



COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND PARK MASTER PLANNING PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

The Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB) led an effort to revise the park master planning process, which resulted in **Resolution (2003)-735** that laid out specific elements to be included, actions to be taken and time frames for the master planning process. The Resolution process employed a citizen Master Plan Committee of 15, with a Chair and Vice Chair from the PRGAB. Additional parks were subsequently planned utilizing the Resolution Committee-led process, and City Council granted permission to use a Community Meeting process for two park master plans.

In 2008 Council approved a study of four master planning experiences: two were Resolution-Committee format, and two were a Community Meeting format. The study was conducted by staff from the NCSU Dept. of Agricultural Extension's Natural Resources Leadership Institute (NRLI) and accepted by Council in 2009. As a result of this report and its recommendations, Council directed staff to re-write the Parks Planning Process according to recommendations outlined in the report. Among the key recommendations was to develop a comprehensive public participation policy for park planning. The contract with NRLI was amended to prepare the policy re-write. The body of work found in the Public Participation Guidelines, Policy, and Manual for Park Planning addresses the recommendations from the study report and additional recommendations as well.

The entire body of work is presented for full consideration to the Council and includes the broad Guidelines, specific Policy with Figure 1 (a flow chart), detailed Manual, and a sample participation sheet for citizens attending individual meetings titled *Getting Involved in Park Planning*. Staff has retained NRLI to coach and provide feedback during the current Chavis Park Conversations process. Key staff has been trained in collaborative planning processes and has already incorporated many elements of the comprehensive public participation practices and principles into recent projects.

The following suggestions are recommended to assist in reviewing the various documents:

- Read the Preamble below and found at the beginning of each document;
- Read the Glossary of Terms found at the end of each document (same in each);
- Read the Policy document. The general steps and specific responsibilities are found in Section 6, and illustrated in Figure 1 at the end of the Policy.

Please consider that far more detail is provided in the **Guidelines** and **Manual** than the average citizen is expected to find useful, but these documents form the basis (best practices) in the Guideline and provide staff implementation direction in the Manual that are outlined in the **Policy**. Finally, the sample Participation Sheet (*Getting Involved in Park Planning*) is included as a handout based on a typical (but theoretical) meeting of a particular process and would provide guidance for citizen participation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

Preamble

The ultimate goal of the Comprehensive Program using these three documents is to ensure an effective and efficient process that fairly and equitably maximizes citizen input and support for the planning and development of the City of Raleigh's park system.

The broad Public Participation **Guidelines** for Park Planning presents and describes best practice formats, methods, and techniques for the Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department and Raleigh citizens to work in concert to plan, design, and develop park lands, greenways and recreation facilities. It includes examples and samples to illustrate how to use and implement the recommendations.

The Guidelines form the basis for Raleigh's Public Participation **Policy** for Park Planning, which outlines eleven principles of public participation, the general order and responsible parties for the actions associated with public participation in park planning activities, and the [draft] Raleigh City Council's policy statement for citizen involvement in park planning.

The Parks and Recreation Public Participation **Manual** for Park Planning establishes specific procedures, documents the roles, and provides more details for the Parks and Recreation Department to reach a Council-adopted Master Plan, Master Plan Amendment, Revised Master Plan, and System Integration Plan for undeveloped parks. It is a step-by-step manual to assist staff in any effort to inform, consult with, involve and collaborate with the public in park planning and development efforts.

The documents above are supported by **Figure 1**, a flow chart illustrating a general public process is at the end of the Policy and meeting-specific citizen participation sheets titled *Getting Involved in Park Planning*. The Getting Involved in Park Planning documents are handouts to be customized for each type of public engagement.

HOW THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATED IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF THIS PROGRAM

An initial public meeting was held in March 2010 after publishing the first draft of the Public Participation Guidelines, Policy and Manual (then referred to and structured as a Department Operation Instruction document). Twelve citizens attended the forum; the planning team received and responded to 264 comments after a review period. The comments and the responses prompted a re-examination of the three-document approach, especially the Manual. A substantial rewrite of all three documents resulted in a second draft of each. An update to City Council on January 17, 2012 began a public review of 45 days. This period included an update to the Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board and a Public Forum. Four citizens attended the Forum on February 29. At the end of the comment period on March 16, the PRGAB received a training session on listening skills related to their advisory capacity as citizen representatives. The planning team received and responded to 60 comments received from four (4) stakeholders during the recent review period. The revised documents have been provided with the “track changes” editing feature so the revisions are obvious and easy to review. Finally, the Parks and Recreation Director extended an invitation via the consultant to the four stakeholders to meet and discuss the revisions.

Additional information can be found at the following sites:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/nrli/decision-making/projects/index.php>

<http://www.raleighnc.gov/arts/content/PRecDesignDevelop/Articles/ParkMasterPlanProcessReport.html>

or by contacting the Design Development Division of Raleigh Parks and Recreation at ParkPlan@RaleighNC.gov or by calling 919-996-3285.