

## Fast Facts

1. **The Park is 308 acres total.** Of those 308 acres...
  - a. 52 acres are a former municipal landfill
  - b. 3 acres are the hospital's historic cemetery
  - c. 16 acres are the footprints of existing buildings
  - d. 10 acres are leased to Healing Transitions (recovery/treatment facility)
2. **The Promenade Loop**
  - a. Length: 7,400 feet / 1.4 miles around
  - b. Width: 24' for bikes and pedestrians along the full loop, which widens to 48' on the Grove/downtown side
  - c. It would take about 35 minutes to walk around the Promenade Loop 1 time
3. **Recreation, Sports and Play**
  - a. Sports Fields = 193,050 SF / 4.5 Acres total
    - i. Range of sports and uses possible: Frisbee, cricket, soccer, playing catch, field hockey, lacrosse, football, tournaments and play days
  - b. Sports Courts = 14 Courts / 3 acres total
    - i. Range of sports and uses possible: tennis, basketball, pickleball, rent courts for events and tournaments
  - c. In the proposed plan, the Big Field grows to be 41 acres total (27 acres of mown lawn and 14 acres of Piedmont Prairie). It is about 33 acres today.
  - d. 3 Proposed Play Areas @ 4.5 Acres total
  - e. 3 Proposed Dog Parks @ 2 Acres total
  - f. 3 Proposed Water Play Areas @ .6 Acres total
4. **Natural, Restored Areas with Diverse Planting**
  - a. *Piedmont Prairie*: 14 Acres, which support pollinators and diverse wildlife
  - b. *Woodland*: 135 Acres, with native understory trees and shrubs
  - c. *Riparian (or Wetland) Areas*: 19 Acres, which help prevent flooding after major storms
  - d. *Botanic Garden at the Grove*: 5 Acres, celebrates the beauty, seasonal change of plants
  - e. *Pond at the Grotto Garden*: 3.5 acres, similar in size to Pullen Park's lake
5. **Parking**
  - a. Full build-out of the park = 1,060 spaces total proposed, distributed throughout
    - i. There are over 2,000 parking spaces on the Dix Hospital campus today
  - b. Parking areas will be added to the park incrementally over time; if fewer spaces are needed due to technology, changing demand or public transit – fewer will be built
6. **Buildings**
  - a. MVVA team proposes that approximately half of the buildings that exist today on the campus are to be demolished and half are to be rehabilitated / restored.
  - b. More detailed information about the park's buildings can be found in the presentation, boards and events of Community Meeting #3 (June 2018).

## Site Plan Specific Details

Think of the six landscapes as subareas of Dix Park. Each has their own identify and feel but collectively create a great experience for this community. We have highlighted some of the key features and talking points for each landscape below.

Please reach out to [caroline.lindquist@raleighnc.gov](mailto:caroline.lindquist@raleighnc.gov) if you have any clarification questions or feel you need a brief phone conversation to be fully prepped to speak at the boards.

### **1. The Meadow (aka the Big Field)**

- Big Field Extension – The plan proposes extending the Big Field from the State Farmer’s Market all the way north to Pullen Park across a land bridge. The land bridge will go over Western Boulevard and will connect Dix Park, the Governor Morehead School and Pullen Park. The landscape of the Meadow will be enhanced by native plants including a piedmont prairie.
- The Grotto – At the end of the meadow near the State Farmer’s Market, the plan suggests the creation of a pond/swimming hold that will be adjacent to a rocky lookout hill. From the top of the lookout, one will be able to look far up the big meadow but still not see the end since it curves—creating an illusion that it is never ending/boundless.
- The Cemetery – The Cemetery will be enhanced and restored.
- The Farmer’s Market – The Department of Agriculture is currently working with HH Architecture to create a master plan for the State Farmer’s Market that will better optimize their space and connect it with the future Dix Park. Please visit the HH Architecture booth to learn more.
- Experience – The Meadow will be a landscape where people come together to meet each other in nature. It will be a uniting place. It’s where you can throw a frisbee, take a stroll or enjoy a picnic. Older kids will explore tree houses and swing down off rope swings in the tree groves. It will provide people with a sense of boundlessness in the heart of a densifying city.

### **2. The Creek**

- Creek Restoration- The creek bed will be widened from 30 feet to 100 feet and new greenway paths will be built along its edges. A berm (see definition below) will protect park goers from the noise of Western Boulevard. Stormwater detention ponds will improve water quality in the creek and support new habitat for plants and animals. MVVA worked with their subconsultant hydrologists, LimnoTech, to scientifically determine a new meandering creek geometry based on flow patterns of the creek.
- Experience – The Creek will be a natural landscape where people come to get close to water. It’s where kids will discover tadpoles, young and old alike will get their toes wet and enjoy the sound of water over rocks. It will feel a world away and provide people with a sense of escape to nature in the heart of the city.

### **3. The Grove**

- The Restoration of the Grove – The Grove is contributing landscape to the National Historic Register District of the Campus. This plan will transform the grove, restore the tree canopy and create a botanical shade garden with a variety of amenities including a small garden terrace and hammock glade.

- The Stone Houses in the Grove may become nature education centers and provide restrooms and concessions to support this area.
- Experience – The Grove will be a place to appreciate the City of Oaks, fall asleep in a hammock and sled down the hills during winter. Families and individuals will be able to marvel at the plant diversity in the botanical garden, enjoy a small performance by a local theater group, and walk, bike, jog and skip along a network of paths and greenways. Pick-up games of all sorts, including soccer, cricket and field hockey will be happening on the sports fields. People will marvel at the views of downtown Raleigh and learn all about native flora and fauna at the arts and ecology center.

#### **4. The Downtown Gateway**

- The Downtown Gateway connects I-40 to downtown Raleigh along the Dix Park edge. This will be a main entry of the park. One key element of the Downtown Gateway is a series of play areas creating a main entry way into the park. The location of the play area is important. This is the only place in the park that is directly adjacent to a neighborhood. For this reason and others, the play gardens and main entry plaza are a project that could be accomplished in the first phase.
- Lake Wheeler Road needs improvement. The current city street plan calls for Lake Wheeler Road to be a 2-lane divided road. During this process, we will suggest an ideal cross-section (design) for the road that could accommodate a major bus stop by the proposed playground area. In addition, an in-park greenway is proposed along Lake Wheeler Road that would connect Rocky Branch Trail to the Walnut Creek Trail.
- Existing Buildings: There are several existing buildings along the Lake Wheeler Road edge. One idea is that these buildings become homes for people. There is a lot of discussion on whether or not people should live in the park. Some argue that residential uses in the park privatizes the space and that the park should not have people living on it. On the other hand, some suggest that having people living in the park is a good thing. It adds “eyes on the park” and has the potential to generate revenue to fund park operations. This discussion continues.
- New Development: In addition, a few developable areas have been identified along Lake Wheeler. Like the discussion above, many are opposed to the idea of new buildings in the park. However, this is a common practice in many of the great parks across the country. Limited, park-supportive development could provide a revenue stream for the future park. This discussion continues.
- Experience – People will be able to catch a bus at the Moore Square Station and be at the park in 10 minutes. Everyone will be welcomed through a grand entry plaza. Kids of all ages will run through the splash pad. It will be the perfect place for cookouts and birthday parties. There will be little surprises around every bend including inspirational public art, garden rooms and play areas. This will be a place where a family can hang out for an hour after work or enjoy for a whole day.

## 5. The Ridge

- The Ridge is the civic heart of the park, the most energized place within the park. The plan calls for the selective removal of buildings to make a simplified strong framework. Once the buildings are opened up, garden areas and plazas can be created. The portico arches from the original 1856 hospital building are restored to become a grand front porch of the park. The plan also proposes that one wing of the hospital building become a hotel. Although a private building, a hotel allows for much public use. The ground floor will be open to the public and the roof will be a garden that one can access to lookout over the park to the south and the city to the north. The other wing of the hospital could have many uses including the following: a culinary school, arts centers, dormitory style housing for conservation and ecology stewardship programs, etc. Other buildings will also be restored. For example, the All Faiths Chapel could become a community meeting space for lectures, performances, weddings and other special events.
- The Promenade is a pedestrian loop that unites the park. It is over 40 feet wide at some points and will have separated areas for pedestrians and bikers. The loop unites all major landscapes of the park. It is one-mile around and will be completely ADA accessible.
- The Event Hub is a garden-like festival ground. For day-to-day use the event hub will act both as a parking area and picnic destination. For special events, it becomes a festival ground for the park. This space could provide an alternative to Fayetteville Street during festival season. Between the permeable paved areas are long-leaf pine groves as well as some sports courts. Most destination parks have a hard-paved area where food trucks and event infrastructure can be placed without fear of destroying landscape. The event hub would serve this purpose and allow the meadow to thrive.
- Experience – The Ridge is the civic heart of the Park. It is the place where friends meet, and families gather. People will be able to enjoy a drink on the rooftop gardens overlooking the City, stroll along the Promenade loop, host a family reunion and enjoy a special night out in the City. A park visitor center welcomes people. The legacy of the park is shared through a museum exhibit and Raleigh's history is explored through a cultural center.

## 6. The Valley

- The main features of The Valley is a multi-purpose amphitheater. It's a natural location for one and takes advantage of the bowl shape of the land. The plan calls for a trestle that connects the Promenade of the Ridge to the Grotto of the Meadow. The elevated trestle allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross over it and look down to the amphitheater below.
- Experience – The Valley is a destination within the park. People would travel from around the region to see concerts and performances in the Valley.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Q: *“Why is the park divided into 6 landscapes? How were they defined?”*
  - a. The 6 landscapes were defined by the MVVA team and are based on our analysis of the existing conditions of the Park & the Site: geography, ecology and human history.
  - b. The Creek, The Grove and The Meadow are the “nature escape” park – they include paths, gardens and restored ecologies for quiet reflection and the enjoyment of nature
  - c. The Downtown Gateway, the Ridge and the Valley are the “civic” park – they include more of the historic buildings and will support group gatherings and frequent events
2. Q: *“How do bikes and pedestrians use the Promenade Loop? Are cars allowed on it?”*
  - a. Pedestrians and bicyclists always take priority at the loop: walking, running, biking, weekend races and leisurely strolls; the promenade loop becomes a crucial east to west connection between downtown and NC State Centennial Campus
    - i. Pedestrian and bike use of the loop was preferred by a majority of respondents to our feedback question at the Community Meeting #2 meeting (March 2018)
  - b. During large events at the park, vehicles (transit/buses, emergency vehicles and some personal vehicles) may have controlled access to half of the promenade loop where it is at its widest width. Pedestrian and bicycle uses of the loop would be protected and maintained.
    - i. *Why?* Controlled vehicular access after large events has been recommended by Raleigh transportation and planning staff as a way to lessen traffic on perimeter roads outside the park.
3. Q: *“Isn’t park element \_\_\_ too close to park element \_\_\_?”*
  - a. The close proximity of varied park elements is what makes urban parks a success:
    - i. it means that Dix Park can offer something for everyone, during any visit
    - ii. locating elements close together has positive effects on park safety, because the in-between park spaces are active and well-used
    - iii. the design of individual spaces will ensure that nearby elements are not competing; 2 design tools to be used are planting (thick planting directs views) and constructed landforms (hills and valleys control how sound travels)
    - iv. thoughtfully arranging park elements in close proximity will make 308 acres feel like it is much, much larger
4. Q: *“Why is there parking shown within the future park?”*
  - a. Parking at the park is an issue of access and equity; this point was first made by a Master Plan Advisory Committee member to the MVVA team.
  - b. For Dix Park to welcome visitors from across the city, the region and the state, it must include some parking – enough to accommodate everyday visitors.
  - c. During large events, parking off-site and expanded transit service including shuttle buses will be needed.
5. Q: *“Will the prairie edge narrow the big field/meadow a lot?”*
  - a. No. Overall, the big field is being expanded in area across the site, to make new connections to points north and south. The edge of the big field is proposed to be lined with low-growing, diverse plants – a meadow edge (such as Piedmont prairie perennial

species and flowering shrubs) – which are absent today and will support wildlife and pollinator species. Mown lawn remains between the meadow edges; at its narrowest point, an area currently occupied by existing buildings and parking lots proposed to be removed, the mown lawn center is approximately 150' in width

6. How big is the creek meander? If you compare it to the pond at Pullen Park across Western, you can get a sense of scale.
  - a. The technical, hydrologic term for this feature is an “on-line pond”, meaning it is a zone where a flowing creek broadens. MVVA labels it as a creek meander on proposed plans because we want to convey that the water is always moving, not still like a pond might be.
  - b. The size and activities possible in the creek meander are dependent on 2 unknowns today - how much landfill material in this area can be safely displaced and the depth to bedrock. Later site surveys and design phases will investigate this. Park visitors will definitely be able to float toy boats in the meander, enjoy walks around restored riparian ecology and see plant and animal species not there today. Whether or not boating (kayaking, paddle boats) is possible cannot be determined at this time.
7. How big is the Event Hub? How many parking spaces are there?
  - a. The event hub is about 5 acres in total. It is made up of 5 60' wide bays of plaza and/or parking areas set within a restored pine woodland. There is not an advantageous view to downtown from this area of the park today. The event hub is a centrally located meeting place that helps park visitors orient themselves to all of the spaces on the western side of the park and it can accommodate many flexible uses such as...
    - i. Lunch area for school groups arriving via bus from all around the state
    - ii. Early morning or evening meet-up space for athletic activities
    - iii. Temporary events such as antique car shows, tents and vendors for a arts and crafts market, a food truck rodeo
8. Why are the sports courts scattered all around? To disperse activity throughout the park.
  - a. Think of the sports courts as individual outdoor rooms. They are close enough to each other that you could host a tournament at all of them. And yet, they are nestled amidst restored woodland and plantings so that a small group or family could just use one of them and feel like it is their own space for a short time, within the greater context of the public park.
  - b. Additionally, sports courts might do double-duty and be rented out early on a Saturday morning, say, as a registration center for a marathon. In this example, 1 court becomes the place where tents are set up, runners sign-up and bibs and water are distributed.