

The Master Plan

The Master Plan identifies **three Core Principles** that when pursued together, will ensure Dorothea Dix Park realizes its great opportunity: to become Raleigh's central park and a gathering place for the city, the region, and the state. These principles are proposed to guide and shape every phase of Dix Park's development, from planning, design, construction, and maintenance to future park use by partners and visitors.

- ① Open Up and Connect
- ② Build From What Is There
- ③ Offer Something for Everyone



Book Overview



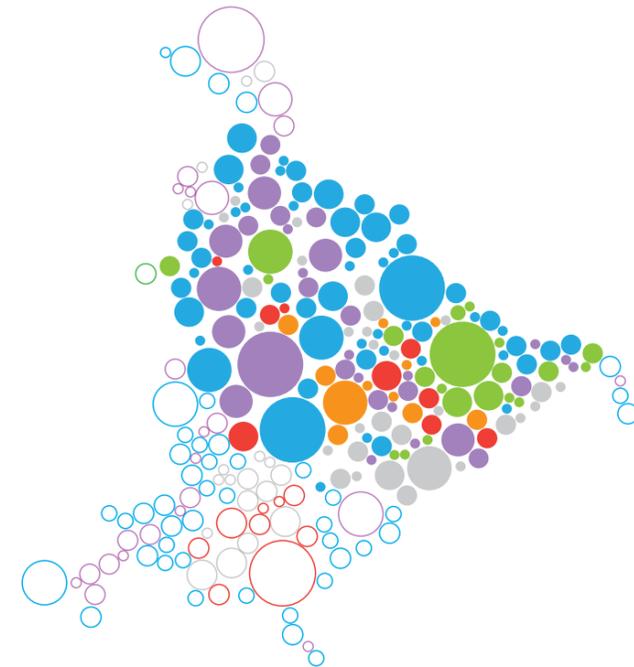
The Land

Exploring the natural and human histories of the land informs the definition of six distinct landscapes that will compose the future park: the Creek, the Grove, the Meadow, the Downtown Gateway, the Ridge, and the Valley. These landscapes reference and build from the past in order to inform the potential of the future public park spaces. The identification of the six landscapes is a creative action that allows the Master Plan to create greater complexity, diversity and specificity across the site while ensuring that telling the stories of the many lives associated with Dix Park.



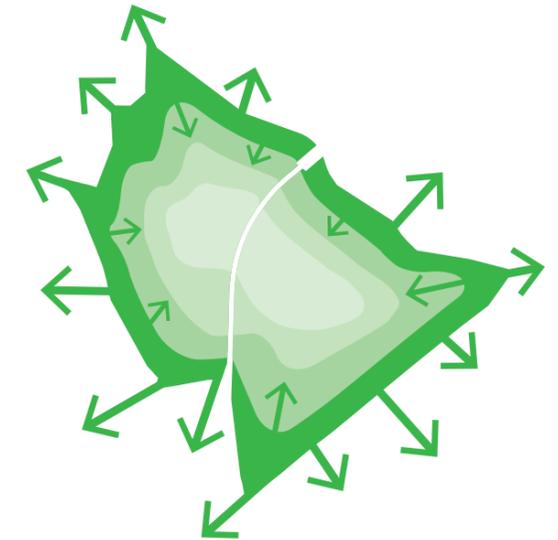
The Framework

Like any structure, parks need a connective framework that creates a unified system. This framework lets the park accommodate future changes and curation of program over time while retaining its character. The framework is the core identity of the park, the part that all users share while they engage in their wildly diverse park-based activities. This identity is particularly important in a park as rich and varied as Dorothea Dix Park. The framework is centered on circulation, such as entrances and edges, paths and roads, and building use. It encompasses wayfinding and orientation, making the park instantly legible to visitors and locals alike. It also addresses issues of equity, and accessibility by orienting the park to all user groups. A strong framework allows all the park's users to think of it as their very own place.



The Program

People come to a park, and then return over and over, because of the quality and variety of activities it accommodates. There are two kinds of such activities: planned activities offered by the park and informal activities visitors invent for themselves. It is essential to articulate a rich variety of planned programs— sports courts, amphitheaters, restaurants and cafes, arts and education centers, play areas, and so on. Informal program, on the other hand, is endlessly nuanced and grows from park users' enjoyment of the landscape's physical, seasonal, and sensory qualities. Such program is impossible to precisely plan but is essential to the park, complementing the planned program with the critical dimension of use. Thoughtful design can, however, foster and accommodate such unplanned activities. This section describes how planned and unplanned program interact to create a unified environment for Raleigh, the region and the state.



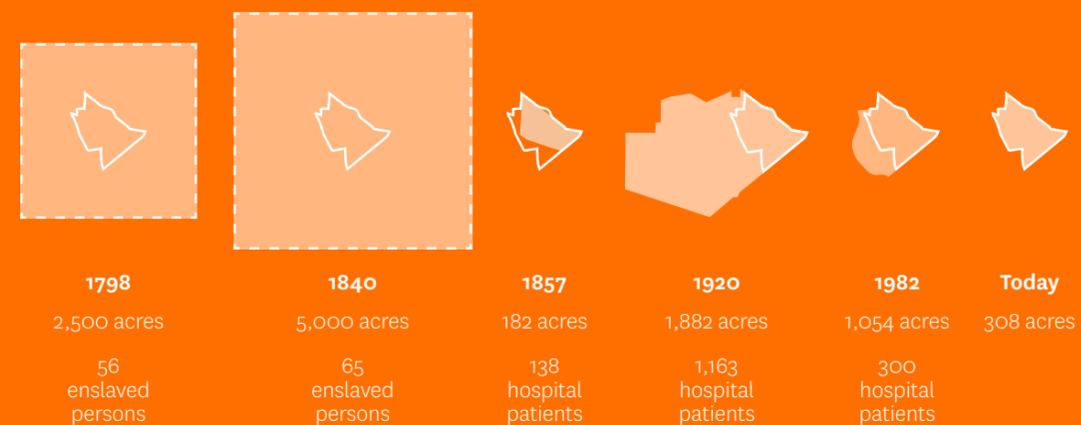
Implementation

Where the previous chapter discuss the existing and proposed conditions of the site, Implementation ensures that these concepts can be realized. This chapter proposes dividing physical work on the park into four phases, bringing advantages in accessibility throughout construction, budget and administration, and identification of robust institutional partnerships. The chapter also analyzes a number of specific aspects: operations and maintenance, funding, and partnerships. Each of these elements is crucial to a sustainable and integrated park.

The Land

The land that will become Dorothea Dix Park has a complex and specific past, with natural and human histories interacting and changing over time. In this chapter, analysis of existing conditions and investigations of past uses come together to shape how the land can most successfully and meaningfully be transformed into the future park. Existing conditions of the land include topics such as topography, hydrology, geology, and ecology. Past uses of the land include its history as a plantation, a hospital campus, a municipal landfill, a therapeutic escape, and a burial ground.

The analysis and investigations are synthesized to define Dorothea Dix Park's 6 landscapes. These 6 landscapes give essential characteristics and experiences of the land a specific location and name, so that they may be preserved, restored and shared.

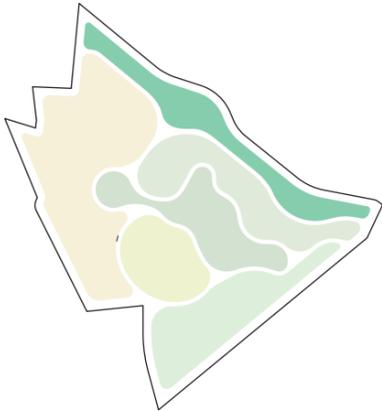


Catalysts for Transforming the Park

Reflecting the range of landscape types throughout the region, the Master Plan proposes that Dix Park be transformed into a composition of six distinct landscapes: the Creek, the Meadow, the Ridge, the Grove, the Downtown Gateway, and the Valley. The definition of the six landscapes is a creative act informed by technical analysis but, more importantly, by inventing from the opportunities latent in the land itself and borrowing from the region's most striking natural features. The six landscapes allow us to read the landscape as a varied grouping with individual strengths and weaknesses that can be assessed and augmented to create a park offering something for everyone. The rest of this chapter is organized according to the six landscapes, analyzing the history and current condition of each one and proposing interventions to restore and improve its ecology, experience, and function.

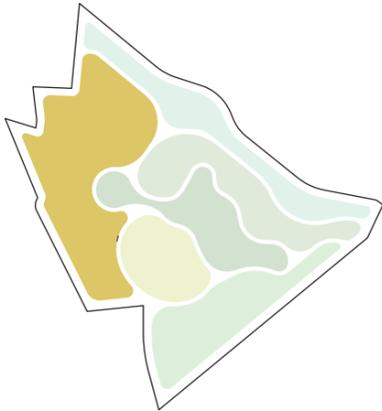


The Six Landscapes



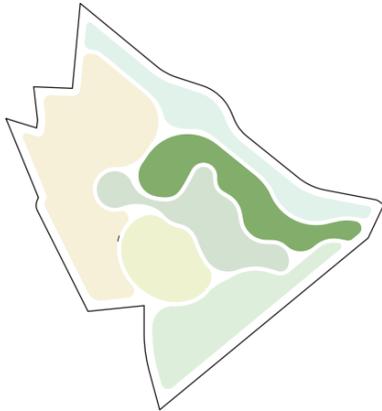
CREEK

Rocky Branch Creek, one of the essential natural elements of the Dix Park site, will be restored to its ecological health. This ecosystem will showcase the ecological diversity of the Piedmont and emphasize the experience of water, defined by the gentle meander of the Rocky Branch's natural course. It will be a quiet zone focused on the visitor's experience of nature.



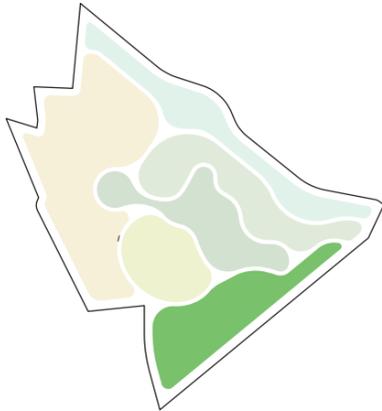
MEADOW

The Meadow will expand the big field that is already a much-loved element of the Dix Park site. The Meadow will become a common ground for the city, a place for established Raleighites and newcomers to meet and interact. Its boundless landscape will connect on one side to Pullen Park, building on Raleigh's extensive greenway system and extending it into Dix Park, and on the other side to the State Farmers' Market.



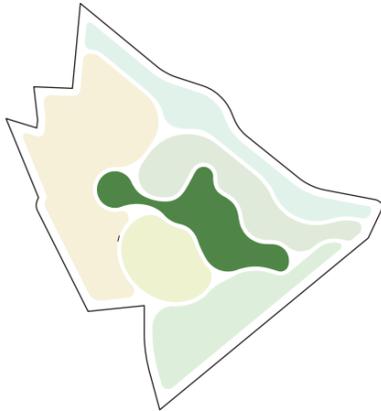
GROVE

With its winding entry drive and historic tree canopy, the Grove was one of the site's most carefully landscaped areas during the time of Dix Hospital. The master plan expands the grove and augments its existing ecology to create a botanical shade garden.



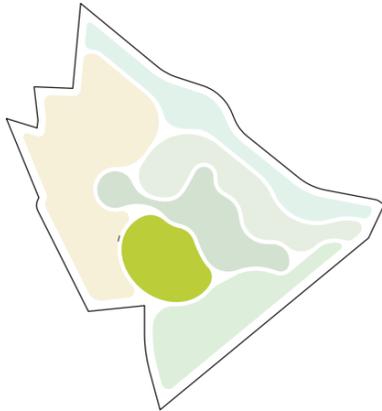
DOWNTOWN GATEWAY

The Downtown Gateway will animate the regional corridor to downtown Raleigh with welcoming gardens, plazas and play areas. Where an osage orange hedge used to separate Dix Hospital patients from the outside world, the site will open up to the city and the region.



RIDGE

The Ridge houses the Dorothea Dix Hospital campus, the traditional heart of the site. The master plan revitalizes this campus with cultural, social and revenue-generating activity, united by the Promenade Loop. These activities will take place in and around the heritage buildings, which will be selectively preserved to create large and small-scale indoor and outdoor rooms. The Ridge is the center of the park, connecting to all the other landscapes.



VALLEY

The Valley, formerly the site's industrial zone, will house new experiences in the form of a rail trestle bridge and an amphitheater for concerts and other events. The master plan proposes refurbishing the existing rail trestle bridge into a pedestrian link between the existing gymnasium and the proposed Grotto Garden.

Highlight the Ecology of the Piedmont



Basic Mesic Forest



Improved Creek Water Quality



Perched Wetlands



Paths Through Wooded Upland



Stormwater Pond

Restore a Basic Mesic Forest Along North-Facing Slopes

Wide Floodplain Affords Diverse Habitat Niches, Riffles, and Pools

Structure, Composition, and Function Restored to Native Floodplain Forest

Restored Embankment Vegetation Filters Surface Run-Off from Western Blvd

Tree Species include River Birch, Red Maple, Sweet Gum, Dogwood, Beech, Black Gum, and Hornbeam

Potential Roadway Expansion to Accommodate Bus Rapid Transit





The Meadow

Build a Common Ground for Raleigh

The Meadow harks back to the site's rural and agricultural past to create a boundless landscape that connects across the region. Before the drawing of the current property boundaries, the meadow extended far into the city: for example, in 1913, Lake Raleigh was created on hospital property. Today, the meadow is the Big Field, one of the most popular areas of the park. The Big Field is boundless: it uses large open space to create a feeling of freedom. Such boundless landscapes are integral to the design of many large parks, such as the Long Meadow in Prospect Park or Sheep Meadow in Central Park, and they grow ever more important as the cities around them become denser and more urban, as Raleigh will do in the next twenty years.

The meadow will be extended north and south. This extension will connect beyond the borders of the park via a land bridge to Pullen Park. This link will integrate the park into the city's robust greenway system and make the Meadow – a space welcoming to pedestrians – a main pedestrian connector within the park. Dix Park's direct connections will then extend through the Meadow all the way from NC State's Centennial campus to the State Farmers' Market. The land bridge will also serve as a corridor for species to expand their habitats.

The Meadow will be a meeting point for all of Raleigh. Meadows are used for a range of social activities that highlight a community's diversity: from pickup football and soccer games to cookouts and birthday parties. In this open, common space, the many cultures of Raleigh and the Triangle will meet and mingle, creating a space with the richness of the region.



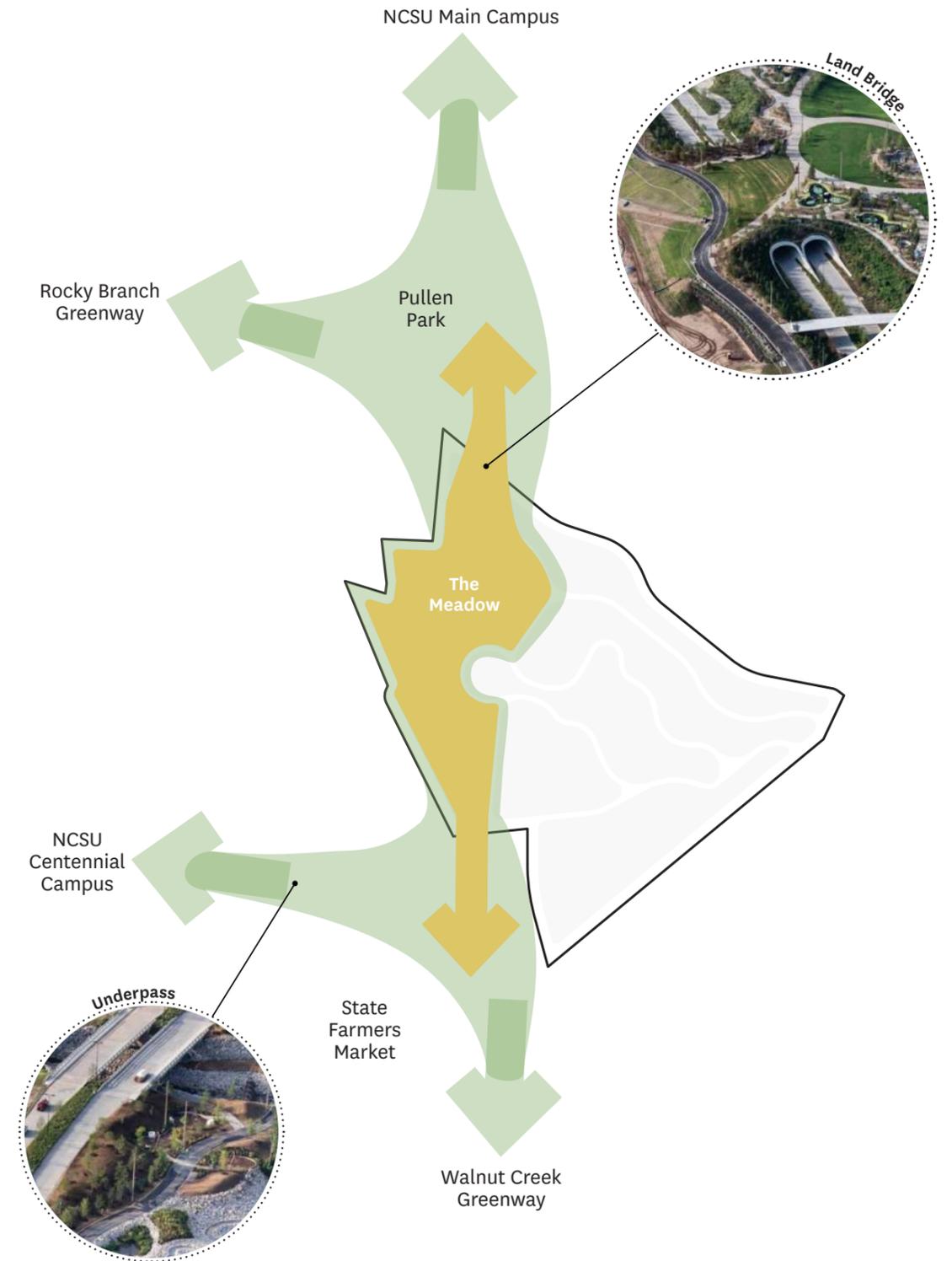
BOUNDLESS PASTORAL LANDSCAPE



THE CEMETERY TODAY



OPPORTUNITY FOR A COMMON GROUND





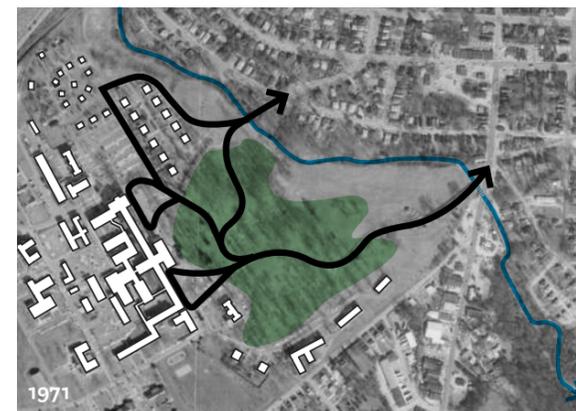
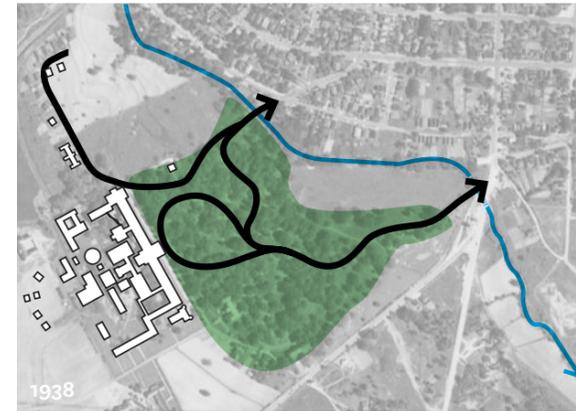
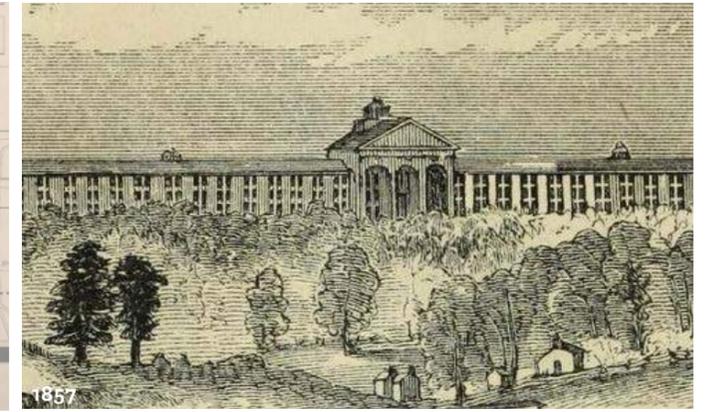
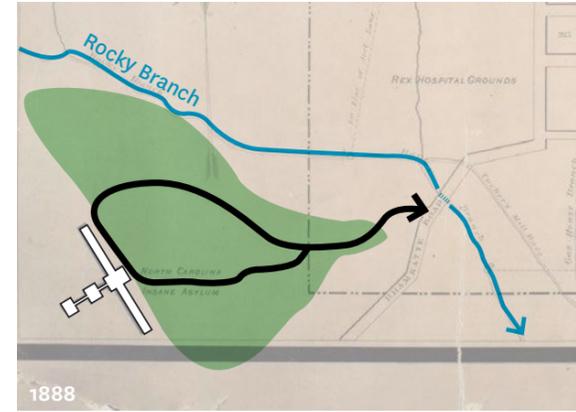
The Grove

Transform a Historic Entry Drive

The Grove has long been one of the most park-like areas of the site, and it still embodies the 19th-century picturesque ideals of A.J. Davis and his contemporaries. While it is uncertain who designed the hospital's landscape, it resembles Davis's published work. Notably, Davis illustrated landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing's 1841 "A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America", which inspired Frederick Law Olmsted and the development of American public parks. The landscape references the rural countryside, expressed by clumps of trees and shrubs that frame undulating open spaces. Circulation is sinuous, as illustrated in Downing's treatise. The composition creates a kinetic experience in which views of the hospital unfold gradually as one climbs to the entrance. These elements represent intentional and thoughtful design moves.

The Grove has been prized and modified since its design. In the 1890s, patients trimmed and felled trees and the hospital built benches, swings and two summerhouses "to create a park for patients." (Haven on the Hill, 40) In 1918-19, a bridge was built for Boylan Heights residents who wanted to connect their neighborhood to the picturesque Grove. The Grove also saw volunteer tree planting efforts after 1990s hurricane damage.

The master plan calls for the restoration of the Grove's oak savanna ecology. A new native understory would allow more species to call the grove home. Cottages that have encroached on the Grove would be removed to allow denser planting and a more immersive experience. As discussed in the next spread, the Master Plan proposes creating perched wetlands on Dix Hill to restore the hill's ecologies and reduce erosion in the Rocky Branch.





The Downtown Gateway

Animate the Corridor to Downtown

During the Dix Hospital years, the southeastern edge of the site that will become the Downtown Gateway was managed to exclude the city. Buildings were designed with their fronts to the hospital interior and their service areas to Lake Wheeler Road. In 1896, gardener James Adams planted a mile-long hedge of osage orange trees to keep patients and farm animals in and outsiders out. Osage orange, with thick habit and sharp thorns, was a predecessor of barbed wire, and the hedge formed an impenetrable barrier between the hospital and the city. By the 2000s, the osage orange hedge had been replaced with chest-high chain-link fence running the length of Lake Wheeler Road.

The master plan proposals for the Downtown Gateway reverse decades of land management by transforming the corridor into a welcoming and active park edge. Plazas, play areas, repurposed historic buildings, and other spaces will foster connections to the city by drawing passersby to densely packed activities. Bus drop-offs will also be centered here, creating transit connections across the city. What used to be a forbidding barrier will become an invitation to the park.

The Downtown Gateway will be a destination and a conveyor: conveying people into and through the park. It will serve as the main pedestrian, bicycle and transit connection to downtown Raleigh. The current grade-separated underpass is already a pedestrianized, humane urban-scape, but it must be framed appropriately by civic elements such as gardens, plazas and play areas. This area will be the most urban space of the park, appropriate to the transition between city and park. It will offer plenty of opportunities to sit, play, and eat to those arriving from Downtown, while also attracting users who have entered the park elsewhere.



NO SIDEWALKS



CHAIN LINK FENCING



GRADE CHANGE BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOOD AND PARK



LOCATION OF 19TH CENTURY MILE-LONG OSAGE ORANGE HEDGEROW BARRIER



UTILITY EASEMENT, FENCES, AND TRAFFIC CREATE BARRIERS TO ENTRY TODAY

Gardens and Plazas Animate the Corridor



PIER 6, BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK, NEW YORK
 A playground is a recommended as an early investment for Dix Park’s edge, as it makes the park accessible to all. The early realization of the Pier 6 playground at Brooklyn Bridge Park created a nexus of activity that constantly brought people to the park. This was a huge step in transforming a place that once kept the public out into a place that invites the public in. As an “activity bridge,” the playground allowed activity to flow from the surrounding city into the park site.



PIER 6, BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK, NEW YORK

SKY BOWL, KENDALL SQ, CAMBRIDGE
 The Sky Bowl at Kendall Square offers a model for how an initial investment in a public landscape can create a harbor for public activities in the middle of a landscape under development. When the Sky Bowl was constructed, the mid-rise buildings around it were still empty or under construction, and the site was somewhat forbidding. The Sky Bowl brought activity to Kendall Square and thus established it as part of the city.

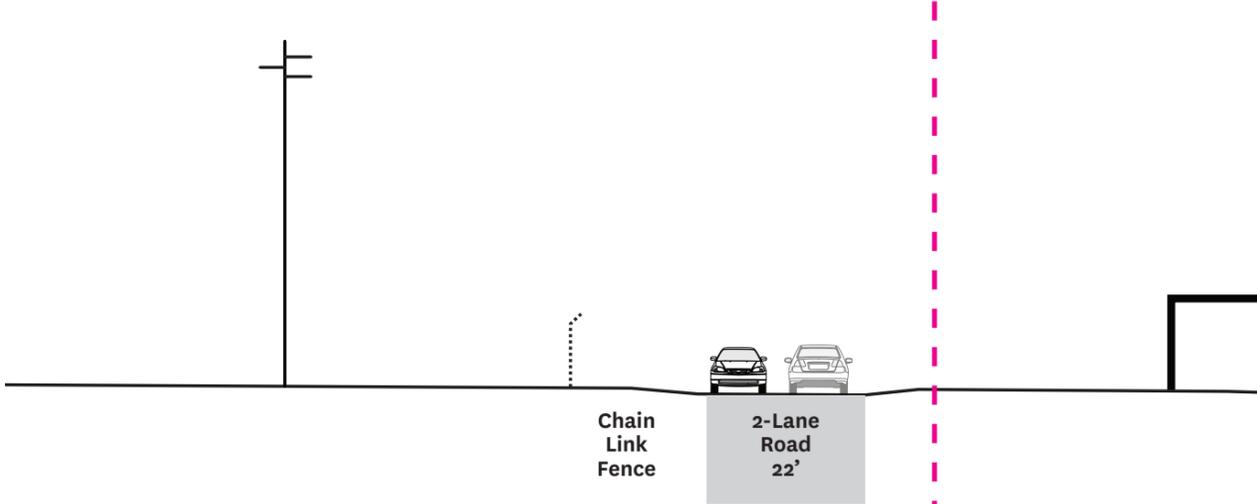


SKY BOWL, KENDALL SQ, CAMBRIDGE, MA

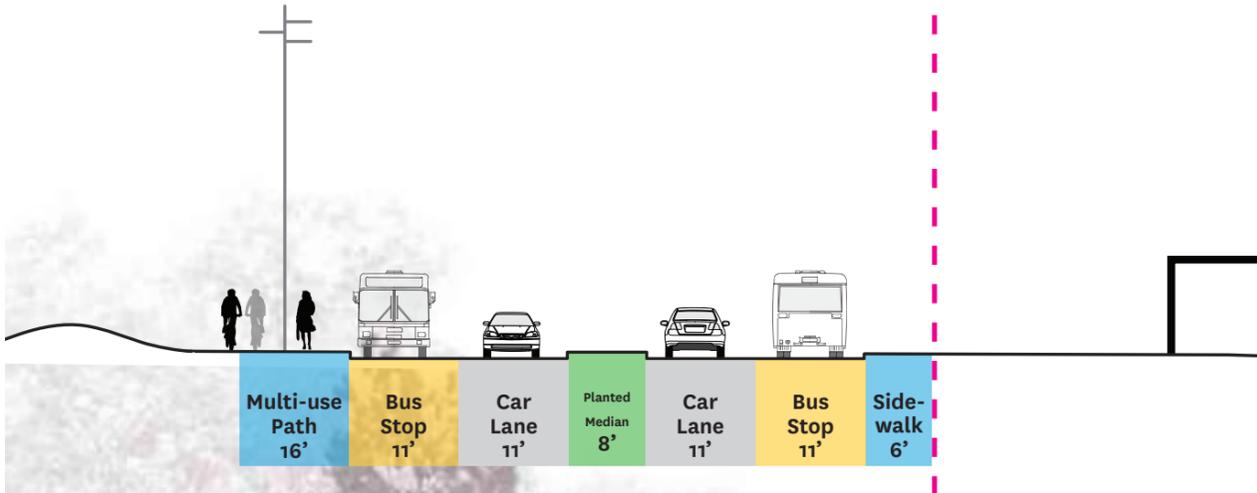
PIER 6, BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK, NEW YORK
 The Promenade at Brooklyn Bridge Park’s Pier 6 Upland creates a strong visual invitation to the park with a wide path that transports the visitor directly from the sidewalk edge into the center of the park. The path’s curved alignment suggests further activity beyond what the eye can see, drawing the user deeper into the site.



PIER 6, BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK, NEW YORK



EXISTING SECTION



PROPOSED SECTION



The Ridge

Revitalize Dix Hill with New Public Uses

The Ridge is the geographic center and natural high point of the site, that extends across the length of Dix Hill and offers sweeping views to surrounding areas. While no conclusive physical or archival evidence of Native Americans occupying the site prior to the Hunter plantation has been found to date, site analysis by the state archaeologist suggests the Ridge landscape to be a likely location for early habitation. The advantageous position of the Ridge relative to Downtown Raleigh was later why the hospital was occupied by 17,000 Union troops during the Civil War.

The clearest physical history inscribed in the ridge is the hospital campus designed by famed architect Alexander Jackson Davis, which embodies the principles of mental health care advanced by hospital namesake Dorothea Dix. Diametrically opposed to the dingy, often inhuman living conditions of the mentally ill Dix had witnessed across the country, the hospital was a progressive experiment that emphasized the role of light, air, and landscape in healing. Davis considered the site as a whole and created a design that took into account both indoor and outdoor spaces as part of an overarching whole.

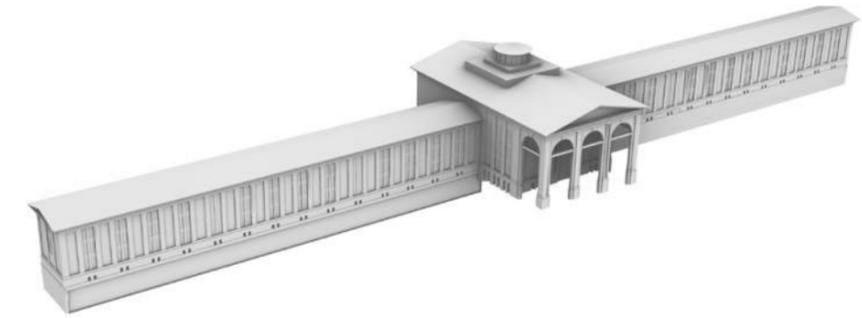
The original hospital building was constructed by a number of local contractors who used slaves as part of their labor force. The site thus bears direct witness to the history of slavery in the region. In particular, Stewart Ellison, an African American who was born into slavery, spent eighteen months between the ages of thirteen and twenty working as an enslaved carpenter for a free mulatto carpenter. Ellison later ran a significant contracting business, was active politically and in 1874 was elected to the North Carolina State Legislature.



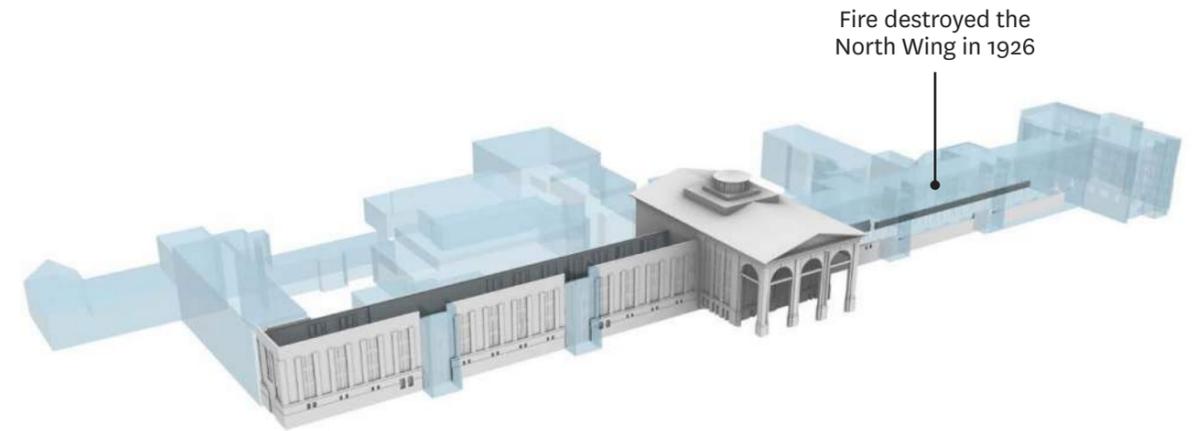
CENTRAL PAVILION DEMOLITION, 1951



EARLY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION, 1850'S

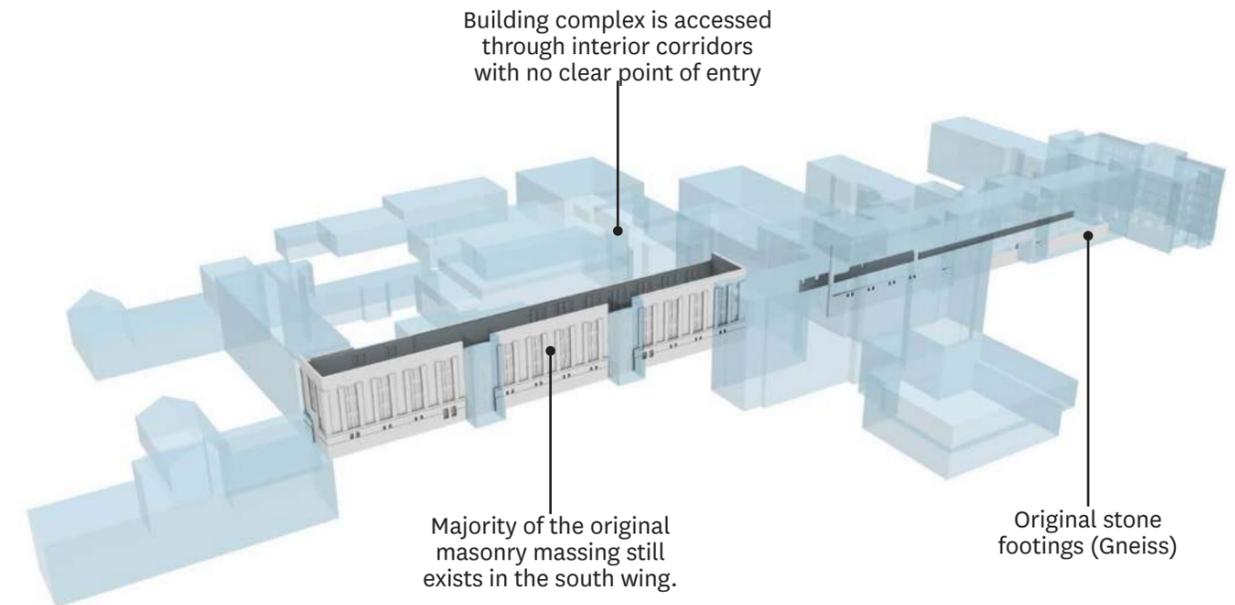


ORIGINAL A.J. DAVIS BUILDING



Fire destroyed the North Wing in 1926

POST FIRE ADDITION



Building complex is accessed through interior corridors with no clear point of entry

Majority of the original masonry massing still exists in the south wing.

Original stone footings (Gneiss)

HOSPITAL COMPLEX TODAY



The Valley

Bridge Grotto Garden to the Ridge

The Valley was the functional core of Dix Hospital, the central engine that powered the rest of the site. In 1890, the Dix Hospital board decided that the hospital should burn coal. To put this decision into practice, the board granted the North Carolina Railroad a fifty-foot right-of-way in the Valley in exchange for the construction of “a switch and sidetrack for coal and freight deliveries” (“Haven on the Hill,” 33). Over the next fifty years, various railroad rights-of-way were granted in exchange for supplies, splitting the site down the middle. The industrial character of the valley was reinforced when a power plant was built there around 1950. The Valley was essentially empty around these functional elements; it was never part of the site experience.

Today, those functions are no longer active, but their physical manifestations and the void around them remain. Most of the Park’s other landscapes require editing and improvement to allow them to realize a contemporary version of their potential, reminiscent of their past state. The Valley, on the other hand, requires radical reimagination. The first part of this reimagination is the proposed transformation of the railroad bridge that runs down the middle of the site from a division to a connection, as described in the next spread. Second, since the Valley has never been part of the park’s user experience, it is the perfect opportunity to create a large-scale new attraction: an amphitheater or other event space. This amphitheater will tie into possible uses of the power plant, such as a brewery or arts space, inspired by adaptive reuse of power plants such as the Seaholm Power Plant in Austin, Texas. Further north, sports courts will turn the gym from an isolated building into an integrated part of a sports and recreation network. Third, a Grotto Garden will anchor the southern end of the Valley. As discussed in the next spread, this Grotto Garden will bring drama and mystery to a corner of the site sorely lacking them.



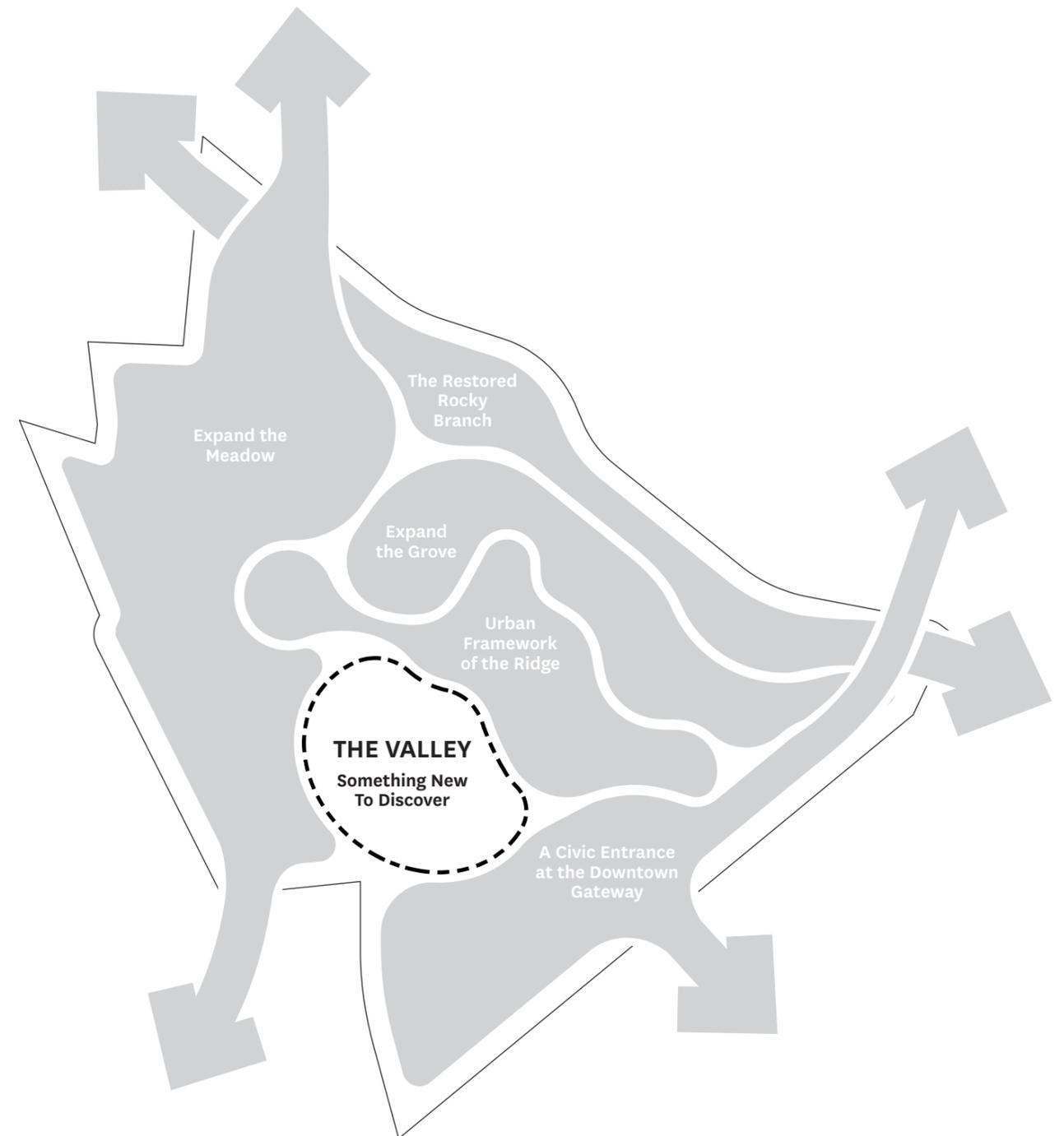
RAIL LINE



OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT



POWER PLANT



The Trestle Creates a New Connection



The Trestle turns what used to be the site’s main division – the rail line – into a dramatic connection soaring above the park and offering stunning views of Raleigh. The Trestle also connects the two poles of public space in the park: the Ridge’s campus that is a hub of programming and cultural activities, and the Grotto Garden that is a romantic microcosm of larger natural systems. This constructed landscape, inspired by the manmade sublime, mystery and sense of discovery of great parks like the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont in Paris or the Vale of Cashmere in Prospect Park, will showcase the diversity and drama of North Carolina’s landscapes on a site that lacks it today. The Grotto Garden will also shape views from the Meadow, redirecting them from the State Farmers Market’s loading docks to the tiered ponds that are proposed to lead down to Walnut Creek. Preliminary studies suggest that the Grotto Garden could be fed with stormwater and rainwater, contributing to the Master Plan’s water management strategy.



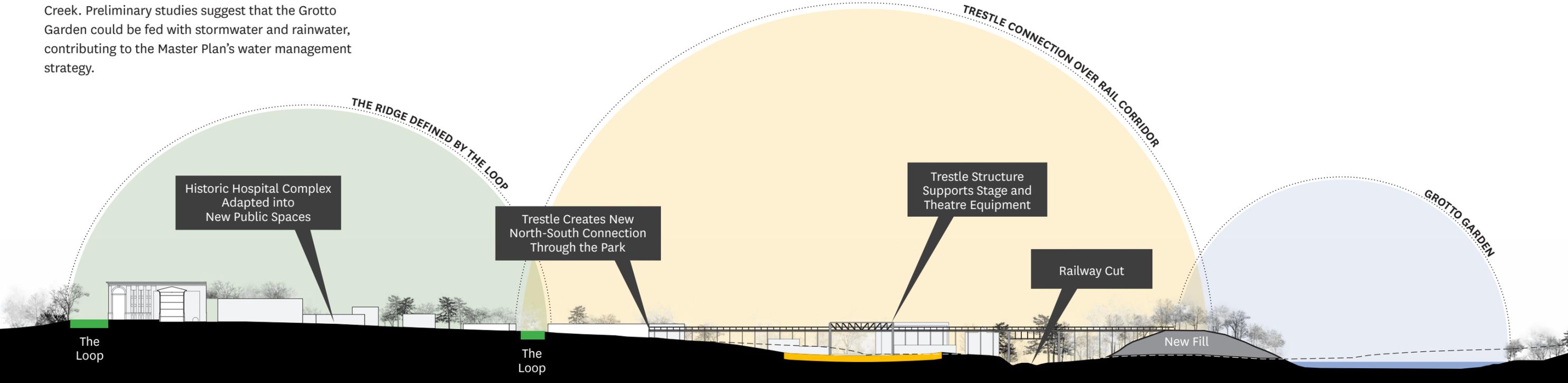
THE JEWEL BOX, FOREST PARK, ST. LOUIS



JARDIN DES BAMBOUS, PARC DE LA VILETTE, PARIS



VALE OF CASHMERE, PROSPECT PARK, NEW YORK



The Framework

The framework structures the park and our experience of how we get there and how we move through it. Cumulatively, the framework is made up of the interrelated networks of paths, roads, entrances, edges as well as indoor and outdoor spaces. It must be accessible, easy to understand and use, public, and welcoming.

Another key characteristic of a park's framework is that it is enduring; it accommodates change over time yet the functions and character of the park are maintained. As an example, Central Park's robust framework has ensured it remains a significant public space for New York City, even as it has evolved to support different programs and needs over the past 150 years.

This chapter describes in concept and in detail the proposed edges and neighbors conditions, the circulation and transportation systems, and indoor and outdoor spaces that altogether, compose the framework for the future Dorothea Dix Park.

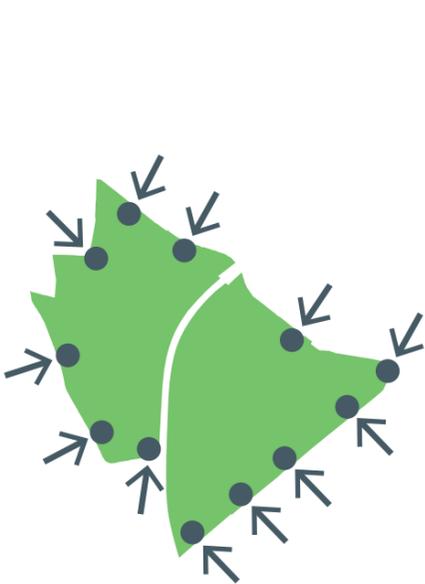


Activate Park Entrances

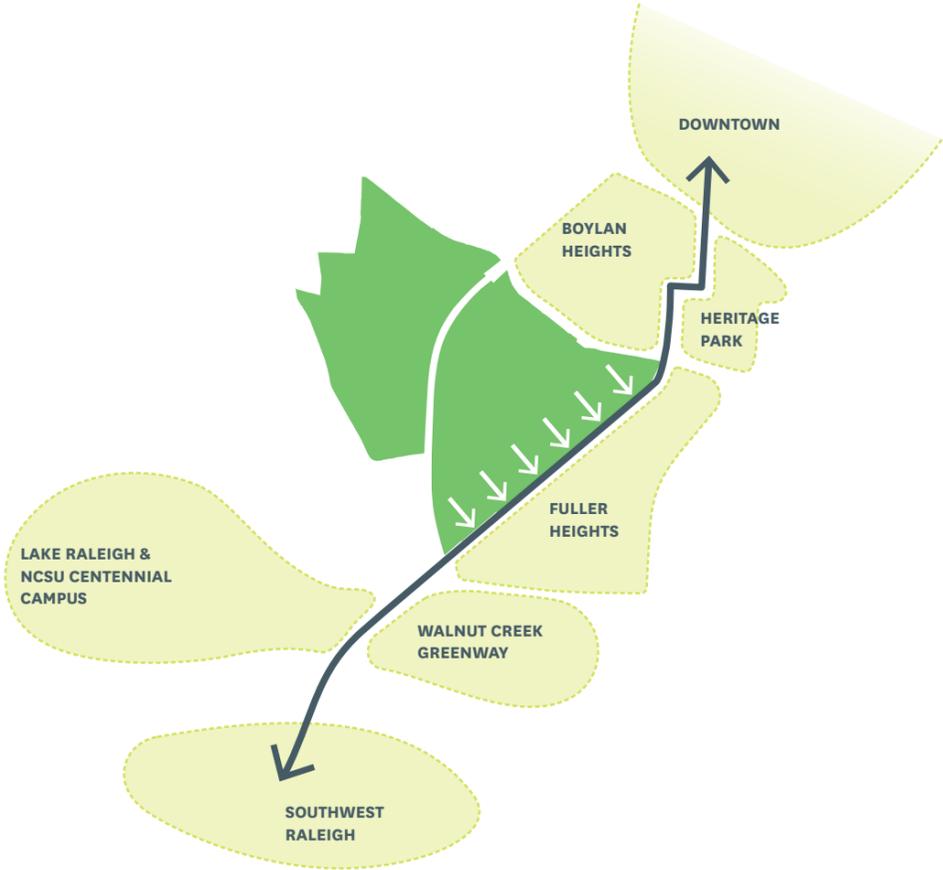
The master plan proposes creating clear, understandable park edges defined by roads and paths. These edges will be permeable, allowing passersby to look into the park and pedestrians and bicyclists to enter. Cultivating dense and diverse neighborhood activity day and night along park edges is essential for safety.

The entrances to the park will be the user's introduction to the park. As such, they hold great importance in the experience of the park. All entrances must be both welcoming and clear: they must leave no doubt that one is entering the park while transitioning smoothly from the surrounding city. This does not, however, mean that they should all follow the same design: each entrance should reflect the character of its immediate surroundings. Such individuality can be expressed through gates, roadside landscape, pavement, and other design elements.

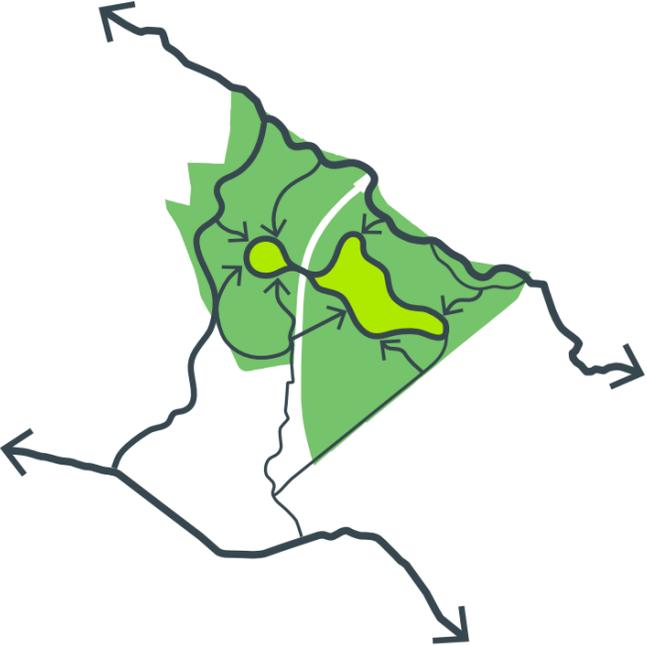
Dix Park will dramatically increase traffic to the park, particularly for bicyclists and pedestrians. In order to absorb this increased traffic, the proposed entrances will be able to accommodate heavy use.



ENTRANCES FRAME THE PARK AND WELCOME USERS FROM ALL SIDES



LAKE WHEELER ROAD CORRIDOR BECOMES THE DOWNTOWN GATEWAY



DEVELOP A ROBUST NETWORK OF PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE ACCESS

Circulation and Transportation

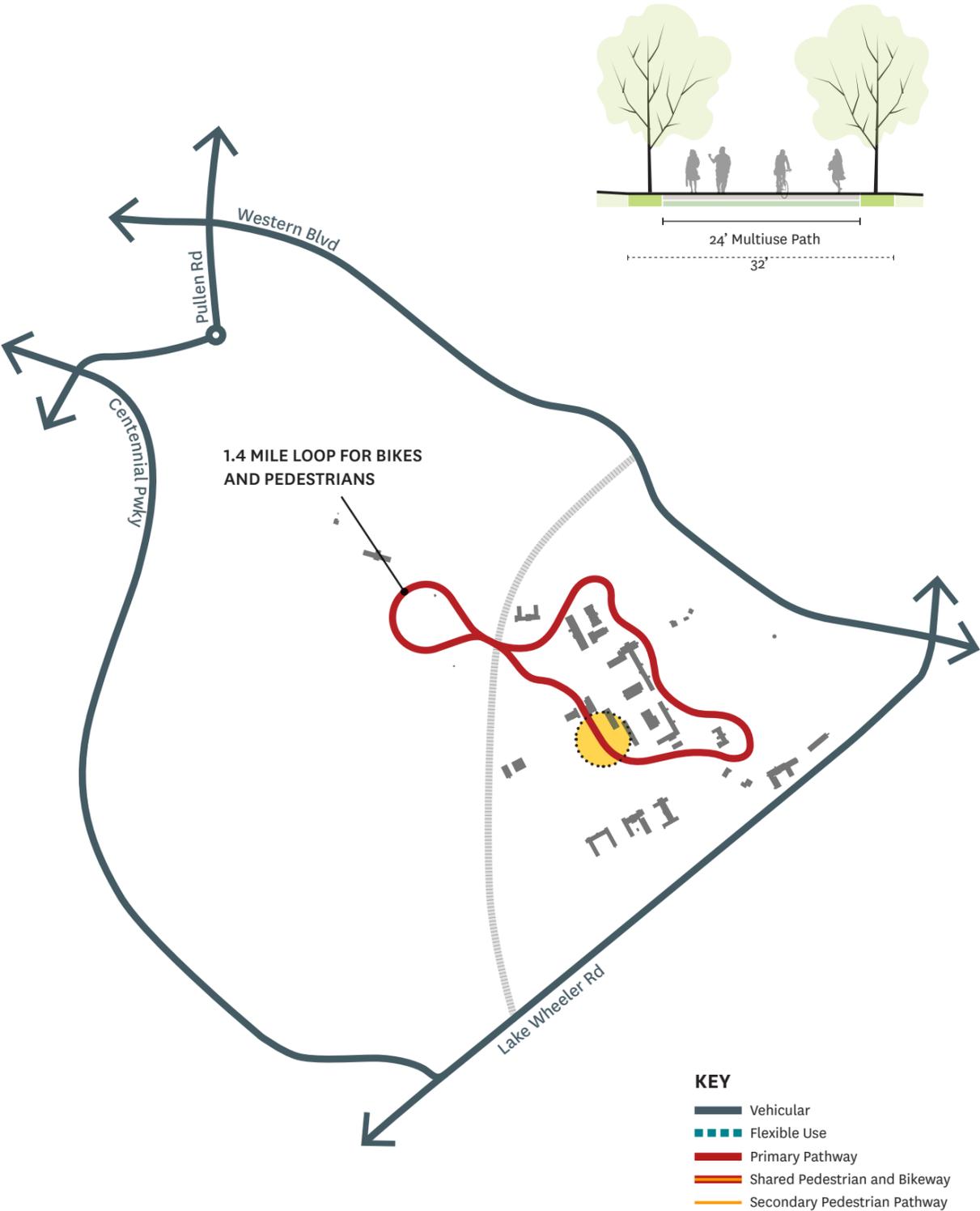
The Promenade Loop



As the core of the Framework, the Promenade Loop will be an engine of legibility and circulation within Dix Park. It will define the Ridge and recover the continuity the Ridge possessed before it was divided by the rail line. It will incorporate the existing bridge over the rail corridor to tie the hilltop together into a legible, unified experience.

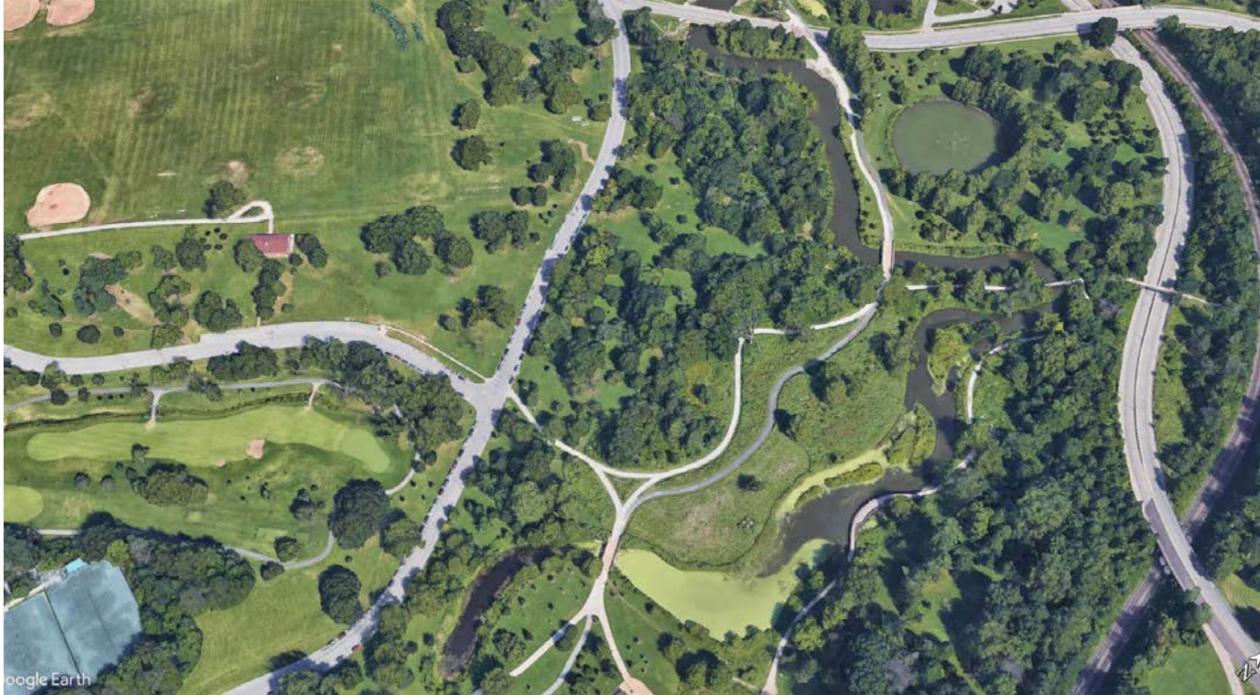
Like the Park Drive in Central Park or the Loop in Prospect Park, both designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the loop will orient the visitor to the site and provides an inherently clear wayfinding system. From inside the Promenade Loop, one will know that one can walk in any direction and encounter it, providing straightforward wayfinding. In other areas of the park, one will always be able to find the loop by walking uphill to the top of Dix Hill.

While defining the central landscape of the Ridge, the Promenade Loop will also connect it to Dix Park's other landscapes. As a social space, it will be a destination in itself, both for walks and bike rides and to see and be seen. Its civic activity will bridge the transition between different landscapes and programs, allowing the densely programmed Ridge to spill out into the surrounding landscapes and drive activity throughout the park.



Circulation and Transportation

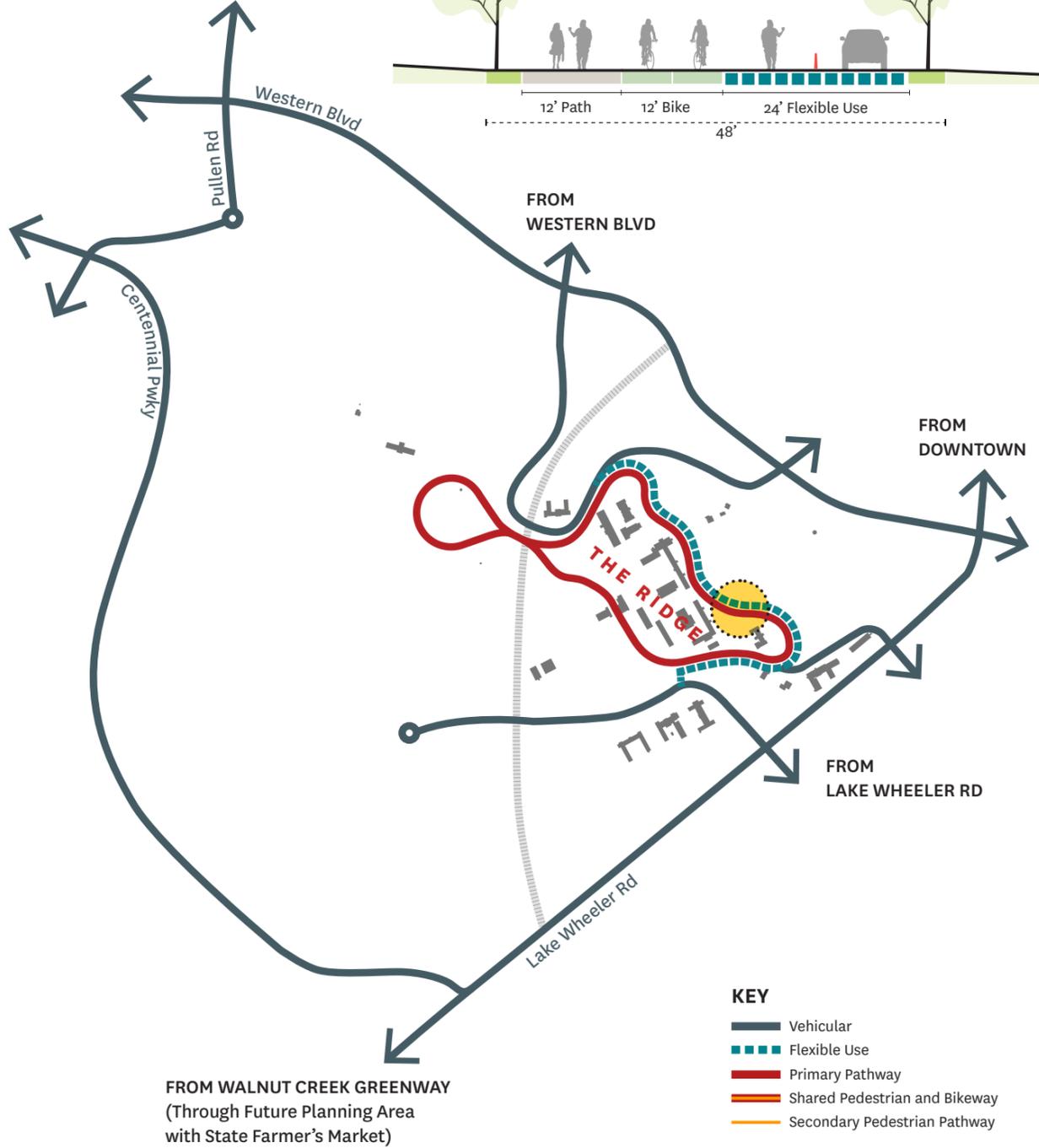
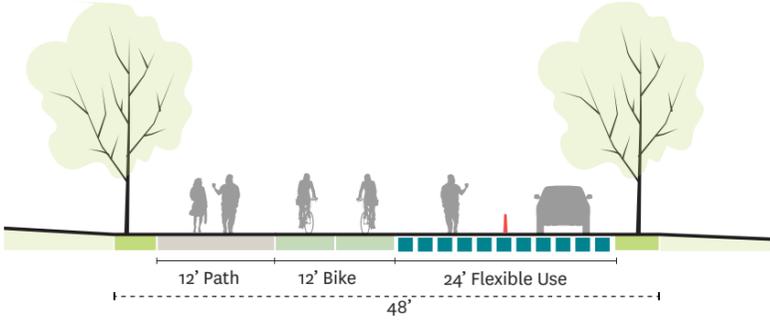
Vehicle Access



Today, car circulation within Dix Park is fragmented and direct. Users enter the park to reach a specific destination and get there as quickly as possible. In some instances, they cut through a corner of the park in order to avoid traffic. These roads stop drivers from enjoying the park's slower pace and encourage driving at fairly high speeds inappropriate to the park.

The Master Plan aligns vehicular traffic patterns within the park to the overall park experience using a few main strategies. In order to prevent motorists from cutting through the park, roads will be designed in the form of "staples" that primarily connect to the same perimeter road at

two points; going through the park will thus never be a shortcut. Sinuous road layouts will take their cues from the entry drive of the designed hospital landscape, extending the pastoral experience to drivers and greatly reducing traffic speed. The Master Plan also reduces car access to the park's interior to a few key roads, leaving most of the park a car-free zone.



Circulation and Transportation

On-site Parking

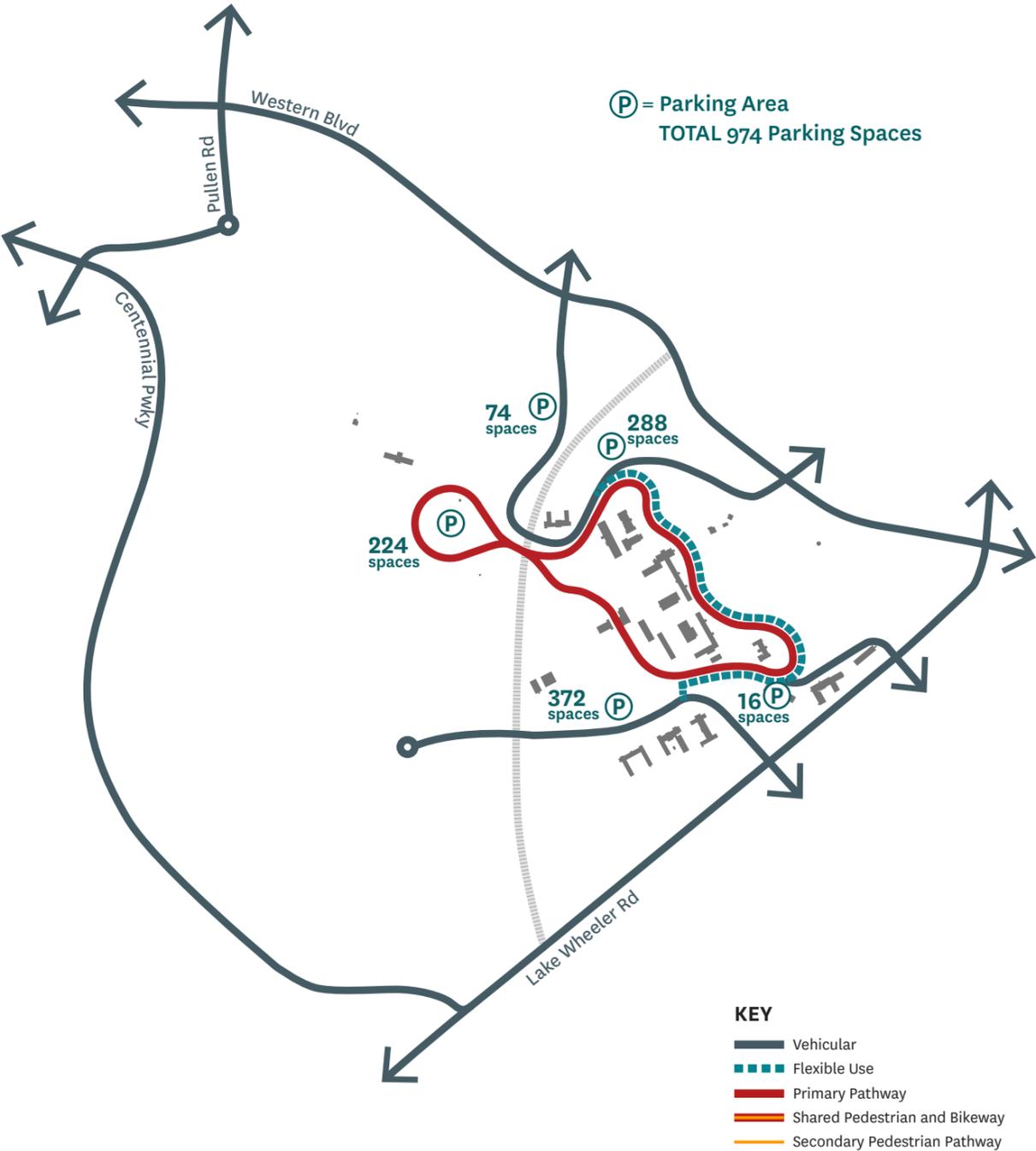


Providing easy-to-access parking located near park features will allow the park to welcome visitors from across the city, the region and the state. While proposed transit upgrades and driving technology advancements are anticipated, driving will remain an important mode of access in the short-term to mid-term life of the park, especially for daily users. In addition, for the park to function as a state-wide destination, it must be able to accommodate users outside of Raleigh’s transit network.

Currently there are over 2,000 parking spaces across the hospital campus. The master plan proposes approximately 1,000 parking spaces to be distributed throughout the park. In professional planning, there are no standard ratios for parking spaces to park features because every park and urban context is unique. That said, looking to other similar parks as reference is a helpful comparison.

Dix Park would have 3.18 parking spots per acre, placing it toward the high end of similar parks: for instance, Hermann Park in Houston offers 2.9 spots per acre, and Washington Park in Winston-Salem offers 3.0 spots per acre.

For everyday park use, the master plan proposes a series of parking gardens that will be shaded, multi-purpose, and will help orient visitors to their place in the park. They will have associated stormwater treatment areas to reduce run-off and improve water quality. The parking gardens are proposed for existing flat, disturbed areas away from prime park use zones and within different phases of the park’s implementation, allowing adjustment of parking counts based on the demand demonstrated in early phases.



Circulation and Transportation

Transit and Off-site Parking

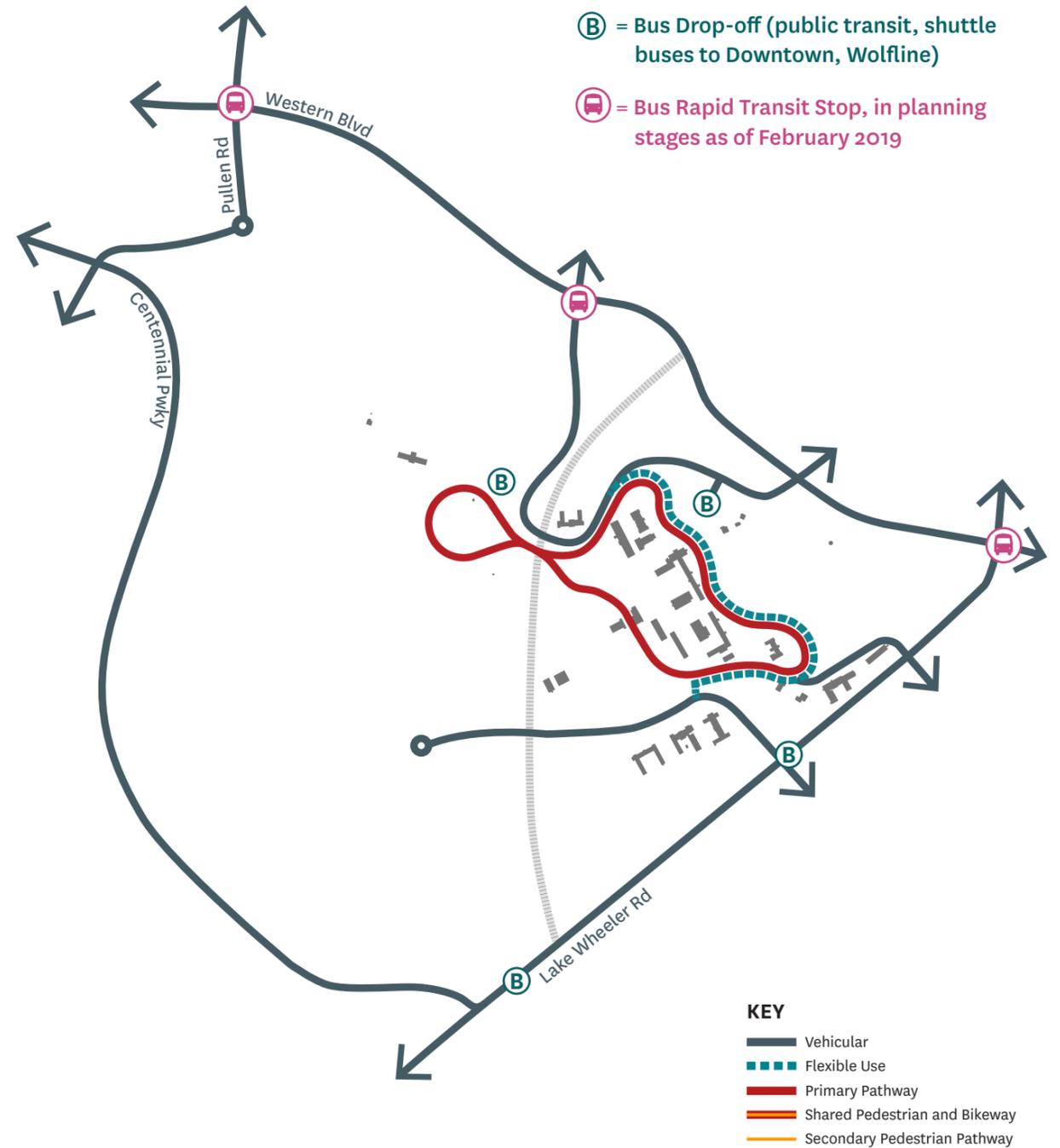


The parking provided within the park will need to be supplemented for large, irregular events, such as concerts at the proposed amphitheater. For these occasions, off-site parking will be organized by making use of weekend availability at nearby sites like the NC State Campus and Governor Morehead School, as well as Downtown lots. Such efforts will depend on strong working relationships with neighboring institutions, as developed in the Partnerships section of the “Implementation” chapter. Connections between these off-site parking lots and the site will depend on an established link via local and regional transit.

Despite the number of surrounding institutions, the existing site is poorly served by public transit. For example, no public transit

network currently stops at the State Farmer’s Market. However, several existing and planned public transit networks can be extended to supply access to Dix Park. These include the Go Raleigh and Go Triangle public buses; the NC State Wolfline buses; and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line that is currently scheduled to open in 2027. These bus lines serve a wide constituency throughout Raleigh and the Triangle.

In addition to including Dix Park on these transit routes, the Master Plan calls for a circulator bus route between Downtown and Dix Park, which would run with increased frequency during large events and other times of high demand.



Circulation and Transportation

Greenways and Multi-Use Paths



Dix Park will establish itself as a transportation hub in part by connecting to the city’s existing circulation systems.

Key to this effort, Dix Park will become a connection between the Walnut Creek and Rocky Branch Greenways. Ecologically, this will allow Dix Park to serve as a patch so that species can expand their habitats. Experientially, it will unify Raleigh’s already excellent greenway system and facilitate a strengthened link between NC State and the City of Raleigh. The master plan also proposes moving Rocky Branch Greenway into the park, immersing users in the restored landscape of the Rocky Branch during their bicycle ride, jog, or commute to work.

Greenways are not the only type of external connection that Dix Park will improve. The master plan calls for instituting a 16-foot-wide bicycle and

pedestrian path along Lake Wheeler Road, which currently has no sidewalk. This will be necessary as Dix Park draws increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic but will also improve connections for Fuller Heights and other surrounding neighborhoods. The Lake Wheeler multi-use path’s proposed meander into the historic Grove responds to steep existing slopes and a narrow, dangerous roadway condition.

In addition to the Rocky Branch Greenway and Lake Wheeler multi-use path, paths inside Dix Park will create a major east-west connection sorely lacking in this part of Raleigh.



- KEY**
- Vehicular
 - - - Flexible Use
 - Primary Pathway
 - Shared Pedestrian and Bikeway
 - Secondary Pedestrian Pathway

Circulation and Transportation

Pedestrian and Cultural Links



The proposed circulation network for pedestrians ranges from multi-use paths (paved and 16 feet wide) to park paths (paved and 5 to 10 feet wide) to informal paths (mown lawn or granular pavement). The character of the surrounding landscape determines the variety of paths, from a slender paved path between a building and a parking area to a woodland trail or a mown track through a field.

Whereas the current circulation network serves simply to convey the user from Point A to Point B, the proposed system of pedestrian and cultural links will encourage wandering, strolling, and encountering the unexpected. This sense of surprise will be present in all of these pedestrian

experiences, but particularly on the trestle bridge that will link the Ridge’s central plaza to the plaza at the top of the Grotto Garden in the Valley. Like the Meadow, these plazas will be open hubs of informal cultural events, from parades to dance performances to small fairs. This activity will spread out from the plazas along the path network, driving cultural activity throughout the park.



Circulation and Transportation

A Multi-Modal Network



This spread focuses on the park's immediate context and introduces five major moves that will embed Dix Park in Raleigh's circulation network. These interventions and improvements will be accomplished in coordination with neighbors, agencies and other project partners:

- 1 The Land Bridge
- 2 Pullen Road Extension
- 3 NC State University at Spring Hill
- 4 State Farmers' Market
- 5 The I-40 Intersection
- 6 Lake Wheeler Road to Downtown

The Land Bridge will connect Dix Park and Pullen Park. Rather than compete with the extraordinary and well-loved resources of Pullen Park, Dix Park will capitalize on its existing strengths and offer program not available there. The Land Bridge will create an organic link between the two parks and allow animals to expand their habitat.

NC State Spring Hill, which is in its own planning phase, will be developed simultaneously to Dix Park. This development will link Dix Park and the existing Centennial Campus.

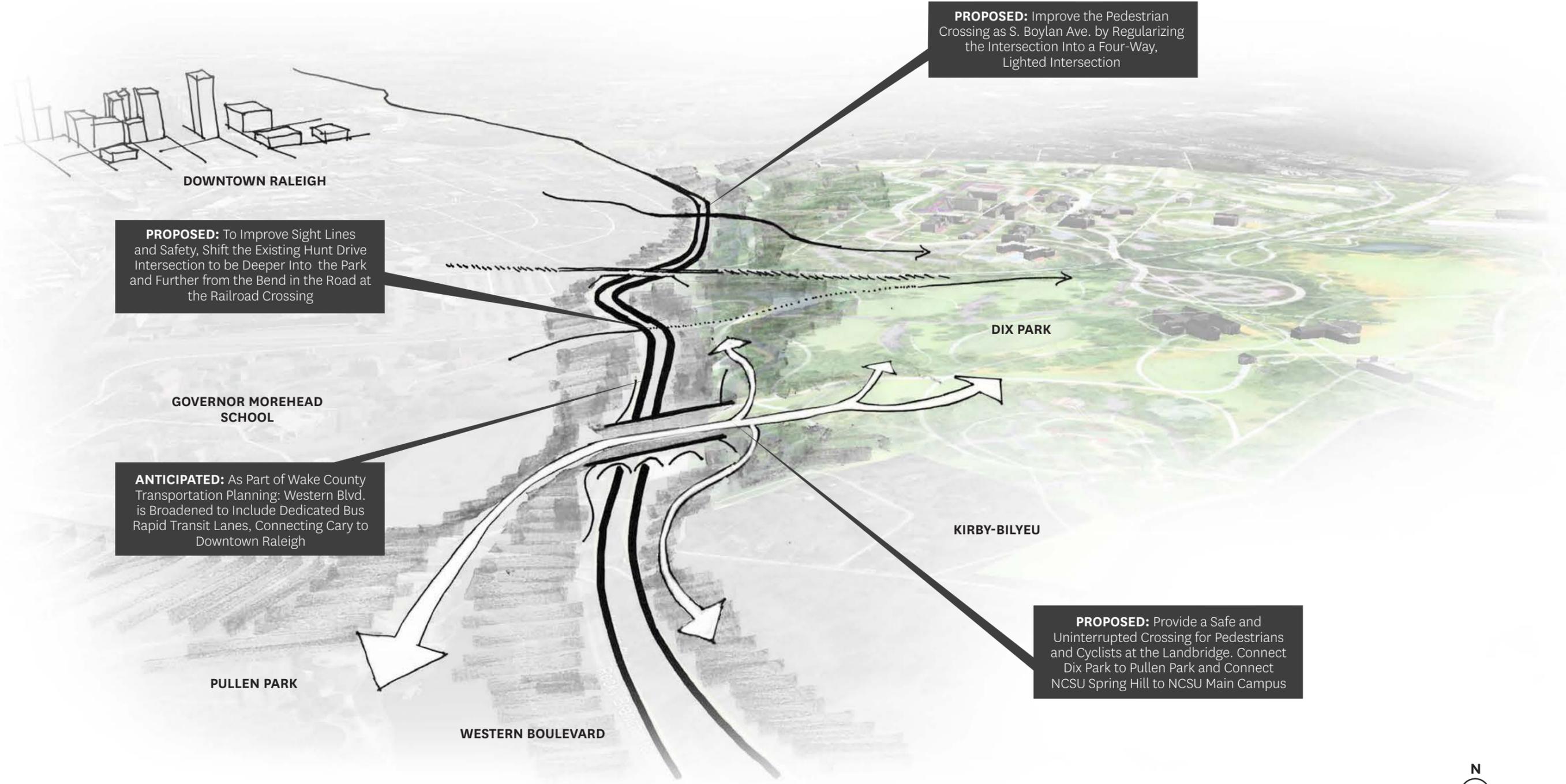
The Pullen Road Extension, which is currently under development, is an anticipated stop for both Bus Rapid Transit and the NC State Wolfline, providing a major point of transfer between two transit systems.

Lake Wheeler Boulevard is currently a major connector between Interstate 40 and Downtown Raleigh, overtaking the two-lane road. As Downtown Raleigh grows, this connection will become ever busier. The Master Plan therefore proposes reconfiguring the intersection between Lake Wheeler Boulevard and Centennial Parkway near the exit from Interstate 40, encouraging north-south traffic to move to higher-capacity Centennial Boulevard. This will allow Lake Wheeler to remain a smaller-scale local corridor that can accommodate the proposed multi-use right-of-way nearby.



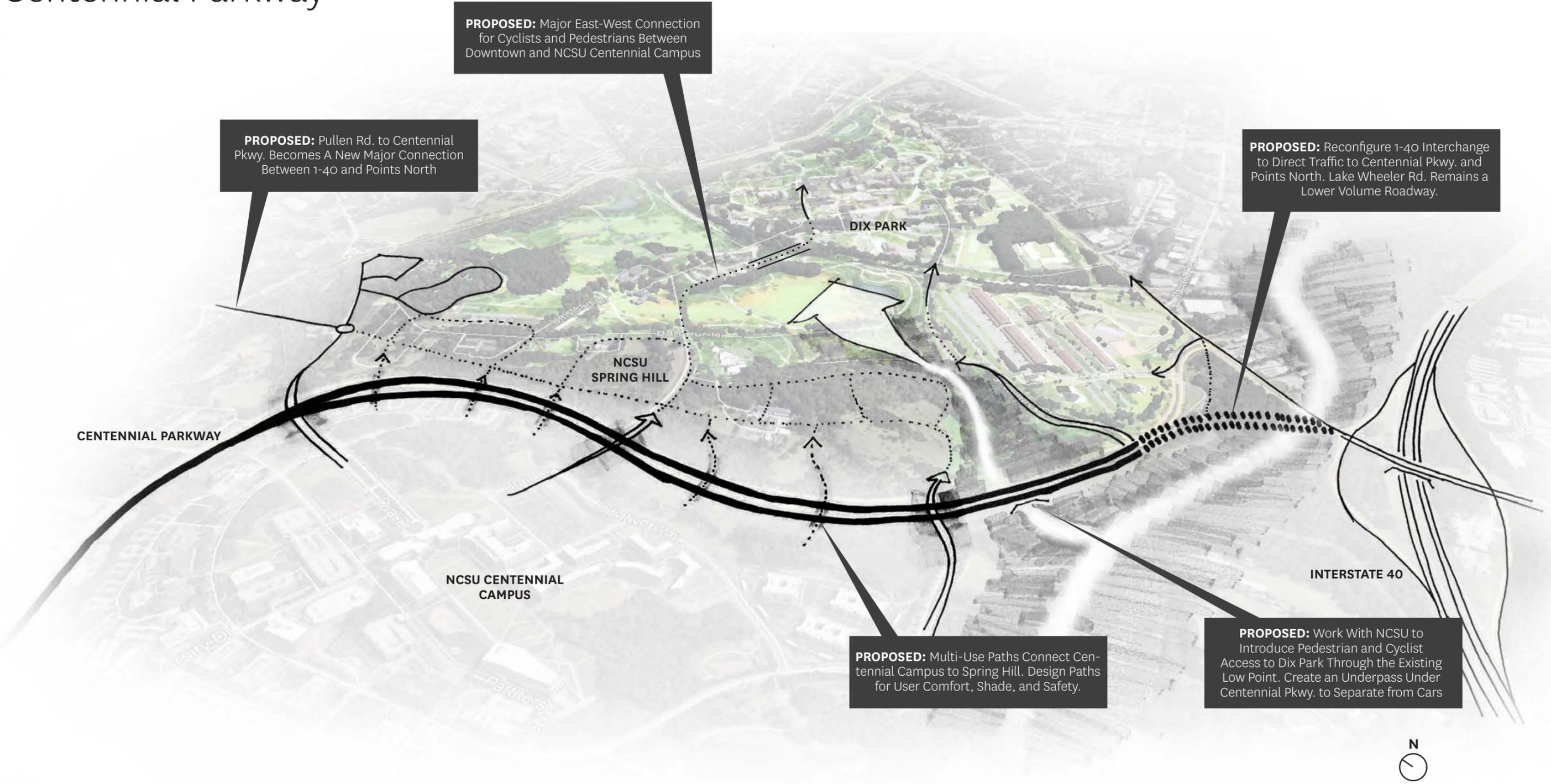
New Connections

Western Blvd.



New Connections

Centennial Parkway



New Connections

Lake Wheeler Rd.



The Program

The last chapter outlined how the framework must be flexible and robust enough to survive and sustain radically changing user needs and desires. This chapter proposes a program for the park. Program, in planning, means how a space is used. In other words: what does Dix Park offer? This program is specific, to allow users to imagine themselves in the finished park, but it is illustrative rather than deterministic. Each program element embodies the beliefs that structure the master plan, but it is understood that the individual elements may change as the master planning and park creation process evolves and will certainly change over the life of the park.

Dix Park must offer a broad range of distinct programs, some of which you only find at Dix and nowhere else, like the Grotto Garden and the Hammock Glade. Other programs, like basketball courts, will exist at Dix and elsewhere. These will be of a quality and character that sets them apart from other parks. By offering both unique and universal experiences, the program will make Dix Park a center both for the surrounding communities and the greater Raleigh area, both a neighborhood hangout and a regional destination.



KEY

- Arts and Culture
- Food and Community
- Wellness and Play
- History and Reflection
- Gardens and Ecology
- Park Support

Arts and Culture

Memorable Experiences

ART AS COMMUNITY EXPRESSION

Dix Park can encourage the arts in Raleigh by providing a public space for exhibitions and installations, and performances and rehearsals. Art seen as a social practice interwoven with everyday life and community expression can highlight community talents and spark conversations about group history, identity, and place.



ART AND MEMORY

Art can be utilized to address the complicated history of the site. As noted in the section on History and Reflection, this may include sculptures, installations, music and performances. There might be physical memorials to the memory of Dorothea Dix; events commemorating the enslaved labor involved in building the hospital; or a site-specific theatre troupe linking the history of mental health patients at Dix Park to universal themes found in plays.



NURTURING A LOCAL ARTS SCENE

Just as Dix Park will be both a neighborhood park and a destination park, there will be room for both nationally and internationally acclaimed artists and local and regional practitioners. This exchange between local talent and national success will foster the local arts scene.



LEGEND

- ① Entry Plaza at the Downtown Gateway for Installations and Events
- ② Exhibit Halls and Maker Spaces in the Rehabilitated Carpentry and Maintenance Buildings
- ③ Rehabilitate the Royster Building to Support Arts and Cultural Institutions
- ④ The proposed Valley Theater supports a range of concerts and community events, with the capacity to host over 7,500 attendees; the rehabilitated Power Plant building offers performance support spaces such as practice rooms, green rooms and concessions

Food and Community

Bringing Together Groups and Families

Like arts and culture, food and community is a way for people to express their own culture and discover others. In Dix Park, food can manifest in two main ways: park goers making their own food, or sampling the fare from food trucks, restaurants, and cafes.

COOKOUT SPACES

Cooking brings people together. Gathering in small groups for a birthday party, a graduation celebration, or a sports game tailgate are rituals that show the diversity of a community and give civic spaces their strength and vibrancy.

FOOD TRUCKS AND RESTAURANTS

Barbeque has a long history in North Carolina, and Raleigh is rapidly becoming the hub of a vibrant restaurant scene. Dix Park can capitalize on these strengths, with vendors selected to showcase local traditions but also the ideas of young, innovative chefs. Restaurants can be housed in the site’s historic buildings and can have both indoor and outdoor seating. Food trucks can set up everywhere from the Downtown Gateway to the Event Hub.

FOOD FESTIVALS

Raleigh already hosts a number of food festivals: the International Food Festival, the Raleigh Food & Wine Festival, the Downtown Raleigh Food Truck Rodeo... the list goes on. Dix Park will be a natural site for these festivals.



LEGEND

- ① Cook-out Zones at the Downtown Gateway
- ② Restaurants, Temporary Markets, Food Events and a Culinary Showcase Space at the Hilltop Campus
- ③ Event Halls used as venues for Family Reunions, Weddings and Rental for Large Groups
- ④ Cook-out Zone at the Meadow, near State Farmers Market Vendors
- ⑤ Event Hub hosts Meet-ups, Cook-outs and Food Truck Events

Wellness and Play

For All Ages, For All Visitors

Zones for wellness and play can be as specific as a tennis court, a rock wall, or a water playground, or they can be a multipurpose, such as a running/ biking/walking trail or a field. Wellness means different things to different people, and Dix Park will offer elements that satisfy everybody’s needs. The park itself promotes wellness: as many recent studies have shown, confirming the belief of Dorothea Dix, spending time in a natural setting can improve both mental and physical wellness.

SPORTS

Dix Park can offer an extraordinary array of sports facilities, from tennis and basketball courts to soccer fields. Like food and arts, sports are an opportunity for community-building: they unite people who would otherwise have had nothing to do with each other around a love of the game. Sports require a facilities: tennis and basketball courts or running trails, and fields for pick-up football and soccer. At Dix Park, sports will promote well-being by combining their direct exercise and health benefits with a close relation to the natural setting.

PLAY AREAS

Dix Park will house a range of play areas. In addition to traditional play structures, these play areas can include nature play, in which children play on equipment such as inverted logs in a naturalized setting and acquaint themselves with the uncertainty and excitement of the natural world. Water play in fountains and on splash pads stimulate sensory experience and cool you down on a hot day. Such play areas refuse to take a “one-size-fits-all” approach to play, instead recognizing every child’s individuality.



LEGEND

- ① Play Area at the Downtown Gateway
- ② Dog Park, 1 of 3 across the site
- ③ Adventure Play Area
- ④ Nature Play Area
- ⑤ Renovate and Retain Haywood Gymnasium

History and Reflection

Connect the Past to Today

TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION

Museum exhibits, markers, and memorials are traditional means of interpreting site history. At Dix Park, these can be employed at specific locations, such as the hospital cemetery, to recognize significant events and people of the site’s past.



LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

Restored ecologies recall the rural, agricultural history of the site, and the wild landscapes of North Carolina. These landscapes embody these pasts and preserve their stories for future visitors.

ART AND STORYTELLING

Art has the capacity to illustrate and interpret the site’s past. Site-specific works that react to the landscapes and buildings may deepen viewers’ understanding of Dix Park’s storied past.



PARTNERS

Local organizations such as Raleigh’s African-American Cultural Complex, regional Native American groups, Healing Transitions and others, will be invited to share their historical perspectives and open up a wide range of park programs that address all Dix Park’s communities.

PROGRAM

Tours, oral history interviews formatted for audio tours, lectures, and events further communicate the site’s history through ongoing programs.



LEGEND

- ① Historic approach to hilltop preserved for pedestrians and bikes
- ② Harvey bldg rehabilitated as visitor center with site history exhibits and archives, to include material on Dorothea Dix; Buffalo and Benner rehabilitated for park programs, such as youth space and concessions
- ③ Earliest architectural materials preserved with interpretation on construction by enslaved persons and hospital history; interior and exterior spaces within the Ridge designed for rotating art exhibits and events
- ④ Stone houses rehabilitated for park programs, such as office(s) for cultural/historical partners
- ⑤ Chapel rehabilitated for park programs, such as park offices, lecture and event space
- ⑥ Rock with Civil War-era markings preserved, interpretative materials added
- ⑦ Cemetery preserved, interpretative materials added; surrounding it, new paths and gardens for reflection
- ⑧ New planting design and park paths frame the Spring Hill House and unites it visually with the Meadow, interpretative materials added

Gardens and Ecology

Inspired by the Land and the Region

Ecology is an inherent theme in any park, and this is particularly true in Dorothea Dix Park's 308 acres perched on the fall line between Piedmont and Coastal Plain ecosystems. Healthy ecology is what affords and sustains the lush garden or beautiful landscape people delight in.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife will become a major attraction in Dix Park once their habitats are restored. Users will mainly interact with wildlife by seeing fauna from paths, but specific outlooks or viewing spaces can also serve this programmatic element.

NATURE EDUCATION

Dix Park itself will be an outdoor classroom, teaching both children and adults about the natural world around them. The park's location amid North Carolina's varied ecoregions allows it to showcase a wide range of habitats and ecosystems. Education could range from guided site tours to botanical garden visits to community gardening. The park will also serve as a living laboratory for science classes at N.C. State's nearby campuses.

QUIET RETREAT

One of the most important functions of an urban park is to provide a quiet retreat from everyday life. Especially as Raleigh grows and becomes denser, the park will serve as a reminder of the area's rural past and a much-needed escape for a walk, lunch, or barbeque. This quality of escape, already present, will only intensify as Raleigh grows.



Park Support

What's Needed for Success

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Maintenance is crucial to the success of Dorothea Dix Park. Proper upkeep will require significant investment, as well as dedicated spaces throughout the park. Spaces will include administrative offices, parking lots for maintenance vehicles, and other equipment storage facilities. It is essential to have a strategic plan for preventive maintenance, rather than allowing major problems to arise.

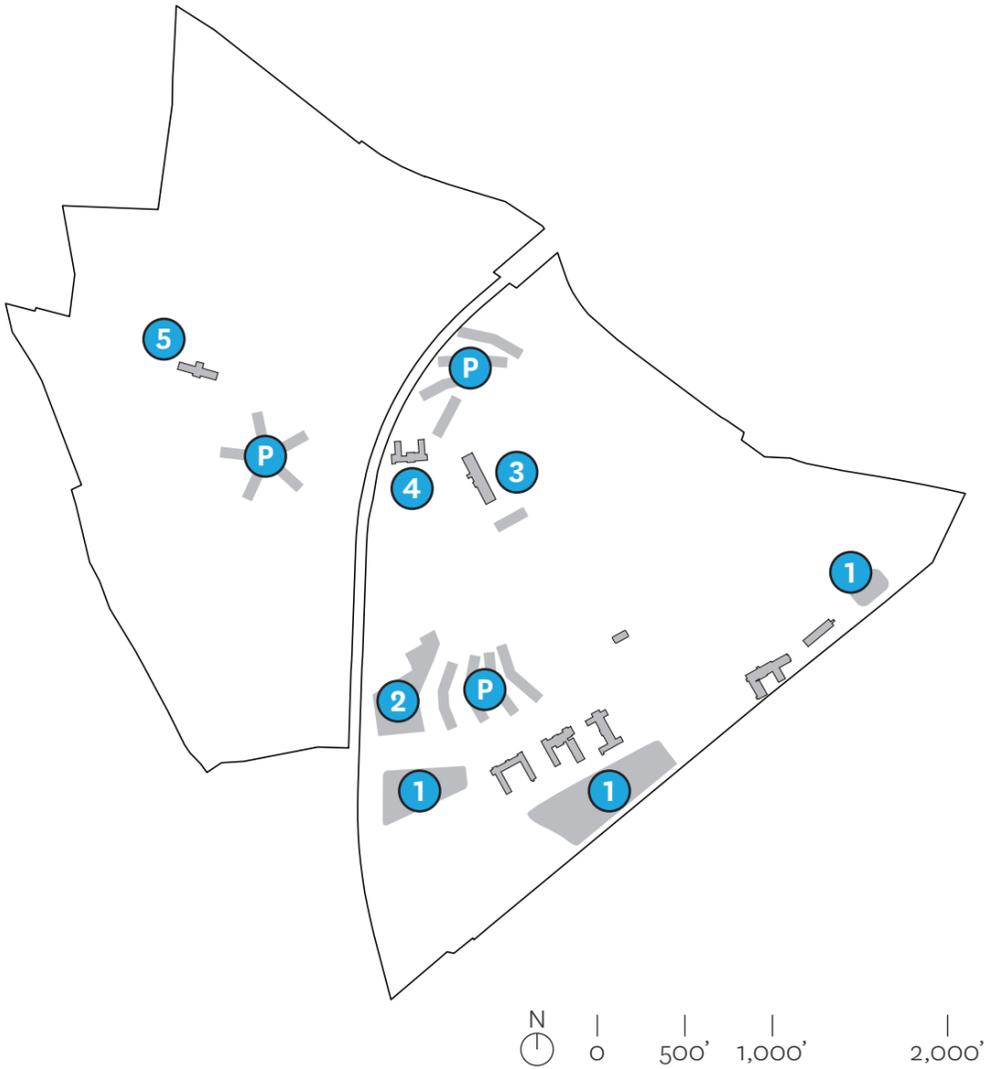


REVENUE-GENERATING USES

The Master Plan has identified a range of programs and opportunities to generate revenue. It is often more difficult to raise money for on-going upkeep than for the original capital project. Optimizing the revenue Dix Park can contribute to its own maintenance and operations budget will help ensure the long-term sustainability and success of the park.

EYES ON THE STREET, EYES ON THE PARK

Drawn from the writings of the urban theorist Jane Jacobs, the concept of “eyes on the street” posits that safety and well-being in an area are linked to its visibility to others. People discourage crime and inappropriate behavior simply by occupying a space and seeing what’s going on. Dix Park must have enough eyes on its many streets, paths, and other zones that it always feels safe and welcoming.



LEGEND

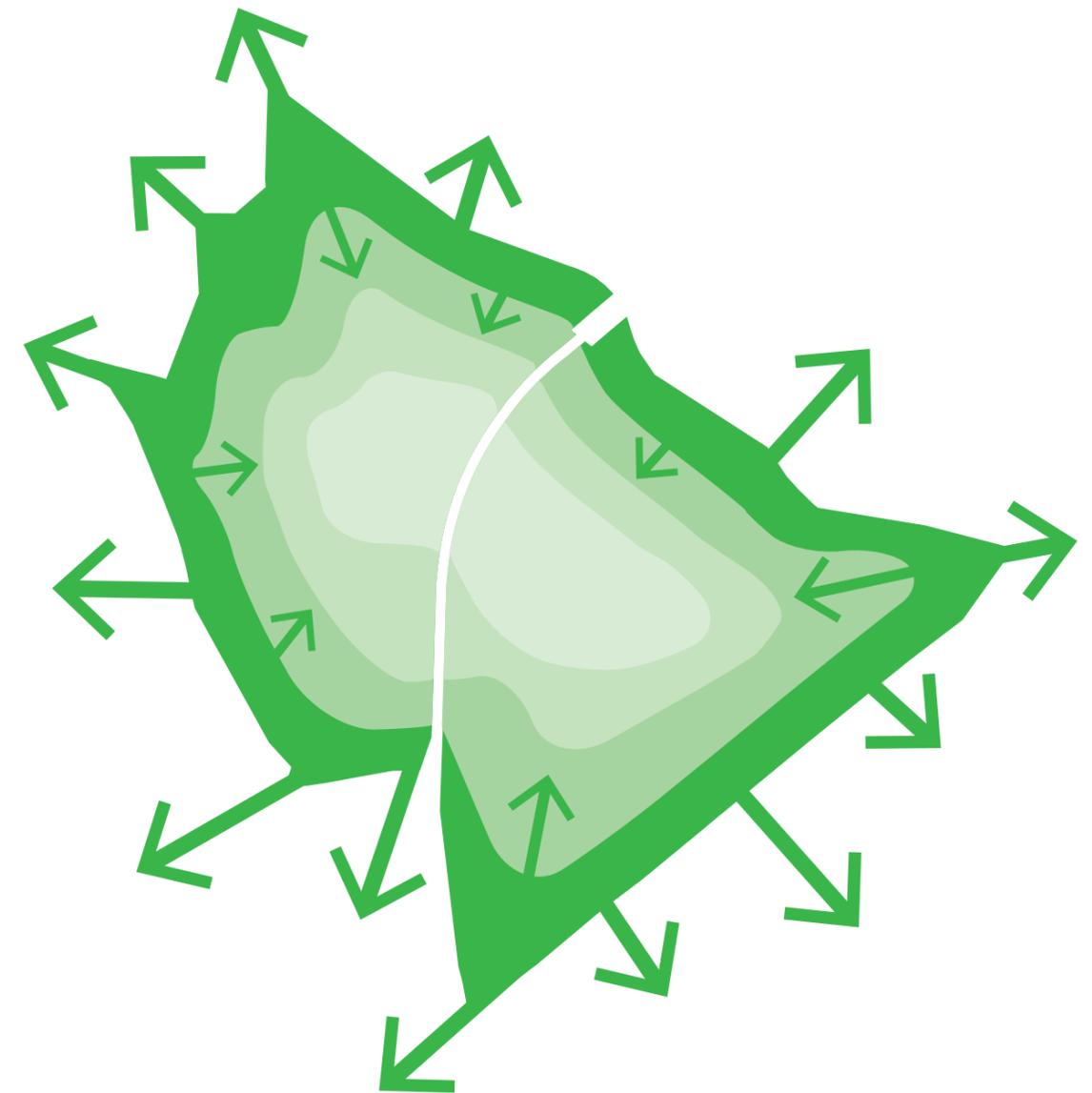
- ① Areas reserved for future construction, to contribute positively to the life of the park and revenue generation to support the park
- ② Service Area and Loading at the Valley Theater
- ③ Existing maintenance building retained for park maintenance
- ④ Existing Lineberger building rehabilitated as a park house, with offices for park staff
- ⑤ Existing Kirby building partially rehabilitated, partially demolished for use as a field house, with public bathrooms, changing spaces and offices for events staff
- P Primary parking areas for park visitors

Implementation

A master plan is an early step in a site's transformation into a beloved public park. This chapter, Implementation, projects into the short-term, mid-term, and long-term future and suggests both concrete next steps and guiding concepts to ensure that the opportunities described in the Master Plan are realized. The Master Plan organizes the park's next steps for physical transformation into four overarching phases, starting with the edges and moving in. This approach will create new entries, connections and activity at the park's edges first, and allow the momentum generated by early phases to identify and develop partners over the life of the park. Capital improvements will proceed as funding and park administration capacity develop so that the park grows in step with available resources. Major building improvements are proposed toward the end of the phasing, after site utility systems are upgraded, once the attraction of a park location has been established.

A robust, sustainable strategy for operations and maintenance work and funding at this early stage is imperative. The great parks of the world plan responsibly for their long-term operations and maintenance, while also being sure not to draw resources away from other municipal services and commitments.

The chapter concludes with a review of the projected roles and the evaluation process for park partners: the essential relationships with institutions, groups and businesses that will embed the life of Dix Park in the local community.



The Life Stages of A Park

Growing and Changing Over Time



INCEPTION

A city recognizes a need for new parkland and acquires a site. A group of passionate people with a strong vision and an understanding of the community usually lead the effort, often with little experience in park-making.



MASTER PLAN

A master plan is made, which provides the basis for the park's primary goals, general organization, and integration into its urban context. Community engagement helps refine the overall park vision in the early stages of planning and influences the development of the program and character of the park throughout the design process.



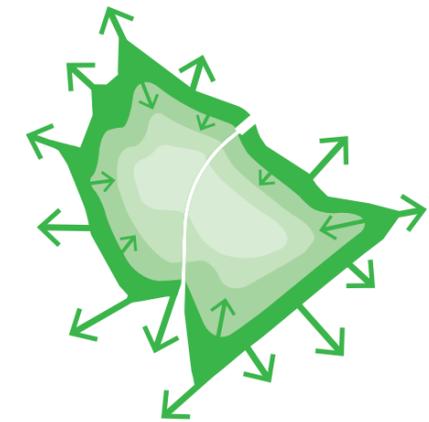
DESIGN

Ideas for organization, character, and program are tested, and the park design is refined in dialogue with the client and stakeholders. Strategies for phasing, costs and fund raising as well as gaining regulatory approvals and solving technical challenges are developed.



CONSTRUCTION

Contractors are selected, a schedule is set, and the park is built. The complexity of landscape construction demands continual decision making, adaptation of the design, and collaboration among contractor, client, and designer.



USE AND EVOLUTION

The park becomes an integral and loved space in the community, grows and weathers, and is sustained through ongoing care. Some specific program elements and uses evolve to be different from the initial design, but the overall vision, organization, and identity of the park persists and strengthens with time.

Phase A (115 Acres)

Welcoming Edges and Entries

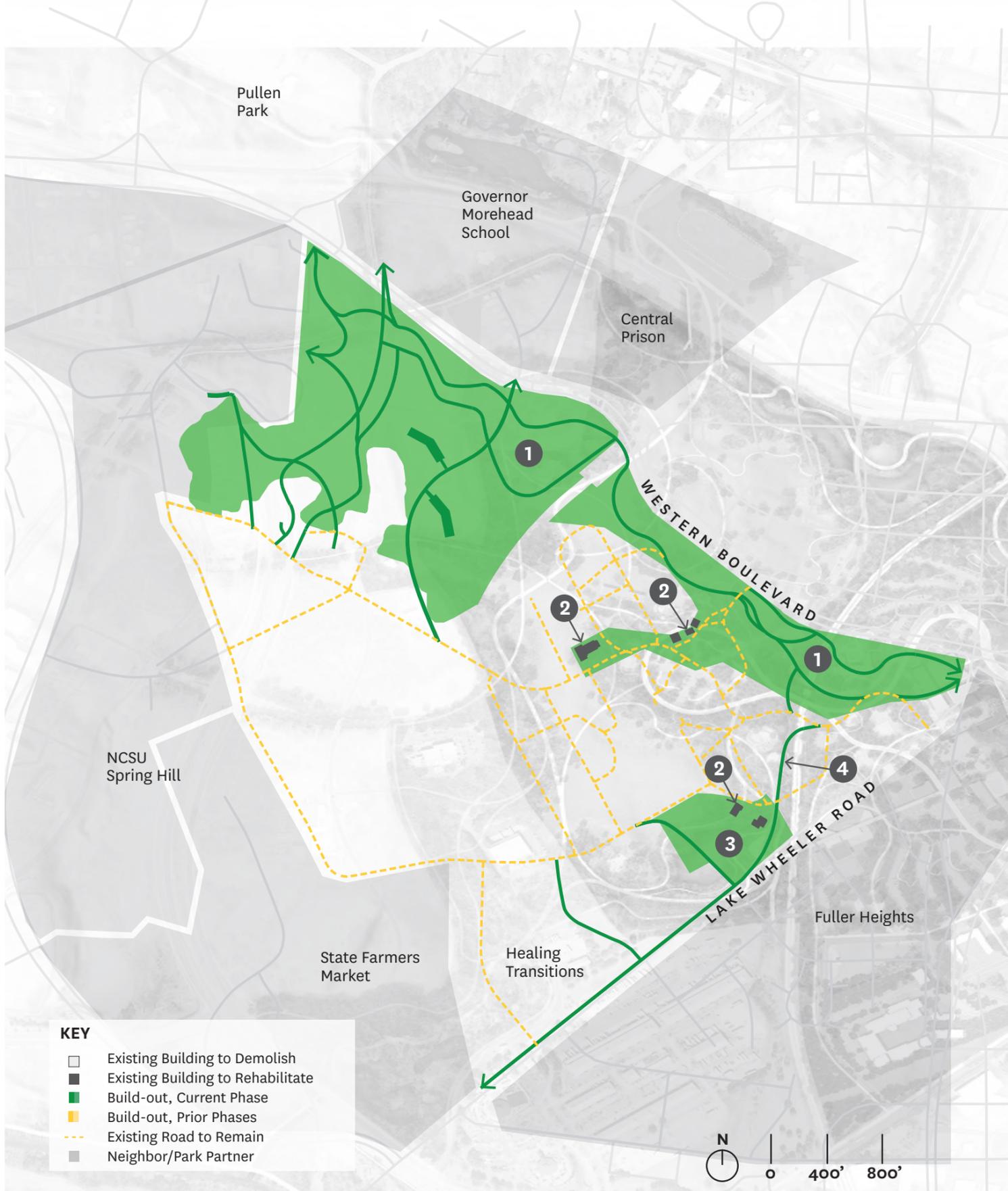


PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

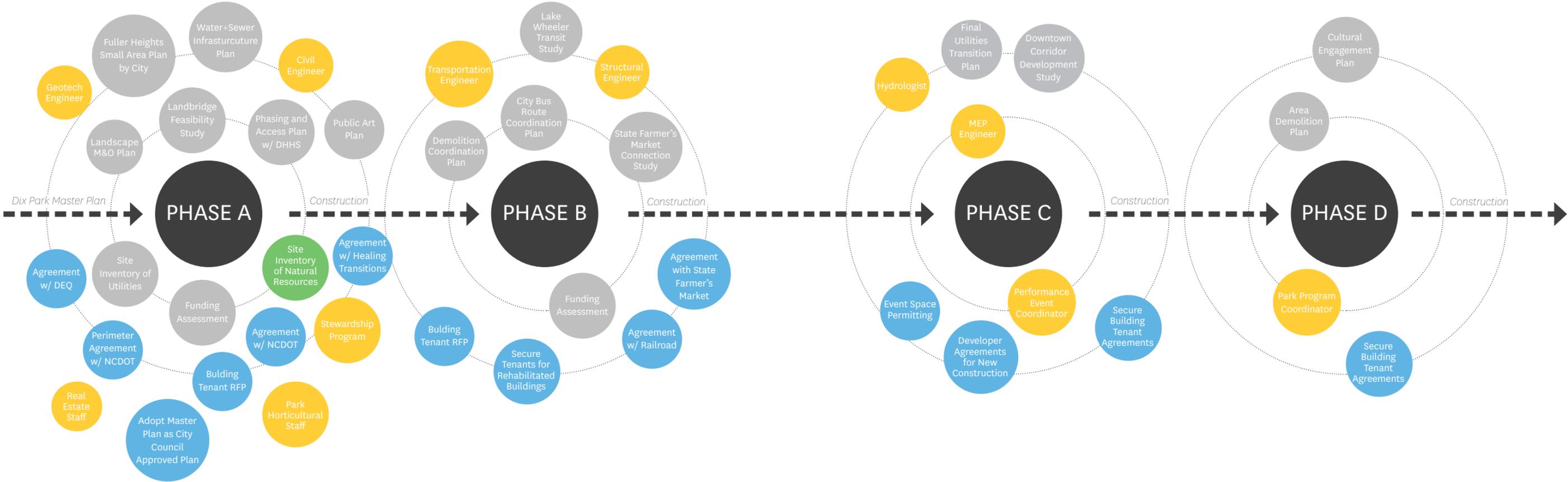
- 1 Restore The Creek
- 2 Rehabilitate early transfer buildings (Chapel, the 3 Stone Houses, Buffaloe, Benner) and the landscapes that surround them
- 3 Main entry with plaza and play areas at Lake Wheeler Road and Grissom Street
- 4 Multi-use path along Lake Wheeler

PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH

- A. Work with neighbors to plan for good access to the park across property lines
- B. Develop and adopt a small area plan for Fuller Heights, to ensure purposeful future change and growth within Fuller Heights as the park grows
- C. Remediate the landfill, with the state DEQ
- D. Coordinate upgrades to municipal infrastructure within Dix Park, with the city utilities group
- E. Redesign Lake Wheeler Road with new pedestrian, bike and transit opportunities
- F. Redesign park entries and transit access along Western Blvd., with NCDOT and Wake County
- G. Build “swing space” for future parking needs



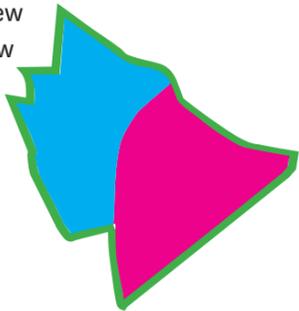
Planning, Design and Engagement Phases A through D



Operations and Maintenance

PROPOSED MAINTENANCE CREWS:

- ① Natural Resources Crew
- ② West Area Crew
- ③ East Area Crew



Maintaining Dix Park’s 308 acres of ecologically rich and native ecosystems will require significant effort and a clear vision, combined with ongoing learning and care. The park can be divided into distinct maintenance crews to streamline maintenance efforts, allocate experts and pinpoint the necessary equipment facilities.

For maintenance, Dix Park is best divided along the railroad tracks into eastern and western zones, each with its own maintenance crew. The western crew will focus on the passive and temporary-use spaces, while the east will focus on the concentration of civic spaces and the majority of actively programmed buildings.

The natural resources crew will oversee native planting and ecological strategies across the entire park, uniting the efforts of the other crews. They will have a particular concentration on the creek, which runs through both zones.

KEY		AREA / LENGTH/QTY.
LANDSCAPE PROGRAM	Woodland Canopy w/ Lawn	2,167,532
	Woodland	2,965,026
	Lawn	1,726,829
	Meadow	593,387
	Creek Channel	289,226
	Riparian Buffer/Feature	831,475
Treatment Landscape	368,577	
CIVIC PROGRAM	Sports Fields	257,400
	Sports Courts	120,959
	Plaza	167,169
	Garden	491,762
	Dog Park	70,922
	Play Area	194,893
	Event Venue	98,137
	Cook Out Zone	87,126
Water Feature	25,178	
BLDG/CIRCULATION	Building to Remain	348,269
	Parking	344,975
	Path	783,781
	Road	19,714
	Bridge	2,000
	Comfort Station	7
	Partner Managed Landscapes	1,462,298

205 ACRES
35 ACRES
68 ACRES
17.8 MILES



Early Opportunities to Transform the Site

PLANT DIVERSITY AND STEWARDSHIP

In select areas, stewardship programs and improvements to native plant diversity can start now. Areas A, B, and C at right represent 3 distinct landscape types that are especially well suited for early stewardship work: they are not planned to be extensively regraded or have their soils disturbed during future construction, and they include long-lead work such as the control of invasive species and establishment of native understory and prairies, which can take years to accomplish successfully.

The native meadow establishment (A) can serve as a testing ground to determine what species and planting techniques work best at the Meadow, prior to the larger landscape work beginning. The railroad corridor (B) is a good learning opportunity in identifying and removing invasive and undesirable species. Here, invasive species can be replaced with native plants that will not spread to other parts of the park. Finally, the remediation of the grove (C) invests in an area that is well used already as a recreation space. The effort can control invasive species and improve eroding slopes that are challenging to maintain today.

SITE TOURS AND INTERPRETATION

The stories of the land can be preserved and shared through tours, podcasts with stations, and events. One specific idea is highlighted at right: a walk between the Chapel and the Cemetery links 2 contemplative spaces tied intimately to the lives of hospital patients and staff.

The audio works of artist Jeannene Przyblyski for the Presidio in San Francisco, CA are a notable example of this model.

CREATIVE DOCUMENTATION

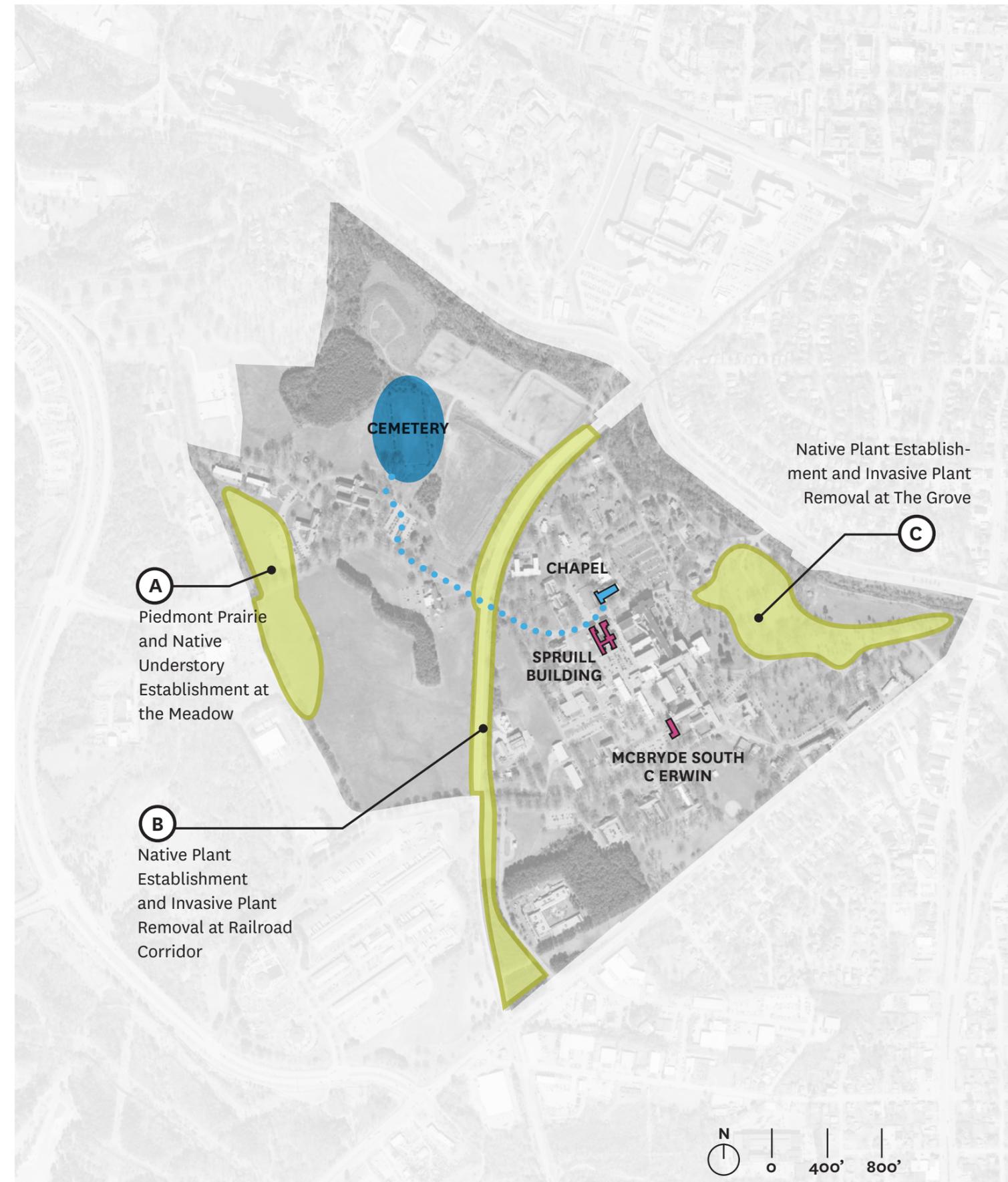
There are several buildings that are currently unoccupied by DHHS and are proposed to be demolished in the future as a part of this master plan. These buildings, such as Spruill and McBryde South C Erwin, have the potential to host temporary installations and exhibits that draw inspiration from their settings. These buildings also may support creative documentation work by students, researchers and artists. Agreements with the state for access will be required before proceeding.



ANNA SCHULEIT
MASSACHUSETTS MENTAL HEALTH CENTER



JENNY HOLZER LIGHT INSTALLATION, NAPLES



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