

Annual Report



2018
2019



RALEIGH

Parks,
Recreation and
Cultural Resources
parks.raleighnc.gov



It is with great pleasure we present the 2018-2019 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department Annual Report highlighting our many significant accomplishments over the past year.

Planning and implementation continued to move forward on capital and bond projects. Please visit our website at <https://www.raleighnc.gov/parks> and search “current projects” to follow the progress.

- **Dorothea Dix Park’s master plan** was unanimously adopted by the Raleigh City Council after 22 months of public input. Looking ahead, Phase 1 of the Plan includes 5 major projects that will enhance the visitor’s experience.
- **Pullen Aquatics Center** reopened in June 2019 after a major renovation that will allow the Center to remain the City of Raleigh’s premier competitive aquatic venue for years to come.
- Over 1,500 people provided their input during the **Dog Park Study** – a Raleigh Parks initiative to help create safe and engaging park spaces for people with (and without!) dogs. Staff was able to connect with over 4,000 residents at our 7 pop-up dog park events throughout the summer.
- **Volunteers** gave over 140,000 hours - assisting with park maintenance and beautification, coaching athletic teams, helping at special events and keeping our greenway trails and parks clean and safe through the Adopt-A-Trail and Adopt-A-Park programs.
- Opening in Summer 2019, **Moore Square** improvements include a dignified border framed with North Carolina granite, an expansive event lawn, a food service kiosk, an interactive water feature, grove rooms and a natural play area.

We will continue to work hard to provide a model parks system for citizens of Raleigh to enjoy and be proud of. We are committed to maintaining our parks and facilities in a clean and safe manner, to preserving and protecting our natural environment and providing the highest quality recreation opportunities for citizens of every age and ability.

Diane Sauer, our former Director who retired in May of 2019 after a 33-year career of service, set the direction for the Department to maintain our parks and facilities in a clean and safe manner, to preserve and protect our natural environment and provide the highest quality recreation opportunities for citizens of every age and ability. Our staff remain committed to that direction and continue to work hard providing a model parks system where both citizens of Raleigh and visitors alike can enjoy an exceptional experience.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank City Council, our volunteers serving as appointed advisory board and commission members, and the citizens of Raleigh whose continued and unwavering support make these accomplishments possible.

Sincerely,

Scott Payne, Interim Director

Letter

from the Interim Director

Together we connect and enrich our community
through exceptional experiences.

Contents

Park Projects 6

Volunteer Contributions..... 18

City of Oaks Foundation 20

The Numbers 22

Campaigns and Initiatives 23

Keeping in Touch 32

Boards and Commissions 34



Park Projects

Sunflowers

The Dix Park team, along with Public Utilities and the Office of Sustainability, quietly planted a 5 acre sunflower field in summer 2018. Once they bloomed and were “discovered” the sunflowers at Dix Park attracted people from around the city, county and throughout the state with about 30,000 visitors and over 3 million social media hits.

Final Community Meeting

In early February 2019, around 15,000 community members attended an immersive multi-media event to present the final draft of the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan before it went to Raleigh City Council for a vote. Citizens explored the Master Plan through visual displays and park elements that brought the outside in and highlighted the various landscapes and program themes in the plan.



Dreamville

The Dreamville Festival – featuring hip-hop artists from NC native, J. Cole’s music label – hosted over 39,000 attendees for a day of music, art and culture.

This event established a

framework for future festivals of this scale to have a home in the City of Oaks.

Daffodils

Raleigh Parks commissioned a special bulb-planting machine that planted thousands of daffodil bulbs in a matter of minutes leaving the field at Dix Park seemingly undisturbed. In early March 2019 a spectacular ribbon of yellow was sweeping through Flowers Field at Dorothea Dix Park attracting thousands of visitors to the park.



Dix Park

Program and Events Highlights



Dix Park

Master Plan Adoption

On February 19, 2019 Raleigh City Council unanimously adopted the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan, directing City staff to develop an implementation plan for Phase 1. The Master Plan serves as the overall vision and guide that the City will use as a framework to create Dorothea Dix Park. The chance to create a new urban park this size in the center of a city is remarkable—and simply unparalleled in the United States today. The Master Plan is just the beginning of what will be an exciting, inclusive process to realize the greatest potential of Dix Park for many years to come.

Next Steps for Dorothea Dix Park Planning

The Master Plan recommends five major projects in Phase 1:

- Restoration and enhancement of the Rocky Branch Creek
- Restoration and enhancement of the Historic Cemetery
- Renovation and/or demolition of buildings in the early transfer from the State
- Creation of the Gateway plaza entrance and play area along Lake Wheeler Road
- Creation of a multi-use path along Lake Wheeler Road inside the park boundaries to connect the Walnut Creek Greenway to the Rocky Branch Greenway

Phase 1 projects are expected to break ground within 2-4 years, depending on funding, results of future planning studies, and Council direction. Park improvements to enhance the visitor experience will begin this year, which could include wayfinding signage, park amenities and trail maintenance – along with ongoing programs and events.



Pullen Aquatic Center re-opened in June of 2019, and is the City of Raleigh’s premier competitive aquatic venue. The facility hosts several large-scale swimming competitions annually. The Pullen Aquatic Center Renovation project, a \$5 million dollar investment, includes new roofing, skylight replacement, building envelope, and structural repair, replacement of natatorium lighting, diving board replacement, replacement of HVAC units, pool gutter system replacement and the addition of a natatorium dehumidification system.

This project is funded by the 2014 bond referendum and intended to provide nine renovated fields, a renovated maintenance building area, and improved ADA access to all nine fields and public facilities. The complex was developed in 1992 and was a game changer for the softball community. Housing nine lighted softball fields capable of accommodating youth fast-pitch to adult men’s slow-pitch programs, WCAC quickly became a destination facility. The complex has served two primary roles over the last 20+ years. It is the host venue for the City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department Adult Softball programs where over 800 athletes play nightly over two seasons, and serves as a tournament destination for all varieties of competitive softball generating \$2.5 million annual economic impact.



Walnut Creek

Athletic Complex



Opening in Summer 2019, Moore Square improvements include a dignified border framed with North Carolina granite, an expansive event lawn, a food service kiosk, an interactive water feature, grove rooms and a natural play area. All this, while still ensuring the beautiful bordering grove of 100+ year old oak trees remains untouched. Moore Square will distinguish Raleigh as a city with premier urban public spaces and act as a catalyst for downtown growth and economic development. Programming for Moore Square will be engaging, interactive, and welcoming while featuring annual programs and events. Since 1792, Moore Square has been a place of gathering, reflection, entertainment, and recreation for the citizens of Raleigh. This 4-acre downtown urban green space was originally conceived as one of 5 public green spaces for the City of Raleigh.



Mary Belle Pate has served as a strong community advocate in this area, and the park bearing her name opened in Spring 2019. Formerly known as Sierra Drive Park, this is a 2.42-acre parcel in Southwest Raleigh located in the northeast corner of Sierra and Lineberry drives. A master plan for the park was adopted in November of 2014 by the Raleigh City Council to guide the future development of this property. This park includes a picnic shelter, comfort station, basketball court, playground, multipurpose open lawn area, and associated parking.



Mary Belle Pate Park

Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are contributing their time, talent and resources to make a difference in our community. Parks and cultural offerings across our City are made stronger by the spirited involvement of individuals, corporate groups, schools and community organizations.

Volunteers assist with park maintenance, coach athletic teams, support at special events and keep our greenway trails clean and safe through the Adopt-A-Trail program.

Over the past year, nearly **16,000** volunteers gave more than **140,000** hours of service within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources department. These volunteer hours amount to a value of **\$3.4** million across more than **2,700** events.



Volunteer Contributions



City of Oaks Foundation

Summer camp and outdoor nature play improve kids' physical and mental health as they build confidence and develop social skills. Our department has aligned with the City of Oaks Foundation to offer a program of financial assistance that allows kids to attend camp free or at little cost.

The nonprofit foundation provided almost \$16,000 in financial aid for youth aged 5-13 to participate in Raleigh's outdoor camps and nature programs in 2018. This made camp possible for over 75 kids in the Raleigh and Wake County area. The foundation has also partnered with local business to provide over \$35,000 for teen programs and summer youth employment through the City of Raleigh.

The foundation also is active in conservation, so that everyone can experience our parks, greenways, nature preserves, farms and community gardens. The foundation has donated acres of land to Raleigh for parks and greenspace and is working right now to transform their beautiful Joslin Garden property into a future public garden and park. In the past year the organization has:

- Hosted three Open Garden Days in the beautiful Joslin Garden, as well as an Easter Egg Hunt and a special Mother's Day Tea at the Joslin House in the spring;
- Hosted plein air painting sessions in connection with the Visual Art Exchange at Joslin Garden, field trips for school groups and seniors, and a special neighborhood Halloween event featuring live owls, bats, and other creepy creatures to benefit local animal rescue groups in the fall;
- Facilitated the fundraising efforts for local volunteer groups aligned with the Raleigh's parks, such as the Friends of Millbrook Dog Park and the Raleigh Riders program, which is providing assisted biking through local parks;
- Supported numerous youth programs around the city dedicated to getting youth – and adults – outside, active, and connected to nature.



The Numbers

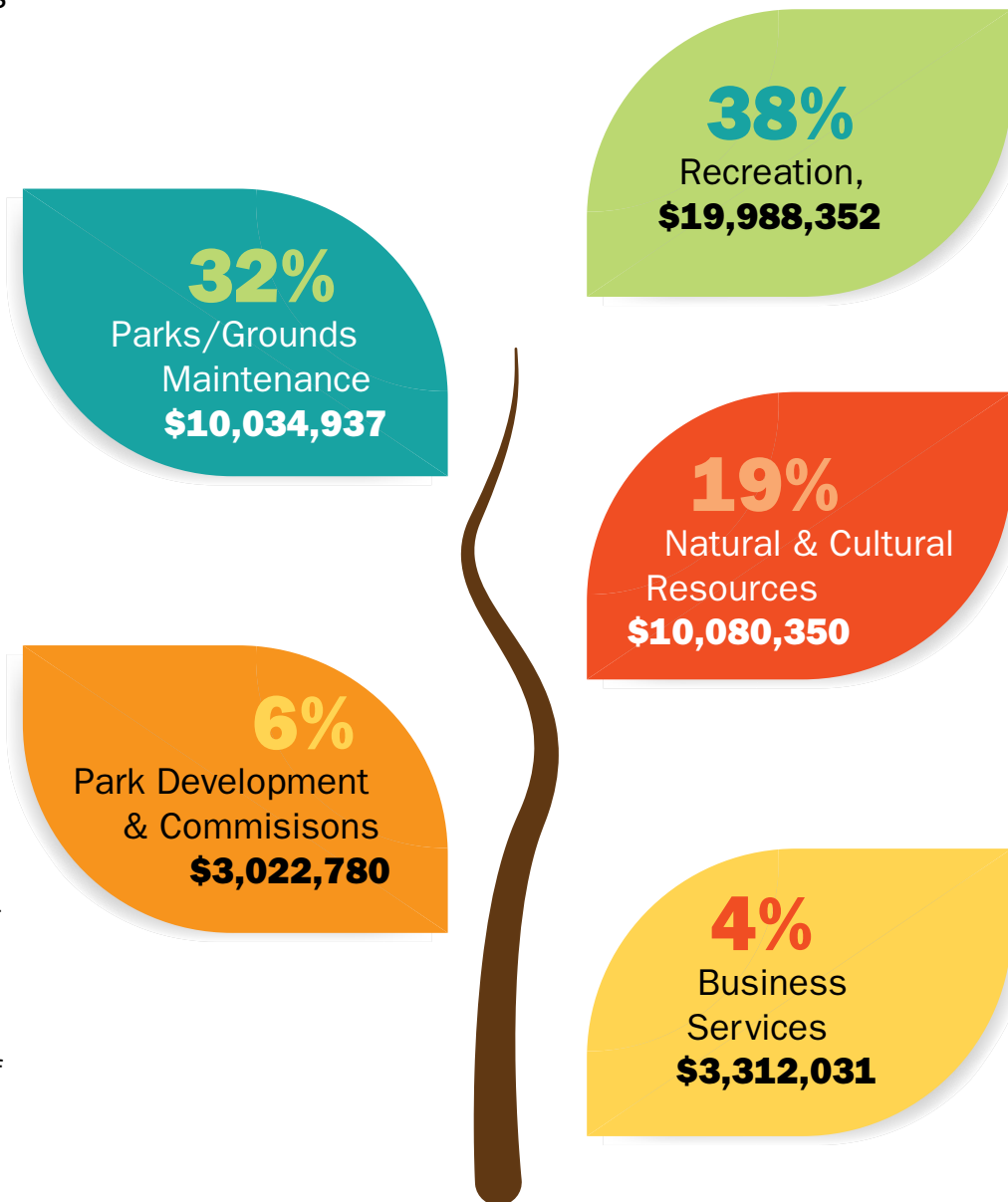
The PRCR Department's 2018-2019 operating budget is **\$52.4M**.

The Department's Capital Improvement Budget for FY19 is **\$26M** and includes **\$20M** for 2014 bond projects.

Play It Forward

The City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department strives to ensure that no one is denied the benefits of public recreation due to the inability to pay. In 2018-2019:

564 families were assisted, with the Amount of Awards totaling **\$163,094.00**



Campaigns and Initiatives

Heart Health Month



February is American Heart Health awareness month and to encourage patrons to access and use our Community Center Fitness Rooms, Raleigh Parks **waived all monthly fees**. We had **692** individuals who took advantage of the promotional program this year!



Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department launched the social media campaign: **Hide and Seek** in Raleigh Parks. Each week, in the month of July, we hid prize tickets in various Raleigh Parks. We intentionally chose both recognizable, iconic locations and those that are hidden gems. Photo clues were posted on our social media channels until the prize ticket was found. The first person to find the ticket and post a photo tagging Raleigh Parks on social media could claim their prize! We were able to use social media engagement to highlight unique park amenities and share information about the parks in a fun and creative way! Eight unique park locations and activities were promoted across social media platforms, leading to **54,567** total impressions.”

Hide and Seek

Campaigns and Initiatives (cont.)

Based on citizen feedback, spatial data analysis, and a review of nationwide trends in dog park planning, the City of Raleigh developed a strategy to create safe and engaging park spaces for people with (and without) dogs. This study includes analysis of the geographic distribution of dog parks throughout the city, opportunities & access in urban as well as suburban areas, & potential tools to encourage publicly accessible dog runs as part of new development. We met over 4,000 people (and their pups!) at our 7 dog park events throughout the summer. 1,500 of you shared your ideas and opinions in our community survey.



Pop-Up Dog Park

program and study



In Fall of 2018 Peach Road Community Center won the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association’s award in Arts & Humanity for its honeycomb mural painted on the exterior of their handball court. Partnering with Raleigh Arts and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resource’s Volunteer services we created a mural with the help of about 100 youth and 15 adult volunteers to solve a problem of continuous graffiti while engaging the diverse community around Peach Road.



Peach Road

Mural project

Roberts Park

Health Truck Rodeo

The Raleigh Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in partnership with Raleigh, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources hosted its first Health Truck Rodeo at Roberts Park Community Center on April 13, 2019. This event included a host informative talks, health booths and community fun! This event included 50 volunteers of professional services and event day assistance. To keep in the theme of being a healthy event, the food truck offered Mediterranean cuisine and no fried options. This event encouraged and promoted adopting a positive and healthy lifestyle for the entire family. Some Participants Included:

NC EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program)

- Raleigh Fire Department
- NC Minority Diabetes Prevention Program
- Strategic Behavioral Center
- City of Raleigh Housing and Neighborhood Department
- Wake Med
- Duke Raleigh Hospital
- Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC



Pop-up Studios



What would you make if an arts center moved into your neighborhood for two months? Pop-Up Studios transform your community center into a mobile art studio where you can take free one day art classes. Whether you have just an hour to commit to trying something new or you want to spend as much time as you can being creative with your neighbors and our teaching artists, the Pop-up Studios are for you! We provide the teaching artists and supplies, and patrons find the timeslot and topic that work for their interests and schedule.



Satisfaction Surveys

Raleigh residents who participate in online surveys help us learn whether we are meeting their needs. Their evaluation let us know whether we are providing the exceptional experiences they expect. Over the past year, we received about 7,200 completed surveys from our program participants. Overall, their satisfaction rating was 4.5 out of 5.0.

Get Social with Raleigh Parks

Get Social with Raleigh Parks: the department embraces social media to keep members of the community engaged and to help us stay informed about what matters to them. We look at social media as a customer service tool, allowing us to interact with citizens, receive feedback and share information.

Our online social media community has grown to **83,150** members.

Twitter **15,730** followers

Facebook **8,341** page likes

Pinterest **404** followers

Youtube **54,620** views

Instagram **4,055** followers

Join the conversation

Have a question about the parks? **Ask us.**

Have a shoutout about something fun in the parks? **Tell us.**

 **Facebook.com/raleighparks**

 **Twitter.com/raleighparks**

 **Instagram.com/raleighparks**

 **Pinterest.com/raleighparks**



Boards and Commissions

Raleigh City Council*

Mayor: Nancy McFarlane
Corey Branch
David Cox
Kay Crowder
Stef Mendell
Russ Stephenson
Nicole Stewart
Dickie Thompson

Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board Members*

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Vice Chair: Jennifer Wagner
Carol Ashcraft
Patrick Buffkin
Christopher Dillon
Kendall Harris
Dexter Hebert
Jennifer Hoverstad
Amy Simes
Lex Janes
Marsha Presnell Jennette
Dr. Carol Love
Clodagh Lyons-Bastian
David Millsaps
Dave Toms
Charles Townsend

Arts Commission Members

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Vice Chair: Moses T Alexander Greene
Natalie Bullock-Brown
Arrington Clark
David Clegg
Jamie Dawson
Laurent de Comarmond
Courtney Greer
Pam Hartley
Bain Jones
Judy Payne
Beth Khalifa
Andy Martin
Angela Salamanca
Patty Williams
Shelley Winters
R Gene Davis Jr
Clodagh Lyons-Bastian,
PRGAB Liaison

PRCR Management Team

Director: Diane Sauer
Interim Director: Scott Payne
Assistant Director: Sally Thigpen
Assistant Director: Ken Hisler
Assistant Director: Stephen Bentley
Administration Superintendent:
Helene McCullough

Historic Resources and Museum Program Advisory Board

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Sally Greaser
Esther Hall
Holmes Harden
Matt Hobbs
Alicia McGill
Joe Mobley
Sam Mordecai
Edna Rich-Ballentine
Stephen Rabin
Jennifer Wagner, PRGAB Liaison

City of Raleigh Historic Cemetery Advisory Board

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Dr. Kimberly Muktarian
Shelby Reap
Caleb Smith

Public Art and Design Board

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Vice Chair: Laurent de Comarmond
Adam Cave
Susan Cannon
Linda Dallas
Lincoln Hancock
Kathleen Rieder

*at time of printing

