

The Process

Initial Community-Driven Design (March 2006)

A previous design team in collaboration with the Friends of Historic Fourth Ward Park developed an initial program for park development in March 2006. Their efforts suggested the following elements and identified concerns to be addressed during the subsequent design of the park.

Proposed Park Program Elements from “Initial Community-Driven Design”

- A soft edge to the lake (without allowing access to the water)
- A dog park (clearly defined, and within the less desirable/under-utilized parcels of the park)
- Trails (multi-use, including pedestrian, bike, in-line skating, etc.)
- Sport fields
- Interesting water features (perhaps a waterfall, or some type of interactive fountain)
- A space for community interaction (spaces for meeting rooms)
- Event space (such as a rental space like the Trolley Barn, but not as grand as Magnolia Hall in Piedmont Park)
- An outdoor theater (which would accommodate between 500 and 3,000 guests with both permanent and flexible seating, and would encourage BeltLine use, rather than neighborhood parking)
- Large lawn space
- Picnic areas (both smaller scale picnic tables, and pavilions for larger gatherings)
- Active recreation areas (occurring south of Ralph McGill and including multi-purpose fields)
- Public restroom facilities
- Concession stands (to be located in small kiosks throughout the park)
- A library (with a focus on children’s literature, and a potential space to hold smaller events, such as movie screenings)
- A flexible outdoor event space (able to

accommodate markets, small concerts, parties, etc.)

Park Design Considerations/ Concerns

- Maintenance
- Safety (especially the discouragement of the homeless population from settling, and the constant patrol of the park)
- Provision for a future influx of children to the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood as younger couples begin to start families
- Handicapped accessibility
- Fencing (used to define the edges of the park rather than to discourage use)
- Sport fields (maintenance and control)
- Parking (could be accommodated along Ralph McGill in bulb-outs)
- Bringing early evening and nighttime life to the park (this could be accomplished through restaurants, cafes, retail or festivals)
- Future street connections (both North/South, and East/West across the BeltLine)
- The creation of way-finding devices that speak to the historic and industrial character of the area
- Potential to raise money through a permanent fundraising device (for instance through the selling of bricks with donors names, as was done in Centennial Olympic Park)
- Bringing the feel and texture of the adjacent neighborhoods into the park
- Pocket parks with a consistent theme (one example was a music theme)
- WiFi accessibility throughout the park
- Play areas that have easily monitored access points
- Involving the local community in helping to landscape the park

Concept Park Master Plan – Steering Committee Comments (October 2007)

In a meeting with the Subarea 5 Steering Committee on October 23, 2007, the consultant presented three different concept plans. Each plan featured a different combination of program elements and different configurations of potential park parcels for acquisition.

Figure 01 - Park Master Plan Concept A



Concept Plan A

Likes

- Feel of a linear park
- Placement of tennis courts
- A single pond concept
- Orientation of the outdoor theater
- Use of a large wall for art or activities
- Multiple uses and connections

Comments

- Playground functions better next to picnic area
- Potential exists for multiple picnic areas
- Does it have the ability to expand west or east?
- Parking lots may need to be larger
- Skate park and fields in a remote corner might attract crime
- The position and size of the pond walls might pose a security risk

Figure 02 - Park Master Plan Concept B



Concept Plan B

Likes

- Minimal grading for a split pond
- Splash pad
- Festival space
- Feels like two separate parks...one active and one passive
- Traffic circulation on eastern side

Dislikes

- Disconnection of Cox property leaves it hard to maintain and keep safe
- Not enough sports fields and associated parking
- Splitting the pond in two
- Number of street crossings
- Amount of park space fronting Ralph McGill, and the isolation of the festival space

Figure 03 - Park Master Plan Concept C



Concept Plan C

Likes

- Separation and location of the dog park
- Trails surrounding the pond
- Grouping of playground, picnic space and associated parking
- Length of the pond
- Compact nature of the park
- Grand promenade from North to Ralph McGill

Dislikes

- Connections to the eastern parcel are not optimal
- Discontinuous flow of circulation throughout the park
- Entrance on Ralph McGill isn't grand enough
- Issues with the pond elevation, and the amount of space it takes up
- Not as much programming
- Isolation of the Cox property

General Steering Committee Comments

Likes

- Use of a splash pad rather than a public pool
- Open programmable festival space
- Multiple parking lots associated with different park programming
- A mixture of passive and active uses
- Flow from Elizabeth to North Avenue works well

Comments

- Pedestrian access to the park crossing Ralph McGill should put the pedestrian as the priority
- Splash park and playgrounds should be adjacent to one another
- Make sure that the festival space is accessible for loading and unloading

Dislikes

- No strong western entrance to the park from Glenn Iris and the neighborhood
- Street going through the park...even a temporary road could become permanent
- Use of a tall fence around the pond creating a visual and physical barrier to the water
- Some of the parcels seem remote and may be more difficult to maintain and keep safe
- Not enough thought about the needs of an aging population
- No designated community meeting space

Draft Park Master Plan Steering Committee Comments (November 2007)

Likes

- Hierarchy of circulation routes
- Flexibility and quantity of programming
- Proximity of playground to splash pad
- Separation of active and passive uses
- Flexible space for festivals, markets, etc. as gateway to Ralph McGill
- Opportunities for public art throughout the park
- Variety of parking options
- Single pond concept as an opportunity for a bold statement

Dislikes

- Lack of playground in the more active southern half
- No public restrooms
- Lots of tennis and no skate park

Translation of the Vision Into Park Elements

After review of the comments and concerns raised from the evaluation of the initial three concept park designs, the planning team assembled a list of desired elements for inclusion in the final park plan. The list of elements included the following items, with other elements to be added as space allowed:

- Multi-use Fields
- Dog Parks (for small and large dogs)
- Picnic Areas
- Lawns
- Playgrounds
- Splash Pad
- Festival Space
- Garden Rooms
- Community Gardens
- Skate Park
- Outdoor theater space
- Fitness Stations

Previous suggestions from the initial community-driven design and from the BeltLine Northeast Study Group were discussed and either added to the above list, or removed from consideration due to factors such as cost, feasibility of use by neighborhood residents or space requirements.

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Master Plan

The Master Plan celebrates two key elements in the park: public art and innovative stormwater management. The Master Plan envisions a park with a balance of passive and active recreation uses. The Master Plan re-envisioned parking lots, buildings, and groves of trees as a green oasis linked by a network of pedestrian paths.

Program Elements

Vehicular Circulation

To maintain the continuity of the park, the plan proposes the permanent closure of several east-west streets to vehicular traffic. The idea is not to discourage access, but rather to encourage circulation around the perimeter of the park. In activating the area, it also adds safety and security by putting eyes on the park. In addition, the new roadways will provide critical north-south routes for local residents and commuters who currently use Glenn Iris, Freedom Parkway, or Highland to get from North Avenue to their respective destinations.

In addition, the closed streets can then be refitted into the primary pedestrian/bike circulation routes with only some minor changes to the hardscape.



Successful vehicular circulation along the edge of a park in London, England



Eco-sensitive paving option at Ladd Stadium in Mobile, AL includes pervious pavement and bioswales

Parking

The concept proposes primary day to day parking needs serviced with on street parking spaces. In addition, two distinct parking areas service the park. The first is on North Angier Street at the corner of the proposed Dallas connection to the BeltLine, servicing the northern portion of the park. This parking could either be a surface lot or a parking structure that could generate funds. Demand for this type of parking should be determined by the ultimate use for the amphitheater, with an initial estimate of approximately 50 spaces. One additional parking area would service the active recreation for the Southern portion of the park and should accommodate around 30 vehicles.



Pervious paving allows stormwater to percolate into the ground

Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian circulation would occur on a hierarchy of paths. Major linear paths would use the existing road footprints, while secondary paths would meander throughout the site. The primary paths would be highlighted through plantings of tree allees, which would act as a shade element and way-finding tool. Users could choose a specific loop based on walking distance around the park. All of the paths would be made from a hard material and would be at a grade compliant with ADA standards.

Multi-use fields

There is a recognized shortage of multi-use fields in Atlanta. The Cox property at the southeastern end of the site will provide dedicated 180' x 260' multi-use space for a variety of sports such as soccer, football, rugby, and ultimate Frisbee. The "open



Multi-use fields can flexibly accommodate a range of activities from soccer to baseball and football



Reuse of a former street as a primary park path in which the curb and sidewalks are removed

meadow" north of Ralph McGill can also serve as a 400' x 200' multi-use field space. In both areas, artificial turf may be used to maximize use and minimize drought impacts.

Dog Parks (Small and Large Dogs)

The community identified a need for dog parks within this park. Although not shown as part of the current master plan, several potential areas for this amenity have been identified. The northwest corner of North Angier and Ralph McGill is one strong possibility, as are taking corners from the "flexibility play lawn", "event lawn" or "open meadow". It is imperative that the community remain involved in identifying a location for dog parks, as well in their development and ongoing maintenance.

Any dog park(s) will have double gated entries with fenced areas. The entry areas will be carefully located to minimize conflicts with visitors that do not want to interact with dogs. The entry area should have concrete surfaces to withstand heavy use. Water fountains in the dog park are another amenity that should be considered. Maintenance practices used



Figure 04 - Historic Fourth Ward Park Master Plan





Dog parks have become a common part of today's urban environment where city-dwellers lack yards

in the large dog park should be similar to turf sports fields, including fertilization, aeration, mowing, and over-seeding. Irrigation will help the turf withstand the intensive use of a dog park. A successful

method of turf management in other dog parks is the rotation of use areas to allow turf to recover from heavy activity. The dog park would need to be divided in half to accommodate rotation. The small size of these parks may preclude this management system.

The provision for an amenity such as a dog park, and its associated maintenance will have to be assumed by a community organization space, as the Parks Department will not maintain a recreational space that is under two acres.

Picnic Areas

An area located in the center of the park to the south of the stormwater pond will offer an ideal spot for picnics. The highlight of this area will be several shelters with an architectural design inspired by the Ponce De Leon Amusement Park shelters that were once located nearby. The design should reference these shelters rather than attempt a direct replication. These structures will create a link to the rich history of the site.

Lawns

Four lawns will serve as flexible open space for use in informal recreation and passive enjoyment. An approximate 4.6 acre meadow in a level area on the east side of the park will create a large space framed by 0.4 mile walking path. Additional meadows in the center of the park will offer rolling slopes ideal for picnics and sunbathing. The soil should be carefully prepared in these meadows to promote



The original structures found in Ponce Park should inspire the design of contemporary picnic pavillions



The lawn at Piedmont Park is popular year round

deep root growth for the turf. Deep root growth lessens the amount of water that will be required for the turf. These meadows should be designed and managed in a less intensive manner than the formal athletic fields.

Playgrounds

The two playground areas for the park will afford play opportunities for children of all ages and maintain safety through adult supervision during daylight areas. The playground area located in the southeast corner of the park will consist of play areas that appeal to both toddlers and older children, with a range of play equipment, including swing sets and play structures. A second playground will be located near the splash pad at the center of the park. This play area will be designed as a children's play space. The play space will be laid out as a natural sequence of "events" – small-scale, intimate places, ripe for exploration and full of things for

kids to do. It will be an experiential space that will intrigue and delight visitors of all ages. Canopy trees will be planted to create shade near the play areas. Shade structures will help supplement the shade, while newly planted trees mature.



Modern day playgrounds can be thought of as an interactive art installation piece, rather than as traditional ready-made equipment

Splash Pad

With a central location and a dynamic attraction for park visitors, the splash pad will be a focal point of the park in warm weather. As the Olympic fountains of Centennial Olympic Park demonstrate, the splash pad will be a magnet for children and will entertain visitors of all ages. The water feature may also provide an opportunity for the incorporation of public art. Careful design of the plaza surface and features in the splash pad will ensure that the splash pad is an amenity at all times of the year.



Splash pads are quickly becoming a sustainable alternative approach to public pools

The Splash Pad will need to be designed to Fulton County Pool Standards, including a restroom facility located within 300' feet of the splash pad.

Space also needs to be provided around the perimeter of the splash pad to accommodate parents, caregivers, and spectators.

Festival Space

An open lawn at the northern end of the park will serve as a gathering place for events. A perimeter path and two interior paths will provide circulation through this approximate 2.9 acre space.



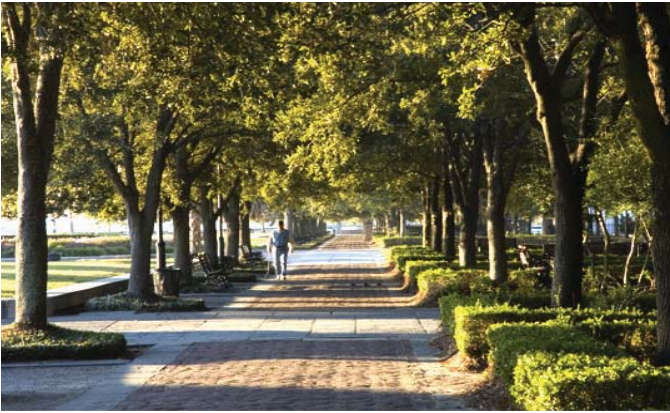
Park areas, such as Centennial Olympic Park, can be readily transformed into an active festival space

Garden Rooms

A series of garden rooms at the southern end of the park space will create attractive alcoves where visitors can relax on benches with a view of the adjacent path. A low hedge will define each garden room to create a sense of enclosure, while maintaining views into the spaces. A formal alley of trees will define the ceiling of the "rooms" and create shade.

Community Garden

Another essential piece of the park program is the community garden. Like dog park(s), there are several areas within the park that could be home to



Garden rooms should feel like they are close, secluded spaces, but still be transparent enough for safety purposes

the community garden. Community involvement as the park grows to its final size will be critical in identifying a location for and implementing this piece of the program.



Community gardens are a great way for people who live in the city to learn about the environment, and feel like they have their own piece of land

Skate Park

An approximate 12,000 SF skate park will be located in the Cox property on the southeastern end of the

park. This location will provide good access to the East-West MARTA line, the future BeltLine transit, and a network of pedestrian paths in Freedom Park and the BeltLine. This park will feature elements commonly found in urban plazas as well as concrete ramps or bowls. A fence will encircle this skate park with a gated entrance. A skate park designer should be consulted in the design of the elements for the skate park.

Amenities such as drinking fountains, lighting and shade structures should be included, as well as adequate space for spectators.



Rather than occurring underground, skateboarding is becoming increasingly mainstream, with many cities investing in the creation of parks

Outdoor Theater

A 250 seat outdoor theater will be terraced into a hillside near the stormwater pond. Seat walls will define the edge of the terraces with flat lawn areas in between. The sunken garden and pond will create a dramatic backdrop for the outdoor theater.

Sunken Garden

The descent into the recessed cove surrounding the pond will take visitors into an experience apart from the rest of the park, a sunken garden. A sinuous network of paths will wind through this lushly



An outdoor outdoor theater that uses the surrounding topography and natural elements

planted landscape of flowers, shrubs, and trees. Plantings will emphasize broad sweeps and drifts of color of drought tolerant plants. The advantage of a sunken garden is that the user has the feeling of seclusion and privacy, while at the same time being highly visible to those above them.

Storm Water Pond

The City's Department of Watershed Management has provided funding for a storm water pond which is providing capacity relief for the nearby combined sewer while integrating aesthetically into the park. The storm water pond will be owned and primarily maintained by the Department of Watershed Management, and as a critical piece of the City's sewer infrastructure, may be subject to constraints and requirements different from that of the surrounding park. For instance, during heavy storms, the pond is designed to fill up and inundate walking pathways and plazas. During this time and immediately afterwards, public access will be restricted. However, the storm water pond is designed to minimize downtime as well as maintenance, and it is anticipated that it will become a highly-utilized park amenity.



The sunken feeling of Butchart Gardens in Canada



An artist's rendering of the proposed Storm water pond

Gateways

Major gateways should be incorporated where the highest volume of visitors will be entering the park. Gateways should include the major pedestrian entrances for the neighborhoods located on Ralph McGill Boulevard and North Avenue. Also of critical importance are the gateway elements to be located along North Angier and the BeltLine to help draw people into the park from the trail and transit.

Public Art

The incorporation of public art throughout the park and the participation of artists in the development of feature areas such as the splash pad zone encourages local artists and generates creative and cutting edge design alternatives to what would otherwise remain standard park elements, such as playground equipment. In addition, art done locally will help to incorporate the feeling and attitude of the local community and evoke the nature and history of the neighborhoods.



A piece of public art made from repurposed tires



Hidden valtakunta -The Sacred Realm of the Forest Elf