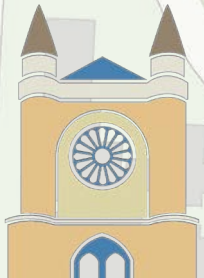
THE FISHER PARK MASTER PLAN

CITY OF GREENSBORO PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT | AUGUST 2022



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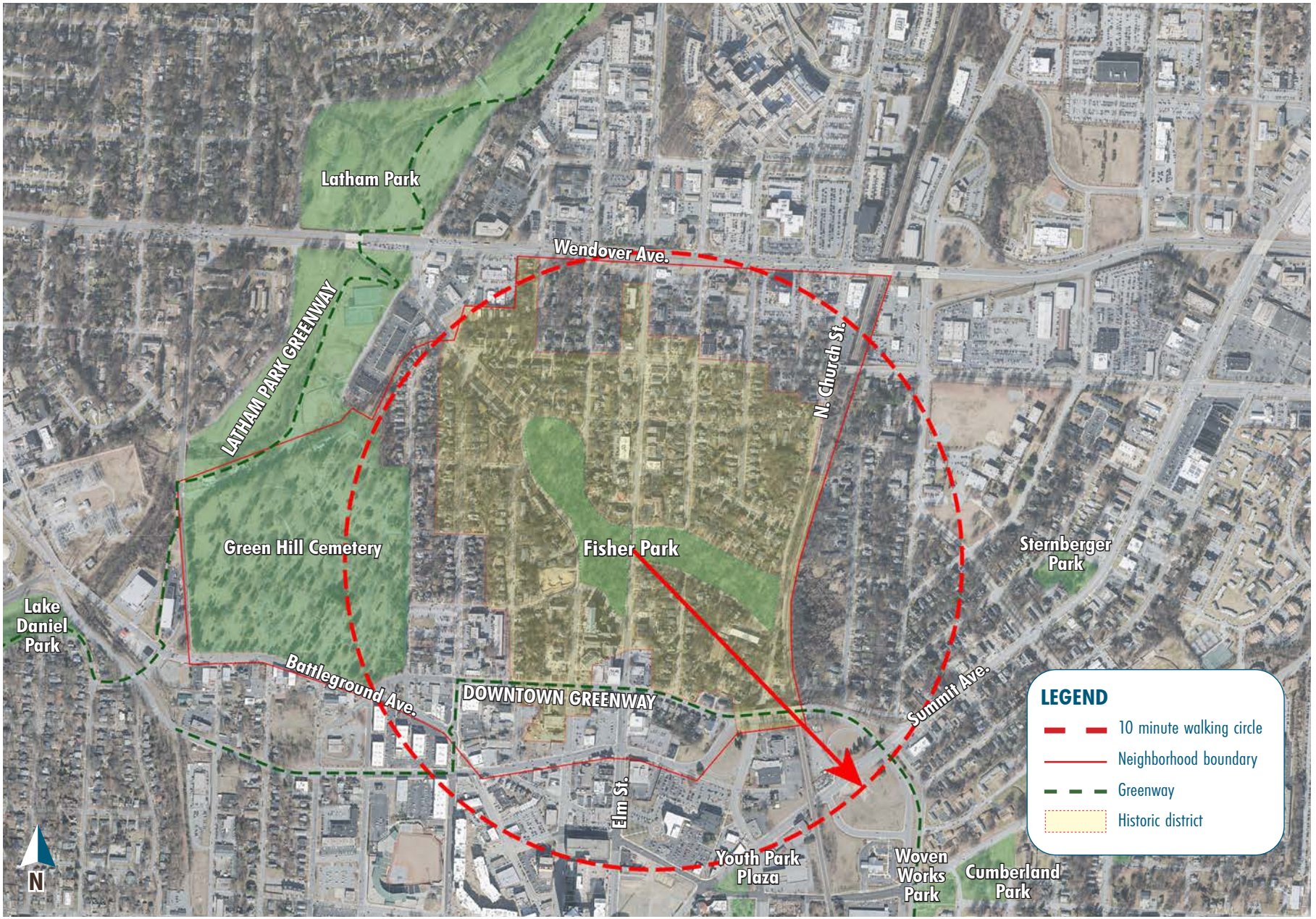


Figure 1 - Map of park and greenway connectivity.

01 INTRODUCTION

Fisher Park has historic significance as Greensboro's first public park. Located at 700 N. Elm Street in Greensboro, North Carolina, this linear neighborhood park encompasses approximately 14 acres. It extends along a winding creek corridor and offers tree-shaded walking trails, stone bridges and stairways, an open field for picnic and exercise, ornamental plantings, a playground, and plentiful greenery along its borders.

The park centers along a tributary of the North Buffalo creek and is bounded by Fisher Park Circle and Florence Street on the west side of North Elm Street and North Park Street, South Park Street, and North Church Street on the east side of North Elm Street. The park trails end only about 500 feet from the Downtown Greenway and 1200 feet from the Latham Park Greenway, and 2 blocks from the Green Hill Municipal Cemetery. The park is nestled in the center of the Fisher Park Historic District. This neighborhood is home to many Greensboro residents who take pride in their beautifully restored and cared for historic homes that overlook the park edges.

MASTER PLAN PROCESS: While beautiful and well-loved by the community, Fisher Park is in need of renovation due to its aging landscaping, outdated play equipment, and ideas generated by the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department's recently completed comprehensive master plan, Plan2Play.

Greensboro has committed to creating parks that are proximate to all community members. As a result, the city boasts 110 neighborhood parks. By intent, these parks are largely identical in recreational opportunities, providing equity but often lacking in uniqueness. Plan2Play provides guidance that neighborhood parks should begin to reflect the character of the neighborhood they serve and offer recreational opportunities that represent the preferences of local residents.

Due to it's historic nature, Fisher Park already has a distinct character and charm. The goal of the Master Plan is to build on the park's existing assets and enhance the landscape through thoughtful upgrades and careful design edits.

The Fisher Park master plan is funded through the City of Greensboro's Participatory Budgeting process. It was one of 4 projects funded in District 3 during the Greensboro Participatory Budgeting (PB) Cycle 3, which ended October 3, 2019. The Master Plan process officially kicked of in the winter of 2021 and was completed in summer of 2022. The process has been grounded in community input and careful site observations.

PLAN2PLAY:

The creation of "Community Hearts" was a guiding principle included within Plan2Play. Community hearts are large neighorhood parks and indoor facilities that have the opportunity to gain focused, additional activites and be transformed into a community gathering space that can draw from a slightly larger, but still locally identifiable, radius.

Community Hearts must have a high density population, be within 1/4 mile of a school or library, serve as a community destination, and be over an acre of land in size. Plan2Play identified Fisher Park as a suitable location for a community heart based on these criteria. While the park is currently serving the neighborhood well, moderate refinements may help to expand its range of amenties and increase use of the park by the local community.

Figure 2 - Early image of Fisher Park and surrounding homes.

Figure 3 - Historic photograph showing original wood bridges.

Figure 4 - Historic photograph illustrating the park's long history as lawn and tree landscape.

02 HISTORY

The development of Fisher Park began as a 14-acre donation from Captain Fisher to the City of Greensboro for the creation of a public park. The surrounding area, known then as Fisher's Woods, had been used as a dumping ground for garbage from nearby Greensboro. In 1900, nearby residents were making complaints about the accumulation of trash within the woods. In response to these complaints Captain Fisher announced "This property has for some time been used as a dumping ground for the refuse of the town, and as soon as the underbrush is sufficiently cleared away to permit, this will all be carted away, streets opened and graded, and the grounds put in first class condition. The tract contains 105 acres and will be divided into 350 lots."

Shortly after this announcement there was a reference to the creation of Fisher Park as a public resource for the city. The donation of the park was brokered by E.P. Wharton. Wharton was a farmer, developer, public servant, banker, civic booster, and namesake of Wharton Street. "It is Mr. Wharton's intention," stated The Greensboro Telegram newspaper, "to make a public park of about fifteen acres that will be a credit to Greensboro. There is no doubt, Mr. Wharton thinks, but that Mr. Fisher will give his hearty cooperation to this part of the plan. Such a park as the proposed one, in an easily accessible part of the city, lighted by electric lights, and with other improvements, will go far towards increasing the attractiveness of Greensboro, already one of the foremost towns in the State." On February 27, 1901, Wharton represented Captain Fisher before the City Board of Alderman to offer the donation of 14 acres of land for use as a public park in exchange for improvements such as public roads be completed within the Fisher Park neighborhood by the City of Greensboro.

Capitan Fisher died in 1903 and never saw the completion of Fisher Park or the surrounding Fisher Park Neighborhood. Nevertheless, the creation of the park moved forward, and park plans were adopted 1907. These plans and park events were noted in the Greensboro Daily Record. "The Civic League has finished cutting the undergrowth," reported the Greensboro Daily Record, "and the carpenters are now preparing to construct benches and bridges throughout Fisher Park." The League orchestrated a "two day's lawn fete, carnival and outdoor theatrical performance to be held in the grove at Fisher Park on two afternoons and evenings in September." Other events planned included a May-pole dance, dances of fairies, woodland nymphs, and a double or echo chorus.

Other improvements to the park continued as it gained in popularity. In 1908 R.C. Hood was authorized to have a pavilion with restrooms constructed for Fisher Park at the price of $150. Walking paths began forming as residents of the neighborhood started using the park. Crossing the stream in the center of the park were originally wooden bridges, some of which were accidentally burned down in the 1920s. The stream bed was lined with rocks in the 1920s as well, either by the Federal Work Projects Administration (WPA) or the Civil Conservation Corps (CCC).

In the spring of 1931, the Greensboro Daily News reported, "Various improvements to grounds and rustic bridges in Fisher Park both east and west of Elm Street, are to be effected under the direction of C.W. Smedley, director of public works and service, it was stated yesterday by Paul C. Lindley, park commissioner. Representatives of the Greensboro Garden Club and others interested are said to have been pushing the matter." It was during this period that the wooden bridges were replaced by stone bridges, likely crafted from Mount Airy granite by Andrew Leopold Schlosser, a master stonemason from Austria/Hungary.

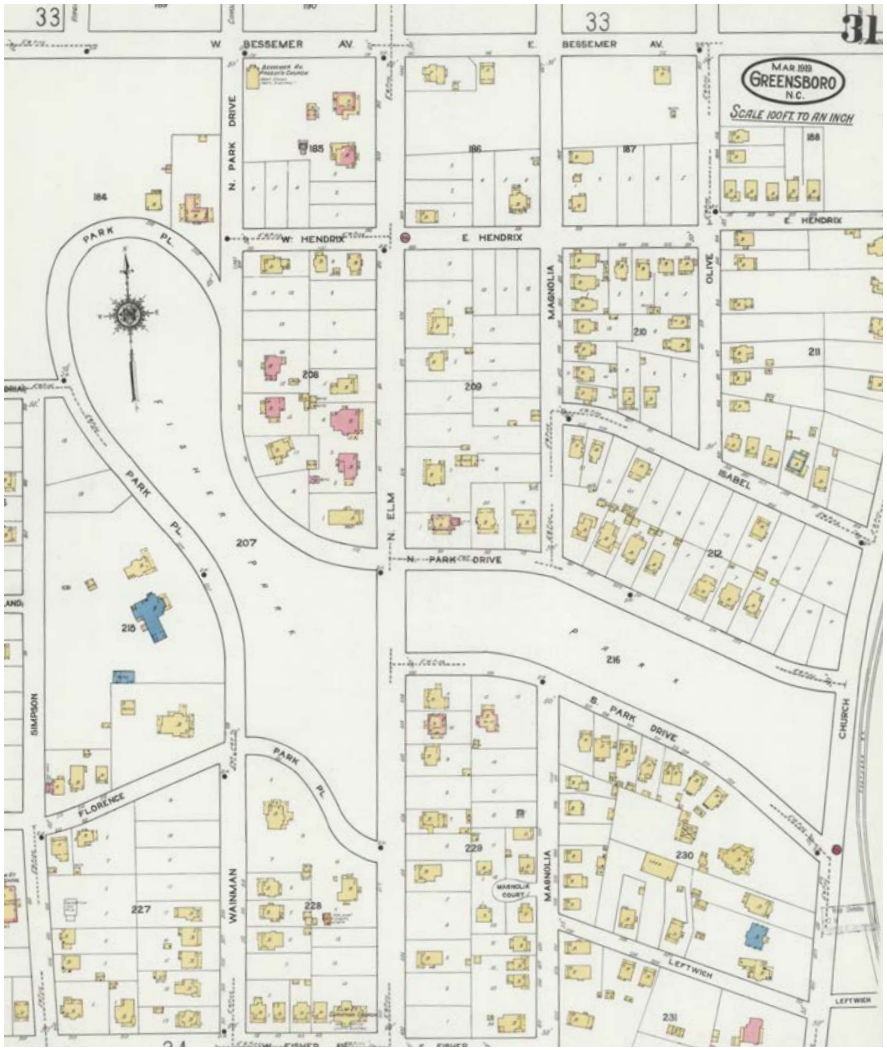


Figure 5 - Sanborn map from 1919 showing Fisher park and the surrounding neighborhood.

Figure 6 - Dedication of the "King's Chair" in 2013.

There have been several other notable events that impacted the park. In 1978, the Fisher Park Neighborhood Association was formed with the mission "to preserve the historic and residential character of the neighborhood, and to work with the City of Greensboro to help maintain our scenic public park." Over the years FPNA has worked to maintain and improve the park. A bond issued in the early 1980's funded a significant streetscape project around the park. This work included improved access and drainage, landscaping, decorative streetlights and signposts, defined parking areas with granite or concrete curbs, and exposed aggregate concrete gutters along the edges of the streets around the park. This work provided a significant improvement to the park's edges.

More recently, Fisher Park was designated a City of Greensboro Historic District in 1982 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. Maintenance and improvements in the Park are subject to guidelines set forth in the City of Greensboro Historic District Program Manual and Design Guidelines, and may require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the City prior to commencement.

Notably, there have been two previous studies of Fisher Park performed by local landscape architect Chip Calloway. These studies include the Fisher Park Restoration and Reforestation Plan of 1990, and the Landscape Management Policy and Procedures for Fisher Park in Greensboro, NC of 2009. Both are excellent plans with the former focusing on detailed horticultural recommendations within the park and beyond to the neighborhood streetscapes. The 2009 narrative focuses on establishing landscape improvement guidelines and procedures in cooperation with the City of Greensboro to accomplish park projects.

Lastly, in 2013 the descendants of Leopold Schlosser arranged for the "King's Chair" to come to Fisher Park. The chair is a handcrafted throne made by Schlosser that is now a very prominent feature within the park and serves as a photo destination for wedding pictures and Santa visits.

Figure 7 - Neighborhood context map of Fisher Park

03 THE PARK TODAY

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT: Located to either side of N. Elm Street and bearing the name of it's historic neighborhood, Fisher Park spans about 4 city blocks just north of downtown Greensboro. The Fisher Park Historic District is considered Greensboro's first suburb, and it's mix of prairie school, craftsman, and colonial revival style houses lend a great diversity to the architecture in the area. While along N. Elm St many houses have been converted or replaced by businesses, much of the surrounding area is still residential. Notable historical buildings include the First Presbyterian Church and the Julian Price house, which sit adjacent to the park.

The Park is bisected by N. Elm Street. The two sides of the park are known by the locals as Park Proper West and Park Proper East. Both sides of the park include winding paths, canopy trees, under story plant communities, stream edges, and picnic and bench seating. The stream is crossed by a series of stone bridges. Stone stairs of varying length and design bring visitors from the higher elevations at the edge of the park down to the lower greens along the stream. Much of the stonework is attributed to notable stone mason Andrew Schlosser (1864-1943). The park edge itself hosts a series of parallel parking spaces creating a variety of entry points for visitors arriving by both foot and car. It is important to note - that some of the park's charm comes from this multi-entry experience - where each path offers new discovery. The two sides of the park, while similar, also have a distinct character and mood - which should be celebrated and enhanced.

PARK PROPER WEST: Park Proper West has a wider and more irregular shape. The far west of the park hosts a variety of spaces for community gathering. The portion of the park closest to Parkway Avenue boasts a more expansive open lawn that occurs along both sides of the stream edge and offers the ability for use as a flexible meeting space. Just past the lawn area is a triangular shaped lawn area, flanked by walkways on all sides. The "triangle" is a frequent meeting point for community gatherings. It is also adjacent to the "Kings Chair" - a special moment within the Park. It is important to note that both the lawn and triangle are subject to flooding and moist conditions during large storm events.

As one moves closer to N. Elm Street the forest and density of horticultural plantings increase. This portion of the park feels the most like a garden - and in the springtime is flush with blooms of azaleas, camellias, daffodils, and more. A series of wonderful and picturesque boulders flank the stream on the approach to Elm Street. Until recently, these boulders remained hidden under a dense thicket of primarily invasive plant species. A community led effort to manage invasives has allowed for the rediscovery of some of these natural wonders. Finally, a small gathering place with three concrete animal sculptures and two picnic tables are set in a deeper wooded area just in front of First Presbyterian Church.

The linear portion of the park on the West side that follows Elm Street serves as the "official" park entry. This area is much higher in elevation that the rest of the park and is hidden from view once in the park due to dense vegetation. A historic sign for the park and granite monument marking the site as Greensboro's first city park give prominence to the location. A series of winding paths take visitors from this edge down into the park below.

PARK PROPER EAST: Park Proper East is more narrow and linear. It begins along Elm Street with another wider and more open lawn area. This zone is also subject to flooding and wet conditions due to the stream being culverted for a portion of the park. Historically this area was used as a swimming hole for local residents to cool off in the hot summers. A grant








Figure 8 - Images of Fisher Park today.

project in the late 1990's secured funding to daylight the stream in this portion of the park - but the project was never completed due to community objections.

Beyond this point the park continues with a series of pathways that flank the stream and lead visitors up to the surrounding neighborhood. This portion of the park is more open and allows for longer views thoughout the park and upward into the adjacent homes. Another granite monument marks the "City Center" or the approximate center of Guilford County. Greensboro, known as the center city due it sighting in the middle of the county, was originally suppose to be sighted in the area of Fisher Park, however the County Seat was moved due to the swampy conditions of this area. At the eastern most portion of the park a small playground occupies an opening within the tree canopy. The play equipment includes one larger structure with slides, a balance beam, set of swings, mulch surfacing, and benches for seating. This end of the park terminates at North Church Street and the adjacent railroad.

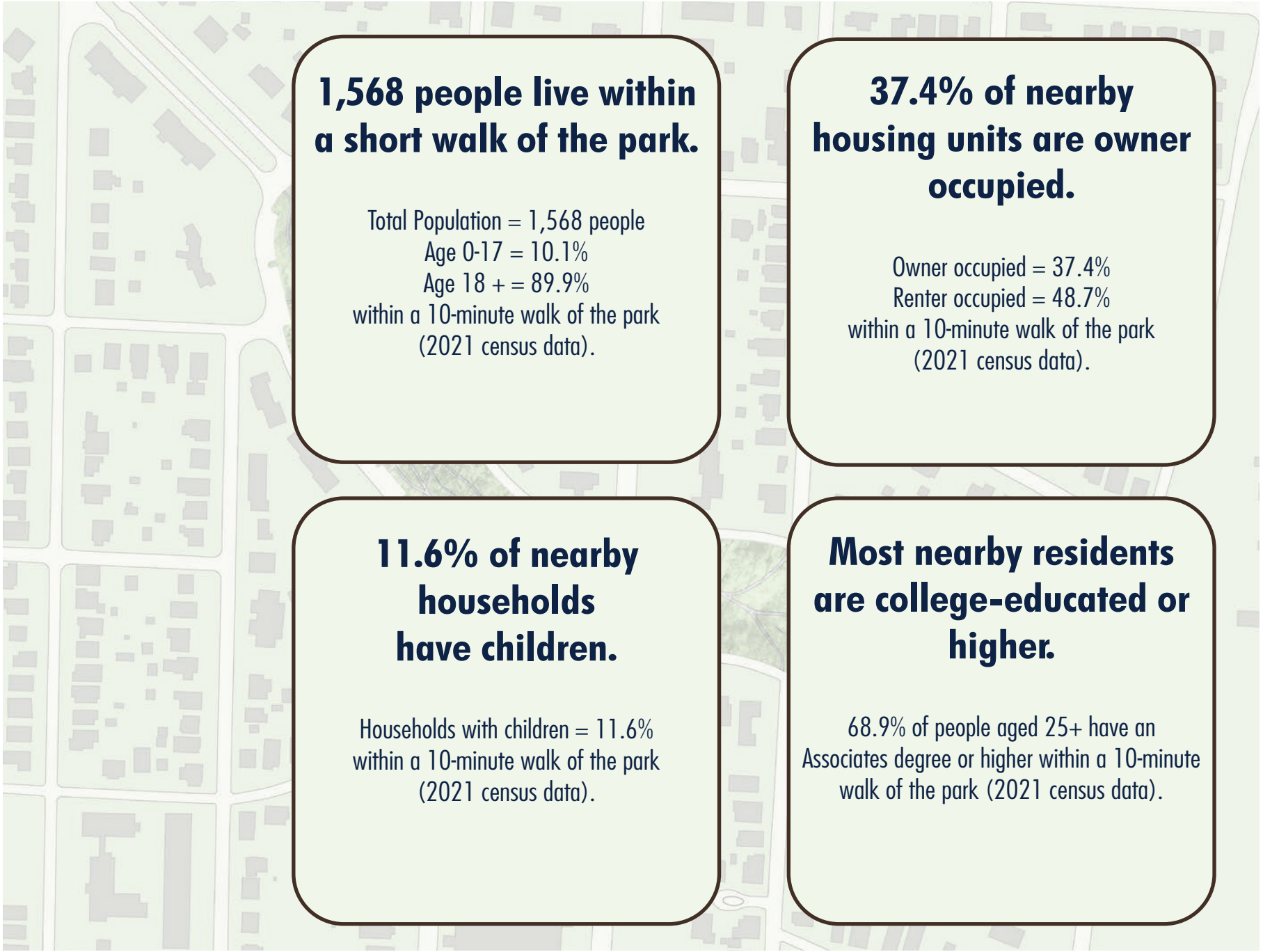
TOPOGRAPHY: Fisher Park is shaped like a linear bowl. The surrounding streets are at a higher elevation that range from a mild accessible change to a more dramatically sloped hill that sits almost 25 feet above the park's stream corridor. The stream, which runs along the center of the park represents the lowest point, and it gently falls from the eastern edge by the railroad track down towards the western edge of the park near Parkway Avenue. There are a few areas that have a more level connection into the park such as the playground edge along North Church Street, the lawn area in Park Proper East close to Elm street, and some zones close to Parkway Avenue. These areas offer critical points for accessible entry and access into the park.

SOILS: A 1920 USDA / NCDA soil map of Guilford County classifies the park's soils as Wilkes Series soil. This soil type consists of shallow, well drained soils with moderately slow to slow permeability. Wilkes soils are found on gently sloping narrow ridges and sloping to steep side of ridges between intermittent and permanent streams in the southern Piedmont. Over it's range, approximately 80% of Wilkes soil is covered in trees and pasture. Dominant trees of Wilkes soils are loblolly pine, Virginia pine, eastern red cedar, blackjack oak, and post oak.

VEGETATION: Walking through the park offers a visitor several different landscape expressions that are in part due to the vegetation. The far west side is relatively open with mown grass and canopy trees. Walking eastward towards the North Elm St., the canopy trees and understory become much denser providing a forest walk experience. Across North Elm St. in Park Proper East, the vegetation maintains a more open feeling of mown lawn and canopy trees for the majority of this side. The vegetation increases in density along the North Church St. side and along the vegetated creek buffers. These buffers play an important role in improving water quality, though many of the plants found along the stream are invasive species and require management.

The park is very horticulturally diverse. The native canopy consists of various deciduous hardwood species. Dominant species include oak (Quercus spp.), hickory (Carya spp.), tulip poplar (Liriordendron tulipfera), and sweetgum (Liquidambar styraciflua). Subdominant canopy species include river birch (Betula nigra), sycamore (Platanus occidentalis), beech (Fagus grandifolia. The native understory canopy is dominated by dogwood (Cornus florida), redbud (Cercis canadensis), and riparian species such as ironwood (Carpinus caroliniana). The native shrub layer is diverse.

In addition to the native canopy, the park's vegetation has been heavily supplemented in some areas by common exotic plant species. These plantings are primarily flowering shrubs and consist of species such as azaleas (Rhododendron spp.), camellias (Camellias spp.), viburnums (Viburnums spp.), and loropetalums (Loropetalum spp.).



1,568 people live within a short walk of the park.

Total Population = 1,568 people
Age 0-17 = 10.1%
Age 18 + = 89.9%
within a 10-minute walk of the park
(2021 census data).

37.4% of nearby housing units are owner occupied.

Owner occupied = 37.4%
Renter occupied = 48.7%
within a 10-minute walk of the park
(2021 census data).

11.6% of nearby households have children.

Households with children = 11.6%
within a 10-minute walk of the park
(2021 census data).

Most nearby residents are college-educated or higher.

68.9% of people aged 25+ have an Associates degree or higher within a 10-minute walk of the park (2021 census data).

HYDROLOGY: There is one small stream that runs the length of the park and is a prominent site feature. This perennial stream flows from east to west along the center of the park. The stream channel averages approximately 3' in width with a shallow depth averaging 6-8" at the time of observation. Large portions of the streambed have been channelized with natural flat stones. It is believed this was completed by WPA and/or the CCC during the Great Depression era, presumably to reduce overbank flooding. Wider and deeper pools occur at the bottom of elevation drops within the stream bed. No obvious waterbody occurs above this stream and it is assumed this stream is sourced primarily from groundwater and stormwater runoff.

The small creek within the park is a tributary of Buffalo Creek. The park falls locally within the Reedy Fork watershed. At the regional level, the park falls within the Cape Fear River basin by way of the Haw River.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Map 3710786500J and map 3710786400J, effective 06/18/2007, there are no floodplains or flood hazards contained on this property. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory Mapping, there appears to be no wetlands contained on this property.

PUBLIC ACCESS: The park has over 19 entrances and a series of winding paths. Accessibility in the park is a concern due to the challenging nature of the noted topography. Most entrances from the street or sidewalk require stairs. The few that don't will need attention to the grading in order to make them accessible. The asphalt paving in the west side of the park is in disrepair multiple places and could pose a hazard for foot traffic or wheelchair accessibility. This also holds true for the paving across the bridges.

SIGNIFICANT NATURAL COMMUNITIES: There are no documented significant natural communities within the park. There are currently no delineated wetlands within the park.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: The City of Greensboro has signed the 100% Promise to ensure that everyone in Greensboro has safe, easy access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of their home by 2050. This promise is an evidence-based program backed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Urban Land Institute (ULI), and The Trust for Public Land.

2021 census data shows 1,568 people living within a 10-minute walk of Fisher Park. Within this area, adults aged 25-34 are the largest percentage of residents at 18.8%, followed by adults aged 55-64 at 14.9%. In total, 89.9% of residents were over the age of 18, and of those over the age of 25, 68.9% have an associates degree or higher. There are 813 housing units within a 10-minute walk to the park according to the 2021 census data. Of these, 37.4% of housing units are owner occupied, while 48.7% are renter occupied. 11.6% of housing units have children. This information supports park renovations that respect the character of the park that long-standing residents have come to love, while providing recreational opportunities for younger adults and families with children.

COMMUNITY PRIORITY AREAS

Results from the first round of engagement.

"I hope there is a focus on native plants that support local wildlife and pollinators!"

"Please respect our park's history. Enhance what exists."

"Make our magical woods accessible for all!"

"Better pathways, not paved but maintained"

"Fun play structures that match the woods"

04 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Figure 9- Image of community comments collected at Christmas in the Park.

Figure 10 - Picture of community members voting on priority areas for improvements.

The recommendations within this master plan represent the culmination of a series of community engagement events. Community engagement was spread across the planning process and occurred both in-person and on-line. The timing of the events aligned with two critical points. The first round of engagement happened early on in the planning phase and focused on understanding the communities priorities for Fisher Park. The second round of engagement allowed residents to review park recommendations that were developed in response to their earlier input, and rate their response to 12 big ideas. A summary of the engagement by phase is listed below.

PRIORITY AREAS: This round of engagement included one in-person event at Christmas in the Park and was followed with one online survey that replicated the in-person event. Both engagement strategies were advertised on both Greensboro Parks & Recreation and Fisher Park Neighborhood Association social media outlets.

The data gathered showed that most of the residents in the Fisher Park neighborhood are fond of the existing character of the park and did not want it to be significantly altered. The two engagement efforts received input from 182 participants collectively. "Plant Life - manage, maintain, and cultivate plants" was selected as the highest priority among participants at 30%. This was followed by concerns over the conditions of the pathways (20%) and site furnishings (16%). Improvements to the play equipment ranked 4th at 12%, while built features (10%), accessibility (7%), and visibility (5%) ranked lower as priorities by participants.

I'm not so sure... → Sounds great to me!

3 4 5

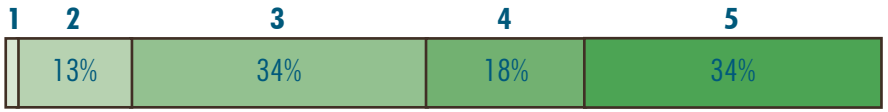
CARE FOR THE CANOPY

1 3 4 5

2%

MANAGE INVASIVE PLANTS

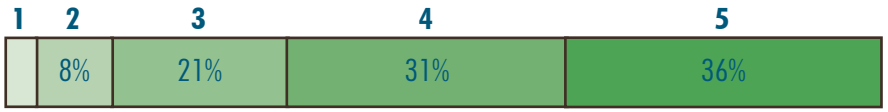
1 2 3 4 5



1%

HIGHLIGHT AND PRIORITIZE ENTRY

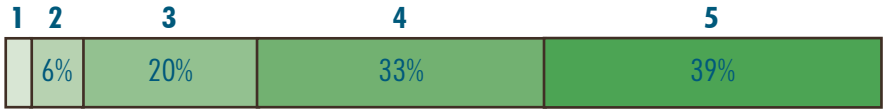
1 2 3 4 5



3%

ENHANCE THE GARDEN

1 2 3 4 5



2%

ELEVATE FURNISHINGS

1 2 3 4 5

4% 4%

MAINTAIN AND RESTORE HISTORIC ELEMENTS

I'm not so sure... → Sounds great to me!

1 2 3 4 5

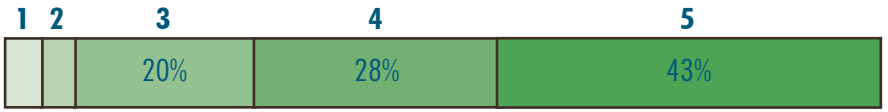
CONNECT PLAY TO PARK CHARACTER

1 2 3 4 5

1%

IMPROVE PATHWAYS AND CONNECTIONS

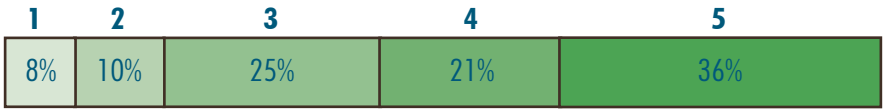
1 2 3 4 5



5% 4%

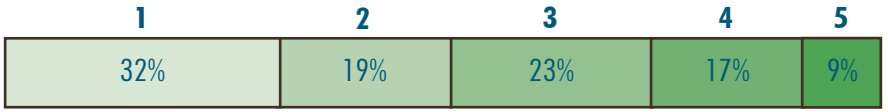
INTRODUCE ACCESSIBILITY

1 2 3 4 5



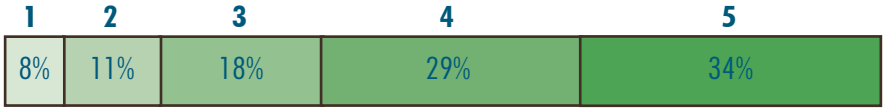
ELEVATE GATHERING SPACES

1 2 3 4 5



FORMALIZE RESERVATIONS

1 2 3 4 5



BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

Figure 11 - Residents ranking each big ideas at a Curbside Cocktails

Figure 12 - Sharing results of community priorities at Curbside Cocktails.

BIG IDEAS CHECK: The second round of engagement provided participants an opportunity to provide input on the 12 big ideas that were developed in-part from their initial input.

This round of engagement was comprised of an in-person event at the May Curbside Cocktails neighborhood event. This event was then immediately followed by an online survey that replicated the in-person content. In total, 82 participants provided their input into this round of engagement.

During this event, each of the 12 big ideas was described in both text and imagery. Participants were then asked to rank each individual idea on a scale of 1 (I'm not so sure) to 5 (Sounds great to me). In addition, there was an opportunity for residents to provide open-ended feedback. This provided residents with an opportunity to tell the design team how they felt about the design and management topics that had been created.

As in the first engagement round, the topic of plant life was highly accepted by the neighborhood with "Care for the Canopy" receiving all votes higher than a 3, and 78% voting a 5. Notably within this exercise, the topic of "Formalize Reservations" did not pole favorably among residents either in-person or online and was removed as a goal of the master plan.

All other big ideas shared were seen as valid by the residents. Given this feedback, the final big ideas for the renovation of Fisher Park are as follows: Care for the Canopy, Manage Invasive Plants, Highlight Entry, Enhance the Garden, Elevate Furnishings, Maintain and Restore Historic Elements, Connect Play to Park Character, Improve Pathways and Accessibility (combined), Elevate Gathering Spaces, and Build Meaningful Partnerships.

10 BIG IDEAS

The focus of the Fisher Park Master Plan is to maintain and enhance the existing fabric of this historic and well-loved park. This design direction is deeply grounded in community input, which consistently trended towards editing and caring for the beauty and history of the Park versus new or trendy design insertions. The master plan recommendations are thus divided into 10 big ideas that focus on care, management, enhancement, and gentle upgrades. The 10 big ideas are divided into three main concepts: plant life, built elements, and partnerships. These ideas and related recommendations are explored in depth in this section of the master plan report.

BIG IDEA 1-4 - PLANT LIFE

1. Care for the Canopy
2. Manage Invasives
3. Highlight Entry
4. Enhance the Garden

BIG IDEA 5-9 - BUILT ELEMENTS

5. Elevate Furnishings
6. Improve Pathways and Connections
7. Connect Play to Park Character
8. Maintain and Restore Historic Elements
9. Elevate Gathering Spaces

BIG IDEA 10 - PARTNERSHIPS

10. Build Meaningful Partnerships

Figure 13 - Trees from 2021 field survey illustrate density and diversity of size in the Fisher Park canopy.

01 CARE FOR THE CANOPY

The Fisher Park tree canopy is one of the park's greatest assets and clearly enjoyed by the adjacent neighborhood residents and park visitors. Community engagement results show that "Plant Life - Manage, Cultivate, and Maintain Plants" ranked highest as a priority for investment by survey respondents.

The park contains an impressive forest canopy. The upper canopy is dominated by oaks, hickory, yellow poplar, and sweet gum. The mid and lower canopies contain species such as flowering dogwood, sweetbay magnolia, and eastern redbud.

The park's forest provides many valuable services to the Fisher Park neighborhood and Greensboro. The trees cool the park and creek by providing shade, mitigate stormwater runoff, sequester carbon, and provide breeding and foraging habitat for many species of wildlife. In addition, the trees help the park feel like a natural oasis within a short walk to downtown Greensboro

~REMOVE DEAD, DISEASED, & INVASIVE TREE SPECIES

The park's trees should be intentionally managed for health, diversity, and longevity. Trees that are dead, dying, and diseased trees should be removed from the park. There are currently 8 dead or dying trees greater than 10" dbh that should be removed from the park. Several of these trees are ash currently infected with Emerald Ash Borer. These trees should be removed from the park as a safety measure. In addition, invasive tree species that frequently escape cultivation, such as Mimosa, Tree-of-Heaven, and Flowering Pears should be removed from the park. It is also recommended that an appointed Neighborhood Association representative schedule and perform an a walk-through of the park with the City arborist every 2-years to identify any hazardous trees for removal.

~ IDENTIFY & NURTURE NEXT GENERATION TREES

The park contains many naturally regenerating tree seedlings and saplings. In general, these young trees should be cared for as they represent the next generation of forest canopy within the park. In some places the native seedlings are becoming excessively dense and altering the views and feeling within the park. In densely planted areas, young canopy trees should be kept at approximately 20-30 feet on center spacing to maintain the desired look and feel of the park's trails. In the areas of the park that are more open and contain mowed lawn, a spacing of approximately 50-75 feet on center would be appropriate. As the aging canopy trees die and are removed from the park, these young trees will take advantage of the canopy opening and increase their rate of growth.

~ CONSIDER SPECIES DIVERSITY IF PLANTING NEW TREES

The park currently contains enough mature canopy trees to produce ample offspring. These seedlings and saplings are evident throughout the un-mown portions of the park. If there is a desire to plant new trees within the park, efforts should be taken to select native trees and increase diversity by selecting tree species infrequently or not currently found in the park. Outside of highlighting park entries - the master plan does not suggest planting new trees at this time.

Privet

Tree of Heaven

Japanese Honeysuckle

Porcelain Berry

Mimosa

Oregon Grape Holly

Figure 14 - Images of some of the common invasive plant species found within FIsher Park.

02 MANAGE INVASIVES

In addition to the impressive array of native plants and exotic cultivated plants within the park, there are many invasive plant species growing in the park. The list of commonly observed invasive plants includes Ligustrum spp., Lonicera spp., Elaeagnus spp., Mimosa, Porcelain berry, and others. These plants thrive in areas of frequent disturbance such as creek banks and forest edge conditions.

The negative impacts of invasive plants are well documented, and this topic was heavily addressed in the 2009 Fisher Park Landscape Management Policy. Invasive plants out-compete most native plants and form dominant monocultures. This ultimately results in an overall reduction in plant and animal biodiversity and loss of native habitat. In addition, many of the invasive plants within Fisher Park grow into dense understory thickets creating areas of low visibility that have detracted from the park's scenic views and caused some park visitors to feel unsafe.

~DEVELOP AN INVASIVES MANAGEMENT PLAN - TIME OF YEAR AND REMOVAL METHODS

The park's invasive plant species should be actively managed. An invasive species management plan for Fisher Park should be developed that contains information about the target species, management approaches, timing, areas to be worked, and logs of past activity.

This plan should be coordinated with The City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, which is in the process of creating a strategic plan to address invasive plant species across the entire city park system. The citywide plans will include a variety of plant removal methods, including the use of specific herbicides at Fisher Park and other park spaces that are negatively impacted by the proliferation of invasive species. The Fisher Park

management plan should include guidelines for removing invasive plants at the most effective time of the year using a method that causes the least amount of harm to the ecosystem. Both the timing and removal method may vary depending on the plant species.

The invasive plants of Fisher Park are a common problem across the region and methods of eradication have been well studied. Sources such as the Nonnative Invasive Plans of Southern Forests by the USDA provide useful information that can be applied to Fisher Park. In addition, see Appendix B for basic management sheets for the most common invasive plants of Fisher Park. In general, removal guidelines for invasive plants in order of preference include hand pulling, hand or mechanical digging, cut and treat stumps with herbicide, and foliar spray with herbicide.

As the invasive plant population within Fisher Park is reduced, resources should be allocated to the replanting of native species suitable for the park.

~ CONTINUE EFFORTS TO REMOVE INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

It should be noted within this master plan that community efforts to remove invasive plants from the park have been ongoing for many years. Local resident James (Jim) Halsch leads this effort and organizes regular workdays where groups of volunteers remove invasive plants primarily through hand and mechanical pulling. Some tasks are accomplished with the professional services of Delancey Street. Removed plants are typically piled at the curb edge and removed by the city. These efforts have significantly reduced populations of invasive plants within the park, particularly along the creek corridor. Jim and his group of volunteers should continue their diligent grassroots efforts.

In addition, the neighborhood should seek additional cooperation from the City of Greensboro to remove the larger invasive trees and shrubs that are beyond the scope of a volunteer effort. These mature plants contribute large volumes of seeds to the park's landscape.

~ RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS & THE NEED FOR ACTION

The FPNA, Parks and Recreation, and the City should raise awareness within the community of the need for invasive plant management. Plant removal within public lands can lead to confusion and frustration by users that do not understand the ecological issues associated with invasive plants. Awareness could be raised by marketing efforts on social media targeted to the surrounding neighborhood. This may also attract additional volunteers to help the effort.

~ TRAIN VOLUNTEERS TO IDENTIFY THE COMMON INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES OF THE PARK

Currently, volunteers make up the majority of the task force that help to remove the park's invasive species. Volunteers should receive basic training in invasive plant identification, removal methods, and tool safety to ensure the invasive plants are properly identified and removed safely and correctly.

Figure 15 - Map showing location of primary entries and relative condition.

03 HIGHLIGHT ENTRY

Some of the charm of Fisher Park is in the sense of discovery. This is partly due to the multiple entrances, both formal and informal, that flank the edges in multiple locations leading into the surrounding neighborhood. Everyone experiences the park in a unique way - and visitors by both car and foot have a variety of inviting places to begin their journey. The goal of "highlight entry" is not to disrupt the charm and multiplicity of experiences, but to extend qualities of some of the more beautiful entry locations to other spaces within the park.

~ MAINTAIN & REINFORCE THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF SIMPLE & BEAUTIFUL PARK ENTRANCES

Fisher Park contains 19 formal entries and numerous informal entries or "cow paths". All formal entries, except for 2, currently include large flowerpots on both sides of the entry path, as well as a black metal trash receptacle. Two entries within Park Proper West also contain dog waste bag dispensers.

The park entry at the intersection of Fisher Park Circle and Carolina Circle is arguably the nicest formal entry. This entry contains two flowerpots, a trash receptacle, two medium sized flowering trees (Natchez crape myrtle), and a ground plane planted with low-shrubs that allow visibility into the park. Where feasible, the remaining 18 formal entries should emulate this location to create a unified park entry expression of two pots, two flowering trees, low-flowering shrubs, and a trash receptacle. It is acknowledged that perfectly matching this entry may be difficult due to the presence of large shade trees at many of the entryways that would prohibit growing smaller flowering trees and shrubs underneath.

The flowerpots are currently maintained by a dozen neighborhood "Pot Tender" volunteers who replant and tend flowers at park entrances each spring and fall. This existing design standard reinforces the park's identity across the various portions of the park, and while not overly formalized, creates a system of clear welcoming points into the park.

The Pot Tenders should continue their diligent work. Consideration should be given to creating a more formal digital Pot Tender sign-up that is accessible through the neighborhood association website. An easily accessible sign-up may help this long-established tradition continue without disruption from change in leadership or neighborhood resident transition. It may also encourage additional volunteers.

Flowerpots and trash receptacles should be added to the two entries where they are lacking. Flowerpots and a trash receptacle should be added to the entrance at the corner of Fisher Park Cir. and N. Elm St. The topography drops quickly at this location and may require a small amount of fill to help level the pots. The trash receptacle can be relocated from one of the informal entries along that section of Fisher Park Cir. and placed lower within the park where the topography levels out more. Flowerpots should also be added to the stone stair entry across from First Presbyterian Church on Florence Street. No trash receptacle is needed at this location due to street parking constraints.

Figure 16 - Map of managed vegetation types within the Park.

04 ENHANCE THE GARDEN

Fisher Park hosts an impressive collection of plantings. These scattered plantings become the most notable on the east end of Park Proper West and reveal a historic woodland garden. Horticultural efforts should focus on the restoration of this woodland garden and the refinement of the existing picnic table gathering area near Florence Street.

~FOCUS GARDENING EFFORTS ON EAST END OF PARK PROPER WEST

Fisher Park contains a diverse collection of horticultural plantings. This mix of native and exotic, noninvasive garden plants are a part of the park's rich history. They include plants such as azaleas, camellias, quince, palmettos, viburnums, and pearl bush. At the east end of Park Proper West, near First Presbyterian Church on Florence Street and across the park to the 100 Fisher Park Circle area, many of these plantings are massed and organized in ways that reveal a carefully cultivated woodland garden of the past.

The woodland garden provides a beautiful floral display in the spring and should be restored. This restoration would include removing the invasive plants, pruning the existing plantings when needed, and infilling the existing shrub masses where gaps exist.

With the exception of park entries, this woodland garden should be the area of more intensively managed horticultural efforts within the park. Limiting gardening efforts to this area would allow the neighborhood to capitalize on the existing garden fabric that exists in this area and also help limit landscape maintenance in other areas.

~INFILL SHRUB GROUPINGS INTO EXISTING GARDEN FABRIC & PLANT NATIVE SPECIES WHEN APPROPRIATE

Overtime, the woodland garden on the east end of Park Proper West has become less defined as a special element within Fisher Park. Invasive plants have blended heavily with the ornamental plantings reducing their visual impact. Some of the ornamental plants have died and left voids in the mass plantings. Existing ornamental shrub groupings should be infilled to replace dead plants or holes within the massings. If new plantings are to be established within the woodland garden area, consider planting native species when appropriate. Some of the existing plantings, including the azaleas, have grown quite large and should be pruned to maintain safe path edges, clear visibility, and overall size and form.

~EXTEND THE BULB BLOOM

Portions of Fisher Park contain an impressive spring bulb collection. These plantings include a large array of daffodils that bring an early spring celebration. Gardening efforts within the woodland garden area should increase the bulb collection to help recognize the horticultural uniqueness of this area of the park and extend the season of flowering bulbs. Careful selection of daffodil cultivars and other naturalizing bulbs could allow early flowering from February to early May.

~ ELEVATE, NAME, & MAINTAIN THE FLORENCE ST. GARDEN

The small gathering space next to Florence Street has a high diversity of ornamental plants. The gathering space itself has a comfortable scale and is marked by a clearing in the woods with three picnic tables, three concrete

Figure 17 - Conceptual plan sketch of the Florence Street Garden.

Figure 18 - Existing seating area in proposed location of the Florence Street Garden.

Figure 19 - Extending the bulb bloom beyond Spring will create more seasonal interest.

sculptures, and a trash receptacle. This space has the opportunity to become a more cultivated and meaningful garden landscape within the park.

This Florence Street Garden could be elevated by limbing up the trees and creating better visibility, removal of invasive species, development of a secondary path system with seating, and insertion of thoughtfully designed masses of native and select exotic flowering perennials and shrubs. In addition, two of the parking spaces along Florence Street should be made ADA compliant. The entrance point into the garden from these spaces as well as the pathway and gathering area should be resurfaced with stabilized decomposed granite creating a softer but accessible connection.

Plants within the garden could be named for educational purposes creating a more arboretum like atmosphere. It is also important to note that while most residents wanted minimal changes in the park - some desired more interesting insertions of art such as large wind chimes and sculpture. If the community choses to make such additions - the Florence Street Garden would be an ideal and contained setting for these more imaginative elements to occur. While funding for development and long-term maintenance of this garden may not currently exist - it seems like a prime opportunity for partnership with either First Presbyterian Church or The Greensboro Park's Foundation. The garden could also be a named landscape offering a potential opening for a major donor contribution. The garden should be a carefully crafted element within the park, and it is strongly suggested that the first step to creating this landscape should be the development of a detailed garden plan by a qualified landscape architect or garden designer. Any design proposal should also carefully consider long-term maintenance, funding, and management.

Figure 20 - Priority map for upgrading benches and picnic tables.

05 ELEVATE FURNISHINGS

Site furnishings, including picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles, and planted pots are an important part of Fisher Park's visual character. The planted pots and trash receptacles are part of the park entry's standard design language, and are primarily covered in the "highlight entry" section of this report. The benches and picnic tables are numerous and are distributed across the length of the park. They vary widely in condition and style. Reducing the variation and creating a standard palette of high quality site furnishings will help elevate the overall park ambiance.

~CREATE A STANDARD SITE FURNISHING PALETTE

Site furnishing standards should build from what exists and is in good condition within the park. Furnishings should also be high quality and long-lasting. Furnishings proposed for future use in the park are:

Picnic Tables:	**Dumor Picnic Table 77** (Black metal frame, recycled wood slats)
Park Benches:	**Victor Stanley Model 2 Homestead 6' length** (Black metal frame, Ipe slats, in-ground mount, with arms)
Trash:	**Dumor Trash 167** (Black metal)
Concrete Pots:	**Match Existing**

~CREATE A PHASED APPROACH FOR STANDARDIZING & REPLACING AGING SITE FURNISHINGS

Benches: There are currently 28 benches within Fisher Park in a wide array of styles. Benches should be updated in a phased approach to off-set the cost of replacement, unless a large donation or grant is procured that allows for an all-at-once change. Due to the large number of benches, it is not suggested that any new bench locations be added to the park, only maintenance and replacement of what is currently there. The exception to this would be the further development of the Florence Street Garden. If this area is developed into a more robust landscape, additional seating elements may be suggested in this area. All new benches should have an in-ground mount. As replacements are made, the concrete pads under existing benches, which are often damaged or set above grade, should be removed. Out of the existing 28 benches:

- **(17)** are in poor condition and are a high priority for replacement
- **(4)** are in fair condition are a medium priority for replacement
- (7) are in good condition and are a low priority for replacement

Picnic Tables: There are 12 picnic tables within Fisher Park in wide array of styles. Picnic tables should also be updated in phased approach to off-set the cost of replacement, unless a large donation or grant is procured that allows for an all-at-once change. Out of the 12 picnic tables:

- **(5)** are in poor condition and are a high priority for replacement
- **(4)** are in fair condition are a medium priority for replacement
- (3) are in good condition and are low a priority for replacement

Trash Receptacles: All trash receptacles match and are located proximate to the entries. All receptacles are in good condition. They should remain as is and be monitored in the future for condition and quality issues.

Concrete Pots: There are only two entrances that need the addition of concrete pots. Pots purchased in the future should match the size and character of the existing pots. All existing pots should be carefully leveled to create more visual uniformity.

Figure 21 - Map illustrating location of future pathway improvements.

06 IMPROVE PATHWAYS AND ACCESSIBILITY

The pathway system is extensive and varied throughout Fisher park. The pathway system today consists of a patchwork of decomposed granite (DG), deteriorated asphalt surfacing, and a mix of deteriorated asphalt and DG. The quality of pathways varies throughout the park and there are numerous areas that are uneven due to washout and rutting. No pathways within the park currently meet accessibility standards by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) code, however there are certain areas where the gentle topography lends itself to the creation of accessible routes.

It is important to note that the community consistently expressed their love of the "softness" of the decomposed granite trails. The following guidelines take this concern into account while also offering solutions for the broader issues of restoration, long-term maintenance, and accessibility.

~CREATE ACCESSIBLE PARKING, PATHWAYS, & EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE PARK

Accessibility is a challenge within Fisher Park. This challenge is largely due to the park's varied and steep topography as well as critical root zones of the many mature trees. There are three major pathway connections that lend themselves to becoming accessible based on existing topography and minimal impact to critical root zone of the park's mature canopy trees. All pathways identified to become accessible routes are currently sloped at or less than 5%, which meets ADA standards without requiring a ramp. In addition to pathway renovation, these three areas should also receive accessible parking spaces located proximate to the adjacent park entries.

The majority of the linear trail that runs through East Park Proper should become accessible. This would provide a long linear park experience for all users. A small sidewalk and 2 parallel accessible parking spaces should be added to the far northeast corner of the park closest to the playground. This is an ideal location because it not only welcomes all visitors to the linear trail, but also into the playground area.

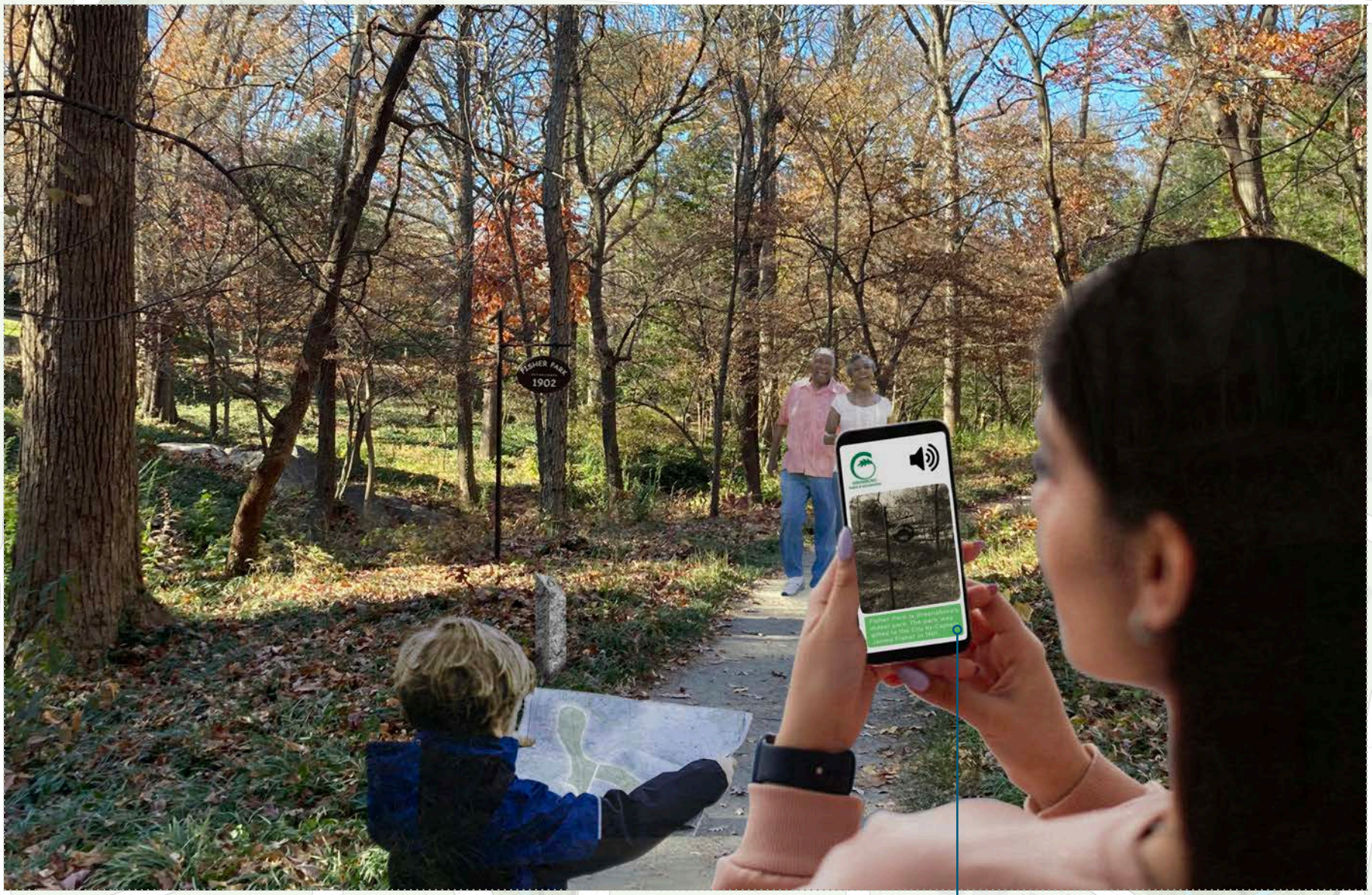
Within Park Proper West, the entry across from 206 Fisher Park Circle should be made accessible. The parking area should be redesigned to accommodate angled spaces, which may require the removal of 2 to 3 small trees. This change would allow for the two closest off-street parking spaces to be reconfigured as ADA compliant, while not decreasing parking capacity. Paired with an accessible path connection this change will allow an opportunity for visitors of all abilities to experience Park Proper West along the open field, and deeper into the woodland. It also allows an accessible experience into the triangular gathering area and the kings chair via a flat bridge crossing. Finally, two ADA spaces should be added at the Florence Street Garden entry as shown in Figure 17 in the "Enhance the Garden" section of this report. These spaces should lead visitors to an accessible path and gathering space in the heart of this future park gem.

~IMPROVE CONNECTION TO THE DOWNTOWN GREENWAY

Fisher Park is within a 5-minute walk to the Downtown Greenway. The Greenway is a planned 4 mile walking and biking trail through Greensboro's urban core. Improving the physical connection between Fisher Park and the Greenway will increase recreational and fitness opportunities for users and raise awareness of the historically significant park among a larger group of Greensboro residents. This connection should be improved by repaving and strategically widening the sidewalk on the east side of N. Elm from Murrow Blvd to N. Park Drive.

~ MAINTAIN SOFT TRAIL CHARACTER & MATERIALS

The decomposed granite stone dust pathways of Fisher Park provide a soft walking surface under foot that blends well with the natural forest character



A history walk could connect printed and on-line resources with simple granite markers located at significant spaces within the park.

Figure 22 - Rendering of history walk bollards and digital resources.

of the park. The DG pathways have many benefits. The material is affordable, easy to repair if damaged, and able to be top dressed for appearance and function as part of regular maintenance. All trails that are not on the designated accessible routes should be maintained using DG. The deteriorated asphalt common in the walkways should be removed and replaced with DG on a compacted aggregate base.

Accessible pathways should be made of Kafka Granite stabilized pathway mix. This mix is a blend of decomposed granite with stabilizers that create a durable, permeable surface that resists rutting. The mix has been tested for ADA accessibility and has met the maneuverability performance requirements of ASTM F 1951-09b. The mix is available in 50 colors including a grey color that would match the parks pathways. This mix could also be used in areas prone to flooding and rutting outside of the ADA accessible routes.

~REPAIR WASHING & RUTTING CAUSED BY DRAINAGE ISSUES WHERE APPROPRIATE

While DG has many advantages, it is subject to washing and rutting on sloped terrain or at locations where water consistently drains across. This condition is very common in the park due to the steep topography and associated runoff. These areas should be corrected by excavating out the problem area, installing a 4-6" base of compacted aggregate and then applying 3" of tamped DG. On areas of severe or routine washing, light uphill grading should be considered to help redirect water away from path crossings where possible. When corrective grading will not suffice, other drainage techniques such as small area drains or plank grating should be considered to help collect and move runoff and groundwater under the park's pathways. As mentioned above, the use of stabilized decomposed granite could also help alleviate some of these issues.

In addition, a 4' wide low boardwalk should be added to connect the stairs along South Park Drive in Park Proper East to the main pathway. This lawn area is subject to frequent flooding. The boardwalk addition would both extend a missing pathway connection and provide a dry walking alternative.

~CLEARLY DELINEATE CROSSINGS AT ELM STREET

N. Elm Street is a busy street with cars traveling at high speeds in both directions. Currently there is only one striped crosswalk to contiguously connect the east and west portions of the park. This crosswalk is located on the north side of the Fisher Park Circle and N. Elm St intersection. This connective crosswalk should be re-stripped by Greensboro Department of Transportation (GDOT). It is recommended that the additional crosswalks, that run north-south along N. Elm and the east-west crosswalk at Florence St. and N. Elm, also be re-stripped for clarity and safety.

Lastly, consideration should be given for adding a pedestrian activated light signal and/or an in-street pedestrian crosswalk sign at both of the park intersections that cross Elm Street. Determination of the applicability of this suggestion would be based on a warrant study conducted by GDOT. The FPNA should contact GDOT and request a warrant study to begin this process.

~DEVELOP A HISTORY & NATURAL FEATURES WALK

The park should consider adding a series 10 to 12 small granite markers to commemorate various historical and natural elements of the park. The markers should consist of simple numbered granite bollards, so as not to take away from the existing park monuments. Markers would delineate special places such as the Kings Chair, City Center Monument, and the old swimming hole. Natural features such as the creek and its relationship to the City's larger hydrological cycle could also be highlighted. The markers could connect to an on-line interface, smart phone app, and printable map. Development of this material could be created in collaboration with UNCG and/or the Greensboro Historical Museum. The collection could harbor historic photographs, oral histories, and brief overviews. An accompanying "kids" version could also be developed. A central sign with QR code could be located at the park entry allowing visitors easy access to the resource. A link to the resource could also be housed on the FPNA website.




Play equipment should be replaced over time with themed elements that blend into the surrounding woodland and reflect the park's history and natural beauty.




3 to 4 discrete play elements should be placed along the pathway between the current playground and the Center City Monument to encourage exploration, movement, and creativity.

Figure 23 - Character imagery illustrating potential playground renovation ideas.

07 CONNECT PLAY TO PARK CHARACTER

The playground, located in the far northeast corner of the park near North Church Street, is enjoyed by many families in the surrounding community. The playground equipment provided is the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department's standard play equipment located on top of play mulch with a plastic edge restraint. While the playground is sufficient for current use - opportunity for future improvements could make this a special and more magical place within the park landscape.

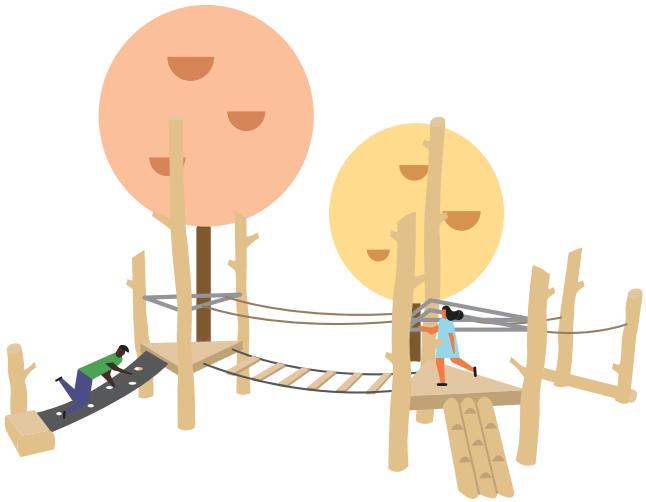
~ SELECT FUTURE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT THAT REFLECTS THE NATURAL CHARACTER OF THE PARK

The Plan2Play Comprehensive Master Plan suggests that parks and playground equipment be reflective of the community and environment they are located in. Children who participated in the Fisher Park engagement process also had ideas for creating a more vibrant creative play space. The current play equipment is aging and will be in need of replacement in the next 5 to 10 years. This replacement offers an opportunity to create a play space that better reflects the natural character and unique history of Fisher Park. Future play elements should be made of wood and be themed to relate the history, garden plants, and/or natural elements of Fisher Park. The design should better blend into the surrounding tree canopy and emphasize imaginative play for children. There are a number of play manufacturers, such as Kompan, who specialize in this type of equipment. These types of natural play elements are typically made from rot-resistant Robinia wood and meet playground testing and fall standards.

In addition, the topography of the playground lends itself to becoming an accessible space within the park. The pathway from the N. Church Street entrance to the playground area should be made accessible in the future. The existing grading is under 5%, the required slope for ADA access without the use of ramps. As noted earlier, this accessible path should be constructed of stabilized DG.

~ CREATE NATURAL PLAY OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE WOODS, BOULDERS, & CREEK

Beyond the primary playground area, play should be extended in small insertions along the walking path to create a more immersive experience. The pathway leading from the current playground down to the Center City Monument is an ideal place for this to occur without visual disruption. Using small insertions of play equipment at three to four locations within the park would create a circuit of discrete play locations that would encourage motion, creativity, exploration and nature play. These elements could be small and take up similar space to the park benches that line many of the pathways. Finally, Park Proper West boulders West Park Proper and habitable edges of the stream should be maintained for overgrowth encouraging families to engage with the water's edge.



Stone bridges add character and beauty to the park.

Stone stairs are lovely and varied in size, scale, and scope. Some need repairs and restoration to improve visual quality and safety.

Figure 24 - Images of existing bridges, walls, and stairs.

08 MAINTAIN AND RESTORE HISTORIC ELEMENTS

Fisher Park contains several notable historic elements within the park. These elements include the stone bridges, stone stairways, and the stone King's Chair. It is believed that master stone-mason Andrew Leopold Schlosser (1864-1943) crafted many of the park's stone bridges using granite quarried in Mount Airy, NC. Mr. Schlosser was a local stone mason in the area and worked on many architectural projects in Greensboro during his career. Elements of Mr. Schlosser's contributions to the development of Greensboro are noted in the book "Greensboro, an Architectural Record" by architectural historian Marvin Brown and published by Preservation Greensboro and the Greensboro Junior League. "His masonry work was considered to be of the highest quality, and his services were sought after by architects and builders throughout the state," Moore wrote.

~CREATE A PHASED APPROACH AND GUIDELINES FOR MAINTAINING & PRESERVING HISTORIC ELEMENTS SUCH AS THE GRANITE STAIRS & BRIDGES

As a testament to the skills of Mr. Schlosser, the stonework elements within Fisher Park are largely in good condition. In general, the bridges should be kept free of vines and large woody vegetation rooting at the base that would lead to cracks in the mortar joints. Mortar joints that have spalled should be repointed by a qualified mason that specializes in historical preservation. Close attention must be paid to matching mortar colors and matching Mr. Schlosser's mortar technique when performing this work.

The stone stairways should also be kept clear of vegetation that is growing in the mortar joints. These plants will cause damage to the stone work as the roots increase in size. Excess soil buildup on and around the edges of the stairs is common within the park. At a minimum, the stairs should be swept in spring, late summer, and late fall to prevent soil and debris accumulation. Weeds and other plants growing on the stairs should be removed. Metal handrails should be reviewed periodically for signs of rust and corrosion. Areas of corrosion should be sanded to bright metal and repainted to match. As handrails require replacement, a more elegant, historic handrail standard should be selected to match the era of the park's founding.

The historic elements restoration map (Fig. 25) provides the overall condition of the parks historic stone bridges, stairs, and walls. Most bridges were noted in good condition but having uneven asphalt or concrete paving on the approach to the arch that has deteriorated. This is not a problem with the bridge structure itself, but impacts walkability. This material should be removed and replaced with stabilized decomposed granite.

The majority of the stone stair cases would be considered rustic by today's standards as they contain uneven treads and varied riser heights. This is part of the Park's charm and should remain as they are historic, but it is noted that many of the staircases are a tripping hazard and present a challenge to some visitors.

Figure 25 - Map illustrating restoration priority for bridges, walls, and stairs.

BRIDGES

B1. Exposed terracotta tile. Concrete slurried on top of joints. Stonework appears different.

B2. Flat bridge. Stone work sound. Surfacing deeply rutted and in need of replacement.

B3-B8. The bridges are in good condition. Remove vegetation from stonework joints.

STAIRS

S1. Poor condition, monolithic stones, heaved and settled, uneven, dangerous.

S2. Poor condition, monolithic stones, settled, low riser heights, covered in loose debris.

S3. Poor condition, mortared stones, overgrown with vegetation, abandoned.

S4. Moderate condition, mortared stones, uneven treads and risers.

S5. Moderate condition, mono and mortared stones, uneven treads and risers, 2007 restore.

S6. Moderate condition, multiple monolithic per tread, uneven treads and risers.

S7. Moderate to poor condition, mortared stones, uneven, edges overgrown by plants.

S8. Moderate condition, multiple monolithc per tread, uneven, loose gravel on treads.

S9. Good condition, mono and mortared stones, appears to have had quality restoration.

S10. Good condition, saw cut granite slabs, covered in debris and needs cleaning.

S11. Good condition, saw cut granite slabs, slight encroachement of plants on edge.

S12. Good condition, saw cut granite slabs, slight encroachement of plants on edge.

WALLS

W1. Good condition, manage vegetation on back of wall.

W2. Good condition, manage vegetation on back of wall.

W3. Good condition, manage vegetation on back of wall.

~ CONSIDER OBTAINING ADDITIONAL SCHLOSSER'S CHAIRS

The King's Chair is located near the gathering triangle in Park Proper West. This chair was constructed by Andrew Leopold Schlosser and sold to the park by his grandson, Norman Schlosser, in 2013. The two ton throne was installed at the park in September of 2014. Since coming to the park, the King's Chair has become a notable landmark and enjoyed daily by many visitors and used as an element in larger neighborhood gatherings.

There are rumors that a matching "Queen's Chair" exists. Though attempted, that chair could not be located as part of this study. However, it is documented that Schlosser did create additional chairs. The Greensboro Historical Musuem has a child's high chair within their collection. This chair is on display outside of the museum at the Mary Lynn Richardson Park. If a Queen's Chair does exist, it would be a welcomed addition to Fisher Park and should be reunited with the King's Chair. The two chairs should be placed next to each other and used to help teach visitors about the history of the park's stone elements and in daily and neighborhood events.

Figure 26 - Location of improved gathering areas.

09 ELEVATE GATHERING SPACES

Public parks have the ability to bring people together. The Fisher Park neighborhood has a rich history of using the park for community gatherings at events such as Christmas in the Park, the Halloween Parade, and the Easter Egg Hunt. While gatherings occur across Fisher Park there are a few locations that are used more than others. Minor design alterations to some of the more frequented spaces would better support event functions.

~CREATE A HEART WITHIN THE PARK FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS AT THE EDGE OF PARK PROPER WEST'S LAWN

The open lawn at the far west side of Park Proper East is a natural gathering place. The lawn is bifurcated by the stream and a historic stone bridge. The bridge serves as a focal point for both sides of lawn. The lawn itself offers an informal space for crowds of all sizes to gather. Blankets and personal chairs can be brought to this area for both informal and formal events. There are currently no established seating options or other amenities at this location.

The addition of a small irregular bluestone landing on both sides of the bridge would carefully blend into the existing path structure, but also add a more structured place or for events to occur and performers to set up. This location is ideal because it sits at the edge of the larger lawn providing a focal point for gathering events. The area to the north of the bridge could be accessible, while the area to the south would remain inaccessible past the stone bridge. Providing specialty paving on both sides of the bridge allows options for event set-up. These additional hardscapes should be modest in size, must be built of high quality natural stone that blends with the historic elements, and should be a maximum of 350 square feet. These areas could be complemented by framed plantings of flowering shrubs.

~LIFT THE TRIANGLE WITH GENTLE GRADING

Located more centrally in Park Proper West, the area known as "the triangle" sits at the confluence of three paths that cross the creek. This location currently features two picnic tables, two benches, and a wooden pole utility light. The King's Chair is also on the perimeter of this space adding visual interest and historic significance.

This triangle is prone to saturated soils and scattered areas of standing water after large rain events. This area should be enhanced with gentle grading to help with drainage issues within the triangle and adjacent pathways. Two fairly significant trees would need to be removed in order for this change to occur. One of these trees, a tulip poplar, is currently in slow decline and is already a candidate for removal based on condition. One additional picnic table could also be integrated into this space for increased seating capacity. Finally, a minimum of one-power outlet should be added to this area to support event functions.

~ PROVIDE POWER OUTLETS AT GATHERING SPACES

A weather tight, lockable power receptacle located on a power pedestal should be added to both the Park Proper West's lawn and triangle gathering spaces. An example of an appropriate mounting post for the park is the PEDOC 5P18-C-HT-1. This mounting post is 18" high with a hinged, lockable lid. It is a two gang fixture and available in a bronze powder coat to blend with the landscape.

Adding small natural stone hardscapes and masses of flowering shrubs as extensions of the current pathway system at the bridge that connects the Park Proper West lawn would create more functional spaces for gathering and performances.

Figure 27 - Conceptual rendering of proposed gathering area at the Park Proper West lawn.

10 BUILD MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Fisher Park residents do a remarkable job of caring for Fisher Park. From the Pot Tenders to the Halsch Invasive Species Removal Team to concerned citizens picking up trash on their daily walks, the park receives a large amount of neighborhood support. These efforts should be supplemented through strategic partnerships with the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department and other stakeholders.

~STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH CITY OF GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Neighborhood support for the park should be strengthened through additional partnerships within the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department. The Parks and Recreation Department prides itself on being engaged with active community members and stakeholders. Strengthening this relationship through the Parks & Recreation Community Engagement Coordinator would help foster a relationship that sought cooperative solutions to the park's challenges.

The Landscape Management Policy and Procedures for Fisher Park (Calloway, 2009) outlines the functions and responsibilities of the Fisher Park Neighborhood Association (FPNA) and proper procedure for approval of works plans and special projects. Those functions and procedures are still applicable and are as follows:

Fisher Park Neighborhood Association (FPNA) Board and Park Committee Functions: The FPNA Board of Directors is elected by residents to represent the neighborhood and oversee the functions of the association. The Board elects officers and appoints chairpersons of several FPNA committees. The Board meets monthly and receives regular reports from the Park Committee. Work plans, planting plans, and proposals for special projects in the park should be reviewed and approved by the Board prior to submittal to the City.

The FPNA Park Committee plans and coordinates workdays, new plantings, and other work on behalf of the neighborhood, and the Committee reviews any proposals by neighbors or others for projects in the park. The chairperson presents or coordinates the presentation of committee recommendations to the Board. Residents who are interested in serving on the Park Committee should contact the current chairperson, the FPNA President, or another member of the Board of Directors.

The FPNA President and the chairperson of the Park Committee are authorized to communicate with City staff in connection with plans approved by the FPNA Board, maintenance and other routine matters. The FPNA Board of Directors may designate other representatives to communicate with City staff in connection with special projects or for other specific purposes.

Procedures for Approval of Work Plans and Special Projects: The City of Greensboro is responsible for routine maintenance of the park, including grass mowing, mulching of landscaped areas, and emptying of trash receptacles. City staff or contractors perform this work. The FPNA Park Committee chairperson, after review and approval by the FPNA Board, will submit proposed work plans, planting plans, and requests for improvements to the City of Greensboro Parks & Recreation Department Planning and Project Development Division Manager. The Division Manager will review these submittals and may grant approval for any work that does not require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), which may include removal of dead and declining plants, including trees under 4" dbh (this means diameter at breast height, which is measured at 4.5' above the ground), removal of

living invasive plants, including trees under 4" dbh, minor repairs to steps and bridges, and new plantings in accordance with the Master Plan and this document. The Division Manager will confirm the scope of approved work in writing back to FPNA, and send a copy of the approval to the City of Greensboro Historic District Program staff.

The FPNA Park Committee chairperson will consult with Parks & Recreation Department and Historic District Program staff regarding work proposed by FPNA that may require a COA, based on the Historic District Program Manual and Design Guidelines provisions pertaining to the Neighborhood Setting. A specific COA is required for significant changes to existing park conditions such as new or altered site features, and for removal of any tree over 4" dbh. When a COA is required, the Parks & Recreation Department will submit the application to the Historic District Program staff, who will determine whether the COA can be issued at the staff level or whether approval by the Historic Preservation Commission is necessary.

Special projects proposed by individuals or other organizations, such as changes to playground equipment, addition or removal or significant changes to hardscape or landscape features, addition or removal or significant changes to lighting or signs, or public construction in or affecting the park, will be reviewed by the FPNA Park Committee and Board for input and recommendation before City approval is granted.

When there is an immediate hazard in the park, the Parks & Recreation Department may submit a COA application to the Historic District Program staff without review or input by FPNA. Historic District Program staff will provide copies of approved COA's to the Parks & Recreation Department and the FPNA Park Committee chairperson.

~ BUILD ALLIANCES WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO HELP AID PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The FPNA should actively build alliances with organizations that can aid in park improvements. For example, The woodland garden restoration and Florence Street Garden would seem to be a common ground between the Fisher Park neighborhood residents and the First Presbyterian Church congregation. These types of alliances with park stakeholders may provide monetary or volunteer aid on projects that impact them directly.

The Greensboro Parks Foundation is a federal 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to supporting a broad base of programs, services, and facilities that enrich the lives of Greensboro and Guilford County residents by strengthening financial and volunteer resources for the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department. The foundation accepts donations and allocates funds to various park projects. An alliance with the Foundation may facilitate targeted fundraising within the community for Fisher Park projects.

~ FORMALIZE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & PROCEDURES

The FPNA currently has several volunteer opportunities for residents (Pot Tenders, Invasive Plant removal, etc) that wish to help maintain the park. The Association should consider formalizing the volunteer opportunities and creating a digital sign-up (Sign-up Genius, etc) that is linked to the FPNA website and social media feeds. These opportunities could be expanded to include the restoration of the woodland garden and also be shared with stakeholders outside of the immediate neighborhood for maximizing volunteer campaigns. Formalizing these sign-ups would also help ensure that volunteer led efforts did not diminish at times of leadership or participant changes.

The FPNA should also consider officially adopting Fisher Park via the Greensboro Parks and Recreation "Adopt a Park Program." Members of the committee and residents already go above and beyond the adoption criteria. Formally adopting the park would strengthen ties between the FPNA and Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, and could be mutually beneficial in the future. Greensboro Parks and Recreation could include the log of the FPNA associations numerous volunteer hours in their annual report, and the FPNA could have a more direct communication line with the Parks Department for future maintenance needs.

Finally, Greensboro Parks and Recreation should review the park's maintenance routine and needs in the future. As the park continues to grow and mature, it may be required for staff with more specialized horticultural skills to oversee the annual landscape maintenance of the woodland garden area, and potential future Florence Street Garden located in Park Proper West. The far west end of Park Proper West and entire Park Proper East side of the park, could most likely remain under a more typical neighborhood park management regime and schedule. If the FPNA receives any significant donations in the future earmarked for the park, designation of some of these funds for long-term maintenance should be considered.

NEXT STEPS

Since the early 1900's, Fisher Park has endeared itself to Greensboro residents. The park's proximity to downtown, winding paths, and forest canopy provide a unique asset within Greensboro's park system.

From the historic stonework to the plantings, much of what is great about Fisher Park has been created and cared for by its residents. The Fisher Park Neighborhood has the opportunity to help gently refine and improve the park through careful edits that are respectful of the park's unique history and ecology. Much of this work can be accomplished through volunteer efforts. Moving forward, emphasis should be placed on managing the park's plant life. Continued invasive species management and woodland garden restoration should be a neighborhood volunteer effort priority.

Beyond volunteer efforts, additional funding should be sought to help accomplish the goals outlined in this master plan. Additional funding for park related goals may be sought through future participatory budgeting efforts. Funding raising for specific projects directly through the FPNA or organized and earmarked through the Greensboro Park's Foundation would be another opportunity. Lastly, this master plan will help the City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department seek additional funding that could be used for improvements to Fisher Park.

01 OPINION OF PROBABLE COST

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	COST
CARE FOR THE CANOPY		
Removing dead and diseased trees	8 (ea)	$24,000
MANAGE INVASIVE PLANTS		
Park wide plant removal (annual recurring cost)	1 (ea)	$5,000
Herbicide (annual recurring cost)	1 (ea)	$1,200
Tools	20 (ea)	$1,500
HIGHLIGHT AND PRIORITIZE ENTRY		
Trees	10 (ea)	$3,000
Containers	1 (ea)	$150
Annuals (annual recurring cost)	38 (ea)	$1,140
Mulch (annual recurring cost)	1 (ea)	$1,900
ENHANCE THE GARDEN		
Shrubs woodland garden infill	150 (ea)	$8,250
Bulbs	3000 (ea)	$1,500
Florence Street Garden	65,000 (ea)	$65,000
ELEVATE FURNISHINGS		
Park bench (Victor Stanley, Model 2 Homestead)	28 (ea)	$64,400
Picnic tables (Dumor Picnic Table 77)	12 (ea)	$24,000

**This opinion of probable cost was developed in the summer of 2022. Due to the volatility in construction market at this time, it should be primarily be used as a tool for general decision making and fund procurement. Final costing should be procured at each stage of park improvements. Greensboro Parks and Recreation will use the master plan as guide to assist in determining public, private and grant funding sources for the park enhancements. Any major capital improvements will be included in the City's Capital Improvements Budget in FY 23-24 but traditionally are only funded through bond referendums.*

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	COST
MAINTAIN AND RESTORE HISTORIC ELEMENTS		
Restore stairways (3) poor & (5) moderate condition	8 (ea)	$58,000
Resurface bridges (2) poor condition	2 (ea)	$3,900
CONNECT PLAY TO PARK CHARACTER		
New playground equipment	1 (ea)	$80,000
Individual playground equipment stations	1 (ea)	$40,000
IMPROVE PATHWAYS, CONNECTIONS, AND ACCESSIBILITY		
Demo + site work	1 (ea)	$16,500
DG traditional pathway	14,184 (sf)	$56,740
DG stabilized pathway	7,864 (sf)	$58,980
Connective boardwalk	560 (sf)	$18,330
ADA parking spaces updates (3 locations)	1 (ea)	$19,500
Granite markers	12 (ea)	$6,000
ELEVATE GATHERING SPACES		
Bluestone gathering areas	650 (sf)	$20,800
Electrical receptacle	1 (ea)	$1,250
DESIGN, ENGINEERING, & CONTINGENCY	1 @ 15%(ea)	$51,180
TOTAL		$648,460

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