



To: City Council

From: Raleigh Historic Development Commission
Nicole Alvarez, Travis Bailey, Don Davis, Ian Dunn, Nick Fountain, Jenny Harper, John Hinshaw, Laurie Jackson, Jeannine McAuliffe, Jimmy Thiem, Kaye Webb, Gaston Williams

CC: Tania Tully, Senior Preservation Planner, City Planning
Grayson Maughan, Senior Planner, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources

Date: January 31, 2019

RE: Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan

The Raleigh Historic Development Commission (RHDC) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan. The RHDC understands that adoption of the Master Plan is only the beginning of years of planning that will take place and looks forward to future involvement. This project, for which authenticity is key, will define Raleigh for generations to follow.

The RHDC supports the adoption of a master plan that retains approximately half of the campus' built environment to serve a variety of new uses while reserving some existing buildings for future uses. The retention and adaptive use of the historic campus to the greatest extent possible provides a meaningful opportunity to both commemorate and elevate the spirit of Dorothea Dix. These tangible expressions of Dix's noble efforts provide an unparalleled opportunity to meet a myriad of 21st century community needs that otherwise might not be readily available, all while preserving the physical history of the site, its stories, and its spirit.

The Commission urges the City Council to respect the process to date and consider the thousands of public comments that helped inform the proposed Master Plan. As a legacy site of deep historic and cultural significance both to the City of Raleigh and the State of North Carolina, the City has an immense responsibility as steward of this historic built environment and its cultural landscapes.

As City Council's official historic preservation advisory body, the RHDC offers the following final thoughts.

- Take a cautionary and holistic approach towards demolition. Mothballing, or preferably, a temporary use wherever possible until future plans for the park are more fully realized, is recommended.
- A high value is placed on the retention and adaptive use of the staff housing village. Whether they are used to serve community needs as art studios, maker or educational spaces, potential housing, etc., they require minimal rehabilitation effort and cost.
- Continue to make informed decisions. Developing a detailed cultural landscape report to aid future decisions is encouraged.
- Due to the site's historic and cultural significance, both to the City and State, the RHDC seeks to develop a formal partnership between the City and the Dix Conservancy as phasing for the Park develops over time.

Post Office Box 829
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602
(919) 832-7238 ph
(919) 516-2682 fax

www.rhdc.org