

Dorothea Dix Park

Master Plan Executive Committee

Date: **Wednesday, December 5, 2018**
Time: 8:30am-11:00am
Location: Flower Cottage at Dorothea Dix Park

Meeting Agenda

8:30am-8:45am: Breakfast, Welcome & Updates
8:45am-10:00am: The Master Plan Book & Schedule to Adoption
10:00am-10:30am: Next Phases of Work
10:30am-11:00am: Key Messaging
11:00am: Meeting Close

MPEC members not in attendance were Kay Crowder, and Ken Bowers. Ralph Recchie, City of Raleigh Real Estate Manager, stood in for Ken Bowers.

Kate Pearce began the meeting with announcements. Pearce gave a tour to Congressman Price's staff on Tuesday, December 4th and will give a tour to NC Agriculture Commissioner Troxler the following week. Pearce will also meet with the Public Utilities and Transportation Departments before Christmas. The Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources Holiday Party for committee members will be Thursday, December 13th at Five Points Center for Active Adults. The next MPEC Meeting will be Thursday, December 13th. The agenda for that meeting is to go over the committee's edits of the draft master plan booklet and to discuss the cost estimate. The draft master plan booklet for the public will go out before Christmas. January 7th is the next City Council Work Session and Council will review this draft master plan.

MPEC members each were handed a 200+ page draft master plan booklet. Pearce introduced the booklet. It is organized by four sections: Landscape, Framework, Programs, Implementation. Pearce noted a challenge recently has been that people are caught up on the details of the park design. The master plan is meant to be a high-level document that communicates a vision for the future of the park. Specific details will be worked out after master plan adoption in the Design Detailing process. The master plan is the beginning of a much more detailed process to design and construct the park through phases.

Pearce quoted Van Valkenburgh by using a house building analogy to explain the master plan. If you think about building a house, the Master Plan suggests the style of house you are interested in (modern vs. bungalow), it would figure out the number of bedrooms and bathrooms needed and realize some of the benefits of choosing a house in a certain neighborhood (close to a school, bus stop, etc.) But how the house is constructed (blueprints), how it's paid for (mortgage) and determining materials, paint colors, finishes, etc., would all

come in later phases of work. The same applies here. We have figured out the overall vision for the future of the park but there are so many details that still need to be worked out. That's what the next phases of work will include.

Pearce explained that the six landscapes are the catalysts for the land transformation from hospital grounds to world-class park. The Creek, The Meadow, and The Grove are places of respite and reflection. The Downtown Gateway, The Ridge, and The Valley are energized civic spaces. The variety of landscapes is key to creating a park for everyone. It creates a balance of experiences for a variety of constituents. Pearce referenced Gil Penalosa's concept of the 8-80 Cities. She said to think about an eight-year old in the future of Dix Park. One day at the park will offer that eight-year old a place to run wild in the open Meadow, learn about tadpoles at the restored Creek, swing in a hammock hung from the huge oaks in the Grove. That eight-year old will also meet friends (new and old) in amazing play spaces, learn about the history of our community through a program at the cultural center and create art in the maker-space. Now, think about an eighty-year old. Dix Park will offer quiet places of reflection in the landscape, a completely flat promenade where old friends meet and greet each other, a community gardening program where volunteers can take healthy food home. That eighty-year old will also attend lectures in the renovated Chapel, learn a new skill at the culinary institute and enjoy a meal with friends and family at the Ridge. It is this complete experience that will make Dix Park amazing. If done right, Dix Park will be the prescription in our community to address both individual and community well-being.

The framework describes how people move to and through the park. The plan increases the number of entrances to create permeability. The Promenade Loop is the primary, unifying element. Car access is limited in the park as well as parking. The plan offers 1,000 parking spots, half as many parking spots as there are on site today. It plans for shared parking with neighbors for large events. The park will be built out in phases, so the number of parking spots added or removed in each phase can be more responsive to the needs of the times. In early phases, if more temporary parking is needed to fit the needs of our car dependent culture, adjustments can be made. BRT stops, GoRaleigh, and the Wolfline are all parts of the transit plan as well to help reduce need for single vehicle parking.

When MPEC reviewed the transit document, a member asked about a loop around the perimeter of the park. They asked that that loop be highlighted as well.

Next, the committee reviewed the new connections pages. These pages of the master plan book will become the foundation for the follow up external transportation plan studies. Members noted that discussions around state roads such as Western Boulevard are bigger discussions since the city does not own them. Plans look to create a grid like connection between Centennial Campus and Dix Park to allow for multiple entrances along the park's western edge. Plans also highlight a potential realignment of Centennial Parkway to I40 so to reroute some of the traffic off the small, two lane Lake Wheeler Road. Lake Wheeler Road is however, proposed to be widened to create a complete street— meaning bike, pedestrian, bus,

and car transit pathways. This requires the road coming into the park boundary at some points as seen in page 79 of the draft master plan.

Along the northern park edge, the West Street extension project has the potential to become a primary connector between Dix Park and the planned Devereaux Meadows. This will be one of many connections to and through downtown. Inside the park, the city is exploring a rail trail along the Norfolk Southern Line. The City has asked MVVA to create a rendering that illustrates a rail trail to guide discussions with Norfolk Southern.

MPEC members noted that connections are key to the park's success. They noted that if people cannot get to the park or, in this current time of car dependent culture, find a place to park, people will not go. Members also noted that for any off-site parking, a shuttle transporting people to the park needs to be a part of the experience (ex. Using the unique Raleigh Trolley).

The committee briefly discussed the programming section. They noted the need to add wellness into the opening of the section. A member asked if the lease with Healing Transitions will be mentioned in the draft master plan since that is part of park property. Follow up discussion needs to occur.

The Implementation Section outlines the four phases of the park build out. Phasing is done by projects that make sense to go together and by what the city can do given that the State still has a seven-year lease on the majority of the buildings. The city is working with a third-party cost estimator to analyze Phase A costs. Pearce discussed Phase Now, which is not part of the master plan. It is a low-cost effort to improve the daily park experience between now and when Phase A actually begins. These include continued programmatic events to continue the public momentum around this master plan.

The Implementation Section addresses options and needs for financing. It includes an operations and maintenance section, which is typically not included in master plans, but is critical to park success. It also includes a funding section that identifies tools for funding. It does not state a timeline for the application of the tools because the plan needs to be able to adjust to the opportunities and needs of the times.

MPEC members noted that the funding for Phase A needs to be figured out from the City side before donors will make large contributions. They noted that donors need to see the City's financial commitment to the phasing of the park through means such as a bond. Donors want to feel that they are putting money to the actual creation of a tangible thing. Pearce asked if the city's purchase of the property for \$52M was not enough to show city support of the project. A committee member noted that many donors also do not believe that a city project is actually happening until the City puts forth a large amount of money. They doubt that the city will fund a major public park. A citizen asked if the new MOU between the City and the Conservancy can say the City will commit to funding a certain part of Phase A. Pearce explained that it will not be a part of the MOU because all future funding options need to be vetted through the City Council of that time. Pearce stated that in this Phase Now time, the

Conservancy should focus efforts on building political and public support. If the public strongly supports the park, bonds will pass more easily.

Meeting close.

As follow up, members were asked to provide comments on the master plan booklet in time for the next MPEC meeting on Thursday, December 13th.