

**Public Leadership Group Meeting Summary**  
**Meeting #12 on January 14, 2014**  
**John Chavis Community Center**

Materials from the meeting are available for download here:  
<http://chavisconversation.skeo.com/public-leadership-group/>. A project binder with hardcopies of all documents is located at the John Chavis Community Center; please check with the front desk.

**Major Outcomes & Decisions**

1. The Public Leadership Group chose February 25, 2014 to hold Meeting #13 and agreed with the updated project schedule that came with selecting that meeting date.
  - a. February 25 – PLG Meeting #13
  - b. March 20 – PLG presents Draft John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan to Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB). Citizen comment on the plan. Meeting at 6:00pm in City Council Chambers.
  - c. April 17 – PRGAB action to recommend the Draft John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan to City Council for adoption. Meeting at 6:00pm in City Council Chambers.
  - d. May 6 – City Council Presentation for adoption of the Draft John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan. Meeting in City Council Chambers.
2. The Public Leadership Group reached consensus on the revised Master Plan with the changes discussed at PLG Meeting #12.

**Overview**

The goals of Meeting #12 were to review PLG and public comments on the draft Master Plan, take a consensus vote on updates to the Master Plan, and review upcoming Master Plan approval process.

Vernice Miller-Travis began the meeting by welcoming everyone to 2014, thanking the group for committing extra time to discuss the public's comments on the master plan and reviewing Meeting #11. The group reviewed meeting summaries from meeting #11 and the December Public Forum. Meeting Summary #11 was approved. The December Public Forum Summary was approved with abstention by four members, three were absent from the Forum and one did not have time to review the summary. Emily Ander let the group know that Meeting #13 needs to be rescheduled to February 25 or postponed until March 11. She ran through the project schedule and the approval process for each scenario. The group chose to meet on February 25. Vernice asked the group if they had any issues to share and discuss with the PLG. A few members brought up issues. Next the PLG was asked to share their impressions from the December Public Forum in a round robin fashion.

David Shouse reminded the group of the difference between schematic design and master planning and that there is funding for schematic design. He reviewed the steps in the approval process. Vernice spoke to the importance of the PLG presenting the Master Plan as a unified body, speaking with one voice. She highlighted the group's work and accomplishments over the past year and a half.

Alisa Hefner oriented the PLG to the comment table and asked the PLG to identify any comments for group discussion. None were identified so the group focused its discussion on public comments that needed further in-depth discussion and decision by the PLG. The discussion was organized by theme, like the master plan, and straw poll votes were taken at the end of each theme. Amusements staff were present at the meeting and provided their perspective on amusements at Chavis. At the end of the discussion the PLG took a consensus vote on all of the recommended changes they had made. Alisa let the PLG know that these changes would be incorporated into a Final Draft Master Plan that will be provided to the group on February 11, two weeks prior to their final meeting. This draft will include a Looking Ahead section, which will also provide a cost estimate and recommend a process for public engagement moving forward. Finally David Shouse asked the group who would be interested in being part of the presentation to Parks Board. Several members volunteered.

**Public Leadership Group Check-in**

- Youth input
  - One PLG member felt strongly about youth input not being sufficient and requested an event to engage them with the help of community center staff. There was the feeling that it lacked input from neighborhood youth. For example there are three preschools close by that should have been included.
  - Another member mentioned surprise at not seeing more youth at the Forum and wondered if there is another opportunity to include them.
  - Another expressed pleasure at seeing Shaw and NCSU students in attendance.
  - One PLG member wants to engage youth in understanding the history of the park and John Chavis. It was shared that it is challenging to incorporate this or other community content within the state's strict school curriculum
  - Many expressed interest in youth participation as the process moves forward into schematic design and the discussion ended with a recommendation to expand youth participation in the schematic design phase and beyond.
- Cecilia Zuvic visited Argentina and Chile over the holidays and brought forward images of park features that she experienced there that she thinks are applicable ideas for consideration at Chavis during schematic design. Even though the climate is cold there people want to be outside and this is reflected in the types of amenities and number of people using them. Photos were of observation decks, pedal train, bike safety, slides on slopes, and public art in parks.
- **Question:** How has the voice of the staff been included in the process?  
**Response:** The Community Center Director and Assistant Director have been invited to all PLG meetings, copied on all PLG emails that include staff, have attended PLG meetings when there were two staff members and they had the ability to do so, and have assisted the Project Team in coordinating events outside the PLG meetings (youth involvement, finding PLG members, etc.) and preparing information for the meetings. Four PRCR staff members who work at John Chavis Memorial Park attended the December Public Forum on their personal time.

**Public Forum Reflections** (Round Robin)

- Good turnout, honest feedback, good meeting
- I wasn't there but I heard it was fun.
- Skeptical and nervous at first but got better once things got going. Discovered two participants who are sisters and attend the Central CAC were in the photograph of the airplane slide that is included in the Master Plan.
- Engaging. Wish I could have rotated through the Stations. Youth excitement. Things started slowly but picked up. Students were represented that night (Shaw and NCSU). Shaw Athletic Director attended! Participants questioned our decisions in a positive way. They wanted to understand the ideas and how we came to them.
- There was lots of general discussion about and explanation of the Concept Plan. Expected more anger and frustration but participants were generally happy and excited which was encouraging. For me the public's reaction means they like where we're going.
- We were rockin' in the corner. People are passionate about the history and flocked to Station 1. I encouraged people to write it down. Public wants to be heard. Excitement. Passion!
- Amazed at the level of interest. Participants were engaged in each group. Participants were curious to see PLG recommendations. They came with the intent that something would be done now. Public doesn't want to wait 10 years to see progress. Parents want a safe, environment for their children and age-appropriate areas. PLG did a fantastic job!
- Participants were not as excited about the Community Center and Aquatic Center but we got things on the board and had good conversations.
- I noticed excitement when people came in. I asked people to listen and engage. Positive feedback as people left. I was pleased with the event.
- Fun! There was lots of input from all ages regarding play/sports & fitness. People are concerned about safety. Requested sound output for fitness. There was tension at the end of the meeting. Got the feeling that the public is not trusting the PLG's decisions.
- Public appreciated the opportunity to share input and being asked what they think.
- At the end there were some comments about not a worthwhile process. PLG is committed and we wouldn't be here if we weren't. Change is coming to the park
- Public is mostly supportive of the PLG's ideas and the Master Plan. This community is often very skeptical.
- Overall the public had a positive experience.
- Would have been good to have more youth. Jonathun Muldrow has a good idea about how to engage youth.
- Comments via Facebook/social media include safety, accessible and age-appropriate, relevant to neighborhood, impressed with all of the work the PLG has done and the level of information, want park to be a mix of natural elements with modern and state of the art ones.
- Vivian Lee did extensive outreach at Shaw, which really paid off.
- Need more activity that is noticeable from the street. The community will watch the PLG's decisions closely. They don't want to get excited and then see nothing happen.
- More activities/amusements in the park
- People are passionate about this park because of the history. People are feeling more receptive and trusting.

- Continued, high level of participation. It was a good event and well planned.
- Since I could not be there I provided CAC members with a handout of how to proceed at the meeting with a summary of the Master Plan because I knew most of them would not read the full document.
- People communicate differently but they all want to be heard. The community has not felt heard and therefore have been frustrated for a long time.
- Have they been heard? We will be watched closely.
- The PLG has done much work outside of the PLG meetings to involve and engage the public in this process. "We did the work" now we want to see action as demonstrated by improvements in the park.
- **Question:** Is there another opportunity for public input in Schematic Design?  
**Response:** Yes, a public meeting will be held around the 30% point of schematic design (1/3 of the way through the design process).
- **Question:** Will the PRGAB take the PLG's recommendations?  
**Response:** Yes, if you are unified.
- **Question:** Isn't it a conflict of interest for Lorenzo Jackson and Richard Bostic, two PRGAB members, to vote on the Master Plan especially if their personal opinions are different from the groups?  
**Response 1:** No, in fact their intimate involvement in the project is actually a positive. It will be important when the PRGAB is deliberating the Master Plan.  
**Response 2:** We can represent the PLG's interests and how the group got to the final plan because we've been here the whole time.
- There has been cohesion within the group over time.

**Public Comment Discussion**

Comments on the Master Plan were collected between November 12 and December 17 from the Public Leadership Group, the General Public during the review period from November 26-December 17 (copies of the Draft Master Plan were available at Richard B. Harrison Library, Southgate Library, John Chavis Community Center, Top Greene Neighborhood Center, Jaycee Community Center, Five Points Active Adult Center, Anne Gordon Center for Active Adults, on both project websites, through social media and by request), from participants at the December Public Forum, from City of Raleigh staff, and from Skeo Solutions. One hundred and thirty six comments were received and compiled into a spreadsheet. Staff reviewed and responded to all of the comments, most of which had already been addressed in the Master Plan. A second spreadsheet was created for all of the comments that need further input from the PLG that includes a recommendation on how to address the comments within the Master Plan. These comments were grouped and organized in the same order as the Master Plan for easier group review by the PLG. We walked through and discussed each recommendation and then took a straw poll vote on each. At the end we took a consensus vote on how the comments will be incorporated in the Master Plan.

**Concept Plan**

- Accept recommendations as laid out in the Discussion Tool

**Honoring the Past**

- Too much emphasis in the Master Plan on the retro café. Concerned with what a retro café is defined as. Wording in the MP is critical.
  - Restaurant vs. café
    - Could be concession stand, lunch counter, etc.

- Placeholder in Master Plan for further exploration in schematic design
- Accept recommendations as laid out in the Discussion Tool for:
  - Original Carousel House Building
  - Heritage Plaza
  - Replica Plane

#### Aquatic Center

- Accept recommendations as laid out in the Discussion Tool
- Add whirlpool to Master Plan on page 27 at the end of the bullet for 'warm water therapy/wellness pool'

#### Community Center

- There should be warming kitchens in meeting rooms in addition to a full kitchen.
  - Each meeting room may not have a warming kitchen.

#### Circulation and Creek Management

- Add that a function of the wheeled train can be used to shuttle people into the park during events. The shuttle would be around, not through, events. The wheeled train needs to be accessible transport.
- More information on the Little Rock Creek conservation easement and Neuse River Stream Buffer Rules.

#### Sports & Fitness

##### Track

- "the full range of surfaces, including artificial turf."
- Prioritize use of track for regular users versus outside groups
- Want to avoid user conflicts between field and track. Add wording on page 29, item B about protecting existing use of track. *Continue to support use of track and its importance to the community.*
- Artificial Turf Discussion
  - What is the implementation cost versus maintenance cost?
  - We need more sport opportunities. Artificial turf provides more opportunity for play, practice and games. Needs less maintenance especially after rain.
  - Example: New soccer fields at WRAL Soccer Complex. Two-thirds bond project in conjunction with Capital Area Soccer League (CASL). The project was managed by PRCR staff but the park is owned and managed by CASL.
  - Must consider not only the upfront cost but the lifetime maintenance cost because PRCR will own and manage this field for the long term.
  - **Question:** Will we see the results of the investigation? Who will decide which surface material we ultimately go with?  
**Response:** Yes, the PLG will see the results of the investigation. Staff will make the final determination on which surface material to use. The public can weigh in at the public meeting during schematic design.
  - Having a full range of uses could be a problem. It could cause user conflict. Don't jeopardize use of the track.
  - PRCR must consider programmatic needs of John Chavis Memorial Park, PRCR's athletic programs, budget, how the space is going to be used, etc.
- We need to think about the marketability of the features in the Master Plan for the park in order to sell the Master Plan to PRGAB and City Council. What is the Return on Investment for each of them?

- The PLG decided to rewrite the recommendation to reflect the following: *Include sports lighting and explore the full range of surface materials including artificial turf.*

#### Courts

- Include historic picture of tennis within the Master Plan (Lionette Williams to provide)
- Include special needs people
- Add the terminology youth courts or youth focused courts. Have instruction and training to support youth learning these sports.

#### Fitness Zones

- Include audio to list with lighting and seating under amenities in revised MP text

#### Play & Amusements

- Recommend wheeled train and exploring motorized and non-motorized amusement rides including a miniature train on tracks

#### Honoring the Miniature Train

- The miniature train on tracks was possible in the 1950s so why is it no longer possible?
- There were no children present at the Public Forum to vote for amusements.
- Why can't we have both the track train and the wheeled train? They should both be included since budget does not factor into the Master Plan.
- Train is historically significant.
- Wheeled train will make park accessible. It is not an amusement.
- Wheeled train example in Wilmington, NC mall. It looked like a miniature train and you couldn't tell that it wasn't on a track. Adults and children were able to ride it. Could have a replica of the miniature train that could serve as an amusement while getting around.
- Wheeled train at IMBF in September was an amusement. Kids rode in it up and down Fayetteville Street with smiles on their faces. My daughter begged me to go on it.
- I don't want to add an amenity that competes with Pullen Park. I want to see something unique from Pullen, something that people will want to come to Chavis Park for, that they can only get here. People I know will continue to go to Pullen for the train.
- **Question:** What about an elevated track for train?  
**Response:** We explored this and the topography, number of crossings, cost and amount of space are limiting factors.
- **Question:** What about the use of Segways instead of a train?  
**Response:** This can be explored.
- I like the flexibility of the wheeled train.
- What about a miniature train around the park's border? The original train had speed.
- Amenities were removed beyond the train. Some people don't want to drive across town to ride the Pullen train.
- Have options that would provide speed and movement like the fair
- Some members of the public want a track train.
- Have tracked train in the area where picnic shelters #3 and #4 are now. There is nothing on the west side of the park now.

## Chavis Park COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

- Track train option has not been fully explored.
- People don't want to go to Pullen – deep-rooted feelings among long-term residents from segregation
- Expand the Greenway through the underutilized side of the park through the tunnel to the southern piece of the park.
- Community Center staff wants amenities that are different from Pullen because patrons will continue to go to Pullen if both parks have the same amenities. Staff wants a reason for patrons to want to come to Chavis. Examples are outdoor basketball courts, water play area like Wet N' Wild in Greensboro, or skate park.
- Keep wheeled train and explore other motorized amusement rides including a track train.

### Amusement Staff Feedback

- Must provide a good experience including well connected pathways and restrooms. The experience is the most important piece.
  - People stay in the park for the amenities
  - People do not come back if they have a bad initial experience
  - It is not about one feature but the combination of features that create the experience.
  - Rides only take a few minutes. What will keep people at Chavis? The other amenities.
- Design, need a detailed design, and phase attractions over time
- Curb appeal of the park is critical. If people passing by on foot, bike or car see something fun/exciting as they pass by it makes them want to come in and experience it
- Success of a park is linked to the uniqueness of the attractions and how those unique attractions bring people into the park. But also how the experience and supporting amenities keep people coming back. What will bring people from across town/the region here? How does that attraction keep people here and bring them back?

### Vegetation Management

- Accept recommendations as laid out in the Discussion Tool

### Safety & Visibility

- Accept recommendations as laid out in the Discussion Tool

### Consensus Vote on Revisions to Master Plan

**100%** of PLG members voted a 1 to support the changes as discussed at the meeting  
No one voted a 2 or below.

### Volunteers for PRGAB Presentation on March 20, 2014

- Cecilia
- Gretchel
- Rob
- Lonnette (back up)
- Jackee (back up)

### Meeting Evaluation Feedback

- The PLG found it beneficial to reflect on the December Public Forum prior to the group discussion on the draft master plan comments.

## Chavis Park COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

- The PLG understands the approval process and schedule for moving the master plan forward as well as the difference between schematic design and master planning.
- The group feels that the updated Draft Master Plan will address the issues brought forward by the community and PLG.
- It was more difficult than usual to hear the facilitators and the conversations.
- I liked having the opportunity to express and discuss issues that are most important, talking about the Forum, and having resource representatives present for our discussion.
- I disliked the discussion about the train.
- Items to incorporate into Meeting #13 include how to best conduct outreach to youth to increase attendance and participation at the next public engagement opportunity, more about turf, and to have enough time to discuss any lingering issues or concerns.
- I really appreciate how the track miniature train was given an opportunity for real discussion and that it was not outright dismissed but included to be explored and an optional power amusement.
- Ten of the eleven PLG members who completed the evaluation expressed interest in participating in Schematic Design!
- Thanks for the extended time, we truly needed and the dinner was very good. Was good to see everybody.

### Attendance

**PLG Members Present:** Jacqueline Howell, Lorenzo Jackson, Vivian Lee, F. Lonnette Williams, Joseph Ellerbee, Richard Bostic, Gretchel Carter-Hinton, Rhonda Muhammad, Cecilia Zuvic, Eyvonne Dailey, Virginia Stanley Tally, Rob Wylie, Jonathun Muldrow, James E. Williams

**PLG Members Absent:** Angela Jackson-Mann, Margo White

**Withdrawn PLG Members:** Bishop Victor Glover, Geraldine Williams, Jaquan Bennett, Bennie A. Mack, Jr., Hallie Mittleman, Seddrick Hill

**Staff & Guests:** Vernice Miller-Travis, Alisa Hefner, Sarah Little, David Shouse, Denise Saunders, Ivan Dickey, Diane Sauer, Ken Hisler, Troy Burton, Greg Thompson, Richard Costello, Marvin Howell, Emily Ander, Matthew Keough, Mary Lou Addor

## APPENDIX

Amusements Input

Thursday, 1/9/2014, Pullen Amusement Center Conference Room

Attendees: Emily Ander, Matthew Keough, Troy Burton, Richard Costello, Marvin Howell, and Greg Thompson

1. Focus should be to ensure a quality experience for users within the park, far beyond attractions.
  - Visitor sequencing. Visitor experiences should be easy and obvious, i.e. where to park, easy orientation to landscape through vistas and signage, quick identification of basic amenities such as restrooms, security, and indoor shelter.
  - Focus on the most desired experience and build towards that first, i.e. Event space and community gatherings. Suggestion: appealing, unique gathering places and opportunities that bring users to the site, over and over, and which inspire recommendation to others to attend, making the park a destination ahead of specific amusements.
  - Forced entry point helps create experience.
2. Park attractions and investments require intentional detailed design over time. Prioritize accessibility, visibility, safety, layout, cost considerations, and curb appeal in careful site design.
  - Design should place amenities, infrastructure, attractions, programs, and amusement elements together in a complementary way.
  - Layout of park and various activities should be simple to navigate.
  - Relationship between various elements in the park – athletics, cultural learning, recreation programming, amusements, sport and fitness, and amusements – require awareness, coordination, and management. These items should impact one another in positive ways. One idea is to develop a unifying theme and/or apparent relationships between these items.
3. Success of individual park attractions is dependent on their uniqueness and relationship to the park experience.
  - Develop amusements and attractions in stages, responding to the users' experiences, learning and adapting design (not the master plan) in the process. It is especially helpful to watch and respond to users' interest following a priority investment, i.e. performance space. In this example, success with events can indicate where additional amenities and attractions are needed (food services, shade structures, seating areas, etc).
  - This incremental and iterative process can be less satisfying at the onset but it is the most realistic and successful approach to park development that is responsive to users and the evolving community of users.

## Design Notes:

- Phasing of infrastructure is reality, especially in developing amusements over time.
- Site considerations include allowing adequate clearance spaces, service areas and approaches, significant infrastructure and utilities (light, electricity), safety areas that can restrict access and require fencing. The “footprint” of amusements can be significant in terms of space and costs to the park’s operation budget, including specialized maintenance and specially trained staff.