

Parks and Natural History

A self-guided tour of downtown Raleigh

This tour was developed and narrated by the **Raleigh Digital Connectors** program, a nationally-renowned program providing technology and leadership training for youths ages 14-18.



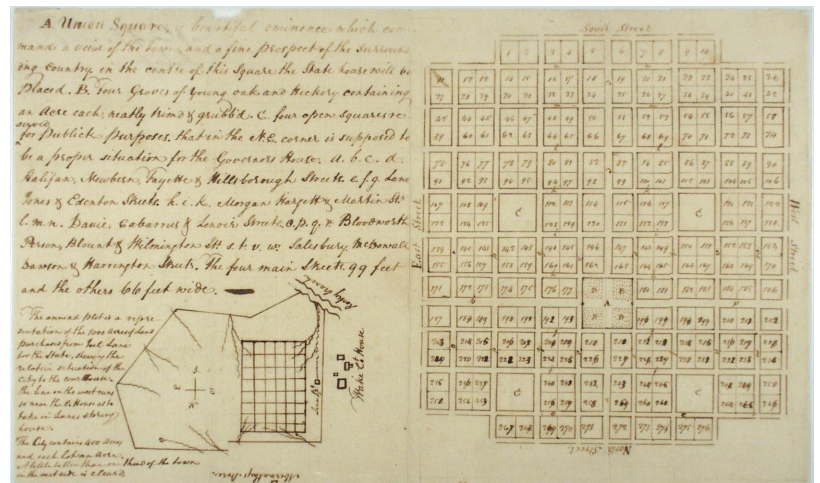
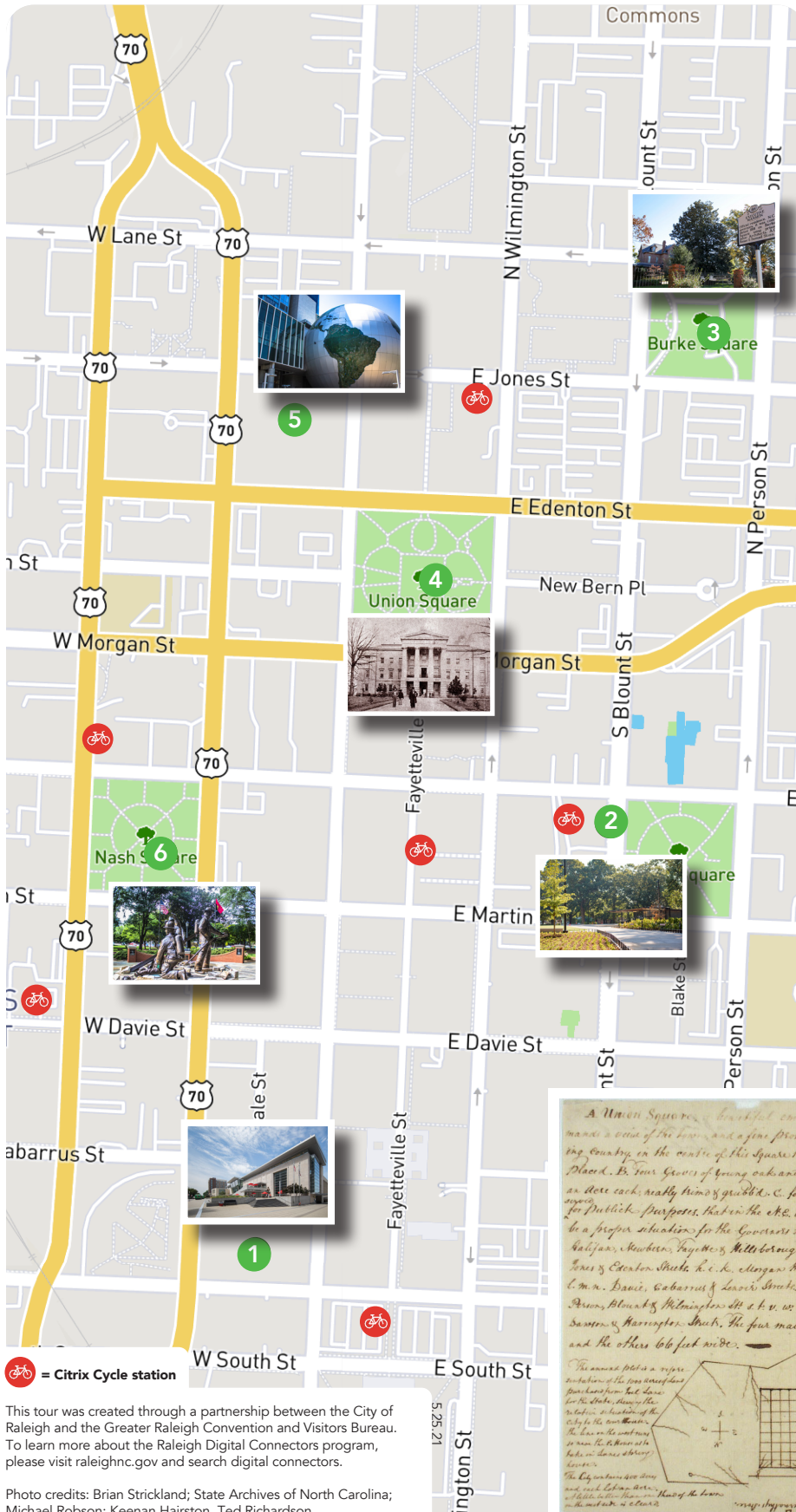
1 RALEIGH CONVENTION CENTER

500 S. Salisbury St.—
Introduction

Welcome to the Parks and Natural History Tour! Today you will learn history about Raleigh's four original parks, travel to each of them and discover their importance today. You will also pass by the world's largest globe replica.

To get started let's talk a little bit about the original city plan for Raleigh.

Surveyor and former North Carolina state senator William Christmas was hired to develop the plan for the city. Christmas modelled his design after William Penn's Philadelphia Plan, creating a one-square-mile grid of perpendicular streets with integrated green space, centered on Union Square (now Capitol Square), which was designated as the site of the State Capitol building. Four, 99-foot-wide thoroughfares acted as the main arteries: Fayetteville, Halifax, Hillsborough and New Bern streets. Each of the city's quadrants contained a four-acre square with public green space, named after state leaders Richard Caswell (northwest of Union Square), Thomas Burke (northeast), Alfred Moore (southeast) and Abner Nash (southwest). Each featured diagonal pedestrian pathways, lawns and commemorative elements, including statuary and civic art.



This tour was created through a partnership between the City of Raleigh and the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau. To learn more about the Raleigh Digital Connectors program, please visit raleighnc.gov and search digital connectors.

Photo credits: Brian Strickland; State Archives of North Carolina; Michael Robson; Keenan Hairston, Ted Richardson



2 MOORE'S SQUARE

200 S. Blount St.

Named after Alfred Moore, a former associate justice of the Supreme Court, Moore Square is a time-honored, historic district in downtown Raleigh which, like

Nash Square, has remained as public parkland. It comprises a one-block radius on all sides of the square and is across from historic City Market. Since 1792, Moore Square has been a place of gathering, reflection, entertainment and recreation for the citizens of Raleigh. The four-acre downtown urban green space was originally conceived as one of five public green spaces for the City of Raleigh. Moore Square was closed in 2017 to allow for renovations. The renovations were the result of a competition held in 2011 to redesign the square. The Square opened again in Aug. 2019 as a 21st-century space with the surrounding district buzzing with life and nightlife. It is a charming mix of old and new, with cobblestone streets juxtaposed against modern upgrades like the new GoRaleigh Transit Station, a multimillion-dollar renovation that serves more than 15,000 commuters each day. Feel free to stroll through the park and enjoy the beauty and vitality of Moore Square and, if you're hungry, stop by Square Burger.



3 BURKE SQUARE AND THE EXECUTIVE MANSION

200 N. Blount St.

The N.C. Executive Mansion is the official residence of the governor of North Carolina and his or her family. The executive mansion

is a beautiful example of Queen Anne architectural style because of its asymmetrical build and highly-ornamented facades. Construction began in 1883 and the structure was designed by architects Samuel Sloan and A.G. Bauer. The executive mansion is not only home to the governor, it is considered the "people's house." The building is also a meeting space, historic site and an elegant event location and thousands of visitors tour the mansion each year. Gov. Roy Cooper is the 70th governor to hold the office in North Carolina since the end of the American Revolution and the 30th governor to live in the mansion. It was described by President Franklin Roosevelt as being "the most beautiful governor's residence interior in America." Admission is free; however tour reservations must be made at least two weeks in advance and hours are limited and vary seasonally.



4 NORTH CAROLINA STATE CAPITOL

1 E. Edenton St.

The North Carolina State Capitol has been the capitol building of the state since it opened in June 1840. It is one of the finest and best-preserved examples of a major civic building in the Greek Revival style of architecture because of its symmetrical shape, pilasters and more. It is a National Historic Landmark, and at one point, the building housed the office of the Governor, the Supreme Court, state library, state geologist's office and the chambers of the General Assembly, as well as various other state offices. The building has been restored to its 1840 to 1865 appearance.



5 NATURE RESEARCH CENTER AND THE DAILY PLANET

121 W. Jones St.

Opened in 2012, the Nature Research Center is the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences' latest wing. Through exhibits,

programs and field experiences, visitors are provided with opportunities to get up close and personal with science and nature. In these exhibits, you can explore not just what we know about the natural world but how we know it—the tools, techniques and real live scientists that study the past, present and future of our planet. From meteorites to mammoths, from deep-sea submersibles to citizen science, the Nature Research Center brings it all to life, right before your eyes. With state-of-the-art laboratories, research opportunities, interactive exhibits and live presentations given by top scientists, the Nature Research Center makes science a tangible and enjoyable experience and helps visitors understand the practical applications of science in their daily lives. On the corner of the museum is the Daily Planet. Despite its jaw-dropping size, the Daily Planet is not the world's largest globe (which is in New York), but it is larger than the world's largest rotating globe (which is in Maine). The Daily Planet is 72 feet tall which is as tall as almost 13 humans, and its placement—wedged against the side of a building in Raleigh as if it rolled there—somehow makes it look even more colossal. The Daily Planet houses a multimedia theater-of-sorts with a 2,000-square-foot video screen that projects science presentations and nature images. Outside, the globe is a hollow steel ball covered in hi-res satellite photos of the Earth. The images were rolled onto the globe's exterior like a billboard—which means that the Daily Planet could someday be transformed into another planet if we tire of looking at our own.



6 NASH SQUARE

200 S. McDowell St.

Named after Abner Nash, the second governor of North Carolina, Nash Square fulfills its intended use as public parkland.

Located just across Hargett St. from City Hall, this lush landscape contains lawn, a variety of perennials and many native shade trees, including oaks and magnolias. The four sections of the park are symmetrical, with a network of paths composed of two concentric circles crossed by perpendicular walkways that connect to the four corners of the square, each one splitting in two near the site's edge to provide multiple entry points from the perimeter. Four additional paths act as the main entrances to the park, bisecting each of the sidewalks bordering the square along Dawson, Hargett, McDowell and Martin streets. Central to the park is a small plaza that houses the 50-foot-wide N.C. Fallen Firefighters Foundation Memorial. Dedicated in 2006, it features a bronze sculpture depicting four firefighters atop a hexagonal cement slab. The sculpture is surrounded by a low, segmented brick wall inscribed with the names of firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty. Feel free to enjoy the beauty and history of this beloved square.