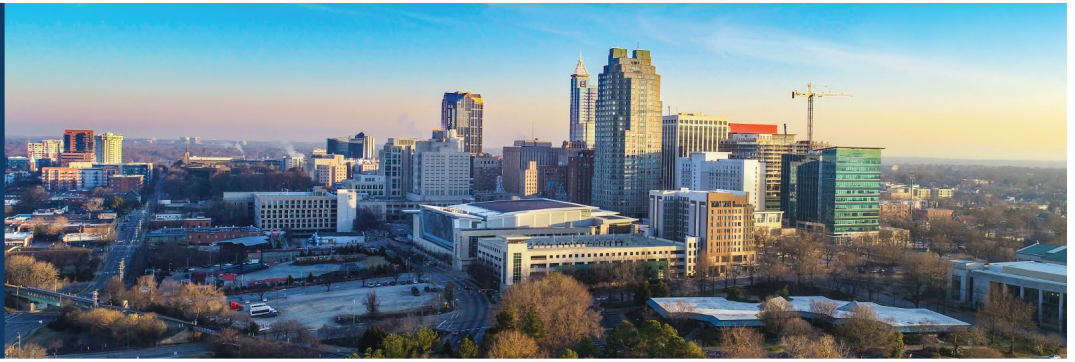


# Manager's Update

raleighnc.gov



Issue 2021-08

March 5, 2021

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### Work Session - Tuesday, March 9 - 4:00 P.M.

Reminder that Council will meet next **Tuesday** in a scheduled work session at **4:00 P.M.**

The agenda for the work session was posted to the electronic agenda management system Thursday.

**You will be receiving information on joining the WebEx Events session on Monday; staff will be available to assist with log ins and joining the virtual City Council meeting.**

### Strategic Planning Retreat Next Week

Reminder that Council will meet for the annual planning retreat next **Friday** and **Saturday** at the **Raleigh Convention Center**, 500 S. Salisbury Street. The retreat agenda materials and other logistical information will be forthcoming. All safety protocols associated with COVID-19 will be observed at all times during the retreat.

## INFORMATION:

### Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Program – Western Corridor Update

*Staff Resource: Mila Vega, Transportation - Transit, 996-4123, [mila.vega@raleighnc.gov](mailto:mila.vega@raleighnc.gov)*

Staff continues work on advancing the Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) program. An update on status of the program was recently provided via *Manager's Update Issue 2021-01* (January 8) and during the January 28 meeting of the Transportation and Transit Committee.

In 2019, the Western Boulevard Corridor Study (WBCS) was initiated, with a major goal to identify the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Potential alignment alternatives were analyzed based on a series of factors including public input, adherence to existing plans, right-of-way availability and transit propensity. As a result, the WBCS recommended the [Cary Towne/Maynard alignment](#) as the LPA, subsequently endorsed by the town of Cary in July 2020 and by the City of Raleigh in August 2020. The planning study is in its final phase, with a draft final report anticipated by early Summer.

The recommended LPA for Western Corridor includes the proposed Western Boulevard extension, connecting the existing section of Cary Towne Boulevard to Jones Franklin Road. This proposed extension was first adopted into the city's Thoroughfare Plan in 1968. This allowed the city, over the course of several decades, to request right-of-way dedication and acquire properties in the vicinity to accommodate the planned future street extension. The Western Boulevard extension has continued to be a part of the City's transportation plan and is currently identified in the Raleigh Street Plan.

The preliminary design phase (0 – 30%) for the Western Corridor began in January 2021. The corridor is approximately 12 miles and will include both dedicated transit lanes and mixed traffic lanes between the downtown Raleigh and downtown Cary. This design phase is estimated to take approximately 20 months to complete.

The preliminary design work will include identification of roadway options and locations for BRT stations. Topographical survey work will begin in late February to guide the initial design work. In coordination with the town of Cary, survey notification letters (approx. 700) were mailed on January 25 to both owner (mailing) and property (site) addresses along the Western Corridor. Staff will continue to adequately work with and notify property owners located within the potential area of impact.

*(No attachment)*

### Chamberlain Park Water Tank Improvements

*Staff Contact: Aaron Brower, Raleigh Water, 996-3469, [aaron.brower@raleighnc.gov](mailto:aaron.brower@raleighnc.gov)*

The Chamberlain Park water tank, located at the corner of Everett Avenue and Tower Street, is in the final phase of an improvement project. The improvements, which are primarily being performed to decrease tank leakage, include the following aspects: rehabilitating existing concrete inside of the tank; sealing of floor cracks; installing a floor liner; and tree removal from proximity to the tank.

Now that the work on the inside of the tank is nearly complete, staff has been working with the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources department to identify and permit the removal of several existing trees from the tank site.

The need for the tree removal at the tank site is multifaceted: 1) The underdrain system of the tank that carries away any leakage from the tank to the storm system has been compromised several times from the tree roots; 2) vandals have used the trees to elevate themselves high enough to graffiti the tank because the trees are so close to the tank; 3) acid from the trees deteriorate the exterior coating prematurely; and, 4) most of the trees identified for removal are in poor health and would damage the tank in the event of falling.

The majority of the trees that will be removed are within the fencing of the tank site with the exception of a few on the north side that are in very close proximity to the tank structure itself. Trees within the “park” portion of the site will not be impacted. A new screening plan will be developed in conjunction with the Urban Forestry staff, with implementation to occur during the fall planting season.



**Example trees to be removed at tank site**

*(No attachment)*

#### **Joint Disparity Study with Wake County, Wake County Public School System - Update**

**Staff Resource:** : Audrea Caesar, Office of Equity and Inclusion, 996-5698, [audrea.caesar@raleighnc.gov](mailto:audrea.caesar@raleighnc.gov)

As previously shared with Council, City staff along with staff of Wake County and the Wake County Public School System issued a *Request for Information* (RFI) to solicit feedback from potential consultants on the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing a joint disparity study.

Based on responses to the RFI and subsequent staff discussions, the recommendation is to not pursue a joint disparity study at the present time. Staff does, however, believe there are synergies and opportunities in the future to partner and collaborate on aspects of community and vendor outreach and during a subsequent disparity study implementation phase.

The recommendation to opt out of a consolidated approach is based on vendor RFI responses and are centered around the following factors: 1) legal requirements dictate an individual report will be required for each entity; 2) overall project timelines for all entities could be impacted if any individual entity is not able to achieve project plan milestones; 3) overall cost savings were negligible; and 4) given the unique aspects of many of the goods and services procured by each entity, there may be a lack of a shared vendor pool, thus not creating synergies in vendor data.

Responses to the RFI did highlight areas, such as a market analysis, where a joint study may be advantageous; staff will seek ways to collaborate during the RFP process to share data. Staff will provide Council with a project plan for this initiative to begin the coming months.

*(No attachment)*

#### **Ensuring Safety of the Public Water Supply - Backflow Testing and Cross Connection Program**

*Staff Resource: Whit Wheeler, Raleigh Water, 996-3245, [william.wheeler@raleighnc.gov](mailto:william.wheeler@raleighnc.gov)*

The Cross-Connection Program provides an integral role ensuring the safety of the water supply by protecting the water distribution system from contamination by an end-user or customer. Protection is achieved through the installation of a backflow device on the customer side of the water meter or fire service line; these devices prevent a reverse water flow from a building back into the public water supply system. For most residential customers, the backflow protection is a check valve in the meter yoke that is maintained by utility staff. For commercial, fire prevention, and irrigation services, backflow assemblies are installed and the responsibility for maintenance resides with the individual utility customer. The Raleigh City Code requires these customer-owned backflow assemblies to be tested annually (triennially for residential irrigation) by a Certified Tester. Results from test reports are submitted online by the testing agent for recordkeeping in accordance with North Carolina Public Water Supply regulations.

When the mandatory Stay-at-Home order was enacted in March 2020, Raleigh Water discontinued the mailing of testing reminders and ceased issuing violations for failure to test. However, due to the diligence of our customers, the compliance rate at the conclusion of the last fiscal year was an impressive 83%. Since June 2020 a steady decline in compliance has been observed. With approximately 28,000 customer-owned backflow devices attached to the public water supply system, staff is preparing to resume issuing test reminders to advise customers of the compliance schedule. At this time there are no plans to issue testing violation notices. Reminders are planned for mailing next week to all customers (commercial and fire prevention) due for testing during the months of April and May. Reminder letters to residential irrigation customers are scheduled to be mailed in April. Residential irrigation backflow devices are due for testing July 1, 2021. A check with other large utilities in the state find that all others are proceeding with cross connection programs as normal.

*(No attachment)*



**Small Business Support / Pandemic Relief**

*Staff Resource: Mark Weldon, Office of Econ. Dev. & Innovation, 996-3139, [mark.weldon@raleighnc.gov](mailto:mark.weldon@raleighnc.gov)*

Staff with the Office of Economic Development and Innovation continues to engage with and provide solutions to the small business community, as we approach one year into the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the initial Small Business Listening Session at Council Chambers which was held March 16, 2020.

Efforts to date include:

**BUSINESS ALLIANCE AND PARTNER RESPONSE:** Frequent collaboration with the City's Business Alliance leaders and Economic Development partners, with 78 called meetings to date. This has created a well-coordinated response among organizations representing small businesses all across Raleigh:

- Black Dollar
- Blue Ridge Corridor
- Downtown Raleigh Alliance
- Five Points Business District Association
- Glenwood South Neighborhood Collective
- Hillsborough Street Community Service Corporation
- Midtown Raleigh Alliance
- Person Street Partnership
- Shop Local Raleigh
- Village District Merchants Association
- Wake County Economic Development

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINAR SUPPORT:** The Office of Economic Development and Innovation has hosted and produced 11 different webinars on topics including:

- SBA / CARES ACT / PPP relief
- Child Care financial solutions
- NC Unemployment
- Landlord/Tenant solutions
- Raleigh Relief Fund (English and Spanish)
- Safe Business Operations – Count On Me NC and physical health considerations
- Caring for your team during COVID-19 and mental health considerations
- Parking and Curbside Pickup
- New Federal Stimulus and Relief Package

**RALEIGH RELIEF FUND:** Office of Economic Development staff worked closely with Carolina Small Business Development Fund (CSBDF), and Wake Tech Small Business Center, to create grant programs supporting the public-private partnership, seeded with City Council \$1M, and private partner contributions, to deliver \$1.6M relief to small businesses.

**IMPACT PARTNER GRANT:** Grants were awarded at the end of 2020, amplifying the Wish You Were Here hyperlocal marketing campaign. Goals of this innovation effort include connecting business and arts communities (with local artists hired for their services), activating spaces and experiences in a safe, social-distanced format, driving safe consumer engagement and foot traffic in business districts across the City, and leveraging the Wish You Were Here campaign to preserve Raleigh's ongoing "mind share" for residents

and visitors. Grants totaling \$92,434 are funding 14 projects across seven of the City's business alliances districts.

GENERAL PROGRAM COMMUNICATION: Staff has kept the small business community current on a variety of local, state, and federal relief programs:

- **US CARES SBA PPP – New round of applications are open**
- US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – SAVE SMALL BUSINESS FUND – applications are closed
- NC GOLDEN LEAF RAPID RECOVERY FOR SMALL BUSINESS – applications are closed
- NC JOBS RETENTION GRANT (JRG) – applications closed October
- NC – MURR – applications closed 11/12
- NC IDEA BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT – applications closed 11/2
- WAKE FORWARD – applications closed 11/16
- WAKE COUNTY NONPROFIT ARTS RELIEF FUND
- WAKE HELPS (Utility Relief) – applications closed 11/30
- THREAD CAPITAL COVID-19 RAPID RECOVERY LOAN – applications are closed
- RALEIGH SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF FUND – applications closed in June

Looking ahead, pandemic relief continues to be a priority:

- **SMALL BUSINESS PPP APPLICATIONS:** Office of Economic Development and Innovation hosted an information session March 2<sup>nd</sup> for Business Alliance Partners, with local banking and small business support experts, to share details about the exclusive application window for small business PPP applications. That is leading to a collaboration by Economic Development partners Black Dollar and Shop Local Raleigh, who are planning an upcoming webinar session for small business owners on the PPP Special Application Window for Small Businesses. More information: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program>
- **SBA WEBINARS:** In concert with Economic Development partners at Wake Tech Small Business Center, staff is communicating a series of SBA webinars to help specific demographic communities navigate the PPP application process.
  - Mar. 3, 12:30 p.m. ET, Women Business Owners
  - Mar. 4, 3:00 p.m. ET, Asian-American + Pacific Islander, Native American + Tribal Small Business Owners
  - Mar. 5, 1:00 p.m. ET, Black + African American Small Business Owners
  - Mar. 5, 3:00 p.m. ET, Hispanic Small Business Owners
  - Mar. 6, 2:00 p.m. ET, Veterans, Self-Employed Business Owners, [Click here to register](#)
  - Mar. 8, 3:00 p.m. ET, LGBTQ Business Owners, Youth Entrepreneurs, Restaurant Owners, [Click here to register](#)
- **BUILDING UPFIT GRANT:** Nine new quarterly grants totaling \$204,325 were awarded on March 5<sup>th</sup> including four grants that will include upfit provisions supporting social distancing and building configuration, in response to the pandemic. This quarter's grants are expected to help drive \$942,772 in business investment, for 23,441 square feet of space, and creating 81 new jobs. This

quarterly program continues, with the next application window opening April 2<sup>nd</sup>. More information: <https://raleighnc.gov/services/grants-and-funding/building-fit-grant>

- SHUTTERED VENUE FEDERAL SUPPORT: Working closely with Business Alliance partners, in particular Downtown Raleigh Alliance, staff is closely monitoring federal announcements for program requirements, and ensuring that communications are in place to assist Raleigh's music and performance venues – large and small. More information: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/shuttered-venue-operators-grant>
- CONNECTING BUSINESSES TO CITY OF RALEIGH SOLUTIONS: Staff collaborating from the Office of Economic Development, Transportation, Special Events, Planning and Development, Raleigh Water, and others continue to seek and provide solutions, to help small businesses survive and navigate through the warming weather, increasing vaccinations, and easing restrictions from the state.

*(No attachment)*

## Council Member Follow Up Items

### Follow Up from the January 19 City Council Meeting

#### **Peace Garden Designation at Dix Park (Mayor Baldwin)**

Staff Resource: Kate Pearce, Parks, 996-3285, [kate.pearce@raleighnc.gov](mailto:kate.pearce@raleighnc.gov)

During the meeting Council requested staff to review, evaluate, and make a recommendation regarding designating one of the gardens at Dix Park as a "Peace Garden". Included with eh Update materials is a staff memorandum prepared in response to the request.

*(Attachment)*

### Follow Up from the March 2 City Council Meeting

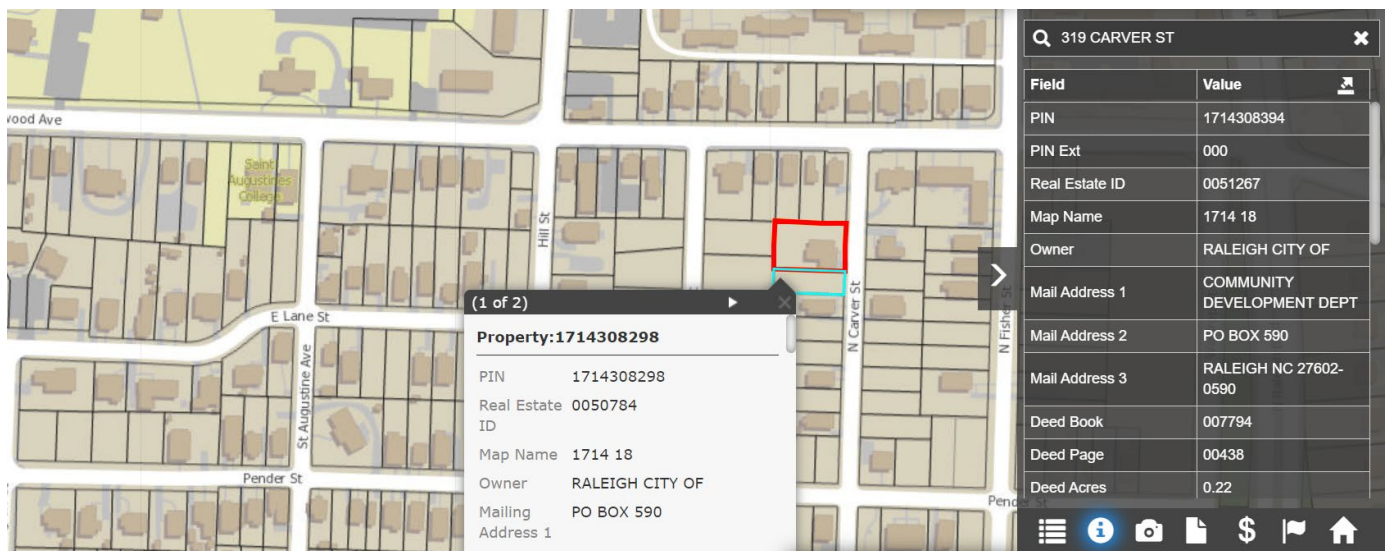
#### **Public Comment - 319 N. Carver Street - Rehabilitation vs. Demolition (Mayor Baldwin)**

Staff Resource: Larry Jarvis, Housing & Neighborhoods, 996-6947, [larry.jarvis@raleighnc.gov](mailto:larry.jarvis@raleighnc.gov)

During the Public Comment portion of the meeting, Ms. Octavia Rainey advocated for the rehabilitation of the property located at 319 N. Carver Street as opposed to proceeding with demolition. Rehabilitation of the structure, while feasible, does not take into consideration other, strategic policy objectives and trade-offs related to affordable housing programs. The City owns the adjacent vacant lot at 317 N. Carver Street, but that lot is unbuildable because of a utility easement located on the southern boundary of the parcel. Combining the parcels at 317 and 319 N. Carver Street into one larger lot, or relocating the lot line that separates the parcels, would open up additional affordable housing production opportunities.

Based on initial assessments it appears that at least three new units would be possible to be constructed on a reconfigured parcel structure. Possible options include a duplex and an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). Staff recommends an RFP process to select a non-profit affordable housing developer to develop a rental project on the site. The City owns a limited number of other vacant sites where rental development with long term affordability is recommended. Staff anticipates a presentation to Council on this topic in the near future.

The structure at 319 N. Carver Street was originally built in 1960 and moved to the existing site and rehabilitated in the 1990's following Hurricane Fran. Over the years the structure has been repaired several times and has now been vacant for more than three years. While the one unit can be preserved, the potential for a new, three-unit option would be precluded with preservation, and the City would still possess an undevelopable vacant lot that will have to be maintained. Below is a location map of the parcels in question.



**Vicinity Map, 319 N. Carver Street**

*(No attachment)*



# Council Member Follow Up



Raleigh

## MEMO

TO: Marchell Adams-David, City Manager

FROM: Kate Pearce, Planning Supervisor, PRCR

CC: Tansy Hayward, Assistant City Manager  
Oscar Carmona, Director, PRCR  
Stephen Bentley, Assistant Director, PRCR  
Sally Thigpen, Assistant Director, PRCR

DEPARTMENT: Parks Recreation and Culture Resources (PRCR)

DATE: January 28, 2021

SUBJECT: Peace Pole/Garden Follow Up

### Introduction

At the January 19, 2021 meeting of the Raleigh City Council, Mayor Baldwin requested staff review, evaluate and make a recommendation regarding designating one of the gardens at Dix Park as a 'Peace Garden.' This memo is in response to that request.

### Request

Since the City purchased the Dix Park property in 2015, staff has received numerous requests for use and designation of indoor and outdoor space at Dix Park for a variety of purposes. These requests range from large institutions interested in occupying building space to smaller community groups requesting the designation of memorial and honorary gardens. Absent a process, staff requests interested parties submit a letter of interest as record for future consideration. To date, there have been ten letters of interest submitted to staff.

Staff followed up with the petitioning group to better understand the request and expectations. While Dix is the preferred location, due to the regional and state-wide draw of the park, other parks may be considered. Designation of a 'Peace Garden' and installation of a Peace Pole is central to the request. The petitioning group is not necessarily interested in an adopt-a-park model where volunteers would help maintain the space. The intent is that the City establish and maintain the garden as a commitment to peace and healing the community from recent events.

Regarding the specific request for designating one of the gardens at Dix Park as a peace garden, there are a few practical considerations. Currently, there is only one small semi-formal garden space at the park. This is the pollinator garden located in front of the Flower Cottage, which is leased to the Dix Park Conservancy. Staff would need to identify an appropriate location and install a garden-scape to create and designate a 'Peace Garden'. Funding does not

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currently exist to establish additional gardens at the park. Existing gardens in other parks may be an option to consider until an appropriate space at Dix Park is available.

Staff will recommend to the petitioning group two options to consider:

1. If the petitioning group sees Dix Park as the preferred location the group can wait until the future partnership model is created for the park as other groups are currently doing.
2. Work with PRCR on potentially identifying another location within the park system to designate as a peace garden and install a pole.