public Meeting #1

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Yes, that is exciting to hear!

Public Comment Submitted: What percentage of people from other racial groups are included in the planning and implementing the various spaces? Please be inclusive.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Engagement with a diversity of individuals and groups is of utmost importance in the process and we are striving to be inclusive. The newly formed Dix Park Community Committee was formed with the goal of including racial and ethnic diversity. More information on the Community Committee can be found at <https://dixpark.org/community-committee>. We currently do not have percentages for demographic participation but will look for ways to capture data as the planning and implementation process for the Plaza & Play moves forward. We welcome your feedback on ways we can continue to be inclusive.

Public Comment Submitted: As Raleigh becomes increasingly urban, easy access to natural, unspoiled areas will grow in importance, so I was very much relieved that the survey preferred nature activities.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Many thanks for this important feedback.

Public Comment Submitted: A park is a place for the disabled too. How has COVID altered design and programming of parks especially thinking forward 30 years?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: The design of the Plaza & Play will be inclusive for all abilities. Health and safety are of great consideration in designing public spaces and gathering and play has certainly changed during the pandemic. Consideration of these changes as well as looking many years into the future is part of the design process.

Public Comment Submitted: Highly appreciate this opportunity tonight. Thank each of you for making this interactive virtual conversation possible. What app are you using for the text survey? I want to use that app for other projects.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Many thanks! We are using PublicInput.com community engagement software, created by a company based in Raleigh.

Public Comment Submitted: How will this be budgeted and is there a timeline?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: For the project schedule, please visit <https://dorotheadixpark.org/plazaplay>. The design of the Plaza & Play is being funded by the Dix Park Conservancy. Funding for construction has not yet been secured. Funding mechanisms may include a future park bond and fundraising.

Public Comment Submitted: Very informative...thank you

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for joining the event and your feedback!

Public Comment Submitted: I've loved the temporary disc golf course and think it would be awesome for these skilled landscape architects to design something permanent. I'm not sure that this section is the right space for it, but it definitely falls into the "play" category lol

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for your input!

Public Comment Submitted: Are coordinated events part of Phase 1? Concerts, festivals etc would help raise awareness of the park transformation.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Great point. Park programming which encompasses these types of activities is part of the project scope. Please reach out with any specific ideas!



## Plaza & Play

### MVVA response to Q&A during Public Meeting #1

Public Comment Submitted: Sledding at Dix has been a time-honored tradition. Just want to make sure that sledding, to some degree or section will be available (if it ever snows again?)

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Great point! We understand this is a loved activity in the park. The Plaza & Play area is not one of the areas used commonly for sledding. We are exploring activities for all seasons and will keep this idea in mind as we develop the design.

Public Comment Submitted: Can you speak more to the connection to the Farmer's Market?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Very important question. We are actively working with the City to coordinate between this project and the Farmer's Market to maximize connections through pathways, roadways, bike ways, and programs/activities.

Public Comment Submitted: How do y'all plan to continue to engage kids with the park planning. Something likely note difficult virtually but essential to some of the more imaginative elements of the design process. My five year old wants to know :)

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Great question! For the time being, we have a few virtual activities for kids and people of all ages to participate in online. We also sent home one of these activities with kids in the Raleigh Park's REC program. Please visit [www.publicinput.com/plazaplay](http://www.publicinput.com/plazaplay) for these online activities, which include virtual post-it sharing of ideas, sketches, and illustrations of how you like to play outside.

Public Comment Submitted: It would be great to incorporate whispers of what exists in proximity to the Lake Wheeler entry...places such as the NC State research farms, the Yates Mill, the Farmers Market, Centennial Campus, etc.

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: Thank you for these suggestions.

Public Comment Submitted: I see that the administrative buildings near the larger field (not fenced in) on Lake Wheeler are staying. what is the plan for them?

- Design Team/City of Raleigh Response: The neighboring buildings to the Plaza & Play are currently being leased to the Department of Health and Human Services. The potential use of the buildings will be explored in future phases.