



# Chavis Park COMMUNITY CONVERSATION Situation Assessment Report



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City of Raleigh, North Carolina

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## Executive Summary

The City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department has engaged Skeo Solutions to facilitate a Community Conversation around the past and future of Chavis Park that will result in a revised Chavis Park Master Plan. To initiate this process, Skeo Solutions conducted a Situation Assessment for the Chavis Park Community Conversation project. The Situation Assessment included site research, stakeholder interviews, an initial site visit on April 25-26, 2012, and a presentation of the project to the Central Citizens Advisory Council (Central CAC) on May 7, 2012. During the site visit, members of the Skeo Team participated in a tour of Chavis Park and surrounding neighborhoods with representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department.

## Purpose and Approach

The purpose of the Situation Assessment is to clarify issues and identify stakeholder and site considerations and to recommend ways to make a collaborative dialogue successful.

To this end, the Skeo Team worked with Parks and Recreation staff to identify categories of stakeholders, as well as specific organizations and individuals, for Situation Assessment interviews. The Skeo Team's goal was to cover as broad a range of stakeholder groups as possible through the interviews, recognizing that Chavis Park has historically served both its immediate and regional neighbors. Individuals and organizations identified during the Skeo Team's initial discussions with Parks and Recreation staff were invited to participate in the interview process, either during the project site visit or during a pre- or post-site visit phone interview.

In addition to the stakeholder interviews, which comprised the main body of work during the Situation Assessment, the Skeo Team also reviewed background materials and attended the Central Citizen Advisory Council's May 7, 2012 meeting. Background materials on Chavis Park were provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. At the Central CAC's invitation, the Skeo Team presented the Community Conversation project and responded to questions about how stakeholder input would influence project outcomes.

## Issues Statement and Recommendations

The Skeo Team identified a set of priority issues that will need to be addressed during the Chavis Park Community Conversation and developed a recommendation for addressing each issue:

### **Issue I: Ensure inclusion of existing residents, newer residents and other key institutions in the Chavis Park redesign process.**

*Recommendation: The formation of the Public Leadership Group should provide a venue to represent these stakeholder groups and fully capture their voices and perspectives in the Community Conversation process.*

### **Issue II: Address the upgrading of Chavis Park facilities.**

*Recommendation: The revised Master Plan for Chavis Park should suggest priorities and a phased approach for the revitalization of the park (including the upgrading of major park facilities) over a desired and reasonably achievable amount of time.*

**Issue III: Recognize and honor the historic and cultural role and amenities of Chavis Park.**

*Recommendation: The Community Conversation should identify which elements of Chavis Park – both those that are currently and were formerly in place and – are important to recognize, restore or replace. The Community Conversation could also make recommendations about moving forward with efforts for historic designation.*

**Issue IV: Develop a strategic approach to obtaining political, civic and budgetary support for a revised Master Plan for the park.**

*Recommendation: The Public Leadership Group should be composed of people who can bring vision, mission and purpose to the effort to create broad civic and political support, and people who can lead a sustained effort to secure the requisite financial support over time to implement the revised Master Plan in its entirety.*

**Issue V. Make clear to the public how the results of the Chavis Park Community Conversation will result in substantive outcomes for the park’s renewal.**

*Recommendation: The Skeo Team will propose a Communications and Outreach Plan that will address multiple outreach methods and will pay particular attention to the high number of older residents in neighborhoods around the park who do not have computer access.*

**Public Leadership Group and Design Resource Team Formation**

Based on the key issues identified in the Situation Assessment, the Skeo Team recommends forming a Public Leadership Group (PLG) and a Design Resource Team (DRT).

- Members of the PLG will build community ownership, assist with structuring and guiding the Community Conversation process, and provide recommendations that contribute to a revised master plan for Chavis Park.
- In compliance with the Public Participation Manual for Park Planning, the DRT would serve as an internal, technical City of Raleigh staff team for the project and should be representative of the full spectrum of possible Departmental responsibilities at Chavis Park.
- The Skeo Team also recommends forming a group of Subject Matter Experts who can serve as external, technical resources to both the PLG and the DRT.

Additional recommendations regarding the role and composition of each group are described in the body of the report.

**Next Steps**

Next steps for the Chavis Park Community Conversation may include:

- **Finalization of the Situation Assessment Report:** Review and comment on the draft Situation Assessment Report by stakeholders, followed by incorporation of stakeholder input and finalization of the document.

- **Communications Plan:** The Skeo Team will draft a communications plan that addresses stakeholder recommendations regarding regular communication over the course of the Community Conversation as well as describing the various modes of communication that will be used to reach a broad range of stakeholders.
- **Launch a Chavis Community Conversation Website:** Skeo Solutions will host a website dedicated solely to sharing information about the Chavis Community Conversation project.
- **Public Leadership Group Formation:** The Skeo Team and the Parks and Recreation Department, in concert, will make recommendations regarding candidates for the PLG based on the Situation Assessment Report's recommendation.
- **Design Resource Team Formation:** The Parks and Recreation Department will assemble a group of inter- and intra-departmental professional staff who will serve on the DRT representing the City's interests.
- **Subject Matter Experts:** The Skeo Team and the Parks and Recreation Department, in concert, will make recommendations regarding potential external, technical experts who will serve as resources for the project.
- **Public Forum:** The Parks and Recreation Department will host a public forum to launch the Chavis Park Community Conversation.

## I. Introduction

The City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department has engaged Skeo Solutions to facilitate a Community Conversation around the past and future of Chavis Park that will result in a revised Chavis Park Master Plan. To initiate this process, Skeo Solutions conducted a Situation Assessment for the Chavis Park Community Conversation project. The Situation Assessment included site research, stakeholder interviews, an initial site visit on April 25-26, 2012, and a presentation of the project to the Central Citizens Advisory Coalition (Central CAC) on May 7, 2012. During the site visit, members of the Skeo Team participated in a tour of the Chavis Park and surrounding neighborhoods with representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department.

### Overview

The purpose of the Situation Assessment is to clarify issues and identify stakeholder and site considerations and to recommend ways to make a collaborative dialogue successful. The report follows the following structure:

- **Chapter I** summarizes the purpose and methodology of the Situation Assessment.
- **Chapter II** provides a summary of key concerns, motivations, interests and considerations identified during stakeholder interviews, including information needs requested by the stakeholders. It also includes factual and legal considerations related to the site.
- **Chapter III** provides a Priority Issues Statement and a series of recommendations to address priority issues.
- **Chapter IV** discusses formation of the project's Public Leadership Group and the Design Resource Team. It includes recommended principles and guidelines for forming the two entities. It also includes a chart describing the recommended consensus process and schedule and training recommendations for the Public Leadership Group.
- **Chapter V** discusses potential next steps for the Chavis Park Community Conversation project.
- **Appendix I** lists the interviewees who contributed to the Situation Assessment.
- **Appendix II** identifies the interview questions used during Situation Assessment interviews.
- **Appendix III** lists the park amenities suggested during the interview process.
- **Appendix IV** lists background materials provided by the City of Raleigh for the Skeo Team's review.

## Methodology

The Skeo Team used the following methodology for conducting the Situation Assessment:

- **Identification of Stakeholders:** The Skeo Team worked with Parks and Recreation staff to identify general categories of stakeholders as well as specific organizations and individuals for interviews. The Skeo Team's goal was to cover as broad a range of stakeholder groups as possible through the interviews, recognizing that Chavis Park has historically served both its immediate and regional neighbors. Stakeholders from the following categories were invited to take part in the initial interview process:
  - City of Raleigh (Parks and Recreation staff, Staff from additional city departments and current and former City elected and appointed representatives)
  - Immediate Neighbors and Active Park Users (residents, active park users, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, citizen advisory councils, adjacent institutions)
  - Downtown Stakeholders
  - Stakeholders with Planning Involvement (NC State University professors, parks planning representatives)
  - Faith Community
  - Non-Profits, Service Providers and Community Development Corporations (CDCs)
  - Youth and Young Adult Organizations (community-based organizations, K-12 schools, community colleges)
  - Seniors Organizations
  - Environmental Organizations (non-profits, adopt-a-stream programs, state and City natural resource staff)

For a list of interviewees, see Appendix I. For a chart of the stakeholder categories that includes the interviewees as well as additional individuals and organizations identified during the Situation Assessment, see Appendix III.

- **Interview Process:** Individuals and organizations identified during the Skeo Team's initial discussions with Parks and Recreation staff were invited to participate in the interview process, either during the project site visit or during a pre- or post-site visit phone interview. Interviews were conducted as informal conversations using a working list of questions to spark discussion and elicit input. For a list of these questions, see Appendix II. In instances where relationships needed to be strengthened or an interviewee could not make a group interview time slot, one-on-one interviews were conducted.

Interviews conducted during the site visit were generally conducted in groups that ranged in size from two to eight people and took approximately 90 minutes. Interviews conducted by phone were generally with one stakeholder at a time and took approximately 30 minutes in most cases. Approximately eight individuals were

interviewed one-on-one; the rest were interviewed in groups. For a full list of interviewees, see Appendix I.

- **Review of Background Information:** The Parks and Recreation Department provided the Skeo Team with background materials for review. A full list of these materials is provided in Appendix IV.
- **Central Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Attendance:** In addition to the activities described above, the Skeo Team also attended Central CAC's May 7, 2012 meeting. The Central CAC has been a vocal stakeholder in past planning efforts for Chavis Park and contacted the city to express concern regarding the efficacy of the Chavis Park Community Conversation for the Central CAC's constituency. In response, the Skeo Team offered to attend the May 7 meeting to present the project and answer questions about how stakeholder input would influence project outcomes.

## II. Stakeholder Interviews Summary

Stakeholder interviews covered a range of topics, from the history of the park and surrounding neighborhoods to land use to recommendations for creating a successful process for the Chavis Park Community Conversation. Key issues of concern as well as motivations, interests and considerations are summarized below.

### Park History

- **Regional Resource:** Historically, the park was a regional resource for the African American community. Before desegregation, it was the only park between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia, with a swimming pool of its size open to African Americans.
- **Unique Cultural Resource:** Many stakeholders who are long-time neighborhood residents mentioned that the park was “home” and told personal stories of growing up in the park, community life and celebrating key milestones at the park. Examples include:
  - The community center at Chavis Park had the first color TV in the neighborhood. So many people would come to watch it that they had to watch TV shows in shifts.
  - Wedding receptions and anniversary celebrations were held at the community center.
  - Historically Black Colleges and Universities like Shaw University and St. Augustine’s College held sporting events and practices at the park because they did not have their own facilities.
  - Students from North Carolina communities far outside Raleigh looked forward to school-sponsored field trips to the park as a milestone in their middle school experience.
  - Many famous basketball players played at the community center through a semi-pro league known as the Chavis League of Raleigh City. Stakeholders reported coming to the Chavis Park Community Center to watch many players, including such future NBA notables as Pistol Pete Maravich, Bob McAdoo, Michael Jordan, Jerry Stackhouse, Bobbie Jones, Chris Washburn, Grant Hill and Carlos Boozer.
- **Loss of Amenities:** The loss of amenities such as the World War II Plane (which many associate with the Negro service members stationed in Chavis Park during the war as well as the Tuskegee Airmen), kiddie train, large swimming pool and original carousel location has been distressing for some long-time residents, particularly when viewed in light of

*Chavis Park's revitalization should be seen as a benefit to the City as a whole, as well as a benefit to South Park and Southeast Raleigh.*

*- Situation Assessment interviewee*

*The plane in Chavis Park was an expression of the community's identity.*

*- Situation Assessment interviewee*

investments in Pullen Park following desegregation as well as recent investments and upgrades.

## Land Use

- **Neuse River Buffer:** Although the buffer easement does not restrict access to the creek that runs through the park, there are limitations on development and vegetation management. In a practical sense, the buffer area's existing vegetation restricts visual sightlines and physical access to the creek for most park users. Some stakeholders also have concerns about pests such as rats nesting in the overgrowth.

Management of the buffer area recently transferred from the state to the city. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources has confirmed that some lower vegetation and tree limbs can be removed from the buffer area.

- **Traffic:** There are concerns that Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is too wide and busy. There are also concerns that the speed of traffic is too high and that crossing Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard by foot to get to the new park entrance is not safe.
- **Transportation:** Public transportation with convenient access to the park as well as a bus shelter near the Chavis Park Community Center entrance would be beneficial.
- **Topography:** The topography of the park makes communication and sightlines between different areas of the park challenging, particularly for summer camp programming. Staff uses walkie-talkies to communicate across the park. Additionally, some areas of the park feel isolated now that the center of activity has moved to the higher elevations around the track, community center and new carousel building.
- **Suggested Amenities and Programming:** Stakeholders had numerous suggestions for amenities and programming. For a complete list, see Appendix IV.
- **Connections to Surrounding Land Uses:** The connection between the greenway and the park should be strengthened; the greenway leads to a wetlands conservation area and educational center about two miles south of Chavis Park.

*We need to bring back swimming lessons and ensure that the city's lifeguard training includes black people. Kids swimming at the pool want to see lifeguards who look like them.*

*- Situation Assessment interviewee*

Connections between the park and adjacent land uses are weak. Specifically, Chavis Heights was not redeveloped with a clear connection to the park.

- **Relationship to Other Parks:** Overall, this area of Raleigh has a higher level of park access than newer areas of the city. Specifically, the John P. "Top" Green Neighborhood Center is located adjacent to Chavis Park. What role should the two parks play? How can they complement each other?

The relationship of Chavis Park to Pullen Park was mentioned numerous times. Some stakeholders have a strong perception that Pullen Park has received more funding for amenities and maintenance because historically it was the white regional park before desegregation.

## Community Renewal Needs and Initiatives

- **Community Renewal:** Many stakeholders who are long-term residents of neighborhoods adjacent to Chavis Park expressed gratitude for community renewal projects such as the Chavis Heights project that are bringing new resources and improved housing stock to the community.
- **Pride in Community Diversity:** Many stakeholders expressed pride that the historically African American neighborhoods around Chavis Park continue to be places of diversity within the city. Stakeholders noted the unique position of these neighborhoods as places where African Americans, whites and Hispanics live in close proximity.
- **Gentrification:** Some stakeholders also expressed concern that revitalization efforts downtown and in the neighborhoods surrounding Chavis Park could lead to the loss of long-term residents. Many people emphasized the value of retaining long-term neighborhood residents as a way of maintaining the historic character of the community, even as new families arrive.
- **Greater Community Concerns:** There is a Community-City partnership initiative to redevelop the former Trailways Bus Depot lot as a research-office-workforce development project with an urban agriculture theme. Many Raleigh residents and city staff members do not know much about the status of this initiative. Some stakeholders who are residents of neighborhoods near Chavis Park mentioned concerns that the project could lead to gentrification and that resident requests for a full-service grocery store were being ignored by the City. In addition, a number of stakeholders who are residents of neighborhoods near Chavis Park mentioned the need for additional grocery stores or local markets that offer culturally relevant food for the neighborhood. Seniors have to travel too far to get to a full-service grocery store, thereby qualifying some parts of the neighborhood as a food desert.

*To be successful you will need to include a younger generation of residents.*

*- Situation Assessment interviewee*

## Challenges and Opportunities

- **Building Consensus:** Many challenges to building consensus were noted during the interviews. Some stakeholders perceive the neighborhoods around the park as transient. Some noted that the changing demographics of the neighborhood may have implications for changing programming needs. Other stakeholders noted that there are many differences of opinion over what the park should become and how it can best serve the whole community going forward.

*There has been a history of conflict and broken promises going back decades ... How can they trust that their concerns will be listened to?*

*- Situation Assessment interviewee*

Still others pointed out that there is no single definition of the community served by Chavis Park. In almost every conversation the Skeo Team had with stakeholders, an issue was raised regarding how neighborhood boundaries are defined in the downtown, South Park and South East Raleigh areas. While recognizing the regional

significance of Chavis Park, many stakeholders had strong (and varied) feelings regarding what neighborhoods and Citizen Advisory Councils should be considered legitimate stakeholders in the process.

- **Planning Fatigue:** Many stakeholders who are residents of neighborhoods near Chavis Park feel they have been asked to contribute time and ideas for city and park planning efforts numerous times over the years and that those processes did not result in significant improvements at Chavis Park. These stakeholders mentioned the need for commitment to funding and implementing the plan that will result from this process.
- **Safety and Perceptions of Safety:** Several safety concerns were mentioned, including:
  - *Illegal Activity:* Stakeholders described use of the park trail and wooded areas for illegal transactions, including drugs and prostitution, as well as visible drug activity in the shelters during the day.
  - *Gang Presence:* Some stakeholders mentioned that concern about reprisals from gang members is a barrier to reporting illegal activity in the park.
  - *Lighting:* Additional lighting has been installed across the park and several stakeholders mentioned that this has drastically improved safety. Other stakeholders indicated that installing even more lighting could be beneficial for further improving safety.
  - *Tunnel:* Safety issues were raised for the area around the tunnel that goes under Martin Luther King Boulevard. Some interviewees mentioned that a murder that occurred there several years ago has discouraged park users from using the tunnel as a way to cross under the street.
  - *Track:* Community Center staff mentioned safety concerns for seniors who would like to use the track in the early morning hours.
- **Relationship with Shaw University:** Some stakeholders mentioned concern that Shaw football players, who practice in the field surrounded by the track, cause damage to the field and discourage seniors from using the track because of their language and seniors' fears about being hit by stray balls. Other stakeholders mentioned that Shaw University benefits the neighborhoods near Chavis Park in many ways that the community may not be aware of and suggested that a stronger relationship between the university and the park could be beneficial.
- **Community Ownership and Local Jobs:** Many stakeholders mentioned the opportunity to use landscaping and construction jobs or volunteer opportunities at the site to build a local sense of ownership and also to provide job training for young adults from neighborhoods near the park.
- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Stakeholders felt that the park occupies a key niche as a historic African-American park in Raleigh and in the region. Identifying corporate sponsors for park restoration could supplement funding provided by the city and could meet corporate community involvement goals.

- **Investing In and Marketing African American Culture:** Many stakeholders mentioned the opportunity to invest in the unique cultural history of the park by adding signage, cultural markers and interactive historical exhibits. The opportunity to market the park as a destination park for Raleigh residents and tourists was mentioned numerous times. Additionally, the park could be marketed as part of a larger campaign to recognize the contributions of African Americans to the development of Raleigh.

*We need to create history and education classes about Chavis Park and the history of the South Park and Southeast Raleigh community.*

*- Situation Assessment interviewee*

### Creating a Successful Process

- **Transparency:** The process should be transparent, with regular milestones and meetings.
- **Community Outreach:** There must be venues in addition to the project website where people can get information about the project. There are many seniors who will not be able to access the website.

*Outreach needs to consider stakeholders outside of the immediate neighbors.*

*- Situation Assessment interviewee*

Updates and meeting announcements could be made through the following venues: water bills, local schools, Meals on Wheels, stations set up along the greenway, neighborhood meeting places such as corner stores, barbershops and churches, the Boys and Girls Club, Neighbor to Neighbor, the YMCA and 4-H.

### **III. Priority Issues and Recommendations**

The Skeo Team identified the following priority issues that will need to be addressed during the Chavis Park Community Conversation:

- I. Ensure inclusion of existing residents, newer residents and other key institutions in the Chavis Park redesign process.
- II. Address the upgrading of Chavis Park facilities.
- III. Recognize and honor the historic and cultural role and amenities of Chavis Park.
- IV. Develop a strategic approach to obtaining political, civic and budgetary support for a revised Master Plan for the park.
- V. Make clear to the public how the results of the Chavis Community Conversation project will result in substantive outcomes for the park's renewal.

The above priority issues represent critical stand-alone concerns that must be addressed to move successfully through the Chavis Park Community Conversation process. This process needs to culminate with a group of leaders who, along with Parks and Recreation staff, are committed to playing a stewardship role over time to support the implementation of the revised Chavis Park Master Plan. The process also needs to provide the civic leadership necessary to secure the political and financial support needed to fully implement the plan.

What some stakeholders are most concerned about, and doubtful of, is whether the Chavis Park Community Conversation process will result in a revised plan that will actually be adopted, funded and set forth as a priority for the City of Raleigh.

Additional considerations and recommendations for each key issue area are summarized below.

#### **Issue I: Ensure inclusion of existing residents, newer residents and other key institutions in the Chavis Park redesign process.**

- Thus far, the conversation about the revitalization of Chavis Park has primarily engaged many of the long-term nearby South Park neighbors.
- As the South Park neighborhood is experiencing demographic shifts and downtown neighborhoods are experiencing new population growth, residents are moving into the South Park neighborhood who view Chavis Park as their neighborhood park too.
- There are also a number of educational institutions that currently use or have historically used Chavis Park such as Shaw University and St. Augustine's College. Additionally, Ligon Middle School is located with proximity to the park and is a potential park user. These educational institutions need to be involved in the Chavis Park Community Conversation and encouraged to play more of a stewardship role at Chavis Park.
- Expanding the stakeholder groups involved in the Community Conversation may challenge some stakeholders' perceptions of who should be involved with the process, but could lead to effective new partnerships that could contribute to long-term revitalization efforts including planning, funding, implementation and stewardship.

*Recommendation: The formation of the Public Leadership Group should provide a venue to represent these stakeholder groups and fully capture their voices and perspectives in the Community Conversation process.*

**Issue II: Address the upgrading of Chavis Park facilities.**

- There is a strong consensus among stakeholders that facilities at Chavis Park need serious upgrades and the requisite budgetary appropriations to fund and maintain them.
- The upgrades sought include improvements to physical structures such as the swimming pool and bath house, restrooms, drinking water fountains, playgrounds and play structures, gymnasium, tennis courts, picnic shelters and the original Carousel building, as well as landscaping and reforesting upgrades.
- Other upgrades mentioned include the Chavis Park Community Center (its physical building and Wi-Fi and technology upgrades), as well as increasing the programming offerings of the community center to include recreational sports (including swimming lessons), academic activities, theater, and arts and crafts offerings.

*Recommendation: The new Master Plan for Chavis Park should suggest priorities and a phased approach for the revitalization of the park (including the upgrading of major park facilities) over a desired and reasonably achievable amount of time.*

**Issue III: Recognize and honor the historic and cultural role and amenities of Chavis Park.**

- A key objective for South Park neighborhood residents is the establishment of an East Raleigh - South Park National Historic District. Central to this goal is the recognition of Chavis Park itself as a designated historic site.
- There is a need to recognize key landmark structures, including the WWII plane commemorating the Tuskegee Airmen, the original Carousel building, the original entrance to the park, the War Mothers Memorial bench, the kiddie train ride and the large swimming pool as part of honoring the historic character of Chavis Park.
- Consideration should be given to whether Chavis Park could receive a historic designation within a designated East Raleigh – South Park National Historic District. Designation could be supported by the combined efforts of individuals who advocate for an African American cultural center, North Carolina State University (South Park/East Raleigh Preservation and History and Education program), and the Raleigh Historic Development Commission.

*Recommendation: The Community Conversation should identify which elements of Chavis Park – both those that are currently or were formerly in place– are important to recognize, restore or replace. The Community Conversation could also make recommendations about moving forward with efforts for historic designation.*

**Issue IV. Develop a strategic approach to obtaining political, civic and budgetary support for a revised master plan for the park.**

- There is consensus among the many stakeholders interviewed that current federal, state and municipal budget limitations preclude the full revitalization and restoration of Chavis Park and its facilities and grounds in the short term.
- However, there is also consensus that the full revitalization of Chavis Park as a vibrant City of Raleigh park should be what is captured in a revised Master Plan. A plan that can be achieved in stages and phased in over a particular time horizon (15 to 20 years was mentioned several times).

*Recommendation: The Public Leadership Group should be composed of people who can bring vision, mission and purpose to the effort to create broad civic and political support, and people who can lead a sustained effort to secure the requisite financial support over time to implement the revised Master Plan in its entirety.*

**Issue V. Make clear to the public how the results of the Chavis Park Community Conversation will result in substantive outcomes for the park's renewal.**

- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of a transparent, accessible and responsive process in order to establish trust and good faith.
- Stakeholders also requested that the process employ broad-based efforts to communicate regularly with all stakeholders including electronic, postal mail, public access television, city mailings such as water bills, flyers and, when necessary, door-to-door engagement. Some stakeholders volunteered to help coordinate church groups to go door-to-door in neighborhoods directly adjacent to the park.

*Recommendation: The Skeo Team will propose a Communications and Outreach Plan that will address multiple outreach methods and will pay particular attention to the high number of older residents in neighborhoods around the park who do not have computer access.*

## VI. Public Leadership Group and Design Resource Team Formation

Based on the key issues identified in the Situation Assessment, the Skeo Team recommends forming a Public Leadership Group (PLG) and a Design Resource Team (DRT). Members of the PLG will build community ownership, assist with structuring and guiding the Community Conversation process, and provide recommendations that contribute to a revised master plan for Chavis Park. In compliance with the Public Participation Manual for Park Planning, the DRT would serve as an informal City of Raleigh staff resource team for the project and should be representative of the full spectrum of possible Departmental responsibilities at Chavis Park. The Skeo Team also recommends forming a group of Subject Matter Experts who can serve as external, technical resources to both the PLG and the DRT. Additional recommendations for each group are described below.

### Public Leadership Group Formation Recommendations

The Skeo Team offers the following recommendations for forming a PLG:

- **Role:** The PLG will build community ownership, assist with structuring and guiding the Community Conversation process, and provide recommendations that contribute to a revised Master Plan for Chavis Park.
- **Size:** The group should have no more than 21 members and no fewer than 11 members. Ideally, the group should be composed of around 15 representatives.
- **Stakeholder Group Representation:** The following stakeholder groups should be represented on the PLG. Where possible, individuals who can represent two or more categories should be chosen. PLG members are citizen volunteers.
  - *Neighbors* (including Citizens Advisory Councils and neighborhood associations)
  - *Park users*
  - *Downtown residents and users*
  - *Faith community*
  - *Services providers, non-profits and Community Development Corporations*
  - *Youth* (including both youth in the public school system and youth not represented by traditional school programming)
  - *Seniors*
  - *Local environmental groups*
  - *Local Historically Black Colleges and Universities*
  - *Businesses or national sports community* (could include a major Raleigh employer or a player of national significance who played at Chavis Park)
- **Additional Diversity Criteria:** In addition to stakeholder group representation, the PLG should meet the following diversity criteria as a group:
  - *Race/ethnicity:* Attention should be given to inviting a cross-section of stakeholders from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, including black, white and Latino representatives.
  - *Age:* The group should represent a diverse age spectrum, including seniors, parents with young children, and young adults/teens.
  - *Park Users:* Membership should include regular park users, and usership should span a cross-section of park uses, including the track, trail, pool, tennis courts, playground, ball fields and/or other park amenities.
  - *Residency:* Approximately one-third of the group's members should be long-term residents of nearby neighborhoods. Preference should be given to

neighborhood residents, including more recent residents of nearby neighborhoods, who fall into one of the above stakeholder groups.

The Skeo Team offers the following additional selection criteria for PLG candidates:

- **Balanced Representation and Consensus Building:** Members of the PLG should represent one or more of the groups described above and also commit to working toward consensus on a revised Master Plan for Chavis Park through a consensus building decision-making process.
- **Commitment to Prepare for and Attend PLG Meetings and Events:** Members of the PLG should be committed to fully preparing for and participating in all PLG meetings and major public forums. Preparation may include reading background materials, reviewing draft project materials and other tasks. A sample meeting and event schedule over approximately nine to 12 months could include:

Event	Description	Time Commitment
Public Forum 1	Introduction of the project and PLG candidates to the public	2-3 hours
Public Leadership Group Training	Training to provide skills and language for the conversation, which may include Alternative Dispute Resolution Training, Cultural Competency training and PLG Operating Principles	Full-day workshop
PLG Meetings 1 & 2	Shared learning regarding the past and future of the park, including park conditions and features	2-3 hours each
PLG Meetings 3 & 4	Development of goals and principles for the future of the park and review of potential scenarios for park development	2-3 hours each
Public Forum & Community Design Charrette	Gather public input on goals, principles and preliminary scenarios developed by the PLG	4-5 hours
PLG Meetings 5 & 6	Selection of a preferred park concept plan and draft recommendations for park renovation	2-3 hours each
Public Open House	Gather public input on the draft concept plan and renovation recommendations	2 hours
PLG Meetings 7 & 8	Finalization of the concept plan and draft and final Master Plan review	2-3 hours each
Parks Board and City Council Presentations	Members of the PLG present the Master Plan for review and adoption	2-3 hours each
Community Vision Celebration	Celebration of the adopted Master Plan	3 hours

- **Generating Civic, Political and Financial Support:** Members should be willing to represent the PLG in various meetings as well as serve as ambassadors for the Chavis Park Community Conversation in the community at large. Anticipated outreach activities include:
  - Hosting a series of public fora designed to obtain input and feedback throughout the Community Conversation.
  - Presenting the final Master Plan to City Council for adoption.
  - Engaging in efforts to secure financial support for the plan over time.

### Design Resource Team Formation Recommendations

The Skeo Team offers the following recommendations for forming a DRT:

- **Role:** DRT members would serve as internal, technical resources to the project, and contribute to the project as part of their *professional capacity*, representing the interests and responsibilities of the City. DRT members have established relationships with Subject Matter Experts, who are technical experts in outside agencies and non-profits, that will prove useful in framing and resolving issues as they may arise (e.g. the Parks and Recreation Site Manager for Mordecai Historic Park supervises various sites and programs, as well as possessing background knowledge of other local and State programs and staff).
- **Composition:** In compliance with the Public Participation Manual for Park Planning, the DRT should be an internal City of Raleigh staff team. DRT membership should be representative of the full spectrum of possible Departmental responsibilities.
- **Availability and Time Commitment:** DRT members may be convened as a group or called on individually to answer questions from or give advice to the Skeo Team or city staff as needed. DRT members would also be invited, but would not be obligated, to attend Public Fora and PLG events in their resource capacity.
- **Opportunities for Review:** DRT members would be asked to provide review and input for relevant parts of the draft park analyses and design scenarios, depending on their particular expertise.

### Recommendations for Utilization of Subject Matter Experts

The Skeo Team offers the following recommendations for working with Subject Matter Experts:

- **Role:** Subject Matter Experts would serve as informal technical resources, from outside agencies and non-profits, to the project and contribute to the project as part of their professional capacity (e.g., NC State University, the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources' Ecosystem Enhancement Program).
- **Availability and Time Commitment:** Subject Matter Experts would not be convened as a group, but members should be available for follow-up questions from the Skeo Team or city staff as needed. Subject Matter Experts could also be invited, but would not be obligated, to attend PLG events in their resource capacity.

- **Opportunities for Review:** In addition to serving as a general resource, Subject Matter Experts could be asked to provide review and input for relevant parts of the draft park analyses and design scenarios, depending on their particular expertise. This review process could provide an additional level of professional review and input for final project recommendations and outcomes.
- **Acknowledgements:** Subject Matter Experts should be acknowledged, along with the PLG and DRT, in the final project document.

## V. Next Steps

Next steps for the Chavis Park Community Conversation may include:

- **Finalization of the Situation Assessment Report:** Review and comment on the draft Situation Assessment Report by stakeholders, followed by incorporation of stakeholder input and finalization of the document.
- **Communications Plan:** The Skeo Team will draft a communications plan that addresses stakeholder recommendations regarding regular communication over the course of the Community Conversation as well as describing the various modes of communication that will be used to reach a broad range of stakeholders.
- **Launch a Chavis Community Conversation Website:** Skeo Solutions and the Parks and Recreation Department, in concert, will have a website dedicated solely to sharing information about the Chavis Community Conversation project.
- **Public Leadership Group Formation:** The Skeo Team and the Parks and Recreation Department, in concert, will make recommendations regarding candidates for the PLG based on the Situation Assessment Report's recommendations.
- **Design Resource Team Formation:** The Parks and Recreation Department will assemble a group of inter- and intra-departmental professional staff who will serve on the DRT, representing the City's interests.
- **Subject Matter Experts:** The Skeo Team and the Parks and Recreation Department, in concert, will make recommendations regarding potential external, technical experts who will serve as resources for the project.
- **Public Forum:** The Parks and Recreation Department will host a public forum to launch the Chavis Park Community Conversation.

## Appendix I. Stakeholder Interviewee List

The stakeholders identified in the following charts were interviewed as part of the Situation Assessment. Individual stakeholders may appear more than once, depending on their affiliations. Many stakeholders provided additional recommendations regarding individuals and organizations who the Skeo Team could follow up with over the course of the project.

In addition to the stakeholders listed in the charts, the Skeo Team interviewed a group of elementary school students who participate in an afterschool program at the Chavis Park Community Center.

The Skeo Team also presented an overview of the project at the Central CAC meeting on May 7, 2012. Meeting attendees had an opportunity to ask questions and offer insight into what would make the process successful.

### City of Raleigh

	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>Parks and Recreation Staff</b>	Adrian Starks, Assistant Director, Chavis Park Community Center Al Byrd, Director, Chavis Park Community Center David Shouse, Senior Park Planner Denise Saunders, Recreation Program Director, Community Centers Emily Ander, Planner I Ivan Dickey, Assistant Parks Superintendent Kristen Shea, Recreation Facilities & Special Projects Manager Ken Hisler, Recreation Superintendent Larry Wells, Custodian, Chavis Park Community Center Lynn Warren, Assistant Recreation Superintendent
<b>Additional City Departments</b>	April Morris Adams, Youth and Family Services, Raleigh Police Department Dave Barciz, Gang Support Liaison, Raleigh Police Department Elizabeth Alley, Planner II, Urban Design Center Eric Lamb, Transportation Planning Manager, Office of Transportation Planning Jed Niffenegger, Senior Traffic Engineer, Public Works Martha Lauer, Planner II, Historic Development Commission Mark Senior, Senior Project Engineer, Public Works – Stormwater Utility Division Rich Marx, Raleigh Police Department Robert Wagner, Raleigh Police Department Shawn McNamara, Program Manager, Community Development

<p><b>Representatives (Current and Former)</b></p>	<p>Brad Thompson, Former Deputy Mayor</p> <p>Ed Curtis, former Parks Board member, Carousel Task Force member, and community resident</p> <p>Eugene Weeks, Raleigh City Council and former Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board Chair</p> <p>Fred Belledin, Raleigh Historic Development Commission</p> <p>James West, Wake County Commissioner and former Raleigh City Councilor</p> <p>James E. Williams, former Commissioner of Historic Development and the Arts and community resident</p> <p>Johnny Farmer, 1971 &amp; 1994 Chavis Park Master Planning Committees</p> <p>Mark Turner, Chair of Parks Board, Chair of Raleigh CAC, East CAC Chair and community resident</p> <p>Norman Camp, former Parks Board member, South CAC Chair, Partners for Environmental Justice member, Carousel Task Force member, and community resident</p>
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**Immediate Neighbors and Active Park Users**

<p><b>Residents and Active Park Users</b></p>	<p><b>Interviewees</b></p> <p>Denise Lee, community resident</p> <p>Earlene Hicks, community resident</p> <p>Jackee Howell, HOA Board President of State St. Village and community resident</p> <p>Joseph Ellerbee, Ebony Racquet Club President and community resident</p> <p>Penny Glenn, community resident</p> <p>Queen Hargrove, community resident</p> <p>Rosia Butler, former director of Raleigh Nursery school and community resident</p> <p>Virginia "Peggy" Tally, community resident</p> <p>Zenobia Rogers, community resident</p>
<p><b>HBCUs</b></p>	<p>Vince Bayyan, St. Augustine's College</p>
<p><b>CACs</b></p>	<p>Lonnette Williams, Central CAC Chair, SPERNA and community resident</p> <p>Norman Camp, former Parks Board member, South CAC Chair, Partners for Environmental Justice member, Carousel Task Force member, and community resident</p>

### Downtown Stakeholders

	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>Downtown Stakeholders</b>	David Diaz, Downtown Raleigh Alliance  Fred Belledin, Raleigh Historic Development Commission

### Planning Involvement

	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>NC State</b>	Dr. Celen Pasalar, Adjunct Professor of Landscape Architecture  Kermit Bailey, Associate Professor of Graphic Design  Kofi Boone, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture
<b>City Parks Planning Efforts</b>	Johnny Farmer, 1971 and 1994 Chavis Park Master Planning Committees

### Faith Community

	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>Faith Community</b>	Karen Hoffman, Church and Community Outreach director, Raleigh Rescue Mission

Note: The names of additional faith institutions were provided by interviewees and the city for follow up.

### Non-Profits, Service Providers and Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>Non-Profits, Service Providers and CDCs</b>	Garron Rogers, Gang Outreach, Haven House  Karen Hoffman, Church and Community Outreach director, Raleigh Rescue Mission  Lisa Crosslin, Passage Home CDC and Raleigh Safety Club

### Youth and Young Adult Organizations

	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>Community-Based Organizations</b>	Garron Rogers, Gang Outreach, Haven House

### Environmental Organizations

	<b>Interviewees</b>
<b>Environmental Organizations</b>	Bill Flournoy, Triangle Greenway Council  Melanie Allen, Conservation Trust for North Carolina  Norman Camp, former Parks Board member, South CAC Chair, Carousel Task Force member, Partners for Environmental Justice member, and community resident

## **Appendix II. Stakeholder Interview Questions**

The following questions were used as a starting point for interviews with stakeholders:

1. What is your relationship (or the relationship of your organization) to Chavis Park?
2. What is the role of your organization in the community?
3. What role does Chavis Park play in the community (in the past, present and future)?
4. What are the primary assets and challenges at the park?
5. What is the relationship of the park to neighborhood revitalization and change?
6. Are there plans or initiatives related to the park or surrounding neighborhoods that we should be aware of?
7. What are some challenges the Chavis Park Community Conversation may face?
8. What would make the Chavis Park Community Conversation a successful process?
9. Are there other key individuals or organizations we should be talking to?

### **Appendix III. Suggested Park Amenities**

Suggestions for amenities to include in the revised Master Plan for Chavis Park include (in no particular order):

- Larger swimming pool and bath house
- Pool chairs
- Expanded tennis courts
- Kiddie train
- WWII plane (honoring the Negro service members stationed in Chavis Park during the war as well as the Tuskegee Airmen)
- Playground facilities, including a toddler area
- Signage regarding dogs in the park
- Restrooms
- Water fountains
- New or upgraded community center gymnasium (including air conditioning and new flooring)
- Picnic shelters
- Skateboard park
- Track
- Ballfields
- Carousel
- Four-wheeler area
- Obstacle course
- Public Art
- Theater, amphitheater
- Improved, consistent landscaping
- War Mothers Memorial
- Community garden
- Walking trail with historic markers
- Interactive history exhibits

Suggestions for additional park programming include (in no particular order):

- Health services
- Community theater and plays
- Make the community center free for community use (by neighborhood residents, home owners' associations, etc.)
- Health and wellness activities (physical and mental)
- Swimming lessons and Lifeguard training and certification
- Training modules for working together
- Intergenerational programming
- Revive "Teenage Frolic" dance events
- Convert the former Carousel building into an archive or historical exhibit, such as a tribute to famous sports players (including Negro League baseball teams) who grew up using the park, and/or the history of the South Park – East Raleigh African-American community

Suggestions for amenities and parks programming developed specifically by the elementary school students interviewed during the Situation Assessment include (in no particular order):

- Biking hill
- Swings
- Bigger pool area
- Space for clubs to meet
- Variety of camp activities
- Water fights
- Slip-n-slide
- Chipmunks
- Woods
- College
- Go carts
- Basketball teams
- Football
- Lake
- Canoeing
- Water park
- Water slide
- Outside basketball court

Note: These lists are not final. They will be expanded, refined and prioritized over the course of the project.

## **Appendix IV. Background Materials**

The City of Raleigh provided the following background materials for the Skeo Team's review:

### **Mapping Data and Information**

Chavis Carousel Architectural Rendering (March 2011)

Chavis Carousel House Existing Conditions Plan

Chavis Carousel House Site Plan

Chavis Carousel Site Rendering (February 2011)

Chavis Park Lights

Chavis Stream Easement Survey

Tree Conservation Areas

Tree Conservation Areas Line and Curve Data

Tree Conservation Areas with Parcel Information

Various CAD files

### **Media**

Media coverage from the new carousel building groundbreaking

### **South Park-East Raleigh Neighborhood Association Documents**

Chavis Park: Mapping a Cultural Legacy Knowledge Map

Historic South Park Archives at the John P. "Top" Greene Community Center: Mapping a Cultural Legacy Knowledge Map

East Raleigh-South Park National Historic District: Mapping a Cultural Legacy Knowledge Map

Chavis Park Cell Phone Diaries video

### **Parks Information (Chavis Park)**

Chavis Park Carousel Local Landmark Report

Chavis Park and Carousel History Presentation

Chavis Park Master Plan (1971)

Chavis Park Master Plan (1994)

Chavis Park Household Survey Results (2010)

History of John Chavis

**Parks Information (additional)**

Raleigh Parks Plan (2004)

The Raleigh Aquatic Facilities Study

Moore Square Master Plan

**Planning Information**

2030 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Raleigh

Impetus for Progress Committee Report (2009)

South Park Redevelopment Plan

South Park Neighborhood Plan

Garner Road Development Plan

South Person/South Blount Historic Overlay

South Park Heritage Walk Plan

**Public Participation Materials**

Draft Public Participation Guidelines

Draft Public Participation Policy

Draft Public Participation Manual

## Appendix V. Interviewee Comment Summary and Response

Interviewees were provided an opportunity to review and comment on a draft of this document. Comments and project team responses are summarized below:

<b>Date (2012)</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Project Team Response</b>
June 11	These notes look great to me. I would note that there are existing swim lessons offered at the park every summer. Also mentioned were the need for chairs at the pool. Thanks so much!	Added pool chairs to Appendix III.
June 11	It is truly a pleasure to be a part of the Chavis Park Community Conversation. It was a tremendous part of my formative years. Therefore, I feel obligated to contribute to the preservation of its history and to support future efforts to sustain the park. I look forward to continuing the conversation.	
June 14	Thank you for your efforts.	
June 15	Thanks, great work!	
June 22	Looks fine to me.	
June 22	<p>I read over the assessment report in its entirety, and thought it covered most of the touchpoints to start or further an effective dialogue. As well, its nice to see all this information in one place (document), as professionally delivered. In short, I thought it was outstanding! I know its just the start.</p> <p>Of course, the really hard work is ahead - and it was good that 'assessment fatigue' was noted in the report. At a recent conference, as i mentioned, someone termed the phenomenon as "drive by" research, folks have been "shot" (photographed) and interviewed to death - usually as thesis students need a topic in six months.</p> <p>A few things did stand out in the report as question (or omissions, though maybe hinted at) that i perceive might need some strategy and design thinking, as less bogged down by historical constituency or motive - though that very important, and foundational reason.</p> <p>Unless i missed, I see no direct mention of young people in the assessment in the same way (as reasonable) that elder citizens are mentioned - for example, their lack of computer access. True, and indeed a need. As well, the youth (and future of the park and area I would argue), and resonating with them, present challenges of participation and support. Hence, and maybe missing in the assessment is more mention of systemic programming activity (or education), to extend the idea of the built environment as physical. I sense, for example, many young people have seen the 'mother's war bench' in the park but have little sense of it as a memorial object, and photographs of the airplane slide - but have little awareness of the parks connection to WW2. As well, there is a lot of misinformation (urban myths) that flourish.</p> <p>All of above all speak to 'communication' in general, and i was happy to see (in an overt statement): The Skeo Team will</p>	<p>The project team recognizes the importance of involving younger generations in parks planning. The Communications Plan includes multiple potential methods of outreach aimed at engaging young people, including a project website, use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and development of engaging short films that could be posted to YouTube. Additionally, the Public Leadership Group will include teens and young adults.</p> <p>The project team affirms the power of images in evoking the history and memory of a place and in casting a vision for its future. A map series timeline will be developed to help trace the history of park. Additionally, public forums will be designed to allow community members to share their memories of the park and aspirations for the future. Methods could include opportunities</p>

<p>propose a Communications and Outreach Plan that will address multiple outreach methods and will pay particular attention to the high number of older residents in neighborhoods around the park who do not have computer access .</p> <p>...but as mentioned, no strategic mention of youth, or strategic communication plan. "How" will the story be told (throughout Raleigh)...If I assume, "if we build it (or improve it) they might NOT come...to the park" still. I see little acknowledgment of the obstacles of / to participation by public groups (young, old, new to area / not so new, etc.) - and strategies to counter that effect. This, will require some new thinking - and resistance (even) to some old assumptions that might emanate out of public forum/ conversation groups. New methods for participation will be key.</p> <p>I wish I knew all the answers (or methods). Of course, I do not. However, I am thrilled with your effort to find out - working with people, leveraging community knowledge / input and professional expertise from the outside.</p> <p>If I can be of assistance, I do see mention in the report of a technical advisory group, feel free to contact me. I agree with the notion (and need identified) of 'marketing' the Park (beyond its physical boundaries), and to that extent might have some expertise to offer...as well as experience (years) actually work with the community.</p> <p>I do think, in an overt way, the words "graphic design" needs to be in the report, as a need. Graphic design (before, while/during, and after) is a cultivating of psychological experience practice, and hence is very needed adjacent to all the physical (or built) interventions intended...and beyond. It supports how we know a thing or place is important.</p> <p>Thank you for sharing your assessment report with me!</p>	<p>for storytelling, the arts, photography and music. Finally, the design process will include a community design charrette so that community members can help develop the maps that will summarize a vision for the parks future.</p>
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