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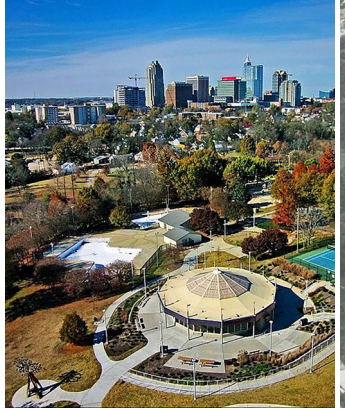
John Chavis Memorial Park



PROJECT: STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION STUDY OF THE PARK MASTER PLAN

A bold vision for the John Chavis Memorial Park was born from a community consensus building process to "honor our past, plan for the future," that began in May 2012. Approved by the Raleigh City Council in May 2014, the Park Vision now challenges everyone on how to best develop the park. The City of Raleigh commissioned Clearscapes, a Raleigh Architecture + Art firm, to lead a public study on how to implement the revised park master plan. Confronting hard choices, architects and landscape architects are proposing design improvements befitting of the inspiring place and community process.

THE FOURS STEPS OF THE STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

1. Identify successful examples of related park features envisioned by the community
2. Address challenges and opportunities to meet the goals of the Park Master Plan
3. Plan for the long-term development and operation of the park
4. Propose Phase 1 improvements within the $12.5 million bond budget

PROJECT STATUS

The Implementation Study is now wrapping up, leading into Phase 1 development work, funded by approved park bond funds. The results of the study to date are presented on the following pages:

1. Park Master Plan of 2014
2. Proposed Park Master Plan Refinements
3. Proposed Phase 1 Development

The final review session on February 16, 2016, will gather public feedback on priorities and strategies for the proposed phase one development.

JOHN CHAVIS MEMORIAL PARK VISION

John Chavis Memorial Park is a vibrant community center, downtown attraction and regional destination. The park celebrates the rich history, culture and arts of the surrounding neighborhoods and the City of Raleigh, and offers wonderful public recreation opportunities, event spaces and programs that foster community life. A place of pride and profound remembrance, the park celebrates the life and work of educator John Chavis, recognizes the community's contribution to World War II, and honors the significance of the park's history to the African-American community during and following segregation.

John Chavis Memorial Park will always offer a safe and welcoming gathering space where family and friends of all cultures come to play, relax, learn and celebrate the big events and small, meaningful moments of life. The park grounds provide a beautiful, clean and refreshing refuge, with access to nature and an expansive view of the downtown Raleigh skyline. Park features and programs promote fitness, health and wellness by offering a range of recreational activities for people of all ages and abilities. Just a few steps from downtown, the park is always full of activity, inspired by innovative programming that is interactive, fun and dynamic.

FINAL PUBLIC REVIEW SESSION

Tuesday, February 16th, 2016 from 3:30PM - 7:00PM

Learn more about the ideas regarding how to best meet the Park's Master Plan vision by attending our next public review session on **Tuesday, February 16, 2016 from 3:30-7:00pm at the Chavis Community Center on 505 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.**

Come participate in this open house, with an overview presentation given at the beginning and repeated at the end of the event. If you have ideas or concerns about this meeting or the project, please call City staff at **(919) 996-2654** or email: **matthew.keough@raleighnc.gov.**

OVERVIEW OF JOHN CHAVIS MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN 2014

The following summarizes the concepts of the original 2014 Park Master Plan

The John Chavis Memorial Park Master Plan 2014 calls for a comprehensive transformation and revitalization of John Chavis Memorial Park guided by the following goals:

- Honor the life and work of John Chavis
- Recognize the community's contribution to World War II
- Celebrate the significance of the park's history to the African-American community
- Replace the existing neighborhood pool and community center with larger, enhanced facilities
- Expand sports and fitness opportunities with new multi-use courts, tennis courts, and an enhanced track and field
- Replace the playground with play features for all ages in a play corridor throughout the park
- Increase the connectivity of the park
- Increase the access and visibility of the creek, including environmental education opportunities
- Incorporate basic amenities into future improvements
- Support community events and gatherings with flexible facilities, spaces, and utilities
- Promote sustainability in park design and maintenance for a clean, safe, and welcoming environment

The concept plan (at right) illustrates the layout of the proposed facilities, parking, paths, and recreation areas. Key features include:

- New Community Center and Aquatic Center located by the Carousel Plaza
- A Central Plaza adjacent to the community center
- Adaptive use of the Original Carousel Building within a Heritage Plaza
- Expanded visitor experience, anchored by plaza spaces
- New playground area with traditional and natural play features, including climbing structures
- Interactive water features
- Second amusement, complementing the existing carousel
- Outdoor performance spaces
- Linear skate spots, fitness zones, and pocket play zones in the western corridor
- Creek overlooks, crossings, and interpretive signage

Highest ranked 'Playground Equipment' images during Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

High ranking 'Play Equipment' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

High ranking 'Play Equipment' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

EASTERN PLAY CORRIDOR

High ranking 'Lighting' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

CAROUSEL PLAZA

OVERVIEW OF KEY IN-PROGRESS MASTER PLAN REFINEMENTS

The following summarizes the strategies for implementation

① **Establishing the Center of the Park** - Orientation of these facilities takes advantage of the existing topography and provide increased connectivity.

- Locating the new Community Center and Aquatic Center on an otherwise unusable hillside, frees space for a larger plaza and multipurpose field and track. The main floors of these new 2-story buildings would be at the same level as the existing Carousel Plaza. The upper level will allow handicap accessibility and easy connection to the upper field, track, and courts.
- The restored historic Allan Herschell Carousel and Carousel Plaza becomes the new front door to the complex providing a handicapped-accessible path from both parking areas.

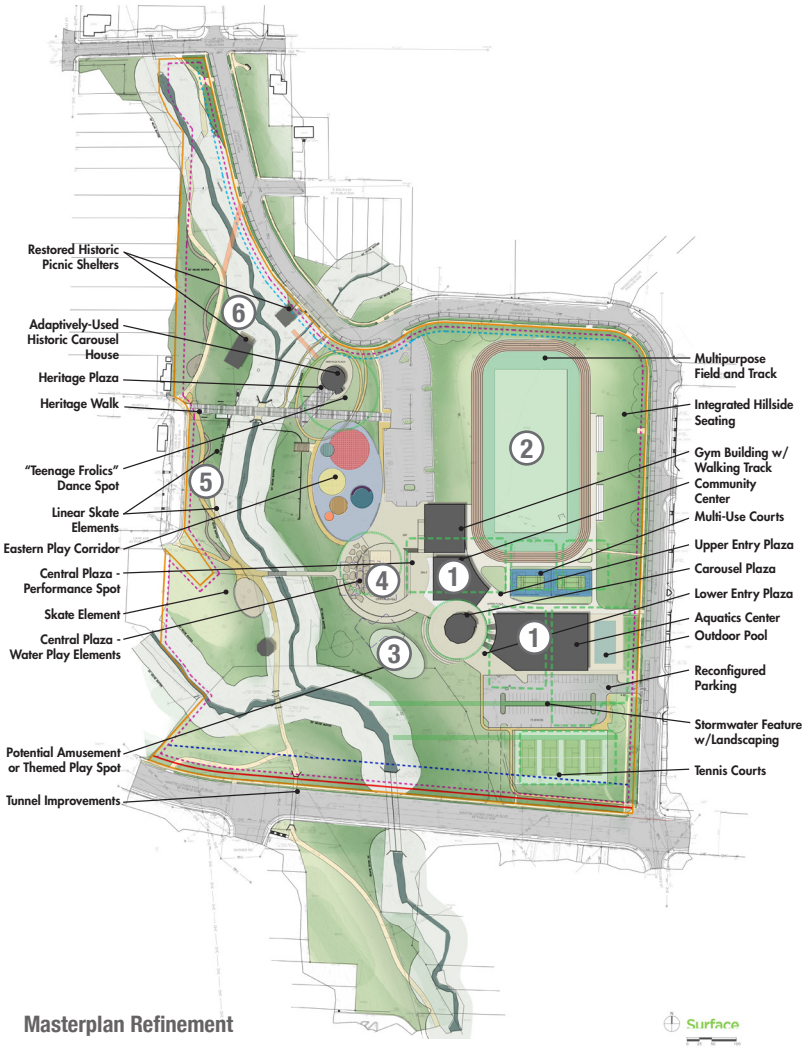
② **Enhancing the Track & Field** - The Master Plan calls for an enlarged field, improved track, and multi-use courts. Proposed refinements accommodate a regulation football field and two courts.

③ **Attracting with More Amusements** - The proposed location is to create an opportunity for a highly-visible 'wow' moment from MLK Jr. Blvd., near the existing carousel.

④ **Gathering for Events** - The Master Plan calls for the Central Plaza to be developed as a flexible event and gathering space. The enlarged plaza accommodates three distinct activity zones or areas - a "dry zone" for activities and events, a "wet zone" with splash pad and water play, and a "flexible zone" to accommodate overflow for large events with water and electrical connections to accommodate food trucks and vendors.

⑤ **Drawing in Skaters** - The Master Plan calls for distributed skateboard elements in the Western Play Corridor. A large skateboard area adjacent to the new bridge from the Central Plaza allows for more concentrated activity with visual connectivity across the bridge to the Community Center. Ice-skating facilities are also planned for the Central Plaza and will help activate the park during the slower, winter months.

⑥ **Improving Usability of Picnic Shelters** - The Master Plan calls for improved access to the two historic picnic shelters and the western side of the park. While opportunities within the stream buffer are limited by a conservation easement, areas for improvement are being identified to move specific crossings to new locations, allowing for better connectivity and visibility to the picnic shelters.



Emmancipation Park - Presented as a benchmark image at Public Meeting I (07/30/2015) East Oakland Sports Center - Presented as a benchmark image at Public Meeting I (07/30/2015) High ranking 'Skate Spots' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15) High ranking 'Skate Spots' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

COMMUNITY CENTER & AQUATICS ENHANCED TRACK AND FIELD SKATE ELEMENTS

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT

The following developments are proposed for the first phase of park development

Ⓐ **Community Center & Gym** - The highest priority in the 2014 Master Plan.

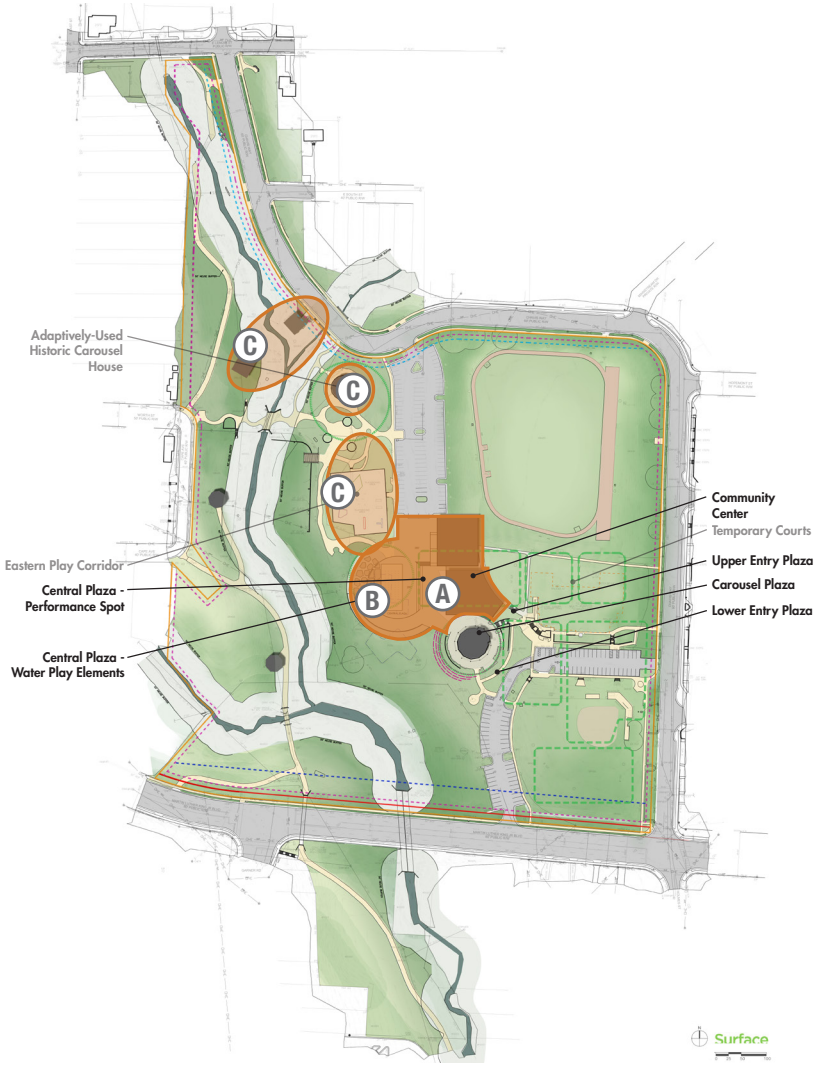
- **Size** - This study recommends increasing the existing building size by 50% to allow for additional meeting, classroom, and event spaces as well as enlarged locker rooms, bathrooms, fitness areas, and a new lounge. The upper level extends over a portion of the Central Plaza to create a sheltered stage or seating area and to allow the upper level multipurpose rooms to overlook the heart of the park and the downtown skyline.
- **Location** - The proposed location of the new Community Center allows the existing center to remain in operation during the construction.
- **Tennis** - The existing courts will be removed during Phase 1 to allow for construction of the new building.

Ⓑ **Central Plaza** - The new Central Plaza will accommodate a range of events including casual seating and relaxation, summer water play, winter ice skating, concerts, festivals, pop up markets, and food truck rodeos:

- **Splash/Water Play** - The plaza incorporates a splash and water play area. The water features could be switched off to increase the usable size of the plaza or converted for ice-skating during winter.
- **Seating** - Upper portions of plaza serve as a stage or as seating for viewing activities or events.
- **Flexible Zone** - The flexible zone provides access to the parking area and playground, accommodates overflow for large events, and includes water and electrical connections.
- **Existing Pool** - The existing pools and bath house will be removed during Phase 1 to allow for construction of the new plaza. The existing pools, constructed in 1979, have reached their life-cycle limit. An independent aquatic facilities analysis concluded that the required upgrades to the pool equipment, deck, and drains are not sustainable.

Ⓒ **Possible Phase 1 Scope Additions** - Together, the Community Center and Central Plaza constitute the base Phase 1 scope and will re-energize the heart of John Chavis Memorial Park. Additionally, one or more of the following items are aspired to be included in the Phase 1 scope:

- **Original Carousel House** - Adaptive reuse of the Original Carousel House as a fully-conditioned, flexible multi-use space with its own toilets for small gatherings, special events, or programmed activities year-round
- **Play Corridor** - Renovation of the existing playground to complement the water play in the Central Plaza.
- **Picnic Shelters** - Restoration of the two historic picnic shelters



East Oakland Sports Center - Presented as a benchmark image at Public Meeting I (07/30/2015)

GYMNASIUM

East Oakland Sports Center - Presented as a benchmark image at Public Meeting I (07/30/2015)

COMMUNITY CENTER

High ranking 'Splash Plaza' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

High ranking 'Seating' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

CENTRAL PLAZA

High ranking 'Play Equipment' image - Public Meeting II (10/01/15)

PLAY CORRIDOR