

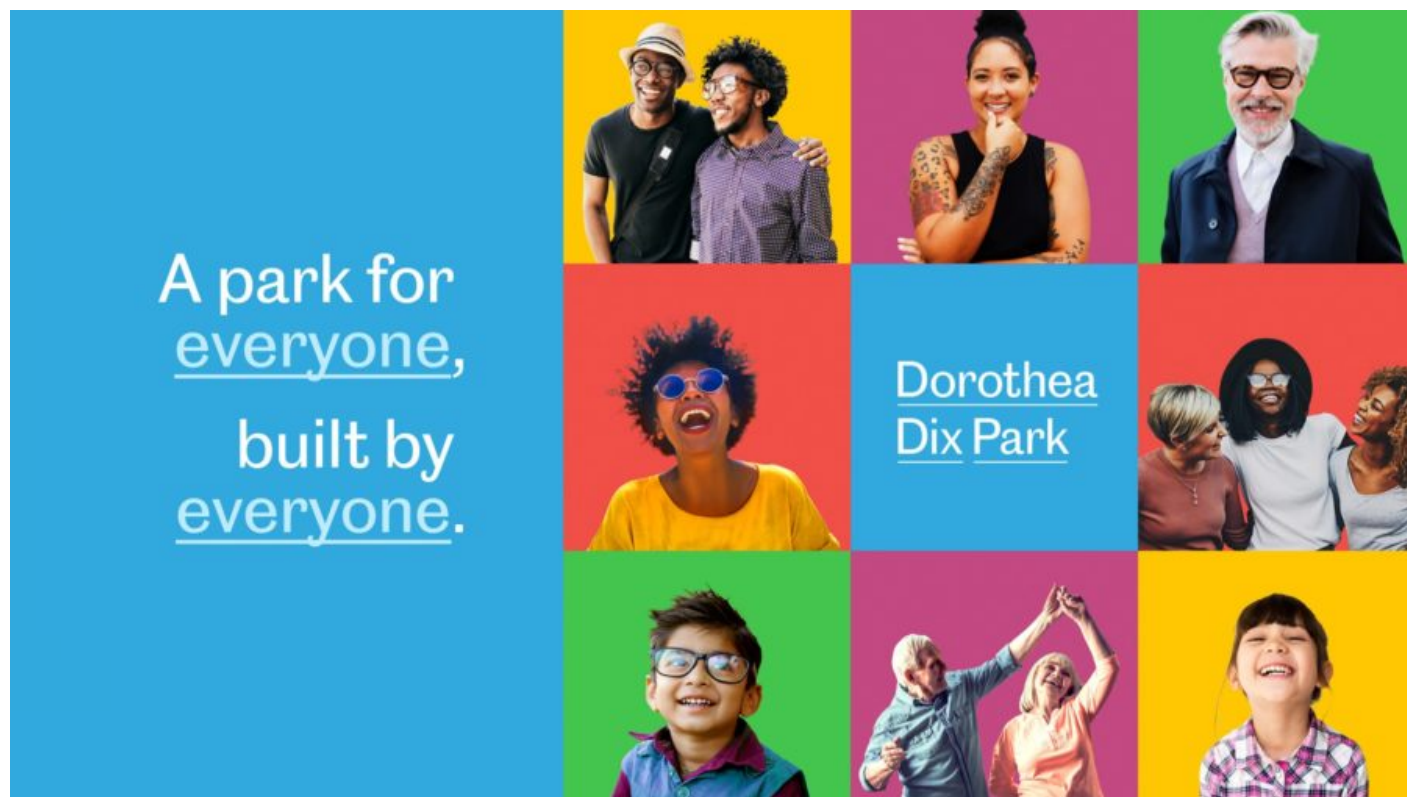
## Dorothea Dix Park: A Park for Everyone

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Categories : [Advisory Committees](#), [Community Partnerships](#), [Dialogue & Deliberation](#), [Diversity](#), [Innovation](#), [Online Participation](#), [Outreach Methods](#), [Uncategorized](#)

Tagged as : [Raleigh Dorothea Dix Park](#); [Pullen Park](#); [Lake Raleigh](#); [Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy](#); [Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan](#); [Neighborland](#); [Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane](#); [Michael Van Valkenburgh](#)

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*I'm glad to introduce [Dan Parham](#) of [Neighborland](#) as a guest blogger.*

The City of Raleigh has embarked on a generational effort to create America's next great public park. The opportunity to create a new public space of this size (308 acres) in the heart of Raleigh is unparalleled in the United States. The City of Raleigh is committed to making Dorothea Dix Park a park for everyone, a place of belonging for all individuals, families, and communities — of every economic level, background, ethnicity, race, religion, interest, and need. As Adrian Benepe from

the Trust for Public Land has said, "Dorothea Dix Park is the most important and exciting park project in America today."

Over the next year, the City is partnering with the [Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy](#) and world-renowned landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh to create a visionary Master Plan for the park. Creating an iconic, inclusive, and sustainable public space requires broad, inclusive, and highly participatory community engagement.

Raleigh Parks and their design team developed a robust, community-centered process to collaborate with the public on the vision for this remarkable park. Kate Pearce, who is leading the Master Plan for the City, describes this capacity-building approach: "Essentially, the Dix Park community engagement process is about building relationships, creating experiences and connecting people with place. Through all of the City's outreach efforts, we hope to inspire a generation of stewards, supporters, and advocates for the future of Dix Park."

### **Levels of engagement**

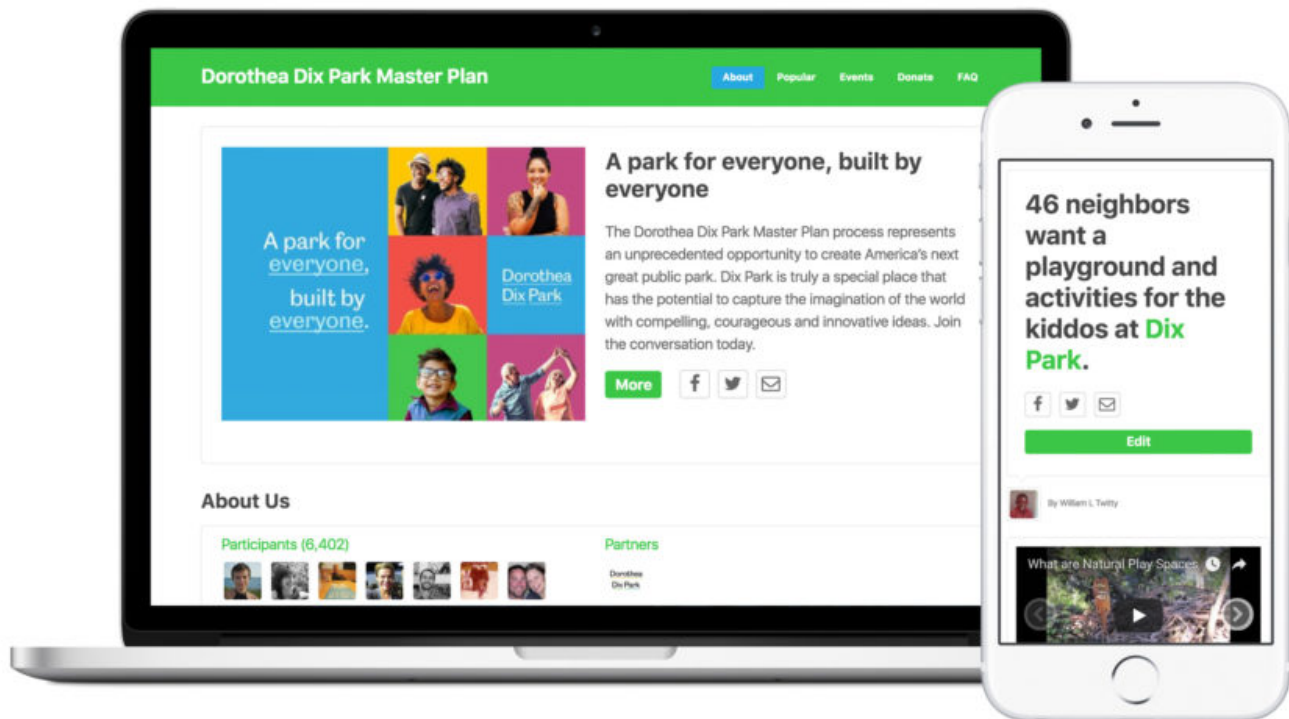
Mayor Nancy McFarlane and Raleigh's City Council appointed 45 residents with diverse backgrounds and experiences to serve on a Master Plan Advisory Committee. This group works closely with the design team throughout the planning process and makes recommendations to a Master Plan Executive Committee. There are also over 200 individuals participating in Master Plan Workgroups, enriching the planning process by providing topic-specific expertise and advising both the Executive and Advisory Committees.



The City has also created a wide variety of opportunities for the public to engage in the planning process including: bus and walking tours of the park, multiple concert series, art programs for children and adults, nature walks, guided star-watching programs, history programs, temporary art installations, large festivals, weekly yoga and other health programs, family movie nights, and more. In addition to their deep inherent value, these programs provide an important opportunity for the design team to “meet people where they are.”

### **Extending engagement online**

The public is also invited to share their own ideas, comment and vote on other residents’ ideas, and give the design team feedback on proposed solutions online. To date, over 10,000 residents have participated directly in the planning process [on Neighborland](#).



Several clear priorities have emerged:

- Honoring the site's history as a mental health facility and a slave-owning plantation
- Robust transportation connectivity with the city and Triangle
- Preservation of the open and green spaces on the site
- Walking and biking trails
- Places for gatherings and concerts
- A water element
- Sports and recreation facilities
- Places for public art; and
- Financial sustainability for the park and its programs

The design team has responded with design concepts that reflect these desires. They are bringing best practices from the design of parks across the world, along with an understanding of the physical and financial constraints of the Master Plan for the park.





These “big ideas” include:

- [Creating a meadow that extends from Pullen Park to Lake Raleigh;](#)
- [Restoring Rocky Branch Creek to a healthy stream;](#)
- Creating a multi-use path that loops the interior of the park
- Integrating the park with the [Farmer's Market](#)
- Creating a civic center at the top of the hill around the historic hospital structure.

Each of these design concepts will be shared with the public whose feedback will continue to guide the design team's iterations.



The City of Raleigh’s community-centered approach to the design of the Dorothea Dix Park is giving North Carolinians an extraordinary opportunity to shape the development of their city for generations to come. If the city rises to this opportunity, this will be a generational opportunity to bring the people of North Carolina together — to create a place of belonging for all individuals and families, for all communities, economic levels, backgrounds, and interests. It will transform individual lives and will help ensure a sustainable region for generations to come.