



JOHN CHAVIS MEMORIAL PARK

Cultural Heritage Interpretive Plan

May 21, 2021



John Chavis Memorial Park

View of downtown Raleigh from the park | Photo by Lift Aerial

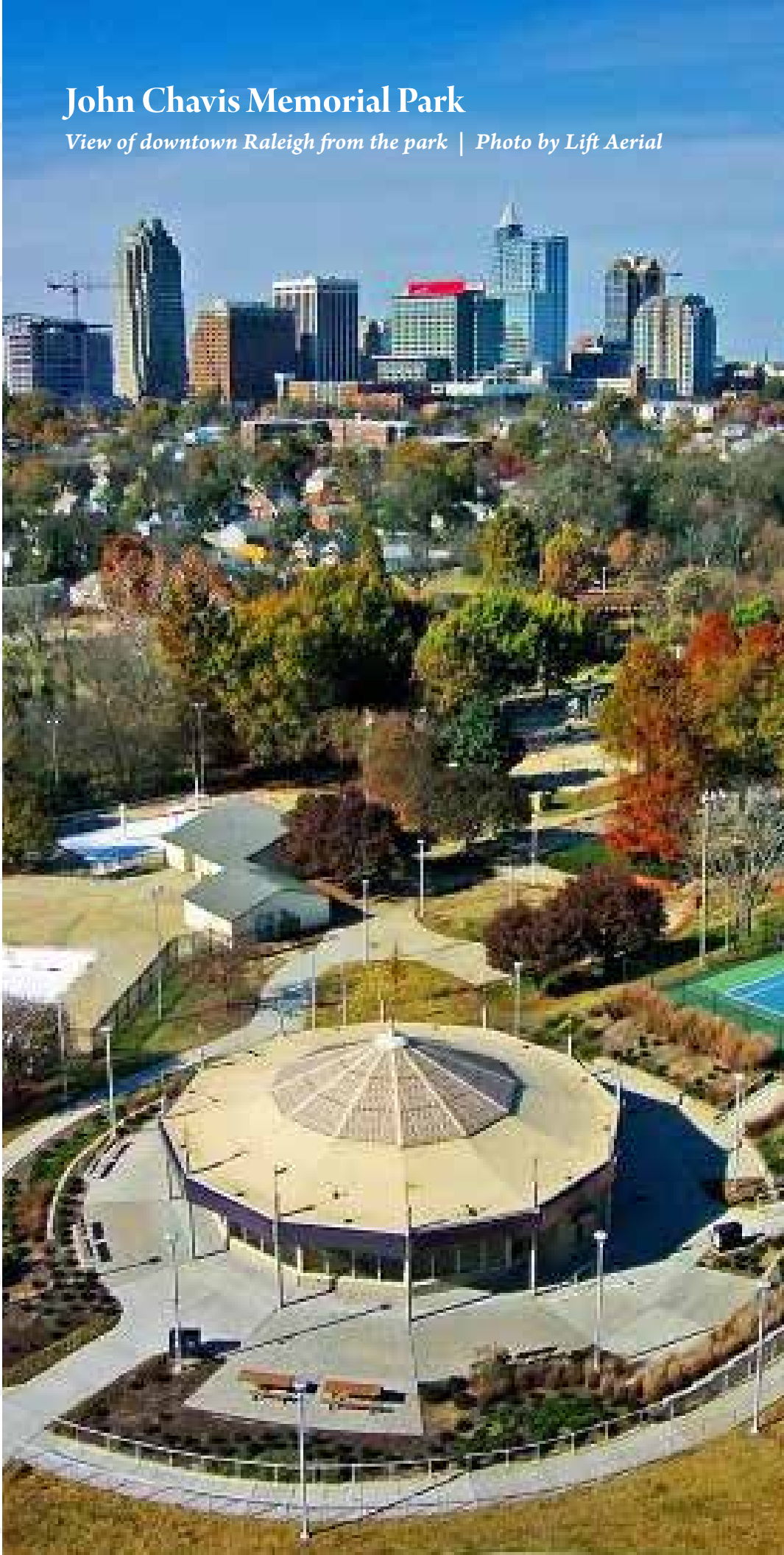


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Photo courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

Executive Summary

The purpose of this cultural heritage interpretive plan is to create a cohesive vision and approach for interpretation at John Chavis Memorial Park. The plan defines outcomes for interpretation—what visitors should understand about the park’s rich heritage, natural features, and community stories, as well as how these stories might inspire visitors to action. The plan organizes interpretive stories into a series of key messages. These messages are presented as the “big ideas,” or the most important broad take-away messages for visitors. The interpretive plan then makes recommendations for interpretive elements within the built environment, digital and interactive features, and future programming and events to reach patrons of all ages. In short, the interpretive plan creates a framework that should guide future investments and efforts related to interpretation at John Chavis Memorial Park.

Planning Foundation

The interpretive plan builds on previous planning efforts including the *John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan 2014* and the *Strategic Implementation Strategy*, both of which included comprehensive stakeholder engagement. Additionally, the plan takes into account work done by the South Park - East Raleigh Neighborhood Association related to the South Park Heritage Walk. It also builds on research completed as part of the park’s designation to the National Register of Historic Places.

Public Engagement

The interpretive planning process was guided by public input that included many forms of outreach and engagement including meetings (virtual and in person), stakeholder discussions, on-line information, hard-copy distribution for non-computer users, and display of concept designs. Public meetings were held at key points in the interpretive planning process to give members of the public an opportunity to learn about the project and provide feedback.

A community advisory committee helped to define outcomes and messages and provided input on concept designs and proposed programming. In addition, the City of Raleigh identified a design resource team made up of staff members from a range of departments to provide review of and input on the plan.

Visitor Outcomes

Growing from the park’s vision statement, previous planning efforts, and community stakeholder and city staff input, the interpretive plan defines visitor outcomes—what visitors should think, feel, and do as a result of interpretation—as follows:

- **Outcome 1:** Visitors should understand the park’s “hidden history,” or the cultural and historical significance of John Chavis Memorial Park.
- **Outcome 2:** Visitors should feel the park is a special place that welcomes everyone.
- **Outcome 3:** Visitors should feel the park is a symbol of African American community, agency, and identity.
- **Outcome 4:** Visitor should enjoy the park and be inspired to create and share their own memories through fun and engaging interpretive exhibits, programs, and events.
- **Outcome 5:** Visitors should engage as stewards, volunteers, and advocates of the park.

Interpretive Messages

Interpretive content is organized into a series of key messages. Interpretive elements, programs, and events are designed to convey these messages, both explicitly and implicitly, offering visitors layers of stories about the park, encouraging more discovery, and even inviting visitors to contribute to the story. These high-level messages are presented in the interpretive plan with the knowledge that additional stories and details will be layered into these “big ideas” as specific exhibit elements are further developed

in future phases of work. Additional details about these interpretive messages can be found in Section Three of this plan.

John Chavis: African American Teacher, Preacher, & Revolutionary War Veteran
John Chavis’ life illustrates the power of education, faith, and determination during a precarious time for free Black Americans before the Civil War.

John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
John Chavis Memorial Park stands as a symbol of African American agency and identity and remains a place of power and civic engagement for the local, regional, and even national Black community.

A Place to Gather & Celebrate
John Chavis Memorial Park is a beloved gathering place that reflects the importance of community, the power of collective memory, and the significance of connections to neighbors.

A Legacy of Service
During and after World War II, veterans from many wars were honored at the park through the War Mothers Memorial, the use of a military jet as an attraction, and public art featuring the story of the Tuskegee Airmen—the legendary World War II Black combat pilots who paved the way for integration of the Armed Forces.

Athletics & Athletes in the Park
John Chavis Memorial Park has a long history of fostering sports and athletics. Many notable professional athletes started their careers as youngsters in John Chavis Memorial Park.

Nature in My Neighborhood
Urban green spaces such as John Chavis Memorial Park contribute to the quality of life and well-being of the community. Little Rock Creek’s restoration is ensuring a healthy environment not only for people, but also for other living things.

Concept Designs

The interpretive plan makes recommendations for interpretive elements within the built environment, as well as digital and interactive features. These include:

- **Gateways:** Immersive entrance arches tell the story of John Chavis and imbue the park with memories of music in the park. QR codes link to additional digital content.
- **John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present Exhibit:** Large-scale prismatic panels convey the park’s historical and cultural significance. QR codes link to a digital timeline of the park’s development and oral histories.
- **Community Center Exhibits:** Exhibits, such as wall graphics and reader rails, in the new community center will cover multiple interpretive themes.
- **A Place to Gather & Celebrate Resbits:** Slat-wall resbits provide space to rest and recall fond memories of fun at the park. QR codes link to additional digital content.
- **Athletics at Play Trailhead:** A three-dimensional sculpture made of rectangular shapes of internally lit perforated metal tell the story of athletics in the park.
- **Interpretive Plinths:** Three-sided plinths dot the park and reveal stories about military service, the park’s natural features, and the historic carousel.
- **Nature in My Neighborhood Playscape & Bridge:** An immersive playscape features images of nature and augmented reality markers that reveal all the creatures that call Little Rock Creek home. A future bridge provides visual access to the creek and opportunities for programming.

Programs & Events

- The interpretive plan outlines potential programs and events at John Chavis Memorial Park for specific visitor segments including:
- General public (local neighbors to regional visitors)
 - Seniors and adults
 - Children and K-12 school groups
 - Young adults and college students

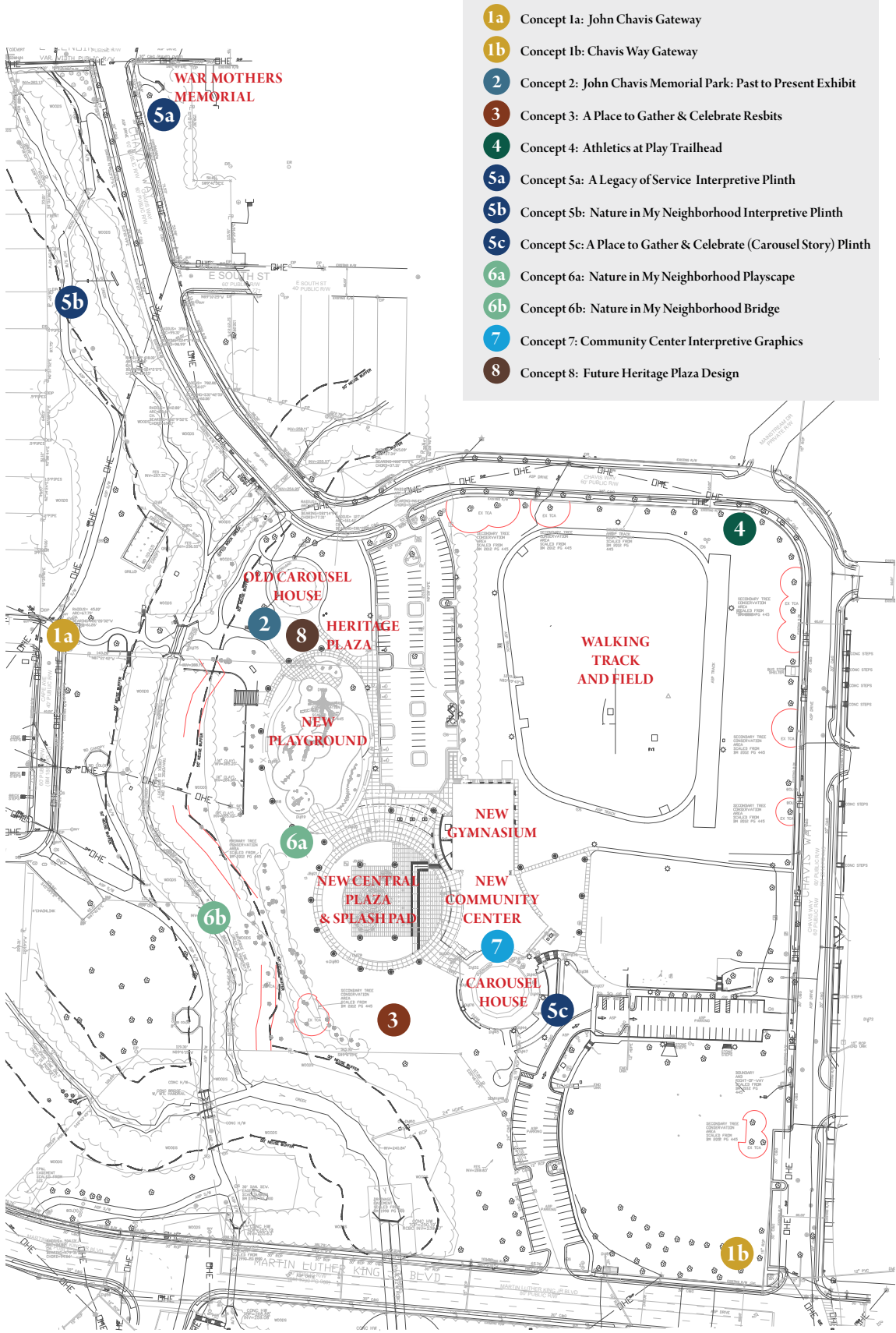
Recommendations include ideas for large public events such as Chavis Park Celebrates, music and dancing in the park, and a Veteran’s Day celebration. Other programs might include pop-up exhibits, a park stewardship day, self-guided and docent-led tours, and nature and history programs. The plan includes ideas for after-school and summer school programs, as well as school programs and family-focused programs. Nearly all recommendations include potential partnerships with local organizations including Shaw University and Saint Augustine’s University, among others.

Implementation Plan & Priorities

Finally, the document identifies investment priorities and creates a framework for how the plan might be implemented over time. As part of this plan’s development, one interpretive element was prioritized by stakeholders for immediate implementation. The John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present exhibit will be complete by spring 2021.

High-priority future elements include the John Chavis gateway, the interpretive plinths, a self-guided tour, and several new programs and events. The implementation plan lays the groundwork for improvements to interpretation over the next five years and beyond.

Interpretive Site Plan





SECTION ONE

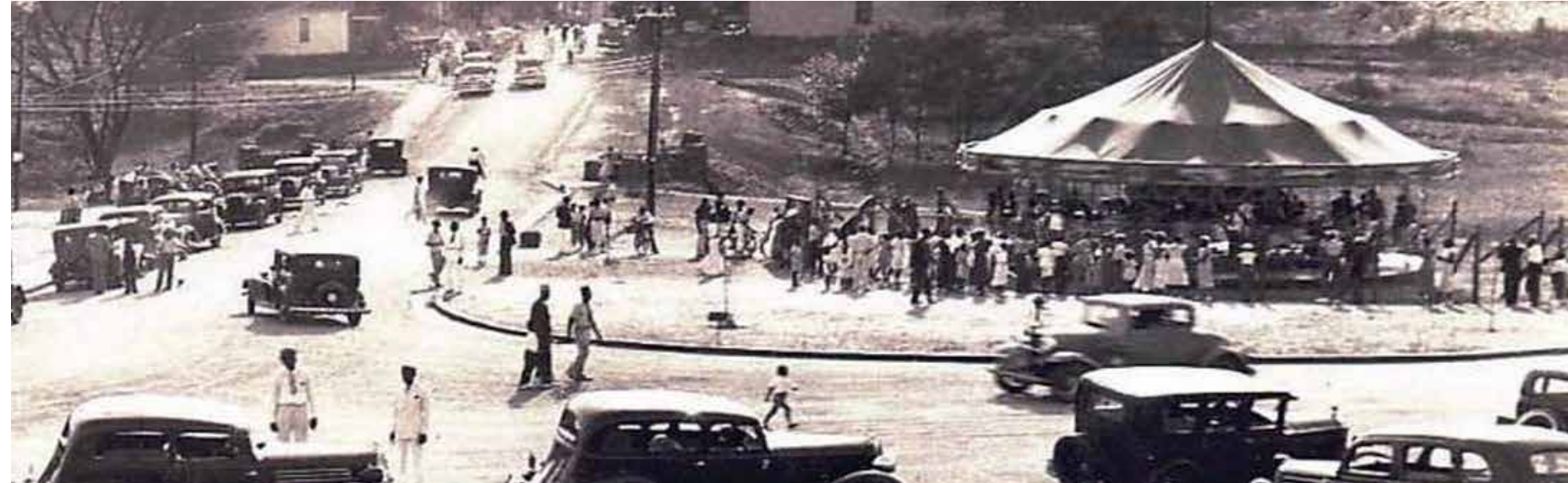
Planning Foundation



A Carousel Ride, 2013

Local Raleigh resident Bernestine Sanders rides the Allan Herschell Carousel inside the new carousel house following its dedication on April 20, 2013. | Photo by Robert Willett, "News & Observer"

John Chavis Memorial Park, late 1930s



The park was immediately a popular gathering place and social hub. | Photo courtesy of Esther Delaney

About the Park

Officially dedicated on May 10, 1938, John Chavis Memorial Park was built with local and federal support in the Southeast neighborhood of Raleigh. The park's namesake, John Chavis, was a Revolutionary War soldier, a teacher, a Presbyterian minister, and a free Black man in pre-Civil War America.

The park was originally built for Raleigh's Black population as a "separate but equal" facility, but its popularity rapidly spread. African Americans traveled from different parts of North Carolina, as well as from other states, to use the park because few recreational opportunities were open to Black Americans during segregation. Over time, the park's amenities grew to include a large swimming pool and bath house, a football field with seating, a baseball diamond, tennis courts, picnic shelters, a merry-go-round, and a playground. Later additions in the 1950s included a grandstand, a Korean War-era plane, and a miniature train.

During World War II, the U.S. Army built a tented camp in the park for Black service members to enjoy Raleigh while on official leave. In 1946, the federal government created a Veterans Annex at the park to provide housing for veterans. The city eventually converted the Annex building into a recreation center that was torn down in 1953 and replaced in 1961.

Several features in the park honor Black service members including the War Mothers Memorial and a public art piece that features the story of the Tuskegee Airmen—the legendary World War II Black combat pilots who paved the way for full integration of the Armed Forces.

As one of the few places Black Americans could gather together in public during segregation, the park became a significant and special place to the local, regional, and even national Black community. Many neighbors and community members have powerful stories about the park's impact on their lives and on their community. As a place not only for gathering but also for recreation and athletics, many professional athletes also trace their roots to John Chavis Memorial Park.

When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation, all parks integrated across the U.S. Since people could now use any park, fewer people visited John Chavis Memorial Park and it experienced a period of decline. In recent years, community activists advocated for the park's revitalization and recognition for its historic significance. In 2016, John Chavis Memorial Park was designated to the National Register of Historic Places. A new community center, playground, and other amenities will be completed in 2021 as the first phase in the park's renewal.



John Chavis Memorial Park has been home to the No. 2 Special Three Abreast Allan Herschell Carousel since 1937. | Photo by John Morris

Purpose of the Plan

This cultural heritage interpretive plan seeks to create a cohesive approach for the City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) Department to engage park visitors with the historic significance, natural features, and community stories related to John Chavis Memorial Park.

The interpretive plan builds on previous planning efforts including the *John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan 2014* and the *Strategic Implementation Strategy*, both of which included comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Additionally, the plan takes into account planning work done by the South Park - East Raleigh Neighborhood Association (SPERNA) around the South Park Heritage Walk. It also relies on research and documentation completed as part of the park's designation to the National Register of Historic Places.

Growing from the park's vision statement and previous planning efforts, the interpretive plan defines visitor outcomes—what visitors should understand about the park and how they might be inspired to care for it in the future. Recommendations in the plan are then built on these strategic outcomes.

Interpretive content is organized into a series of key messages. These messages are presented as the “big ideas,” or the most important broad take-away messages for visitors. Interpretive elements, programs, and events should convey these messages, both explicitly and implicitly, offering visitors layers of stories about the park, encouraging more discovery, and even inviting visitors to contribute to the story.

The interpretive plan also makes recommendations for interpretive elements within the built environment, digital and interactive features, and future programming and events to reach patrons of all ages. All recommendations are conceptual in nature. Thus, as these concepts are developed in the future, they will become further defined and will naturally evolve based on the design process, additional research, and community engagement.

Finally, the document identifies investment priorities and creates a framework for how the plan might be implemented over time.

In short, the interpretive plan builds on the master plan foundation to guide future interpretive efforts at John Chavis Memorial Park.

What is interpretation?

“... an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”

– Freeman Tilden, “Interpreting Our Heritage”



Source "John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan 2014"

Guidance from the Master Plan

In 2014, the City of Raleigh PRCR Department completed the *John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan*. The master plan provided significant guidance to this interpretive planning process, and this section of the interpretive plan summarizes the relevant guidance and recommendations starting with the vision statement.

Vision Statement

John Chavis Memorial Park is a vibrant community center, downtown attraction, and regional destination. The park celebrates the rich history, culture, and arts of the surrounding neighborhoods and the City of Raleigh, and offers wonderful public recreation opportunities, event spaces, and programs that foster community life. A place of pride and profound remembrance, the park celebrates the life and work of educator John Chavis, recognizes the community's contribution to World War II, and honors the significance of the park's history to the African American community during and following segregation.

John Chavis Memorial Park will always offer a safe and welcoming gathering space where family and friends of all cultures come to play, relax, learn, and celebrate the big events and small, meaningful moments of life. The park grounds provide a beautiful, clean, and refreshing refuge, with access to nature and an expansive view of the

downtown Raleigh skyline. Park features and programs promote fitness, health, and wellness by offering a range of recreational activities for people of all ages and abilities. Just a few steps from downtown, the park is always full of activity, inspired by innovative programming that is interactive, fun, and dynamic.

Goals (related to interpretive planning)

- Honor the life and work of John Chavis, the community's contribution to World War II, and the significance of the park's history to the African American community.
- Increase creek access, visibility, and environmental education opportunities.
- Support community events and gathering by incorporating flexible spaces and utilities into future park improvements.
- Promote sustainability in park design and maintenance to create a beautiful, clean, safe, and welcoming environment.

Honoring the Past

Park improvements will honor the past by retaining early park features, honoring former features, and memorializing significant events, stories, and people.

"A place of pride and profound remembrance, the park celebrates the life and work of educator John Chavis, recognizes the community's contribution to World War II, and honors the significance of the park to the African American community during and following segregation."

– "John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan 2014"

Guidance from the Master Plan

Specific recommendations related to interpretive planning include:

A. Retain all early park features in original locations

These original park features include the War Mothers Memorial, two picnic shelters that date to 1937, the original carousel building, the stone-step amphitheater, and the stone bridge and other stonework. The master plan recommends including themes from the War Mothers Memorial into the park’s interpretation. Recommendations for the original carousel building include possibilities for a cafe, exhibits, music, and flexible event space both within the building and in the surrounding plaza.

The master plan identifies the stone-step amphitheater as the site of many social gatherings, Easter egg hunts, and children’s events, and identifies it as a possible location for these types of events in the future, some of which could be interpretive.

B. Honor important former features

The master plan recommends interpreting the original pool complex, miniature train, airplane slide, and stadium and grandstand.

C. Memorialize significant events and people through public art and signage

The master plan recommends developing a cohesive cultural heritage interpretive plan (this plan) that recommends key events and people to honor and the means and methods by which this might be done in various locations throughout the park, noting specifically exhibits that are “high tech and high touch” and use state of the art technology.

Heritage Plaza is noted as a place of particular importance due to the presence of the historic carousel building and as the trailhead for the proposed South Park Heritage Walk, a project of SPERNA .

D. Incorporate findings from historic designation process

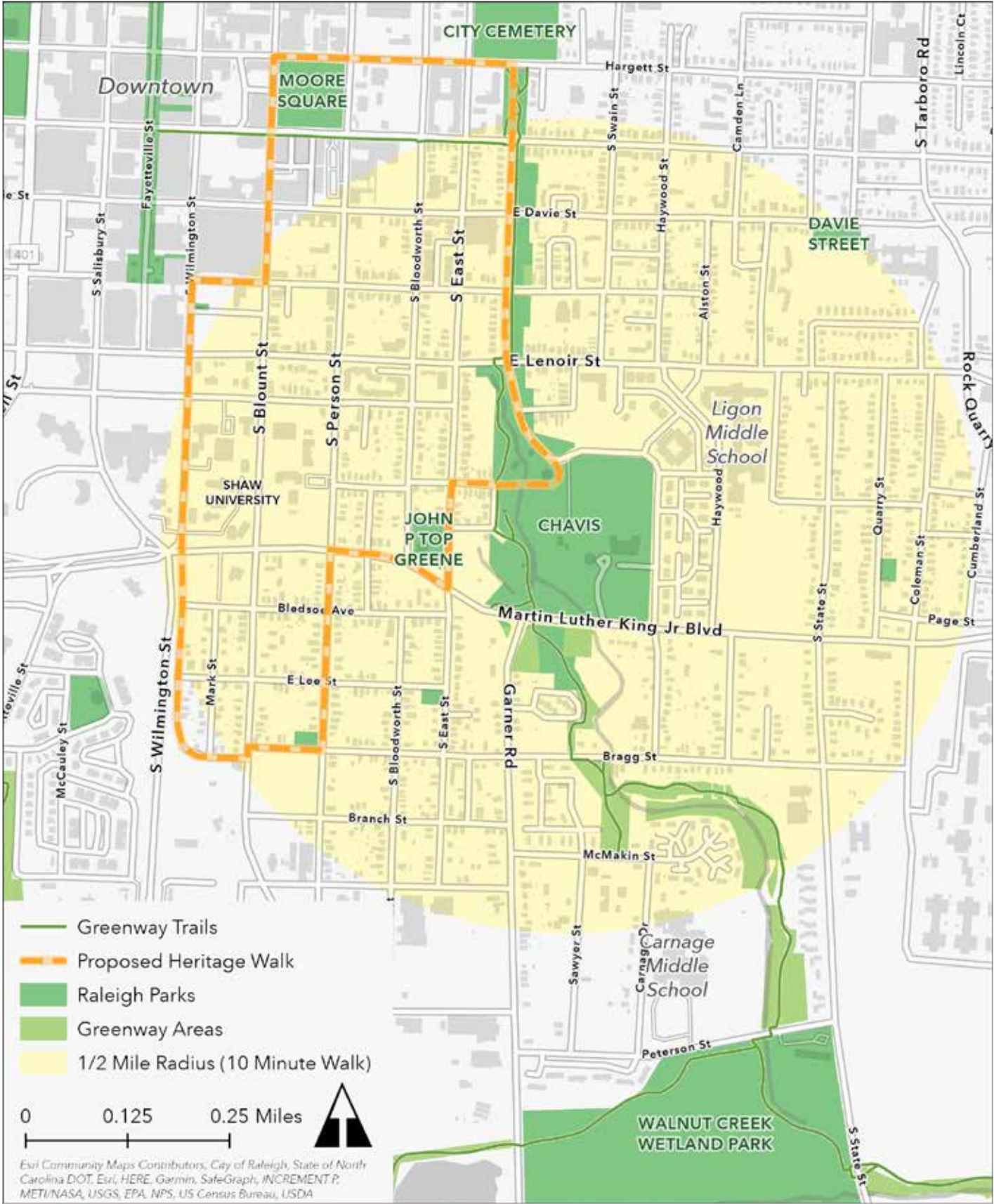
John Chavis Memorial Park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016 with a period of significance from 1937 to 1965.

Other Recommendations

(related to interpretive planning)

Interpretation is mentioned in a few other sections of the master plan including:

- **Community Center:** The master plan identifies the new community center as a location for possible interpretive elements. An interpretive public art piece designed by David Wilson is a feature of the new community center, but there may be other opportunities for interpretation in and around the building. Additionally, the nearby John P. “Top” Greene Community Center could be potential partner in offering interpretive programs for children and adults.
- **Play Corridor:** There may be opportunities to insert interpretive elements designed especially for children in the play area or connected to the creek corridor. The master plan specifically calls out opportunities that promote environmental education and integrating historical themes so that play and education are connected.



Source “John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan 2014”



Grandstand and Stadium Entrance | Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Digital Files

Guidance from the Master Plan

- **Creek Corridor:** The master plan recommends adding art, play, and interpretive features that celebrate the creek and encourage environmental education, specifically calling out additional creek access, crossings, viewing stations, and outdoor classrooms. The Walnut Creek Wetland Park, connected to John Chavis Memorial Park by the Greenway Trail, could be a potential partner in offering interpretive programs for children and adults.
- **Amenities:** The master plan suggests ways interpretation might be embedded in park amenities such as benches, shade structures, lighting, music and sound, and public art.
- **Events:** The master plan proposes development of events that encourage the park's historic use as a community gather place and link to broader Black history and culture in Raleigh. Many of these recommendations have already been implemented by the City of Raleigh PRCR Department, including an annual John Chavis celebration and dancing in the park (Teenage Frolics revival).
- **Sustainable Design:** The master plan encourages the use of green building techniques.

“Park improvements will honor the past by retaining early park features, honoring important former features, and memorializing significant events, stories, and people.”

*– “John Chavis Memorial Park
Revised Master Plan 2014”*

Guidance from the Strategic Implementation Study

The *Strategic Implementation Study* was developed in 2016 to further engage the community in developing John Chavis Memorial Park and to serve as a bridge between the *John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan 2014* and more detailed designs and construction.

The purpose of the study was to confirm and refine the assumptions and aspirations within the adopted master plan, as well as to uncover additional opportunities and challenges that might impact implementation. The study was comprised of four related tasks:

- Identify successful examples of related park features envisioned by the community
- Address challenges and opportunities to meet the goals of the master plan
- Propose phase 1 improvements within the \$12.5 million bond budget
- Plan for the long-term development and operation of the park

The study considered John Chavis Memorial Park in the context of all parks in the periphery of downtown Raleigh recommending that each park, including John Chavis Memorial Park, should celebrate its most unique qualities without replicating the character of nearby parks. Equally important, the study called attention to the exploding interest in greenways, bike share, and other alternative paths and modes of transportation in Raleigh and encouraged John Chavis Memorial Park’s development in the context of connections between destinations.

Specific recommendations related to interpretive planning include:

- **Community Center and Central Plaza:** The highest priorities for implementation were the new community

center and central plaza, both of which were under construction during the development of this interpretive plan. The study affirmed the “integration of art and culture into building design” for these spaces.

- **Original Carousel Building:** The study prioritized the revitalization of the original carousel building and Heritage Plaza as the significant remaining historic feature in the park and as the trailhead for SPERNA’s South Park Heritage Walk. The study suggested possible exhibits inside and outside the building, while also identifying the building as a key event space that would require any potential exhibits to be flexible.
- **Amusements:** Responding to public feedback, the study recommended installing a second amusement (the carousel being the current primary amusement). The study noted that any future amusement should relate to the park’s unique story, which might also create an opportunity for interpretation.
- **World War II:** The study mentioned the story of the Tuskegee Airmen as a cultural touchstone for many community members and encouraged interpretation of the park’s history connected to military service through a range of potential methods.
- **Creek Corridor:** The study furthered recommendations in the master plan related to the creek corridor by recommending the integration of viewing platforms and interpretive elements into bridges and proposed crossings, as well as considering play features in the play corridor that foster environmental education.

Strategic Implementation Study

Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources
Clearscapes
Skeo Solutions
Surface 678
Mary Ruffin Hanbury
Kofi Boone
Calyx

John Chavis Memorial Park

June 21, 2016



Public Engagement

There are many stakeholders vested in the development of the future of John Chavis Memorial Park. Public engagement for this planning process was built on this strong foundation and included many opportunities for the public to provide feedback during the interpretive planning and concept design process.

Public meetings were held at key points in the interpretive planning process to give members of the public an opportunity to learn about the project and provide feedback.

The interpretive planning process was also guided by a community advisory committee that reflected the diversity of residents and users within the park's two-mile service radius, as well as broader regional experts on the park's cultural and historical significance. In addition, the City of Raleigh identified a design resource team made up of staff members from a range of departments to provide review of and input on the plan. Appendix B lists all participants.

Engagement methods included meetings (virtual and in person), stakeholder discussions, on-line information, hard-copy distribution for non-computer users, and display of concept designs.

The project's phases included:

- **Phase 1:** September – October 2020
Research & Community Engagement Kick-off
- **Phase 2:** November – December 2020
Cultural Heritage Interpretive Plan & Concept Designs
- **Phase 3:** January – March 2021
Design Development for Phase 1 Implementation
- **Phase 4:** April – June 2021
Fabrication and Installation for Phase 1 Implementation

“The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department will work to ensure that citizens’ concerns, aspirations, and advice are reflected in the alternatives developed, and provide feedback on how the public influenced the decision-making process.”

*– “Public Participation Guidelines for Park Planning,”
City of Raleigh PRCR Department*

John Chavis Historic Marker

Community engagement led to the 2009 replacement of this historical marker, originally installed in 1938. | Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Digital Files



*The original historical marker, installed in 1938, used out-dated problematic language that needed to change.
Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Digital Files*

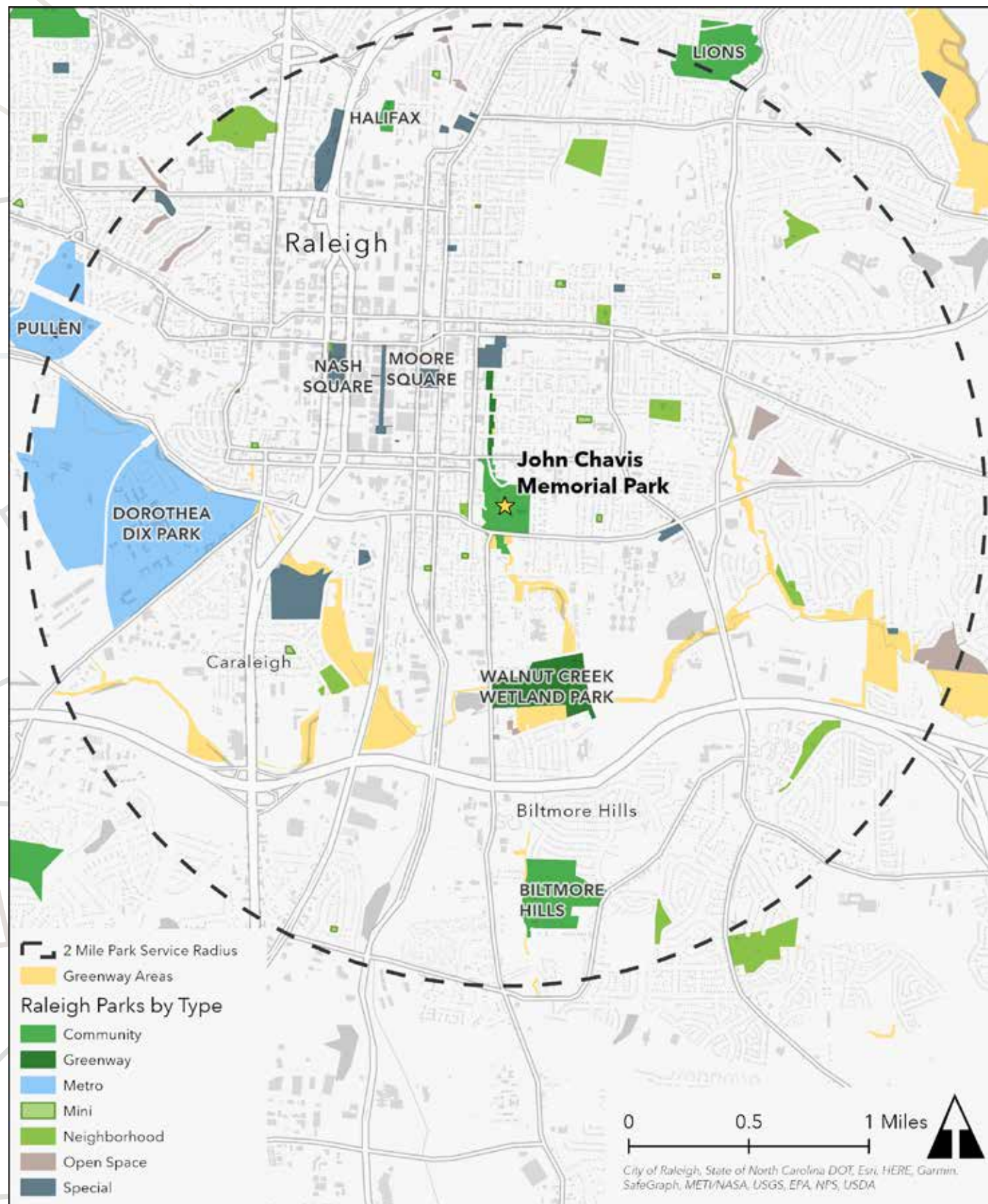
Public Process

Phase 1 Research & Community Engagement	Phase 2 Cultural Heritage Interpretive Plan & Concept Designs	Phase 3 Design Development: Phase I Implementation
Design Review Team Meeting October 6, 2020	Design Review Team Meeting November 18, 2020	Design Review Team Meetings January 6, 2021
Advisory Committee Meeting October 7, 2020	Advisory Committee Meeting November 19, 2020	Advisory Committee Meetings January 7, March 17, & April 7, 2021
Public Meeting November 5, 2020	Parks, Recreation & Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB) Meeting November 19, 2020	Public Meeting January 14, 2021
Stakeholder Discussions	Public Meeting December 1, 2020	PRGAB Meeting February & April 2021
Meeting Summaries	Web-page Update	Meeting Summaries
Web-page Development	Preference Survey	Web-page Update
Public Input.com Activation (platform for comment submittals, dedicated project e-mail, & recorded meetings)		City Council Briefing



SECTION TWO

Visitors



Understanding Visitors

In developing recommendations for the cultural heritage interpretive plan, the planning team sought to answer several key questions:

- Who visits/ uses John Chavis Memorial Park?
- What other interpretive experiences are nearby?
- What would the park’s stakeholders like visitors to know and feel about the park? What would they like visitors to do as a result of interpretation?

Who visits?

The table on the next page provides a broad overview of visitors to John Chavis Memorial Park. The City of Raleigh PRCR Department uses a general service area of two miles around community parks as a planning tool for development. We know from the master plan that John Chavis Memorial Park has long served both the adjacent neighborhood, as well as a larger regional audience, though probably less so since the mid-1960s. However, the park’s significance to regional and national history could once again make it a destination, particularly with new facilities and interpretation.

Community stakeholders and city staff emphasized the park’s use by a few key groups including:

- Seniors use the track for fitness and are likely to be key users of the new community center. Senior housing is adjacent to the park, and seniors are likely to be keenly interested in the park’s cultural and historical significance. There is also a Circle of Friends Senior Club that is very active in the park.

- Children and youth are also key park users. There are after-school programs at the park that serve students in grades K-6 and middle school (ages 5-14). The Summer X-Press Program (for ages 6-12) provides organized summer activities including arts and crafts, recreational sports and games, field trips, and other specialty programs. Many other informal groups of children use the park whether from area daycares, nearby schools, or home-school programs.

- There are a variety of leagues, sports teams, and fitness groups that use the park. These groups span all ages. Shaw University’s football team practices at the park. While there has been a strong historical connection to the school, the connection has not been as strong lately but could be revitalized.

- The city and other community groups have organized small to large events in the park including John Chavis Memorial Park Celebrates. This annual event has included games, historical storytelling, and a scavenger hunt much like a passport program, where visitors must go to different parts of the park to get stamps.

This data points to the need to layer interpretive information and methods for a range of users with a particular focus on children and families, young adults, and seniors. In addition, it is likely that many users will be repeat or regular visitors, which points to the need to create dynamic exhibits and programs that are more than a one-time experience.

“John Chavis has long served both the adjacent neighborhoods and the larger region.”

– “John Chavis Memorial Park Master Plan 2014”



Shyquille Morriesy, foreground, exercises during Dancing in the Park, an evening fitness class at Chavis Community Center. | Photo by Takaaki Iwabu, “News & Observer”

Understanding Visitors

Who visits/ uses John Chavis Memorial Park?

Wide Age Range	Small to Large Groups	Local to Regional
Children	Individuals	Adjacent Neighborhood
Youth	Families	South Park Heritage Walk Connection (future)
College Students	School/ College/ University Groups (particularly for athletics)	Greenway Trail Connection
Adults	Small Groups	Walkable to Shaw University
Seniors	Large Groups	Transit Connections
	Events	Walkable to Downtown
		Raleigh-Durham Residents
		North Carolina Residents & Beyond

Other Visitor Experiences

What interpretive experiences are nearby?

The *Strategic Implementation Study* recommends that John Chavis Memorial Park should celebrate and be designed around its most unique qualities without replicating the character of nearby parks. Equally important, the study calls attention to the exploding interest in greenways, bike share, and other alternative paths and modes of transportation in Raleigh and encourages John Chavis Memorial Park’s development in the context of connections between destinations. Thus it is important to consider other sites nearby and how they may impact and augment interpretation at John Chavis Memorial Park. These sites include:

- **South Park Heritage Walk:** This planned walk connects to John Chavis Memorial Park at Heritage Plaza and aims to broadly interpret the cultural history of the entire neighborhood through a range of methods. Nearby John P. "Top" Greene Community Center is a proposed trailhead for this walk, in addition to Heritage Plaza.
- **Capital Area Greenway:** The CAG system is a network of linear parks, located along rivers, creeks, and streams, that provides opportunities for conservation, recreation, and connection to Raleigh’s parks and other community features. The CAG connects John Chavis Memorial Park to Walnut Creek Wetland Park at the south, and to Moore Square and downtown Raleigh to the north / northwest. It is used by a broad cross-section of people and likely brings many people to John Chavis Memorial Park that might not otherwise visit.
- **City of Raleigh Museum:** This local history museum is located in the historic Briggs Hardware Building in downtown Raleigh and curates permanent and temporary exhibits about the city’s people, places, and resources. It maintains a collection of over 5,000 artifacts and offers educational programming and tours including for school children on topics that link to history, social studies, English, African American studies, and art.
- **Walnut Creek Wetland Park:** The park’s mission is to make people aware of the importance of wetlands for clean water, habitat, and recreation while emphasizing the importance of human interaction with nature. Walnut Creek Wetland Park is connected to John Chavis Memorial Park via the Capital Area Greenway Trail. An education center at Walnut Creek Wetland Park offers a range of programs such as nature nights for children, creating backyard habitat, scavenger hunts, and greenway walks. Program topics span invasive plants, trees, birds, amphibians, butterflies, and insects.
- **Moore Square:** Since 1792, Moore Square has been a place of gathering, reflection, entertainment, and recreation for the citizens of Raleigh. As one of Raleigh’s two surviving original parks, the four-acre downtown urban green space hosts frequent events.



The City of Raleigh offers a range of community after-school programs. | Source City of Raleigh

Interpretation at John Chavis Memorial Park should celebrate the park’s most unique qualities while considering the broader story told at nearby parks and destinations.



The Pope House offers a glimpse into the life of Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope, who was the only African American man to run for mayor of a Southern capital during the Jim Crow era. | Source City of Raleigh



Children engage in programs at the City of Raleigh Museum. | Source City of Raleigh

Other Visitor Experiences

- **Pope House Museum:** As the only African American house museum in the state of North Carolina, the Pope House offers a glimpse into the life of one of Raleigh's most intriguing citizens, Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope, who went to school at Shaw University Medical School and was the only African American man to run for mayor of a Southern capital in the midst of the Jim Crow era. The house features original furnishings and many historical artifacts that give insight into a remarkable man and family.

The range of diverse experiences available near John Chavis Memorial Park point to the need to stay focused on the park's unique historical and cultural story, to offer innovative approaches to interpretive design, and to partner with organizations to offer interpretive programming and special events.

The range of diverse experiences available near John Chavis Memorial Park point to the need to stay focused on the park's unique historical and cultural story, to offer innovative approaches to interpretive design, and to partner with organizations to offer interpretive programming and special events.

Defining Visitor Outcomes

The table below answers the questions: What should visitors understand about the park? What are the emotional impacts of interpretation? What are visitors inspired to do as a result of interpretation?

This table leads to five key outcomes, which are measurable and should guide all interpretive efforts in the park:

Outcome 1: Visitors should understand the park’s “hidden history,” or the cultural and historical significance of John Chavis Memorial Park.

Outcome 2: Visitors should feel the park is a special place that welcomes everyone.

Outcome 3: Visitors should feel the park is a symbol of African American community, agency, and identity.

Outcome 4: Visitor should enjoy the park and be inspired to create and share their own memories through fun and engaging interpretive exhibits, programs, and events.

Outcome 5: Visitors should engage as stewards, volunteers, and advocates of the park.

Think (Cognitive)	Feel (Emotional)	Do (Behavioral)
Life and Work of John Chavis	A Place for Everyone (all are welcome in this park)	Engage in Community
World War II Park History	Community Pride/ Sense of Community	Build Memories/ Share Memories
African American Community Significance (during and after segregation including the park’s regional significance)	Profound Remembrance	Enjoy/ Have Fun
Jim Crow and the Park’s Development (recreation, public spaces, and segregation to integration in 20th-century America)	Importance of African American Agency and Identity	Support Cultural Stewardship and Historic Preservation
Athletics and Athletes in the Park (sports programs and links to professional athletes)	Joy and Excitement	Care for Nature and the Broader Environment
Culture and Art in the Park (dancing and music, the carousel and amusements, and existing public art)		Learn More about the Park’s Significance
Nature (what lives in the park, how to care for nature)		



SECTION THREE

Interpretive Messages



Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Digital Files



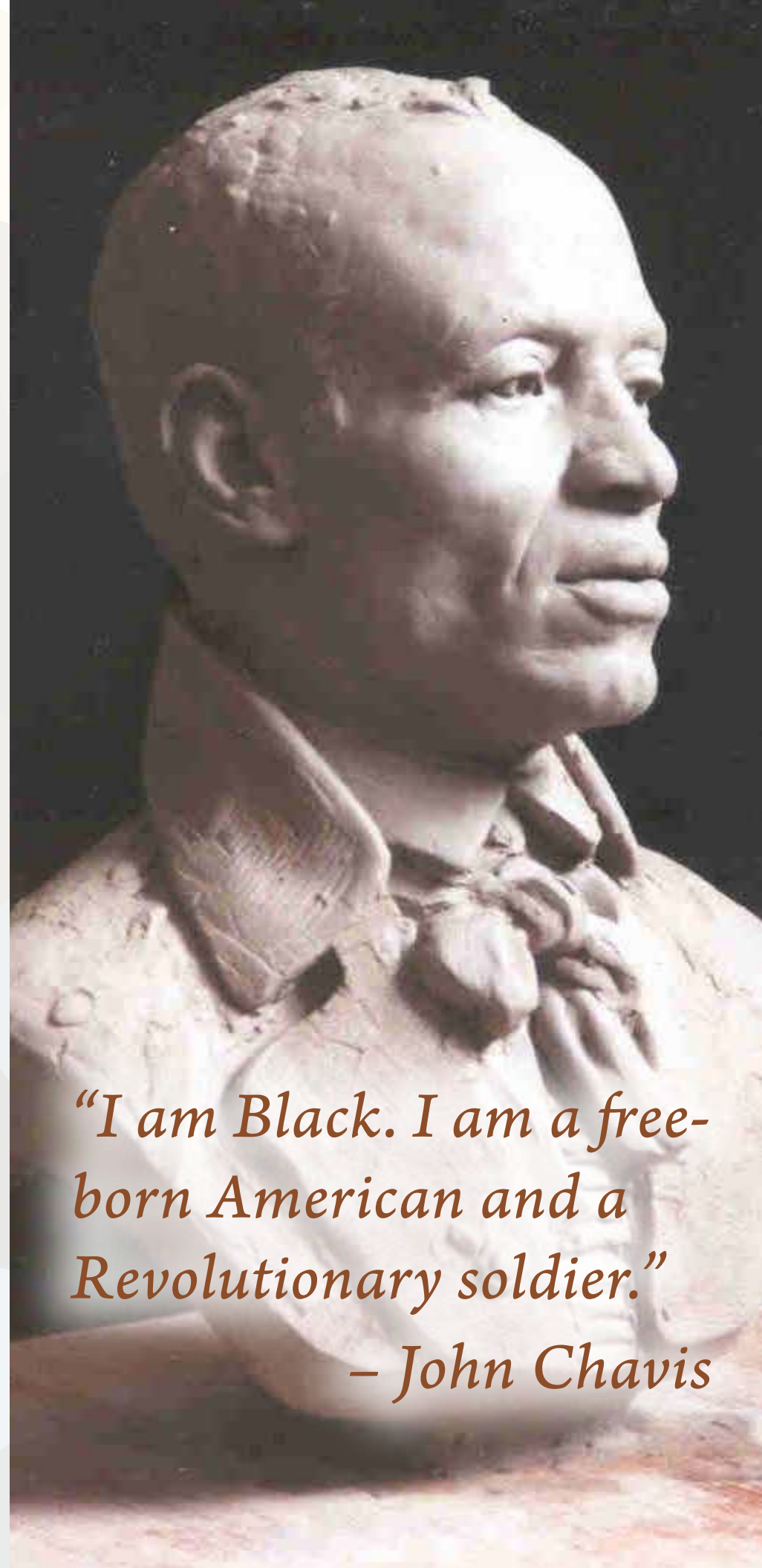
Photo courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

Key Messages

Effective interpretive messages should clarify, limit, and focus the nature and scope of an exhibit. This section of the plan organizes interpretive content into a series of key messages that are built on the visitor outcomes defined in the previous section of the plan. These messages are presented as the “big ideas,” or the most important broad take-away messages for visitors. These “big ideas” should capture the significance of John Chavis Memorial Park and express this significance in ways that are meaningful and relevant to modern visitors.

We live in a fast-paced era that frequently bombards people with information. Thus, interpretive content needs to be focused, layered, and accessible so that visitors, no matter their level of interest, can grasp key messages quickly. These high-level messages are outlined in the following pages with the knowledge that additional stories and details can be layered into these “big ideas” as specific exhibit elements are further developed.

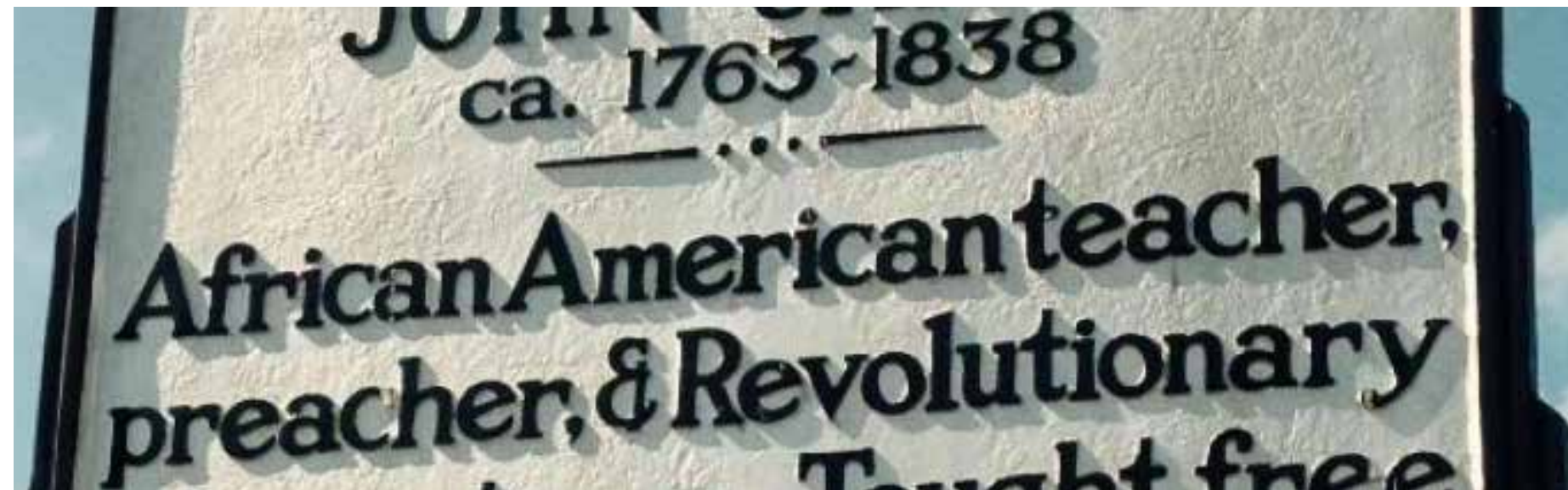
Powerful interpretive messages should clarify, limit, and focus the nature and scope of an exhibit.



“I am Black. I am a free-born American and a Revolutionary soldier.”

– John Chavis

“Prejudice blinds the mind and forbids free and open investigation of the truth.” – John Chavis



A historical marker honoring John Chavis was originally installed in 1938 and later updated. In 1938, it was the first historical marker in North Carolina dedicated to African American history. | Photo courtesy of North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

John Chavis

African American Teacher, Preacher, & Revolutionary War Veteran

Little is known of John Chavis' childhood other than he was born in 1762 or 1763. In 1778, Chavis enlisted in the Fifth Virginia Regiment and served for three years in the Revolutionary War.

After the war, Chavis began studying for the ministry at the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. Chavis moved to Virginia in 1795 and completed his studies at Presbyterian Washington Academy, now Washington and Lee University, becoming the first African American known to receive a college education in the United States.

From 1801 to 1807, Chavis served as a missionary in the Presbyterian Church to enslaved people in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. Chavis moved to Raleigh around 1809, where he preached to both African Americans and whites.

Around 1810, Chavis gained prominence as a gifted educator in the Raleigh area. To supplement his income as a preacher, Chavis opened a school where he taught both

white and African American children. Initially, he taught the races together. But after receiving objections from white parents, he began teaching the white children during the day and the Black children in the evenings. Several prominent North Carolinians were among his students, including North Carolina Senator Willie P. Mangum with whom Chavis developed a close and lasting friendship.

In 1831, enslaved preacher Nat Turner led a slave rebellion in Virginia. After this, laws banned education for Black children and made it illegal for enslaved people or free Black Americans to preach in public. Though Chavis had preached for 30 years and taught for 20, he was unable to make a living and became dependent on financial support from the Presbyterian Church for the remainder of his life. He died in 1838.

John Chavis' life illustrates the power of education, faith, and determination during a precarious time for free Black Americans before the Civil War.

John Chavis Memorial Park

Past to Present

John Chavis Memorial Park was built in the late 1930s as a “separate but equal” recreational facility for African Americans with local and federal support, including with contributions from the Works Progress Administration.

Park amenities grew to include a large swimming pool and bath house, a football field with seating, a baseball diamond, tennis courts, picnic shelters, a merry-go-round, and a playground. Later additions in the 1950s included a grandstand, a Korean War-era plane, and a miniature train.

Despite the negative connotations of separate Black and white parks, John Chavis Memorial Park played a significant role in the local, regional, and even national African American community. People traveled from as far as Virginia and South Carolina to use the park because there

were few resources of this size and quality open to African Americans during segregation.

After the integration of Raleigh’s public facilities in the 1960s, the park experienced decline. However, due to the tireless efforts of community activists, the park is being revitalized as an important place to the African American community and a welcoming place to all.

Today, the park stands as a symbol of African American agency and identity and remains a place of power and civic engagement as an early voting site and gathering place for the Black community.

Appendix D contains a detailed timeline of the park’s development, as well as a regional timeline of African American history and the civil rights movement.

“... that’s how I grew up, during segregation ... when the park came, it was like freedom. That you could come and enjoy, and know that you were safe, that you had a place where you didn’t have somebody to tell you, you couldn’t come over here ...”

– Rosia Butler, Community Member

“It was thousands of thousands of people. It would be about four thousand people here, Saturday, Sunday, easily. Cars would be all the way down, all the way around.”

– Larry Wells, Community Member

“... in spite of what people thought segregation meant, it meant something quite different for us. Because it [the park] was a place of us coming together where people were pooling their resources to invest in the children, who then became adults, who went on to become and contribute more. And that sphere of influence continues today. ... It’s a never-ending cycle where good things have happened from Chavis Park.”

– Frances Lonnette Williams, Community Member



Baseball game at John Chavis Memorial Park, 1945

Photo courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

“It would be the evening and we were not supposed to come down, but you can imagine these six-year-old girls, and some boys too . . . slipping down here and squeezing through the crowd to see the best dancer dance. It was a dancer called Rubber Legs, and he always had a crowd around him . . .”

– Excerpt from the community project Cellphone Diaries

“We went to Chavis Park if we had any fun activities. There was a swimming pool and there was the playground area with swings, slides and probably climbing apparatus, a merry-go-round, and the usual fun activities for a park.”

– Delores B. Wilder, Community Member



Photo courtesy of Larry Wells

A Place to Gather & Celebrate

John Chavis Memorial Park is a beloved gathering place that reflects the importance of community, the power of collective memory, and the significance of connections to neighbors.

Ask anyone why the park is important and they will recall . . . summer day camps, water pageants, the smell of food cooking on Sunday afternoons, Easter egg hunts, roller skating, Shaw students presenting Shakespeare outdoors, church revivals, football and baseball games as well as high school and college meets at the stadium, dancing with friends by the juke box, community parades, wedding receptions, hot afternoons playing in the pool, the neighborhood’s first color TV at the community center, riding the “hoppy horse” and the “choo choo,” school reunions,

the latest fashions and music on display, Washington High School football games, John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School homecoming parades, civil rights marches stopping off on their way to the state capitol downtown, and “Teenage Frolics,” a dance party filmed in the park and broadcast on local television.

Surrounded by a historically Black neighborhood, including some of Raleigh’s first public housing—Chavis Heights—and landmark African American educational institutions—Shaw University and Saint Augustine’s College, Chavis Park and the surrounding neighborhoods provided a sense of community as well as opportunities for upward mobility for many Black families.

“It [the story of Chavis Park] shows African American family and life post-Civil War. Everybody got all the slave stuff, but nobody talks about what Black life was like during the ‘50s, the ‘60s, the ‘70s, the ‘80s. . . . And this brings attention to what it was like because of the activities that were here . . . the baseball games . . . the history here. Everybody is just attached in some kind of way. People met their spouses there. It was a date place for a lot of people, you know. Well, what are you going to do when nobody had any money? ‘Let’s go to the park.’ . . . It was a safe place to be.”

– Yvonne Holley, North Carolina Representative & Community Member



John Chavis Memorial Park train, 1959 | Photo courtesy of SPERNA

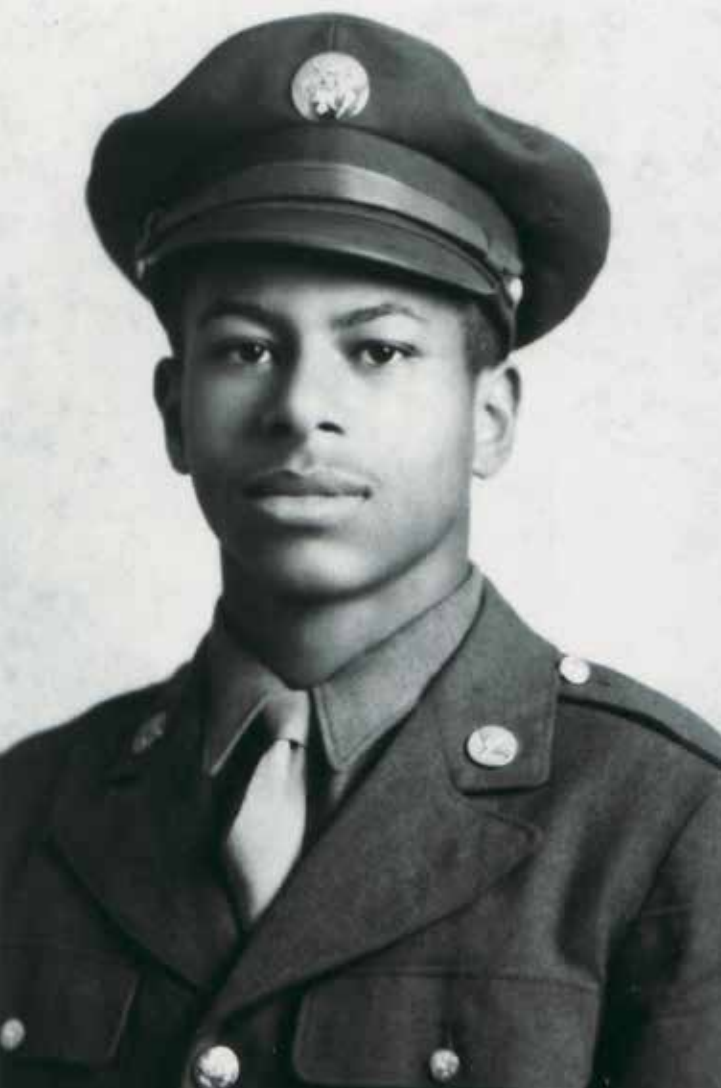


"Our years, appearing on Teenage Frolics, helped us to gain self assurance, awareness, confidence, and so much more! We were inspired to be creative and different. . . . We displayed our artistry through fashion modeling and traveling to different venues. Lights, camera, and actions . . . many of us became accustomed to this from our early days on Teenage Frolics."

– Gretchel Carter-Hinton, Community Member



Teenage Frolics frequently aired from John Chavis Memorial Park. Local host J.D. Lewis (pictured above) made the WRAL dance program famous, as area teens (such as Gretchel Carter-Hinton pictured at right) showed off their dance moves and the latest fashions on the television show. | Photos courtesy of Capitol Broadcasting Company, Inc. and Gretchel Carter-Hinton



Left Top: Tuskegee Airman Harold H. Webb lived in Raleigh after the war, serving on the Wake County Board of Commissioners. | Left Bottom: Tuskegee Airman Vernon Haywood grew up one mile from John Chavis Memorial Park. | Right Top and Middle: In 1941, the U.S. Army built a tented camp at John Chavis Memorial Camp for Black soldiers on leave in Raleigh. | Right Bottom: Millie Dunn Veasey served during World War II in the Women's Army Corps and the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. After returning home, she worked at Saint Augustine's University and was active in Raleigh's civil rights movement.

Courtesy of Harold and Lucille Webb, the North Carolina Museum of History, the "News & Observer" via the State Archives of North Carolina, and Saint Augustine's University

"May 4, 1945: In memory of our sons and daughter of Wake County, who served in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II."

– War Mothers Memorial

A Legacy of Service

As World War II loomed on the horizon, President Roosevelt understood the unprecedented need for service in our country, and he pushed to open doors for African Americans in the military who had previously been all but excluded from service. More than 1 million Black service members took part in World War II though they faced prejudice, discrimination, and segregation even in their service. Most of these Black service members were trained at bases in North Carolina, including the first African American Marines that trained at Montford Point.

John Chavis Memorial Park and the surrounding neighborhood were home to many service members during and after World War II. The Army built a tented camp in the park in 1941 to house Black soldiers visiting Raleigh on weekend leave. The USO Services for Negro Servicemen set up two clubs in Raleigh in 1943. One club was located at the Masonic Temple on South Blount and Cabarrus Street. Another club was near John Chavis Memorial Park at 600 S. Blood-

worth Street. The USO partnered with the YMCA and other religious and civic organizations in Raleigh to offer housing, food, and entertainment such as concerts, skits, dances, and even a "splash party" at John Chavis Memorial Park. The USO club on Bloodworth Street served 143,200 service members during World War II.

After the war, the federal government created a Veterans Annex at the park to provide housing for veterans. The Veterans Annex was later converted to a recreation center that was torn down in 1953.

During and after World War II, veterans from many wars were honored at the park through the War Mothers Memorial, the use of a military jet as an attraction, and public art featuring the story of the Tuskegee Airmen—the legendary World War II Black combat pilots who paved the way for integration of the Armed Forces.

"Wholesome amusements, recreational facilities, food service, and overnight lodging for Negroes in Southern communities are particularly limited in general. Under war conditions the situation in this regard is more than grave. Added to this situation is that of discrimination and injustices which the Negro Service Man meets on every hand. Such conditions make for low morale and provide a hot bed for racial ill will. . . . Our USO Service has provided recreation, amusement, wholesome contacts, food service, lodging, and many other needed services, which perhaps would not have been provided had it not been for the USO in Raleigh. . . . It has proven that people with different beliefs, faiths, creeds, and of different races can work together on common, everyday problems . . ."

– USO Records, Bloodworth Street, Raleigh

Athletics & Athletes in the Park

John Chavis Memorial Park has a long history of fostering sports and athletics.

Whether it was watching the achievements of college athletes from Shaw University or Saint Augustine’s, taking in a weekend Washington High School or John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School football game, cheering on the semi-pro Raleigh Tigers (a feeder to the national Negro leagues), learning to swim in the pool, enjoying

the benefits of teamwork through Little League, or engaging in friendly competition through a pick-up game of football or basketball, the park was and is a place where people of all ages can participate in an important American pastime.

Many notable professional athletes in tennis, track and field, football, basketball, and baseball started their careers as youngsters in John Chavis Memorial Park.

High School State Champions

- Eleanor Nunn (tennis)
- Gilda Adcock (tennis)
- Alicia Adcock (tennis)
- Paul Jervay (tennis)
- Gerald Latta (tennis)
- Jimmy Penny (tennis)
- McArthur Penny (tennis)
- Doris Morgan (tennis)
- Gilda Latta (tennis)
- J.D. Lewis, Jr. (tennis)
- James Cofield (tennis)
- Juan Cofield (tennis)
- Charles Worth (tennis)
- Larry N. Harris (tennis)
- Edwin Worth (tennis)
- Clarence (CJ) Hayes (tennis)
- Calvin Hayes (tennis)
- Valentine Hamlin (tennis)
- Brenda Ferrell (tennis)
- Lawrence Clemens (tennis)
- Bruce Lightner (tennis)
- Thomas “Butch” Hilliard (tennis)
- John Earl Smith (tennis)
- Charles Copeland (track)
- Willie Dean “Pat” White (tennis, track, basketball, football)

Professional Football Players

- John ‘Big John’ Haywood Baker, Jr.
- Chuck Hinton
- Charles ‘Charley’ Lee Young
- Ronald McNeil
- Willie Burden
- William “Bucky” Brooks

Professional Basketball Players

- Lee Ommie Davis
- James Snow
- Cozell McQueen
- James Michael Lamont “Twiggy” Sanders
- LeVelle Moton

Professional Baseball Players

- Robert Height
- William ‘June Rabbit’ McKinley Hartsfield, Jr.
- Arthur Dove
- Wilbert Allen “Pete” Wilder, Sr.

Coaches & Staff

- William “Tag” Montague, Shaw University, Cross Country / Track and Field
- Lee Lewis, Lifeguard
- Herman Hinton, Baseball Official
- Carl Easterling, Tennis Coach



Saint Augustine’s Baseball Team, 1949 | Source Albert Barden Collection, State Archives of North Carolina

“Some of the best athletes that ever lived grew up in Chavis Heights and became champions and hall of famers. I was inducted to South East Raleigh’s Hall of Fame for tennis two years ago. And, you know, all of this says where you got your beginning from.”

– Alicia Adcock, Community Member

“Chavis Park was for Blacks and Pullen Park was for whites. Blacks could go to Pullen for picnics but were not allowed to swim or anything like that. . . . When the recreation department went with the Little League teams, we had Black teams over here and white teams over there. . . . There were strong feelings about white teams playing Black teams, although there were many pickup games in which kids played on their own. . . . At Chavis Park, we had a stadium but when integration came it disintegrated. Shaw and Saint Augustine’s played football and baseball games there. And there were a lot of little semi-pro teams around that used to play there.”

– Howard B. Pullen, Community Member



Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Walnut Creek Wetland Park

“The old trees that are here . . . have just really grown. We have a creek that comes through . . . and that’s where we used to play, going down in that water, and catch little tadpoles and stuff. . . . That waterway that runs through the park was something that, as children, we really enjoyed playing in and jumping over, and trying to see who could jump the farthest. Those are things we enjoyed as children.”

– Frances Lonnette Williams, Community Member



*Children playing near Little Rock Creek, circa 1959
Photo courtesy of SPERNA*

Nature in My Neighborhood

Urban green spaces such as John Chavis Memorial Park contribute to the quality of life and well-being of the community.

Little Rock Creek, which flows through the park, provides important habitat for birds, frogs, tadpoles, native plants, and other living things. In fact, over 60 species can be found in and around the creek including muskrats, raccoons, opossums, squirrels, rabbits, snapping turtles, spring peepers, green frogs, ratsnakes, bluegills, sunfish, shiners, goldfinch, cardinals, and sparrows. The stream’s restoration is ensuring clean water and a healthy environment for all the creatures that call the creek and the park home.

Native plants and pollinator plants could also be highlighted along the stream to provide insights into the value of plants to wildlife. These might include Eastern Blue Star, Swamp Milkweed, Wood Anemone, Northern Maidenhair Fern, Dwarf Crested Iris, Aster Carolinianus, and Cimicifuga Racemosa. The threats of invasive plants, such as Chinese Privet, might also be explained.

Connecting to the park’s historical significance as a place for picnics, John Chavis Memorial Park might also build on important connections between nature and food by encouraging access to fresh, locally grown produce through farmers markets and programs around backyard gardening.

“We used to play in [the creek] as children and get wet, you know. Your momma would say ‘Go home, and your hair is wet, and you have to wash your hair now.’”

– Edna Rich-Ballentine, Community Member



SECTION FOUR

Interpretive Design & Site Map

A Soul Train at John Chavis Memorial Park

Photo by Bob Karp



Photo courtesy of Bob Karp

Concept Designs

Interpretive design, by its nature, is a collaborative, interdisciplinary process characterized by strong connections between content and design. Good interpretive design always starts with a story that is well researched, accurate, and interesting to visitors. Initial work has been done to define the direction of these stories in Section Three.

Section Four of the plan begins to define the ways these stories will take shape as rich multi-dimensional presentations. The concept designs proposed here are a starting place for the design process. They express the look and feel of future interpretive elements and the design intent. As these concepts are developed in the future, they will naturally evolve based on the design process, additional research, and community engagement.

Each design is custom and will require collaboration between a team of specialists, not the work of a single artist. The concept designs presented in this section point to the

range of experts that should be engaged as these designs are further developed. This could include community experts, researchers, writers, graphic designers, industrial designers, scenic designers, landscape architects, engineers, lighting designers, interactive and multimedia designers, illustrators, photographers, sculptors, filmmakers, musicians, and other craftspeople.

Some of the pieces call for original artwork, such as the "Athletics at Play" gateway. In these instances, Raleigh Arts should be consulted as part of the development of the larger design team.

There is tremendous value in interdisciplinary collaboration, but the starting place must be a strong concept and narrative direction that the entire team understands and works toward. That is the aim of conceptual designs in this interpretive plan, as is the identification of possible locations for interpretive installations.

Park Gateways

Exhibit Themes: “John Chavis Welcomes You to the John Chavis Memorial Park” and “Music Memories at the John Chavis Memorial Park”

Approach: Immersive archways create a welcoming sense of arrival. One features the story of John Chavis, the park's namesake, and the other celebrates the legacy of music in the park

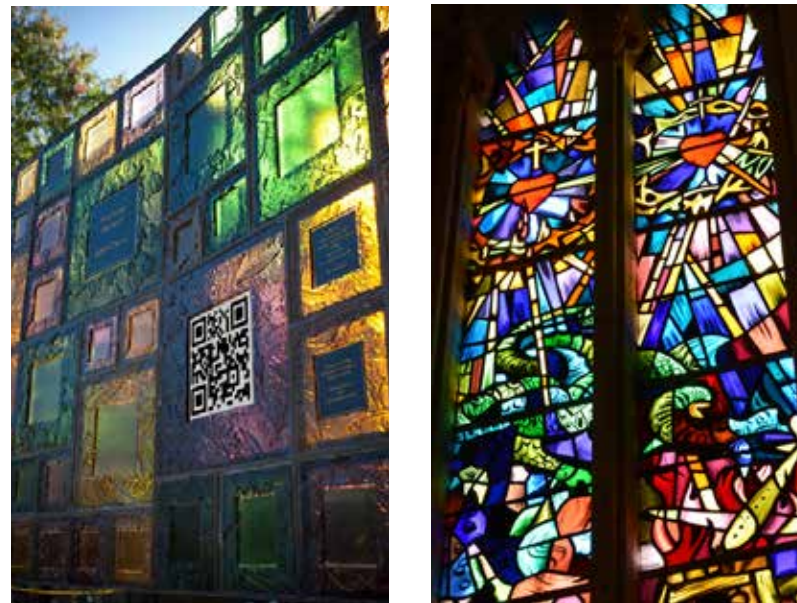
Design Features:

- The use of colored glass-like substrate and mosaic is evocative of the art glass by David Wilson in the new community center.
- Triangular (3-sided) gateway arch
- Imagery is built from historical photographs and other references, structured in a rectangular grid of colored glass shapes.
- Internally lit for legibility and guidance to the entrance, creating a sense of place both day and night.
- Interpretive text uses short phrases and key words
- Playlists of music in themes: carousel music, historical Teenage Frolics music, gospel music, and juke box music by African American artists during the time period the juke box was in the park
- Sound is controlled and contained within the gateway structure by direct sound speakers.

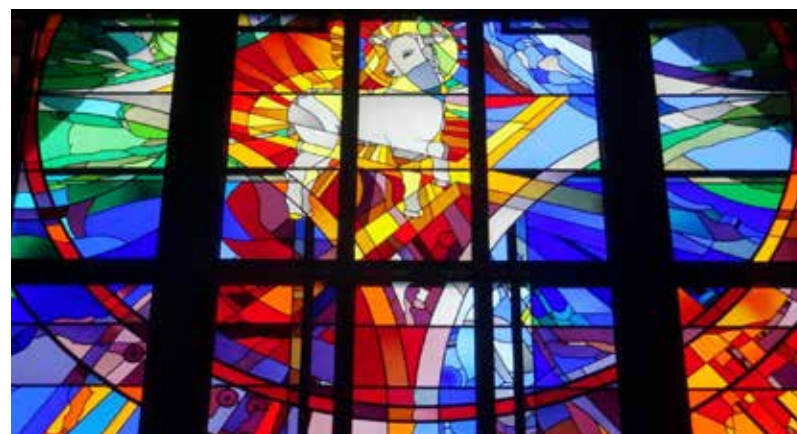


Color Palette from David Wilson's murals "Chavis Reclaimed" in the Community Center

“Welcome to the John Chavis Memorial Park” Immersive Archways Create a Welcoming Sense of Arrival



Precedent Image: Douvres la Deliverande, France



Precedent Image: St. George Catholic Church, Baton Rouge, LA



Precedent Image: Archway by Artist Tim Tate

John Chavis Gateway

COMPONENTS:

- (QTY 1) Triangular archway structure

SIZE:

- Total 16' h x 12' w
- Opening 14' h x 8' w (4 average persons wide)
- 20" w - each triangular surface

MATERIALS:

- Powdercoated metal framing and grid
- Glasslike (UV polycarbonate or similar) unbreakable clear substrate with interior direct print or applied graphics

COLORS:

- Matte black frame and grid
- Clear panels use color palette as in the community center's art glass panels

GRAPHIC STYLE:

- Reminiscent of church-like stained glass windows
- Patterns and graphics evocative of John Chavis' beliefs and teachings and includes quotes by John Chavis

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Interior lighting
- Removable QR codes

Music Memory Gateway

COMPONENTS:

- (QTY 1) Triangular archway structure

SIZE:

- Total 16' h x 12' w
- Opening 14' h x 8' w (4 average persons wide)
- 20" w - each triangular surface

MATERIALS:

- Powdercoated metal framing and grid
- Glasslike (UV polycarbonate or similar) unbreakable clear panel with interior direct print or applied graphics

COLORS:

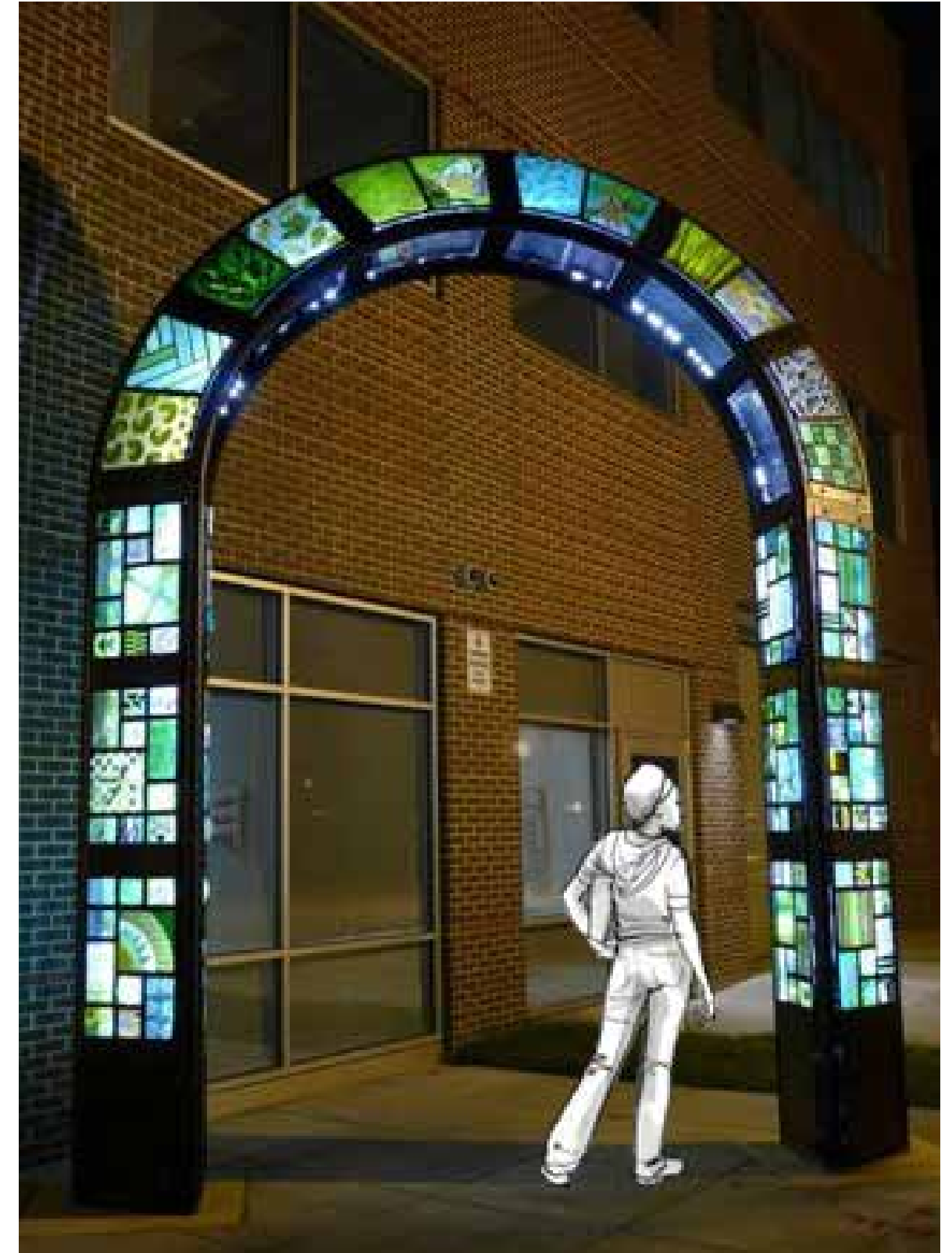
- Matte black frame and grid
- Clear panels use color palette as in the community center's art glass panels

GRAPHIC STYLE:

- Historical photos, patterns, and graphics in a timeline of sound and music experienced at John Chavis Memorial Park

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Interior lighting
- Removable QR codes
- Interactive sound system and controlled direct sound speakers



Precedent Image: Archway by Artist Tim Tate

John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present

Exhibit Theme: Reflecting on the history of John Chavis Memorial Park from the arrival of John Chavis in Raleigh, to the park's construction in the late 1930s, to its present revitalization.

Approach: Two large glass-like panels stand at opposing angles: Left panel speaks to the park's early history, while the right side depicts the park's importance in more recent times.

Design Features:

- The use of colored glass-like substrate & mosaic supported in metal frames.
- Exterior graphics are prismatic and emotional
- Interior imagery is more formal and literal using images, quotes, and contextual phrases to provide information to learn and reflect upon.
- The visitor experiences a sense of being “inside.”
- Internally lit for legibility both day and night



Prismatic Graphic Style for Exterior Panel Faces

Reflecting on the Park's History A Place to Learn, Reflect, and Engage



Precedent Image:
Richard Serra, Nasher
Sculpture Center



Interior images capture the park's history through early black-and-white photographs, as well as more contemporary color images.



Precedent Image:
Stan Studio, Princeton University

John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present

COMPONENTS:

- (QTY 2) 2-sided framed & attached structures

SIZE:

- Each panel 17' h x 6' w

MATERIALS:

- Powdercoated metal framing and grid
- Glasslike (UV polycarbonate or similar) unbreakable clear substrate with interior direct print or applied graphics

COLORS:

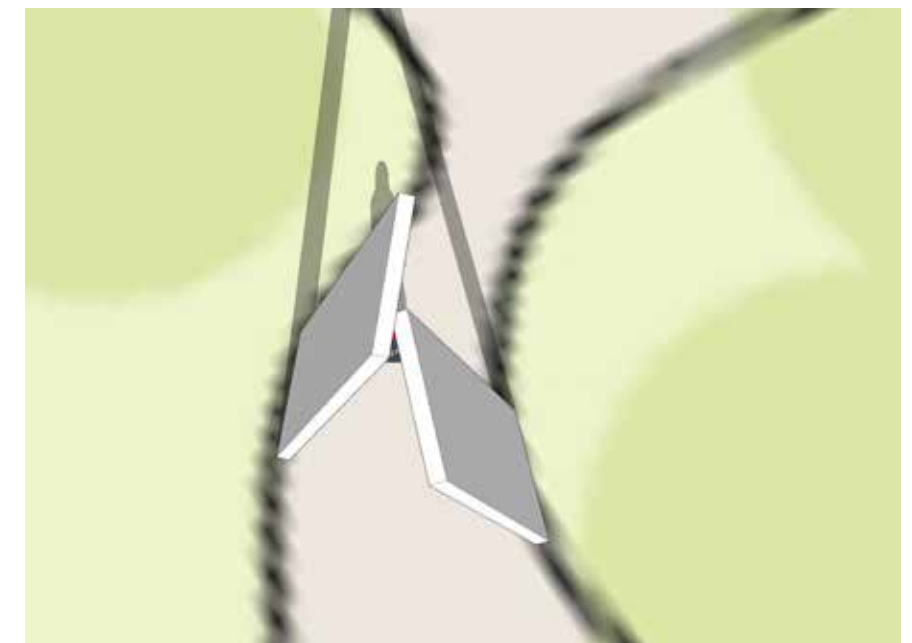
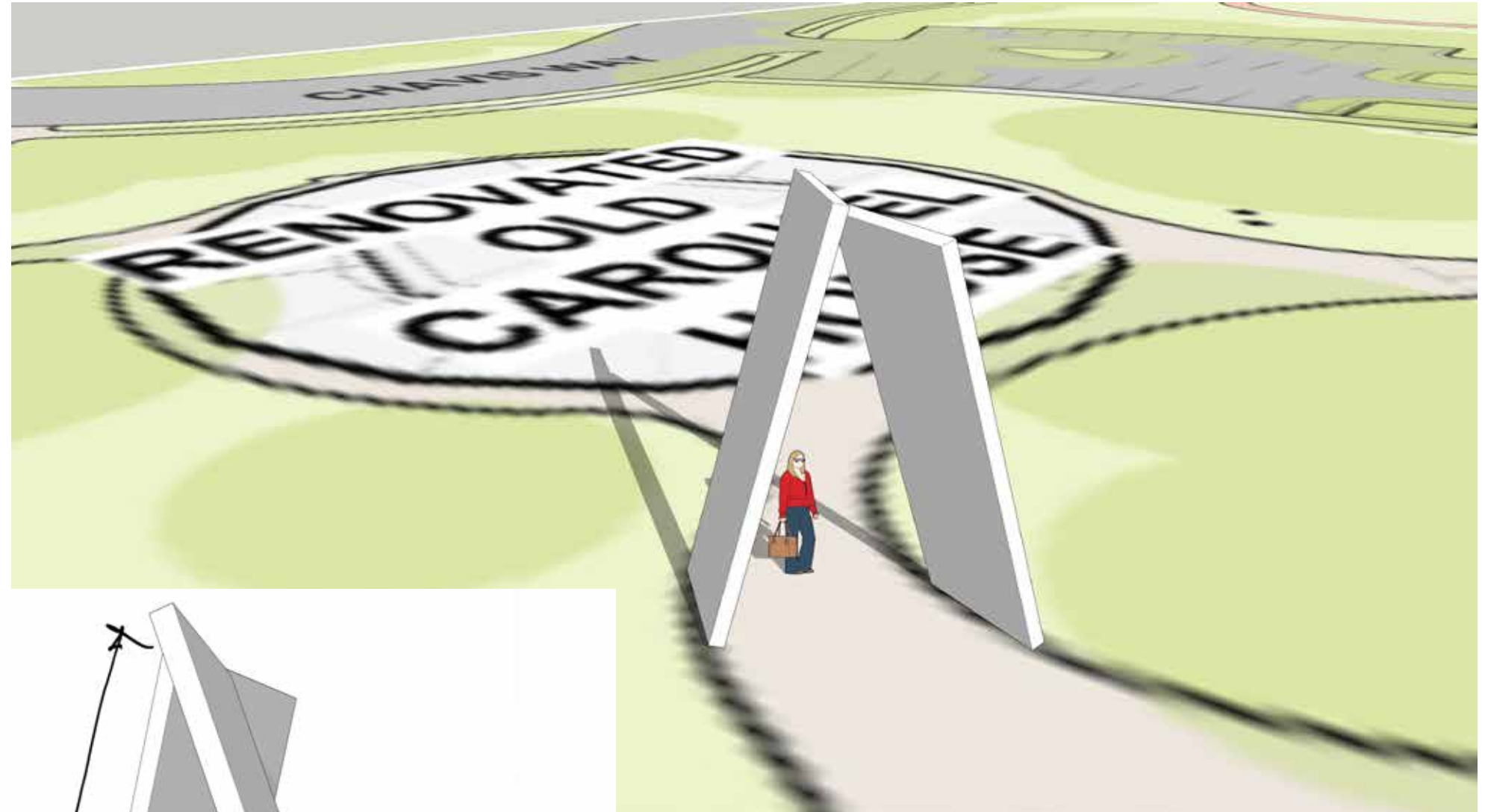
- Matte black frame and grid
- Full-color graphics

GRAPHIC STYLE:

- Outside of panels made of prismatic graphics
- Interior side of panels made of photographs, text, and graphics
- Left panel/John Chavis to late 1950s
- Right panel/1960s to present

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Interior lighting



A Place to Gather & Celebrate

“Let’s Go To The Park...”

Exhibit Theme: John Chavis Memorial Park is a beloved gathering place that reflects the importance of community, the power of collective memory, and the significance of connections to neighbors.

Approach: Slatwall resbits provide space for a rest to recall fond memories of fun at the park.

Design Features:

- The shelter’s construction is made with slatwall panels covered with louvered historical imagery, on all sides and ceiling.
- The louvered lenticular images will move and change when viewed from different angles.
- Imagery is built from historical photographs and other references.
- QR codes will provide access to deeper dives for videos and images of fun times at the park and an opportunity to upload your best memory.



Precedent Image: Houston Group, Australia

A Place to Gather & Celebrate Making Memories

Memory Collection Resbits



Precedent Image: Architect Mike McKay, New Orleans Botanical Garden



Precedent Images: Street Artists
Zebrating, Germany

... summer day camps, water pageants, the smell of fried chicken on Sunday afternoons, Easter egg hunts, roller skating, Shaw students presenting Shakespeare outdoors, church revivals, football and baseball games as well as high school and college meets at the stadium, dancing with friends by the Juke box, community parades, wedding receptions, hot afternoons playing in the pool, riding the “hoppy horse” and the “choo choo,” school reunions, and “Teenage Frolics,” a dance party ...

A Place to Gather & Celebrate Memory Collection Resbits

COMPONENTS:

- (QTY 4) resbit structures
- Decking
- Interior furniture

SIZE:

- Each structure: 8'h x 4'w x 10' deep
- Accommodates 1-4 persons per structure
- Deck: 2 steps-up from ground level
- Adaptable furniture sizes
- Variable spacing of structures

MATERIALS:

- Powdercoated aluminum slat walls with color graphics and black frames
- Deck made of recycled composite material with textured non-slip surface

COLORS:

- Matte black frame and grid supports
- Full-color graphics

GRAPHIC STYLE:

- Lenticular photographs on all sides, full color

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Removable QR codes



Precedent Image: Architect Mike McKay, New Orleans Botanical Garden



Precedent Image: Tetris Square, Lab D+H, China

Adaptable furniture for sitting, lounging, and use as table surfaces

Nature In My Neighborhood

Exhibit Theme: Little Rock Creek, which flows through the park, provides important healthy habitat for birds, frogs, tadpoles, native plants, and other living things.

Approach: An immersive playscape which includes a geometric cut-out interactive experience and other experiential surfaces.

Design Features:

- A nature shape, such as a honeycomb, has interior surfaces covered with nature images, QR codes, and augmented reality markers to bring Little Rock Creek's living things to life.
- Brightly colored metal strips create pathways for following, whimsical playing, and resting spots.
- Photo opportunities abound



Examples of augmented reality from “Internet of Elephants”, a program by National Geographic Explorer, Gautam Shah.

Nature In My Neighborhood Augmented Reality Hub An Immersive Playscape with Unique Experiential Surfaces



Precedent Image: Crescent Plaza, Group GSA, Australia

Nature In My Neighborhood Experiential Playscape

COMPONENTS:

- (QTY 1) Honeycomb interactive structure
- Ribbons of color forming pathways and benches
- Decking

SIZE:

- 6-sided hexagonal structure, per drawing
- Ribbon forms various height benches - 18" to 26" h
- Deck size TBD

MATERIALS:

- Powdercoated aluminum structure with color and graphics
- Powdercoated metal benches
- Deck made of integral colored concrete per Central Plaza with cut-in powdercoated metal ribbon strips

COLORS:

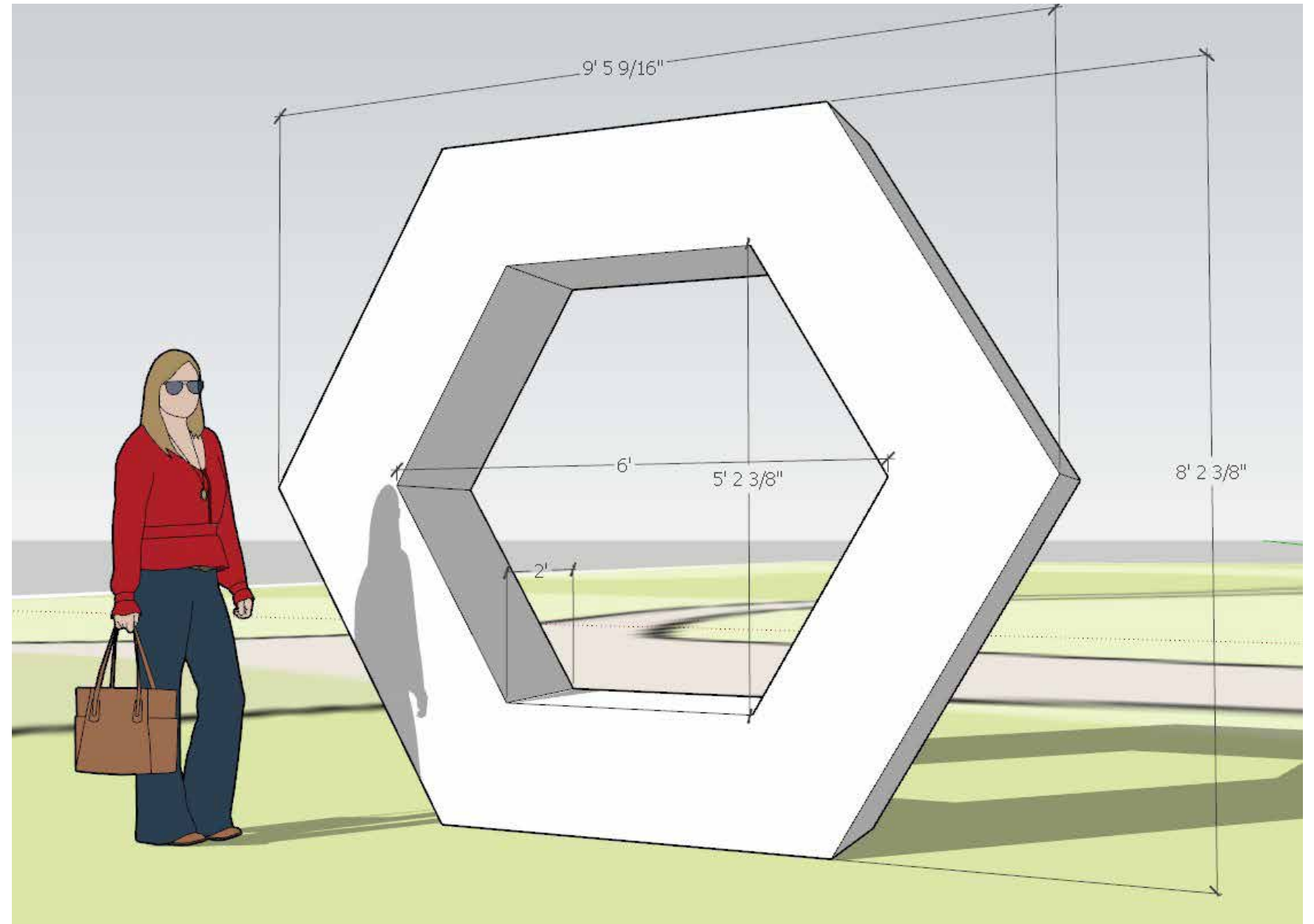
- Bright accent color for structure, benches, and ribbons
- Full-color graphics for interior of structure

GRAPHIC STYLE:

- Nature story text and graphics

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Removable QR codes
- Augmented reality markers placed throughout the playscape components



Athletics At Play

Exhibit Theme: John Chavis Memorial Park has a long history of fostering sports and athletics. Many notable professional athletes in tennis, track and field, football, basketball, and baseball started their careers as youngsters in John Chavis Memorial Park.

Approach: A playful gateway creates a welcoming sense of arrival

Design Features:

- Anamorphic, colorful silhouettes painted on welcoming three-dimensional cubes made of internally lit perforated metal
- Internal illumination is constantly changing colored lighting pushing out of the circular perforations.
- Evokes a fun sense of the history, activity, and leisure
- Examples shown are by artist Pablo Romero; however illustrations could be created by another artist through a collaborative design process that includes an exhibit designer, content developer, and illustrator

“Athletics At Play” Anamorphic Sculptural Gateway A Playful Gateway Creates a Welcoming Sense of Arrival



Perforated Metal Design
by Graepels, Belfast



Illustrations by
Pablo Romero



Proposed Location



Athletics At Play

Anamorphic Sculptural Gateway

COMPONENTS:

- (QTY 6) animated block structures
- Interior LED lighting
- Maintenance access panels

SIZE:

- Structure sizes per drawing

MATERIALS:

- Perforated aluminum with powdercoated color and graphics
- Structures to have interior frosted acrylic panels backing the perforated front surfaces
- (QTY 2) block structures have one solid powdercoated metal side with interpretive graphic panels

COLORS:

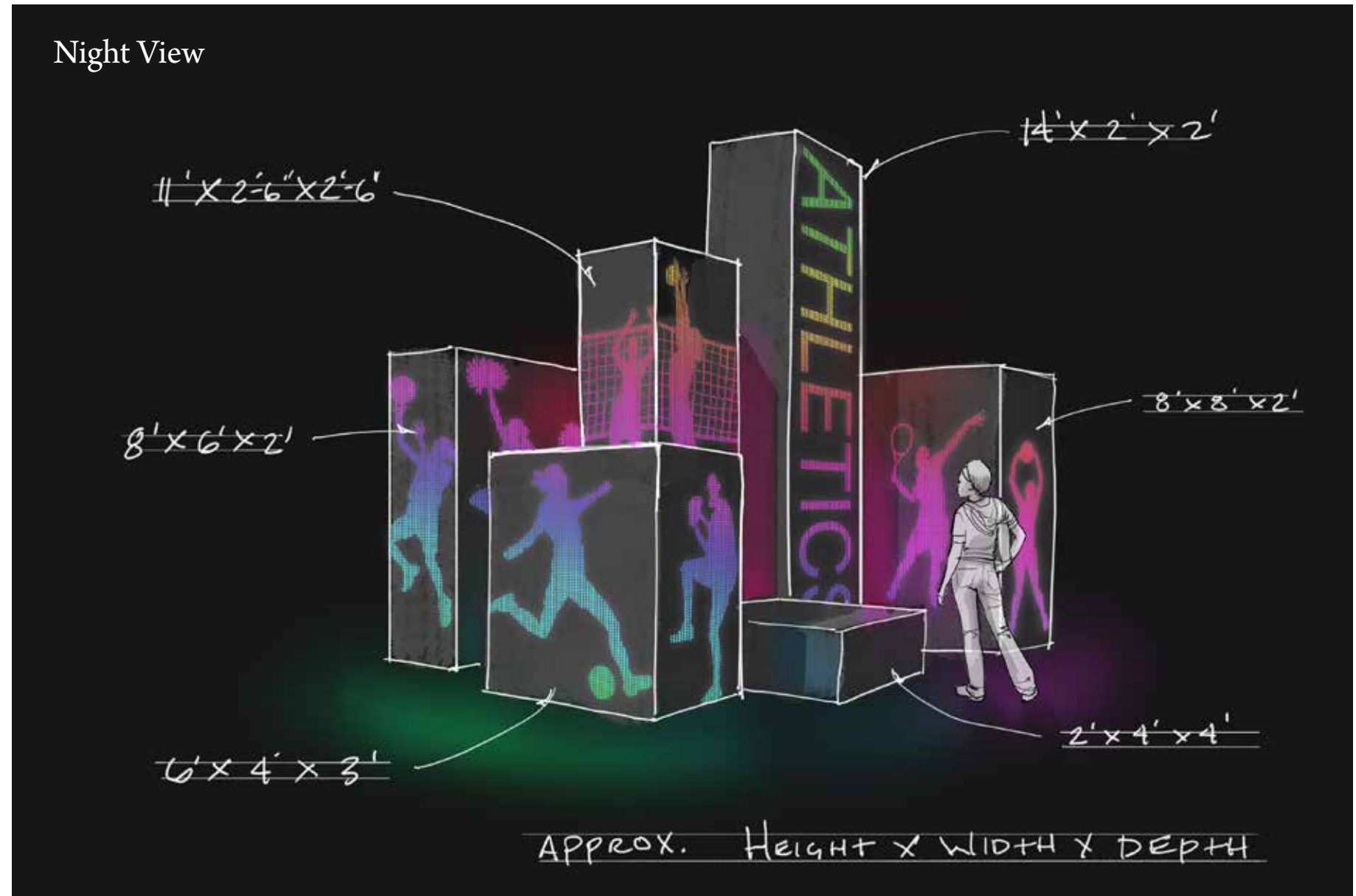
- Rainbow color illustrations
- Changing color interior LED lighting

GRAPHIC STYLE:

- Athletic motion sketches, impressionist style

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Anamorphic effect for illustrations
- Constantly changing interior lighting bleeding out from the perforated metal blocks



A Legacy of Service

Exhibit Theme: As World War II loomed on the horizon, President Roosevelt understood the unprecedented need for service in our country, and he pushed to open doors for African Americans in the military who had previously been all but excluded from service.

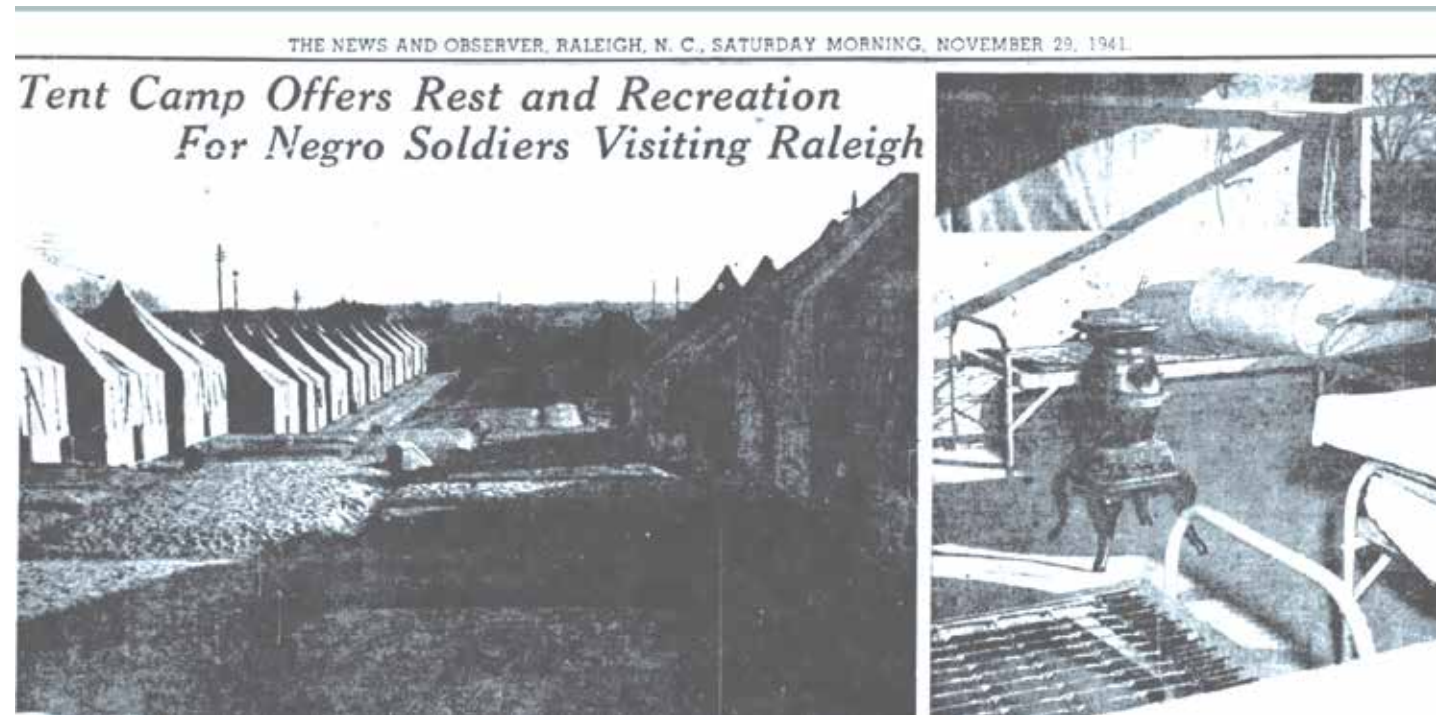
Approach: 3-sided interpretive plinths

Design Features:

- Tall interpretive plinths present storylines using historical images, graphics, and text.
- “Beacon” light panel at top of the plinth provides “way-showing” guidance to the plinths and a point of interest opportunity.
- Interpretive plinths can be located at several sites in the park to tell different interpretive stories.



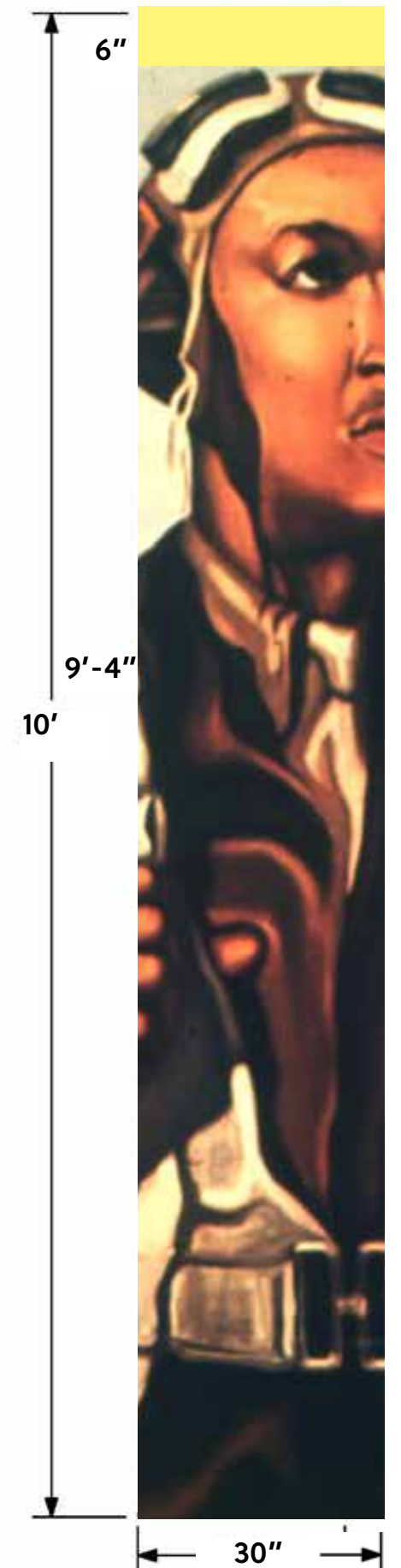
Interpretive Plinths Guide Visitors to Stories Beacons Light the Way to Interpretive Opportunities



Chavis Heights Recreational Project Has Facilities for 540 Service Men

“Snug as a bug in a rug is descriptive of the concrete-floored tents of the Chavis Heights camp. A coal-burning heater and electric lights provide warmth and light. Each soldier has an iron cot, mattress, and pillow and is issued army blankets and an army comforter when he arrives. The side flaps of the tents may be rolled up for sunlight or rolled down snugly to keep out cold air. Tight screening keeps out insects when flaps are rolled up.”

– “News & Observer” · Sat, Nov 29, 1941 · Page 7



Interpretive Plinths Storytelling Beacons

COMPONENTS:

- Triangular structural plinth
- Interior LED lighting for top light beacon strip

SIZE:

- Structure size per drawing

MATERIALS:

- Aluminum structures covered with powdercoated color and graphics
- Pin mounted translucent back printed interpretive graphic panels
- Top strip of translucent substrate (light box)

COLORS:

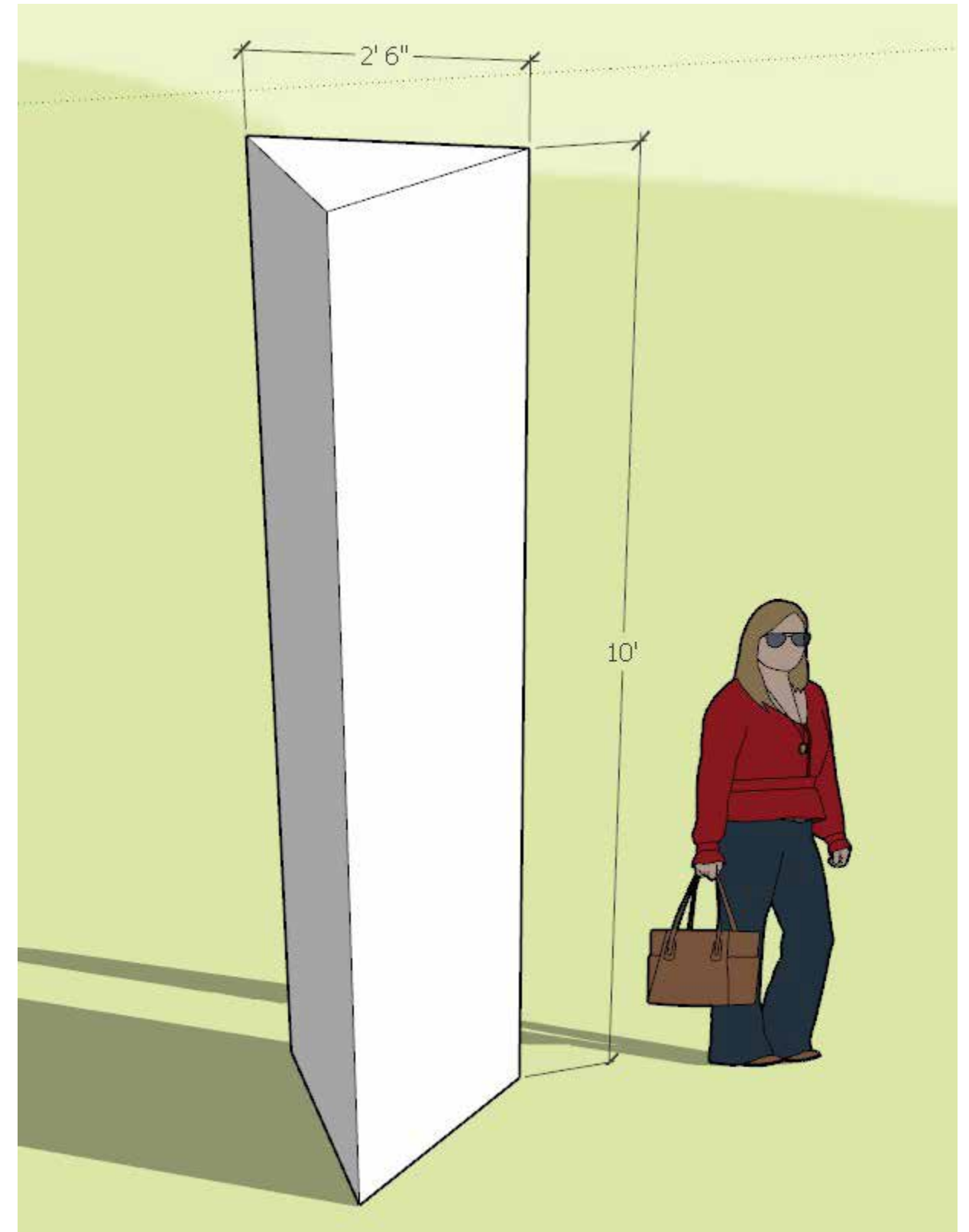
- Full bleed super graphics for plinth coverage
- Full-color translucent interpretive panels

GRAPHIC STYLE:

- Large-scale graphics for long distance visibility in concert with smaller up-close reading scale for the interpretive panels

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Beacon lighting at top of the plinths
- Removable QR codes



Interpretive Site Plan

- 1a Concept 1a: John Chavis Gateway
- 1b Concept 1b: Chavis Way Gateway
- 2 Concept 2: John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present Exhibit
- 3 Concept 3: A Place to Gather & Celebrate Resbits
- 4 Concept 4: Athletics at Play Trailhead
- 5a Concept 5a: A Legacy of Service Interpretive Plinth
- 5b Concept 5b: Nature in My Neighborhood Interpretive Plinth
- 5c Concept 5c: A Place to Gather & Celebrate (Carousel Story) Plinth
- 6a Concept 6a: Nature in My Neighborhood Playscape
- 6b Concept 6b: Nature in My Neighborhood Bridge
- 7 Concept 7: Community Center Interpretive Graphics
- 8 Concept 8: Future Heritage Plaza Design





Delois Marie Johnson in US Army Air Corps paratrooper's cap, c.1945-1950s, taken in a photo booth at Chavis Park | Photo courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

Content Guidelines

As content is created in future phases of work, the following best practices should guide development:

Align with Outcomes & Messages

Visitor outcomes and key messages for interpretation have been clearly defined in this interpretive plan through a process of research and public engagement. Content should fall within the scope of these outcomes and key messages.

Communicate Visually

As much as possible, key messages should be communicated visually as the majority of people (about 65 percent of us) process information based on what we see.

Create Layers

Layering content involves using multiple methods to deliver content—design elements, print, programs, audio-visuals, and multimedia—as well as creating content hierarchies—headings, body copy, captions, and pull-out quotes, for example.

Follow the “Less is More” Principle

Don’t try to do too much—one well-told story is often more effective than overwhelming visitors with all the stories, all at once.

Research indicates that most park visitors will spend less than 30 seconds reading exhibit text—many will only glance at written content. For this reason, developing short and concise exhibit text is critical, as is creating text layers that allow visitors to grasp the big ideas even if they only read headings or captions.

While writers and designers have some flexibility, content for exhibit panels (e.g., plinths) should adhere to the following word counts:

- Heading: No more than 6 words
- Body Copy: No more than 100 words
- Captions: No more than 15 words
- Pull-out Text: No more than 20 words (e.g., quotes)

Similarly, digital content should follow the same “less is more” approach. If visitors are overwhelmed with huge blocks of text and vast amounts of content, they won’t engage. In general, digital content should be designed as an online exhibit that tells a story with images, multimedia content, typography, and digestible chunks of text.

Audio-visual content should also be concise and well edited. Social media sites estimate 15 seconds as the attention span for video content. At the same time, there are examples of effective longer videos. The key is to provide interesting, professional, and compelling content that tells a story and captures the interest of viewers.

Prioritize Inclusion & Accessibility

Content should communicate to the broadest range of visitors. Thus, it is important to incorporate content that reaches those with different learning styles, appeals to diverse ages, and offers diverse perspectives. Text should be written to score no higher than 8-10 on the Flesch-Kincaid readability scale. Closed captioning should be provided on all audio-visual content. The tone and style of all content should be friendly, inviting, and wherever possible incorporate the voices of the people who hold the history.

Cite Sources

Sources should be documented for written content, and visual resources need to be credited as required.



SECTION FIVE

Interpretive Programs & Events



Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Digital Files

Interpretive Programs & Events

This section of the plan outlines possibilities for interpretive programs and events that can achieve the outcomes defined in this plan and provide gateway experiences for many people, serving to introduce new visitors to the important cultural and historical significance of the park and building on what long-time visitors already know so that they will want to further engage, share their own stories, and support the park's preservation.

Interpretive programs and events at John Chavis Memorial Park should be designed to appeal to diverse visitor groups including:

- General public (local neighbors to regional visitors)
- Seniors and adults

- Children and K-12 school groups
- Young adults and college students

The City of Raleigh PRCDepartment will take the lead on implementing interpretive programs and events at John Chavis Memorial Park. Several City of Raleigh PRCDepartment divisions will have roles in this implementation including the Recreation Division, Historic Resources and Museums Program, and Nature Parks & Preserves Program.

Additional key partners will include City of Raleigh Arts, local and state museums, various nonprofit organizations, and local to regional colleges and universities, among others.

Programs and events can serve as gateway experiences that inspire visitors to further engage, share their own stories, and support the park's preservation.

Programs & Events for the General Public

Annual Park Celebration

Focus (primary in all caps):

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A PLACE TO GATHER & CELEBRATE
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partner: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program (City of Raleigh Museum, Historic Raleigh Trolley), City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves, City of Raleigh Arts, local and state museums, and local neighborhood associations, nonprofits, or community advocacy groups

Location: Throughout the park

Description: An annual celebration (currently presented as Chavis Park Celebrates) might include a community cook-out, games, scavenger hunts, historical displays, trolley tours, storytelling, carousel rides, and musical performances. As part of this event, a history harvest and some of the other programs targeted at specific visitor groups (see following pages) could be incorporated.

Dancing in the Park

Focus: A Place to Gather & Celebrate

Potential Partner: City of Raleigh Arts, Capital Broadcasting Company, and local radio stations (such as 103.9 FM)

Location: Central Plaza

Description: A dance program such as a “family frolic” could be hosted as a stand-alone event or on a more regular basis. This dance program might recreate elements of the Teenage Frolics, which occasionally aired from the park between 1958 and 1982. Gospel in the Park, a past program that featured music and fitness, is also an example of a possible program to continue in the future.

Self-guided Tours

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partner: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program (virtual tour) and Raleigh Historic Development Commission (Curatescape app)

Locations: War Mothers Memorial, Little Rock Creek, Historic Carousel House, Public Art Glass, "Glimpse of the Promised Land" Public Art, Carousel, and future interpretive elements related to athletics, John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present, and John Chavis.

Description: A self-guided tour could be available via a purpose-built app such as Curatescape, which is already being used by the Raleigh Historic Development Commission. Alternatively or in addition, a virtual tour could be available via the City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program digital resources, which already includes virtual tours of other historic resources.

Geo-fencing technology is another possibility for creating a self-guided tour. By using GPS and wifi or bluetooth technology, it is possible to create a series of geo zones around the park. When visitors enter a geo zone, a notification or message triggers on their mobile devices to provide interpretive content.

Docent-led Tours

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program and local neighborhood associations, nonprofits, or community advocacy groups

Locations: War Mothers Memorial, Little Rock Creek, Historic Carousel House, Public Art Glass, "Glimpse of the Promised Land" Public Art, Carousel, and future interpretive elements related to athletics, John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present, and John Chavis.

Description: Docent-led tours might be advertised and offered from time to time, particularly as part of large events such as Chavis Park Celebrates.



Chavis Heights Canning Class | Photo courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina



Photo courtesy of SPERNA

History Festival

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: University of North Carolina (UNC) Wilson Library Southern Historical Collection, City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program, North Carolina Museum of History, and local neighborhood associations, nonprofits, or community advocacy groups

Locations: Community Center

Description: A history festival might showcase pop-up exhibits, present interpretive programs, and include other elements that celebrate the long history of John Chavis Memorial Park as an important place to the local and regional Black population. This festival might also include a “history harvest” where community-members are invited to bring and share their letters, photographs, objects, and stories about John Chavis Memorial Park, and participate in a conversation about the significance and meaning of their materials. Each artifact could be digitally captured and then shared in a web-based archive. A history harvest could be a one-time event or something that is incorporated into an annual festival.

UNC's Southern Historical Collection supports historically underrepresented history keepers in telling, sharing, and preserving their stories. Their goal is to acquire, preserve, and make available archival collections about African American families, to engage the community through exhibits and programs, and to inspire families with how these materials are used by scholars, artists, and writers. They might be able to help facilitate this event or serve as a repository for materials that are gathered.

Concerts

Focus: A Place to Gather & Celebrate

Potential Partners: City of Raleigh Arts, Shaw University, Saint Augustine's University, and local radio stations (such as 103.9 FM)

Locations: Community Center and Athletic Field

Description: City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources hosts a summer concert series. John Chavis Memorial Park could be another venue for these concerts. While a concert may not be explicitly interpretive, there could be links to the park's cultural and historical significance, such as gospel music or "Music of the 1960s." Local university groups from Shaw University and Saint Augustine's University may also be interested in presenting concerts.

Food in the Park

Focus: Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: Downtown Raleigh Alliance, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, JC Raulston Arboretum, and City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves

Locations: Central Plaza

Description: John Chavis Memorial Park has long been a place for picnics and community gatherings that involve local food traditions. Historically, there were community gardens and canning classes across from the park at Chavis Heights. This food tradition might be continued at John Chavis Memorial Park with a regular Farmer's Market and interpretive programs around backyard gardening and African American foodways.

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension and JC Raulston Arboretum offer a variety of classes and demonstrations related to gardening, and the City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves program offers classes and demonstra-

tions on pollinators. These organizations may be interested in offering similar interpretive programs at John Chavis Memorial Park in order to reach new audiences. The Downtown Raleigh Alliance organizes a farmer's market at Moore Square and could also be a potential partner.

Pop-up Exhibits

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program (City of Raleigh Museum), City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves, City of Raleigh Arts, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, University of North Carolina (UNC) Wilson Library Southern Historical Collection, Rise Above, local and state museums, the Smithsonian, and local neighborhood associations, nonprofits, or community advocacy groups

Locations: Community Center and Historic Carousel House

Description: John Chavis Memorial Park could host a variety of short-term pop-up exhibits on a wide range of topics including the life of John Chavis, the park's history, African American military service, the Teenage Frolics, and nature.

Traveling exhibits are also an option. For example, Rise Above is a nonprofit organization that offers a traveling exhibit about the Tuskegee Airmen. The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services also offers a range of exhibits including one on travel during the era of segregation and the green book.

Within North Carolina, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources develops traveling exhibits and UNC's Southern Historical Collection may also be interested in helping to develop pop-up exhibits in partnership with local neighborhood associations, nonprofits, or community advocacy groups. The North Carolina Museum of History could also be a resource in bringing short-term exhibits to the park.

Historical Amusements Festival

Focus: A Place to Gather & Celebrate

Potential Partners: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program (Historic Raleigh Trolley)

Potential North Carolina Vendors: Brinkley Entertainment, Michael's Amusements, Powers and Thomas Midways, and Powers Great American Midway

Locations: Throughout the park

Description: The park has long hosted amusements, including the historic carousel that is still present in the park today. To celebrate this history, a Historical Amusements Festival might bring in additional amusements as part of Chavis Park Celebrates or as a separate annual event.

Park Stewardship Day

Focus: Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: North Carolina Ecosystem Enhancement Program, City of Raleigh Engineering Services Department (stormwater management), and City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves

Locations: Throughout the park with a focus on Little Rock Creek

Description: One outcome of interpretation is engaging visitors as stewards of the park, so it is important to have concrete, easy ways that visitors and neighbors can do this. A park stewardship day could invite people to volunteer for a park clean-up day or other small projects in the park. The City of Raleigh Stormwater Management Department has a stormwater volunteer program that includes an adopt-a-stream program, stream cleanups, and stream monitoring. The City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves program may also be able to identify specific projects associated with stewardship of Little Rock Creek.

Veteran's Day Celebration

Focus: A Legacy of Service

Potential Partners: Shaw University ROTC, Saint Augustine's University Division of Military Science, and Local VFW

Locations: Central Plaza and Athletic Field

Description: The strong African American legacy of service to our country could be interpreted and celebrated as part of a Veteran's Day celebration with a focus on the Montford Point Marines and the Tuskegee Airmen, as well as current local service men and women including those in ROTC/military science programs at Shaw University and Saint Augustine's University.



Chavis Park Celebrates | Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Digital Files

Programs for Seniors & Adults

Seniors Programs

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program (City of Raleigh Museum), City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves, and local neighborhood associations, non-profits, or community advocacy groups

Locations: Throughout the park

Description: There is an existing Circle of Friends senior group in the park. Members of this group, as well as other seniors, might be interested in serving as volunteer docents or helping with a park stewardship day or history harvest. To expand this group, interpretation might include an invitation to join and support this group.

History Programs

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes

Potential Partners: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program (City of Raleigh Museum), North Carolina Department of Natural

and Cultural Resources, University of North Carolina (UNC) Wilson Library Southern Historical Collection, North Carolina Museum of History, Shaw University, and Saint Augustine's University

Locations: Throughout the park

Description: Regular history programs aimed at seniors and adults could focus on the history of the park, as well as broader regional history related to African Americans. Local professors and authors could be invited to present some of these programs at the park.

Nature Programs

Focus: Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: North Carolina Cooperative Extension, JC Raulston Arboretum, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, and City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves

Locations: Central Plaza

Description: Regular nature programs aimed at seniors and adults could focus on topics associated with urban parks and nature. JC Raulston Arboretum and the City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves offer a variety of classes and demonstrations related to gardening, backyard birds, pollinators, and more. In addition, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension offers many gardening and bird programs. The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences offers programs on healthy habitat and water. John Chavis Memorial Park could host programs by these organizations.



Photo courtesy of SPERNA

One outcome of interpretation is engaging visitors as stewards of the park, so it is important to have concrete, easy ways that visitors and neighbors can do this.



Photos “News & Observer” | Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina

Programs for Children

The opportunities for after-school programs, summer programs, school group programs, and family-focused programs linked to the park’s key messages are limitless. The ideas presented on this page should serve as a jumping off point for additional brainstorming and creativity.

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: City of Raleigh Historic Resources and Museums Program (City of Raleigh Museum), City of Raleigh Nature Parks & Preserves, City of Raleigh Arts, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, local and state museums, and local schools and educators

Locations: Throughout the park

After School & Summer Programs

- Make your own time capsule
- Dance moves and songs of the Teenage Frolics
- Headlines of history: Children create their own front-page story related to a historical event at the park and display it as part of a pop-up exhibit
- Famous athletes: Children could create "playing cards" of their favorite sport with an athlete from John Chavis Memorial Park on one side.
- Junior scientist: Children investigate the natural world in John Chavis Memorial Park learning about geology, herpetology, entomology, and water quality. The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences has a summer program like this, as well as several others.

School Programs

As school programs are developed, the City of Raleigh may benefit from working with local educators or schools to align programs with North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

- Service learning programs: Service learning integrates community service activities into academic curricula. Adopting Little Rock Creek or participating in a history harvest could be forms of service learning.
- Environmental education and water quality testing

Family-focused Programs

- Kids nature or history nights
- Scavenger hunt: Once interpretive elements are installed in the park, children could go on a scavenger hunt to uncover the important stories about the park. This could be a self-guided activity created on a similar platform to the one used to create the self-guided tour for adults, or it could be created as part of a junior ranger-type booklet.
- Story time: Created for 3rd to 12th grade students and educators, the National Museum of African American History and Culture has created a book list, comprised of non-fiction and fiction, that provide enrichment about African American history and culture (see Appendix A for link). This list could be used to create story times for younger children, and book discussions for older kids and their parents or grandparents.
- History for Families: The North Carolina Museum of History also has a story time program, as well as several other history-focused programs. Their annual African American Cultural Celebration features musicians, storytellers, dancers, chefs, historians, playwrights, authors, artists, reenactors, and more.

Programs for Young Adults & College Students



Source City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Digital Files

Athletics, Concerts, Programs

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- Athletics & Athletes

Potential Partners: Shaw University and Saint Augustine's University

Locations: Throughout the park

Description: Historically John Chavis Memorial Park has been a place used by athletes from Shaw University and Saint Augustine's University. The park might seek to host more athletic events, academic programs, and concerts that benefit not only local universities, but also the community by providing links to the park's cultural and historical significance.

ROTC

Focus: A Legacy of Service

Potential Partners: Shaw University ROTC, Saint Augustine's University Division of Military Science

Locations: Throughout the park

Description: Shaw University and Saint Augustine's University both have ROTC/ military science programs. There could be interest in linking

these programs to activities associated with the significant legacy of African American military service in North Carolina, as well as a Veteran's Day Celebration.

Service Learning

Focus:

- John Chavis
- John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present
- A Place to Gather & Celebrate
- A Legacy of Service
- Athletics & Athletes
- Nature in My Neighborhood

Potential Partners: Shaw University, Saint Augustine's University, North Carolina State University, and other regional institutions of higher learning

Locations: Throughout the park

Description: Students from North Carolina State University have been involved in research and design projects associated with the park and SPERNA's South Park Heritage Walk. There are many possibilities for engaging young adults in gathering oral histories and other types of research and in developing online content, pop-up exhibits, and programs.



SECTION SIX

Implementation Plan

Implementation Approach

As the City of Raleigh PRCR Department gains funding to implement the design concepts in Section Four, each concept will need to be further developed to detailed design. In addition, interpretive content will need to be developed based on the content guidelines in Section Four. This includes writing interpretive text, identifying historical images and other visual resources, and potentially creating digital content. Design and construction documents will also need to be produced. These phases will require project and construction administration management.

Below are the expected phases for each concept. The phases could be completed for the production of a single concept or for multiple concepts at same time. The tasks can be managed either way based on available funding.

Total implementation costs for interpretive elements listed on page 53 are estimated at \$760,000-\$950,000. Total implementation costs for programs and events listed on page 54 are estimated at \$250,000-\$350,000. Costs are based on 2021 estimates and may increase over time.

Confirm Priorities

The following pages outline phases for implementation and priorities based on public input as outlined on pages 11-12. As funding becomes available, annual priorities should be established based on this plan.

Design Development

1. Clarify concept intent
2. Gather research and visual resources
3. Consult with the community
4. Develop content approach

5. Write interpretive text or scripts: Preliminary, second, and final drafts
6. Create template for the graphic design, showing typography, color, grid system, or special graphics
7. Design maps and other special graphics: Preliminary, second, and final drafts
8. Develop preliminary, second, and final cost estimates
9. Provide design documents for the interpretive structures. Documents should be scaled elevations to show intent for the design, color, materials, size, placement in the site, and any special features.

Fabrication

1. Verify cost estimates
2. Develop construction documents with the fabricator
3. Arrange for samples, prototypes, or other models for review
4. Manage review of documents by the City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department or other approvals as necessary

Installation

1. Verify site location and obtain any site surveys necessary
2. Schedule and oversee installation
3. Manage punch list

Maintenance Plan

1. Provide manufacturer’s information and any warranties
2. Develop maintenance plan
3. Identify any ongoing annual costs such as licensing or technology fees



*Around 1960, a Korean War-era F9F-6 Cougar Marine jet was added to the park as a play feature for children.
Photo courtesy of SPERNA*

Teenage Frolics

Photo courtesy of the University of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collection, Lewis Family Papers



Implementation Plan for Concept Designs

Phases: Concept Designs	Community Priorities	Capital Costs
PHASE 1: IMMEDIATE (complete by June 1, 2021)		
John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present Exhibit (2)	1	\$\$
PHASE 2: SHORT TERM		
Community Center Interpretive Graphics (7)	1	\$
John Chavis Gateway (1A)	2	\$
A Legacy of Service Interpretive Plinth (5A)	3	\$\$
A Place to Gather and Celebrate (Carousel Story) Interpretive Plinth (5C)	4	\$
Nature in My Neighborhood Interpretive Plinth (5B)	5	\$
PHASE 3: MID TERM		
A Place to Gather and Celebrate Resbits (3)	1	\$\$\$
Athletics at Play Trailhead (4)	2	\$\$
PHASE 4: LONG TERM (dependent on master plan implementation)		
Future Concept for Heritage Plaza (8)	1	TBD
Chavis Way Gateway (1B)	2	\$\$
Nature in My Neighborhood Playscape (6A)	3	\$\$\$
Nature in My Neighborhood Bridge (6B) - cost includes interpretive elements only	4	\$

Note: The numbers associated with each concept correspond to the site plan on page 41. Implementation phases take into account available funding over time, as well as the master plan's implementation. Community priorities were determined through public input as outlined on pages 11-12. Operational costs associated with staff and facilities are not included. Costs are based on 2021 estimates and may increase over time.

\$ = Less than \$60,000 | \$\$ = \$60,000 to \$120,000 | \$\$\$ = \$120,000+

Priorities for Programs & Events

Priorities: Programs & Events	Capital Costs
HIGH PRIORITY	
Annual Park Celebration	\$\$
Self-guided Tours (app/web development and/or geofencing technology)	\$\$\$
History Festival	\$
Dancing in the Park	\$\$
Park Stewardship Day	\$
Senior Programs	\$
After School & Summer Programs (Children)	\$
Family-focused Programs (Children)	\$
Athletics, Concerts, Programs (Young Adults & College Students)	\$
MEDIUM PRIORITY	
Docent-led Tours	\$
Concerts	\$\$\$
Food in the Park	\$\$
Veteran's Day Celebration	\$\$
Pop-up Exhibits	\$\$
History Programs (Seniors & Adults)	\$
LOW PRIORITY	
Historical Amusements Festival	\$\$\$
Nature Programs (Seniors & Adults)	\$
School Programs (Children)	\$\$
ROTC (Young Adults & College Students)	\$
Service Learning (Young Adults & College Students)	\$

Note: Descriptions of these programs and events can be found in Section Five: Interpretive Programs & Events. Community priorities were determined through public input as outlined on pages 11-12. Operational costs associated with staff and facilities are not included. Costs are based on 2021 estimates and may increase over time.

\$ = Less than \$15,000 | \$\$ = \$15,000 to \$25,000 | \$\$\$ = \$25,000+



In 1941, the U.S. Army built a tented camp at John Chavis Memorial Camp for Black soldiers on leave in Raleigh. Photos “News & Observer” | Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina





APPENDIX A

Reference List



Reference List

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APPENDIX B

List of Participants



List of Participants

Community Advisory Committee

Angela Jackson Simon
Carol Love
Eyvonne Dailey
Gretchel Carter-Hinton
Jacqueline Howell Franks
Janet Peebles
Johnny Blaylock
Joseph Ellerbee
Jonathun Muldrow
Lonnelle Williams
Margaret Egerton
Mary Brooks
Rhonda Muhammad
Virginia Stanley Tally
Vivian Lee
Cecilia Zuvic

City Design Resource Team

Luke Wallenbeck, Project Manager, PRCR PDC
Audrea Caesar, Equity & Inclusion
Demetrius Edwards, Equity & Inclusion
Denise Saunders, PRCR Recreation
Douglas Porter, PRCR Resources
Grady Bussey, PRCR Recreation
Ivan Dickey, PRCR Parks
Kaylah Nance, H&N
Kellee Beach, PRCR PDC
Kristen Shea, PRCR Recreation
Mike Gagliano, PRCR Parks
Sarah Powers, PRCR Arts
Shawsheen Baker, PRCR PDC
Tania Tully, RHDC
Troy Burton, PRCR Resources

City Executive Staff

Oscar Carmona, PRCR Department Director
Ken Hisler, PRCR Recreation
Sally Thigpen, PRCR Parks
Scott Payne, PRCR Resources
Stephen Bentley, PRCR PDC

Consultant Team

Therese Huffman, Project Manager & Interpretive Design
David Brown, Landscape Architecture & Permitting
Inga Kennedy, Public Engagement
Juliet Cutler, Interpretive Planning & Content Development

PRCR: Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources
PDC: Park Development & Communications
HRM: Historic Resources & Museum
H&N: Housing and Neighborhoods
RHDC: Raleigh Historic Development Commission



APPENDIX C

Implementation Estimates



Historic Carousel Building
Photo courtesy of SPERNA

Implementation Cost Estimates

Phases: Concept Designs	Capital Costs
PHASE 1: IMMEDIATE (complete by June 1, 2021)	
John Chavis Memorial Park: Past to Present Exhibit (2)	Already funded
PHASE 2: SHORT TERM	
Community Center Interpretive Graphics (7)	\$15,000-\$30,000
A Place to Gather and Celebrate (Carousel Story) Interpretive Plinth (5C)	\$40,000 - \$55,000
John Chavis Gateway (1A)	\$100,000 - \$120,000
Nature in My Neighborhood Interpretive Plinth (5B)	\$40,000 - \$55,000
A Legacy of Service Interpretive Plinth (5A)	\$40,000 - \$55,000
PHASE 3: MID TERM	
A Place to Gather and Celebrate Resbits (3)	\$120,000 - \$140,000
Athletics at Play Trailhead (4)	\$100,000 - \$120,000
PHASE 4: LONG TERM (dependent on master plan implementation)	
Future Concept for Heritage Plaza (8)	TBD
Chavis Way Gateway (1B)	\$100,000 - \$120,000
Nature in My Neighborhood Playscape (6A)	\$165,000 - \$200,000
Nature in My Neighborhood Bridge (6B) - cost includes interpretive elements only	\$40,000 - \$55,000
TOTAL:	\$760,000 - 950,000

Note: The numbers associated with each concept correspond to the site plan on page 41. Implementation phases take into account available funding over time, as well as the master plan's implementation. Operational costs associated with staff and facilities are not included. Costs are based on 2021 estimates and may increase over time.





APPENDIX D

Timelines



Photo courtesy of Bob Karp

John Chavis Memorial Park

Past to Present

Date	Event
1809	John Chavis moves to Raleigh. Chavis is the first African American known to receive a college education in the United States. As a free Black man, he works as an educator and preacher in the Raleigh area until his death in 1838.
1865	East Raleigh becomes a cultural center for African Americans because of prominent educational institutions including the Raleigh Institute (today’s Shaw University, established 1865) and Saint Augustine’s Normal School and Collegiate Institute (today’s Saint Augustine’s University, established 1867).
1896	The U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of “ separate but equal ” segregated facilities , including parks and other public spaces.
1897	Crosby Colored Grading School (later Crosby-Garfield Elementary School) is established on East Lenoir Street for Black children.
1919	North Carolina Governor Bickett announces the formation of an interracial council for Wake County “to maintain friendly relations between races . . . “
1935	North Carolina leases the City of Raleigh the land for John Chavis Memorial Park for 25 years. The City of Raleigh applies for and receives federal funds through the Works Progress Administration to build the park.
1936	Construction begins on a swimming pool, athletic fields, tennis courts, two picnic shelters, an amphitheater, and two bridges over Little Rock Creek.
July 2, 1937	A No. 2, Special Three Abreast, Allan Herschell Carousel is installed under a canvas tent.
July 4, 1937	The park has its grand opening.
March 18, 1938	The Negro Citizen’s Committee of Raleigh (today’s Raleigh-Wake Citizen’s Association) petitions the city to name the park for John Chavis (1763-1838) —a Revolutionary War veteran, free Black man, educator, and preacher from Raleigh.
May 10, 1938	John Chavis Memorial Park is officially dedicated. According to local news reports, over 3,000 people attend the dedication.
1938	The North Carolina Historic Marker Program installs a marker in honor of John Chavis , the first marker in the state to recognize African American history.
Late 1930s	Shaw University and Saint Augustine’s College (now Saint Augustine’s University) begin using John Chavis Memorial Park for athletics.
1939	Chavis Heights, a segregated public housing community, opens across the street from John Chavis Memorial Park.
~1940	The original carousel house is built.
1941-42	World War II soldiers come to John Chavis Memorial Park. The U.S. Army builds a temporary tented camp and a Veterans Annex in John Chavis Memorial Park to house Black soldiers visiting Raleigh on weekend leave. After the war, the Veterans Annex serves as a community center for the park until it is demolished in 1953.
1945	The War Mothers Memorial bench is installed in memory of those who served in World War II from Wake County.
1930s to 1940s	Washington High School’s football team plays at John Chavis Memorial Park.
1940s	Raleigh’s Black baseball club, the Raleigh Grays, play at Chavis’ baseball field.
1950s to 1960s	The semi-pro Raleigh Tigers play at Chavis’ baseball field. This team serves as a feeder to national Negro leagues. John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School uses John Chavis Memorial Park for athletic events.
1951	North Carolina sells the land on which John Chavis Memorial Park was built to the City of Raleigh for \$1,500.



1952	A miniature train is added to the park.
1954	The grandstand is constructed.
Late 1950s to 1960s	Local resident Roy Hicks sells concessions at the grandstand providing job opportunities for young people and fond memories of “the best hot dogs around” for many neighbors.
1958	Teenage Frolics launches on Raleigh’s WRAL-TV as a music and dance program hosted by J.D. Lewis, a prominent African American radio and television personality. The show features African American teenagers who show off their dance moves to impress fellow dancers and viewers at home. From time to time, the program is filmed at John Chavis Memorial Park.
~1960	A Korean War-era F9F-6 Cougar Marine Corps jet is added to the park as a play feature for children.
1961	A new community center is built with a gymnasium. It is expanded over time to include a lobby and meeting rooms.
August 7, 1962	Four young Black protestors, accompanied by two white friends, jump into Pullen Park’s swimming pool. In response, the City Council votes to close both Pullen Park’s and Chavis Park’s pools until further notice.
1964	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 integrates Raleigh’s public facilities. Now that African Americans can use any park, visitors from further afield no longer make the journey to John Chavis Memorial Park and attendance declines.
1971	The City of Raleigh develops a master plan to revitalize the park that includes new athletic fields and a swimming pool.
1973	Raleigh elects its first African American Mayor, Clarence Lightner, who was a lifeguard at John Chavis Memorial Park in his youth.
1974	The new swimming pool opens.
1975	The old carousel pavilion is remodeled.
1978	John H. Baker, Jr. is elected Wake County sheriff making him the first African American sheriff in North Carolina since reconstruction. Baker operated the carousel and played football in the park during his youth.
1982	The park’s Allan Herschell Carousel is restored.
1982	John P. “Top” Greene Community Center opens only a few blocks from John Chavis Memorial Park. The City of Raleigh names the new center in honor of John P. “Top” Greene, a community activist and South Park resident.
1984	Dancing in the Park begins as a regular program. The aerobics-style dancing and fitness program frequently features Gospel music and runs as a regular program for decades.
1994	The City of Raleigh develops a second master plan to renovate the community center, swimming pool, and tennis courts.
2002	John Chavis Memorial Park hosts a reunion for former residents of Chavis Heights. This becomes an annual event until 2012.
2006	“ Glimpses of the Promised Land ” is installed by public artist Mike Roig.
2007	South Park-East Raleigh Neighborhood Association is founded as a community-based nonprofit.
2008	South Park-East Raleigh Neighborhood Association organizes a Historic Chavis Park Festival.
2008	The Raleigh Historic Development Commission designates the carousel as a historic landmark.
2008	Over 1,000 citizens sign a petition asking the city to reinvest in John Chavis Memorial Park resulting in a series of community conversations and a master planning process.
2009	The North Carolina Historic Marker Program replaces a marker in honor of John Chavis.
2012	The park’s Allan Herschell Carousel is dismantled and restored before moving to the new carousel house in 2013.
2013	John Chavis Memorial Park celebrates its 75th anniversary.
2014	The City of Raleigh adopts the <i>John Chavis Memorial Park Revised Master Plan</i> based on significant public input. The Downtown Raleigh Alliance recognizes the South Park neighborhood for its advocacy on behalf of the park.
2015	The Chavis Conversation Public Leadership Group is awarded the Fred Fletcher Volunteer Award and the 8th Annual Environmental Award for their work on behalf of the park.
2016	John Chavis Memorial Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
2021	The park’s renewal continues with a new playground and community center featuring a glass mural by artist David Wilson.



Raleigh & Beyond

Local African American History (in the context of regional and national events)

The National Register of Historic Places identifies the period of significance for John Chavis Memorial Park from 1937-1965. This timeline stretches much earlier and slightly after this in order to capture the history that informed the park's development and the changes that were taking place in Raleigh during this period.

Date	Event
1792	The City of Raleigh is established and enslaved laborers build much of the city. There are approximately 140,000 Blacks living in North Carolina. The majority are enslaved people working on small- to medium-sized farms.
1865	The Civil War ends slavery. The Raleigh Institute (today's Shaw University) is established as the first Black institution of higher education in the South. By 1881, the school establishes a medical school.
1867	Saint Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute (today's Saint Augustine's University) is established in Raleigh to train African American teachers.
1874	North Carolina Institution for the Colored Deaf and Dumb and the Blind is founded in Raleigh on South Bloodworth Street.
1875	A North Carolina constitutional amendment establishes separate schools for Black and white children.
1890s	East Raleigh's African American population grows due to several prominent institutions including the Second Baptist Church (now Tupper Memorial), which offered classes for African Americans of all ages; Shaw University; Saint Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institution (now Saint Augustine's University); and the North Carolina Institution for the Colored Deaf and Dumb and the Blind.
1896	"Separate but Equal" becomes the law of the land. The U.S. Supreme Court upholds, in Plessy v. Ferguson, racial segregation laws for public facilities as long as the segregated facilities are equal in quality, a doctrine that came to be known as "separate but equal."
1897	Crosby Colored Grading School (later Crosby-Garfield Elementary School) is established on East Lenoir Street for Black children. The original building is replaced in 1939 by a modern brick school as part of a publicly funded project for Black citizens, which included Chavis Park (1937) and Chavis Heights Public Housing (1939).
1900	North Carolina passes a suffrage amendment to the state constitution that prevents most Blacks from voting.
~1915	Hargett Street, Raleigh's "Black Main Street," becomes a center for the African American community.
1917	Raleigh Chapter of NAACP is founded with 29 members.
1924	Washington Graded and High School opens for Black students in Raleigh's Fourth Ward African American neighborhood.
1930	Harris Barber College is created to train young African American men as barbers. In 1942, the college builds on South Blount Street.
~1930	Raleigh's African Americans use nonviolent civil disobedience to work for change. African American ministers boycott a ceremony to dedicate the War Memorial Auditorium because they are required to sit in the balcony.
1932	Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association is founded under the name Negro Citizens Committee. The original committee consists of 15 local African Americans, and they worked to encourage local African Americans to register and vote.



Photo courtesy of Bob Karp

1942	John Haywood Baker, Sr. is hired as the first African American Raleigh police officer since 1875. His son, John H. Baker, Jr., would be elected Wake County sherriff in 1978.
1941-1945	More than 1 million Black service members take part in World War II. Most of these Black service members were trained at bases in North Carolina, including the first African American Marines that trained at Montford Point.
1944	The first conference of the NAACP in North Carolina meets at First Congregational Church in Raleigh.
1945	Raleigh's NAACP branch has 595 members.
1950	Raleigh Ministerial Association expresses “complete condemnation” of the Ku Klux Klan's plans to organize in Raleigh and called for resistance to the movement by “members of our churches and citizens of this community.”
1953	John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School opens for African Americans and replaces Washington High School as Raleigh’s only Black high school. The school is desegregated in 1971 and converted to a junior high.
1956	The North Carolina General Assembly adopts the Pearsall Plan, which ensures segregated schools.
1956-1959	Elwyna Holt of Raleigh asks to have her son, Joe, transferred from John W. Ligon Junior-Senior High School to Daniels Junior High School, citing the inconvenience of traveling across town. The school board claims the application came too late in the year to be addressed. She applies again in 1957 and her application is denied. Later that year, the Holt family files suit in federal court against the Raleigh Board of Education. In 1959, the U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of the school board, indicating the family has not exhausted all administrative remedies.
1957	Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is organized with Martin Luther King, Jr. as president.
February 10, 1958	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addresses the Institute of Religion in Raleigh’s Broughton High School auditorium.
1960	The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded at Shaw University and provides young Black Americans with a prominent place in the national civil rights movement. In 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the SNCC organize more than 50 Freedom Rides across the South.
1960	Students from Shaw University and Saint Augustine’s College (now Saint Augustine’s University) protest segregation by holding sit-ins at local stores.
1960	Seven-year-old William Campbell is admitted to Murphey School. During the five years he attends the school, he is the only Black student there. Four hundred white parents of children at the school petition for Campbell's reassignment on the grounds that integration is not in the best interest of the children. The school board declines to act on the request.
April 16, 1960	Martin Luther King, Jr. speaks at Memorial Auditorium.
1961	Freedom Riders board over 50 buses across the South to deliberately challenge segregation rules leading to the integration of interstate buses and bus terminals. In June, Freedom Riders, including 18 Protestant ministers and rabbis, pass through Raleigh on their way to Florida.
1961	John Winters is elected to city council becoming the first Black American elected to the Raleigh City Council since before 1900.
1961	The Raleigh Board of Education assigns five African American students to Daniels Junior High School and three to Broughton High School.
1963	Protestors picket segregation at the Ambassador Theatre. In response, Mayor Enloe establishes a committee to meet with protest leaders and representatives of downtown businesses to encourage voluntary desegregation. Over the next six weeks, many downtown restaurants and motels opened to Black Americans. Protests continue throughout 1963.
1963	More than 200,000 people congregate at the Lincoln Memorial, and Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.



1964	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ends segregation in public places. All Raleigh's drug store lunch counters are desegregated. All city recreational facilities and indoor theaters are integrated, as are most Raleigh restaurants and several hotels and motels.
1965	Peaceful protestors march from Selma to Montgomery in support of voting rights. Police attack them with clubs, tear gas, and whips.
1965	The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits racial discrimination in voting.
1966	North Carolina's Pearsall Plan, a measure designed to prevent school integration , is ruled unconstitutional in federal court.
1966	Martin Luther King, Jr. arrives in Raleigh and gives a speech at North Carolina State University. The Ku Klux Klan marches downtown in protest. In response, Direct Action for Racial Equality (DARE) is organized and comprised of mostly North Carolina State University students interested in acting to improve race relations.
1968	Raleigh's City Council establishes the Raleigh Community Relations Committee office and staff. By 1970, there are seven African Americans on the 24-member committee.
April 4, 1968	Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated.
1970	A U.S. district court rules Raleigh, and nine other North Carolina school units, must integrate.
1971	A federal court rules that Raleigh's public schools must reflect a system-wide racial balance. The school board decides to use busing and school restructuring to bring the percentage of African Americans close to 30 percent in all schools. Many white families choose to have their children attend county school just outside the city limits. East Raleigh residents fight against the Raleigh school board's student assignment plan, seeking a plan that sets the burden for busing on North and West Raleigh students.
1973	Raleigh elects its first African American Mayor, Clarence Lightner.
1974	North Raleigh Exchange Club became one of first civic clubs in city to integrate with the induction of Mayor Lightner.
1974	Angela Davis, civil rights activists, leads a march in Raleigh. Oral histories indicate the march may have passed through, or originated at, John Chavis Memorial Park.
1978	John H. Baker Jr. is elected Wake County sheriff making him the first African American sheriff in North Carolina since reconstruction.