Dorothea Dix Park
Master Plan Executive Committee

Date: Wednesday, September 26
Time: 8:30am-11:00am
Location: Flower Cottage @ Dix Park

Meeting Agenda

8:30am: Breakfast
8:45am: Welcome & Updates
9:00am: MVVA- led discussion

- Programming Recap
- Park Framework
- Park Phasing and Early Wins

11:00am: Meeting Close

MVVA Principal, Matt Urbanski began with a presentation on the overall structure of the master plan book. It will be broken down into four sections: The Land, The Framework, The Program, and Implementation. Urbanski highlighted the importance of the frameworks section, noting that it is key to making the park welcoming, accessible, understandable, and enduring. He explained that in the late 1800s Central Park was made with such a strong framework of roads, paths, and circulation patterns, that it is still is largely the same today. That framework has allowed the park to evolve with the times as needed. A strong framework requires accessibility from all angles and edges of the park. Urbanski showed that Dix Park connects State-owned land mainly to the west (i.e. NCSU, Department of Agriculture, and Governor Morehead School, and the State Prison) and the downtown/neighborhood areas more towards the east. Proposed roads, and paths work to stitch together those two different types of adjacent land.

The Master Plan Executive Committee (MPEC) and MVVA discussed the four phases for the park buildout. The strategy for phasing is to complete the edges and entrances of the park first, then work inward. MVVA took this approach when designing Brooklyn Bridge Park. They began at the two ends of the pier and worked towards the center. Since DHHS has a long lease on the majority of the buildings, which are mainly in the center, working from the edges inward for phasing is necessary.

<u>Phase A</u>
Phase A of the design plan calls for creek renovation as well as creation of a destination playground along the edge of Lake Wheeler Road. The playground would be where the old patient athletic field is and in the words of MVVA designer Matt Urbanski, “dovetail on the historic use.” The play area would connect to the grove area, which already has a park-like feel. In the interim, the greenspace to the south of the play area could become temporary parking so that Department of Health and Human Services employees do not lose any parking spaces to playground-goers.

MPEC members asked if the amphitheater could move to an earlier phase if the need arises. MVVA stated that it could but explained that the boiler plant would have to be fully out of operation before that could happen. Currently, the boiler plant is connected to steam tunnels that heat all the campus

buildings. This central steam tunnel system will need to be carefully taken offline, section by section. A master plan for the utilities is the next need in the park design.

MPEC members asked the timeline for phasing of the playground area. Sassafras, Raleigh's most recent destination playground, took over two years from conception to opening day. Urbanski said that the play garden at Dix Park could likely be done in two to five years. The Creek area would take around ten years from design conception to opening day.

Phase B

This phase builds on the success of the Big Field to extend the meadow through selected building and pavement removal. It also works to extend the grove area through cottage building removal. Lastly, it prepares select buildings along the Lake Wheeler edge to be used by partners and apply revenue that results from the partnership to park operations, maintenance and programming

Phase C

This phase focuses on The Valley landscape. It creates the Valley Amphitheater along with the overhead trestle and the connecting grotto space. MVVA has experience with amphitheater design from their recent work on Blossom Music Theater in Cleveland. Lastly, it proposes that 2 Downtown Gateway parcels are released to park partners for improvement. Revenue that results from the partnership would be applied to park operations, maintenance and programming

Phase D

This phase turns the buildings along the ridge into the crowning Jewel for the park. It requires selective demolition of buildings around the hospital to open up a plaza area, civic gardens and event space. It invites proposals from partners to use and lease upper floors of Hilltop buildings. Ground floor uses will be sure to contribute positively to the life of the park and include such public amenities as exhibit and event spaces, bathrooms, and food and drink concessions. Lastly, the phase calls to release the final Downtown Gateway parcel to park partners for improvements. Revenue that results from the partnership would be applied to park operations, maintenance and programming.

Urbanski returned to the slide presentation to explain the needed next steps after the master plan adoption and before construction phase. These include legal agreements, planning studies, and design team development and selection.

Needed planning studies include a/an:

1. Site survey of existing natural resources
2. Landbridge feasibility study
3. Infrastructure master plan
4. Water and sewer infrastructure coordination plan
5. Landscape operations and maintenance plan
6. Funding strategy

Needed legal agreements/actions include:

1. Legal agreement with DEQ
2. Legal agreement with NCDOT
3. Memorandum of understanding (MOU) on funding and Maintenance

Needed client/design team development:

1. Civil and Geotech engineers
2. Park horticultural staff

MVVA next discussed finances for the park. Urbanski noted that "financial sustainability" does not mean "financial self-sufficiency." The park aims to have financial sustainability, meaning a long-term vision for how the park will support its physical spaces, its programs and the management of all of its resources. That financial support will be derived from a range of public and private sources. Urbanski noted the following key points about implementation:

- State DHHS spent approximately $12.3 million dollars in 2017 for Dix Hospital Operations and Maintenance ($11.9 million buildings and utilities + $.4 million grounds)
- Park partnerships in renovating and maintaining buildings not only reduce the burden of some amount of maintenance, but also can produce revenue to support park maintenance
- Residential uses at rehabilitated buildings offer the most revenue to the park per unit; hotel units offer the second highest revenue to the park; office uses third (HR&A analysis, July 2018)
- The selective rehabilitation and demolition of the park's buildings is projected to cost between $114 million to $240 million; the need to upgrade accessibility, utilities, and building systems are major cost factors (MVVA analysis, May 2018)

Lastly, MVVA presented three scenarios (see slides 17-20 of presentation). Scenario one proposes no on-site contributions to support park maintenance and operation, resulting in a $22M needed annually. Scenario two shows some on-side contributing buildings, with 426,00SF of buildings operated and maintained by partners—resulting in a needed $14.9M annually. Scenario three shows added buildings to be operated by partners, a total of 774,00SF—resulting in $8M needed annually. MPEC members appreciated the perspective the scenarios provided. Further discussion will follow. The city is also working to hire a cost estimator for the project to do deeper funding analysis.

Meeting close.