Involving the Public in Park Planning: An Evaluation of the City of Raleigh’s Park Master Planning Process
L. Steven Smutko, Mary Lou Addor, and Charlynne Smith
NC State University

Comments Received from Citizens and Parks Staff

Compiled by L. Steven Smutko
NC State University

January 2008

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<th>Comment No.</th>
<th>Commenter</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Leesville Park community meeting participant</td>
<td>I have never seen much come out of a public hearing kind of format with many folks pushing for their special interests. In my experience with that format over the years, it has been apparent that participation is always higher by those negative to a project or proposal rather than those with a positive or neutral position. So, I believe the Resolution Process is the way to go and believe it will yield quality results if conducted with the process improvements recommended in the draft report.</td>
<td>Noted</td>
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<td>Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Giving greater weight to the feedback and participation of citizens who reside within the radius of the service areas that the City has established for the different types of parks (neighborhood, community, metro, etc.) would strengthen the process and give credence to the park type criteria. For example, if a neighborhood park is supposed to serve citizens within a half-mile radius (this, however, should be revised as you recommend to pay greater attention to neighborhood/subdivision boundaries rather than an arbitrary radius), then the feedback from these citizens should hold greater weight in the planning process.</td>
<td>We believe that assigning differential weights to citizen desires will reduce the perception of process legitimacy among those whose preferences are given a lower weight. &quot;Weighting&quot; might better be accomplished in an <em>a priori</em> fashion by identifying preferences of residents within a service area boundary (through surveys) and incorporating this preference data in an initial draft plan which forms the starting point for further comment and discussion.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>What is context of this evaluation with regards to new draft City of Raleigh Comprehensive plan that has a very different &quot;30,000 foot view&quot; perspective?</td>
<td>Public involvement is critical in both the comprehensive plan process and the park master plan process.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>What is the evaluation of park master planning process in context to peers across the country? Or is the evaluation purely comparison to academic best practices in public participation?</td>
<td>We did not conduct a peer evaluation of park master planning process as part of this study. There is very little in the published literature on public participation in municipal park planning. Instead, we reviewed best practices as employed by natural resource planning and management agencies around the country. State and federal resource agencies have been employing these methods for many years. The documentation of best practices in these situations is both broad and deep.</td>
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<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>I was surprised to see the statement &quot;The resolution process was not shadowed by matter of transparency&quot; especially when juxtaposed against the criteria of legitimacy. Does the resolution process adhere to NC GS 132-1 regarding &quot;public record?&quot; The Community Meeting process does - all emails sent to city Core team members by anyone, minutes of Core team meetings, etc. are all subject to this statute and therefore transparent, accessible for all request and review. Emails exchanged between Resolution committee members, committee members and the public, etc. may not be considered &quot;public record&quot; and therefore, not transparent. The lack of transparency of the Resolution approach suggests the planning process has been replaced with a political process - not sure that can ever engender public support.</td>
<td>It is not clear why emails between private citizens, be they planning committee members or community meeting participants, should be part of the public record. Minutes of planning committee meetings and community meetings are public, as are communications between Parks and Recreation staff members of planning committees and other citizens. One of our recommendations is to make this information more readily accessible to citizens.</td>
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<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>If from the academic perspective, the Resolution process is perceived to have &quot;superior participation intensity,&quot; please consider a recommendation that every committee member of a Resolution process is required to share any communication about the master plan process as part of the &quot;public record.&quot;</td>
<td>Although participation intensity has no relevance to how information is shared, we do concur that planning related information should be made easier to obtain by the general public. Regarding planning committee members sharing communication, see our response to the previous comment.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Question: What does a &quot;consultant with strong facilitation training skills who understands how to guide collaborative decision processes and can manage conflict when it arises&quot; look like? Is that a different degree from a Landscape Architect? Is there a list of these consultants? Are they different consultants than our peers use?</td>
<td>A consultant with strong facilitation training skills is simply that: a planning consultant who has training and experience in leading public involvement processes. Many design firms advertise their experience in public involvement process facilitation. Responses from the design consultants involved in the four projects we evaluated reveal a common sentiment that designers understand that &quot;... it is becoming a necessity to have both process skills and design skills&quot; (G. Stanziale, 9/28/08).</td>
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<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>I recognize that your basis of work came from reviewing material provided to you on the four processes in question. With regards to the Leesville Park, I did not see in your evaluation any comment on the survey sent to 5,000 random residents within a two-mile service area.</td>
<td>We were not informed of that survey, nor did we see mention of it in the minutes of core team meetings or, more to the point, community meetings.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>What is the role of the trained park professional in public participation planning processes? For the Community planning process, professional staff representing all aspects of the department is engaged at multiple levels. For the Resolution process, professional staff is not allowed to engage; rather they provide a support role when requested. ... For the Resolution process, if and when staff provides data or evidence on an issue contrary to committee opinion, the City can be cast as impeding or damaging the process. Is professional experience valuable to the public planning process or should it be marginalized with regards to consensus?</td>
<td>The trained park professional is vital to a well functioning public participation process. As we state in the report, good public participation processes do not necessarily result in good planning. However, good public participation is a prerequisite for good planning. The participation process should not supplant the role of the planning professional. Conversely, planners do not plan for people, they plan with people. A 'bounded, participant-intense' process such as the Resolution Process would benefit from open involvement with parks staff. At the same time, it would be counter to the public participation process if the Department were perceived to be leading the deliberations of the committee. For this reason, we recommend use of a neutral facilitator in such processes.</td>
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<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>I have participated now in both processes and offer these thoughts for your consideration, the Community planning process by its very nature of scale and transparency of interaction with the public fits most appropriately with large-scale park planning projects. The Resolution process due to its clear lack of transparency and duration of effort fits best with neighborhood parks. The acrimony of politics is less prevalent at the neighborhood scale.</td>
<td>The principle weakness of the Community Meeting process, as currently practiced, is that it lacks participant continuity over time. Moreover, because of the limited advertising and promotion of community meetings, people who are most likely to attend community meetings are those who live in close proximity to the park. Because each meeting builds on the previous one, those who were not in attendance in meeting #1 or #2 may be surprised by what has been identified in the draft plan that is presented in meeting #3. For people who were not aware of the two previous meetings, this does not appear to have been a transparent process at all. Most importantly we believe that the Department should adapt processes to the needs and challenges presented in each unique case.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>I believe the report would better name and refer to the two major processes used by the City as “Master Planning Committee” process and “Core Team/Community Meeting” process, as opposed to “Resolution” and “Community Meeting” processes. The term “Resolution” has no functional meaning, other than indicating that this is the official City policy currently governing park master planning. The term “Community Meeting” is somewhat misleading as it does not indicate that it is in fact the Core Team that makes all the ultimate decisions in this process. This is, after all, the basic and notable difference between these two processes.</td>
<td>At the outset of this project, we had asked Parks and Recreation planning staff about terminology we should use for the two processes under study. We wanted to use terms that our audience would be familiar with and could identify the processes with the names. These are the terms that were recommended by staff. It is true that Resolution Process has no functional meaning and certainly deserves a better name.</td>
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<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>I do not believe this has been emphasized enough in this report — that it is citizens who have voting authority and decision-making ability in the Master Planning Committee process, but it is staff, Parks Board members and consultants who ultimately make recommendations in the Core Team Format. In the interest of promoting real, meaningful citizen involvement, and investment in our parks, and to build trust with the public, we should be working toward a positive, community building process that gives citizens the ability to vote and directly make recommendations to our elected officials.</td>
<td>We would argue that both processes incorporate the needs and desires of citizens into the final park plan. This is reflected in meeting minutes provided in all four planning processes. Secondly, the decision making authority of citizens is limited in both processes, since City Council is the body that ultimately decides the plan for a park (after approval &amp; recommendations made by the PRGAB). However, the link between the wishes of the citizens who are on the planning committee and the plan that is ultimately approved by Council is much more direct than is the link between citizens attending community planning meetings and the ultimate approved plan.</td>
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<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Concerning the principle “promote full participation” there are other ways of achieving this goal that have not been mentioned, and a discussion of these would be helpful in the report, such as: varying meeting times and venues, providing a variety of input opportunities, such as written comment cards, internet comments, ability to speak at meetings, etc. The goal here should be to provide a variety of ways for different types of people to get involved in the process to achieve more broad participation by a variety of types of user/potential user groups.</td>
<td>We agree.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Concerning the principle “make the process transparent,” all citizens -- not just “participants” -- should have equal and easy access to all relevant information.</td>
<td>We agree. We consider any citizen a “participant” who wishes to access information about park planning and the park planning process.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>I agree the City would improve its outcomes if it managed these planning processes better, by articulating clearly its objectives and purpose at the outset; having staff who are open and responsive to feedback they receive from the public, and to respecting and implementing the results of planning processes; and committing to a quality process instead of a pre-determined decision or outcome.</td>
<td>This is inferred in our recommendation.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Providing adequate capacity and resources should include providing ALL relevant information upfront to the public and committee members (this did not happen with Horseshoe Farm; key information from the Neuse River Regional Park Master Plan was withheld from the Committee). Training staff in facilitation and public participation methods would be a good investment for the City.</td>
<td>We agree that all relevant information should be provided to the public. This is addressed in other recommendations made in the report.</td>
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<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Develop a Broad Public Involvement Policy. I support this suggestion and feel that it would be money well spent for the City to hire the same people who wrote this report to develop a draft of this policy for public comment and eventual City Council adoption, based on this report. Given the fact that staff is already swamped with park development and planning, taking on this task with the help of Parks Board members would take them away from these important tasks. The last policy discussions took almost 3 years of regular meetings and an enormous investment of staff time. A consultant could draft this policy more quickly and less expensively.</td>
<td>Although we could easily write such a policy, we feel that it would be premature and possibly futile to generate one at this stage. We believe that for any policy to be effective, it must have the full support of the PRGAB, park advocates, and the staff who will be responsible for implementing it. We feel strongly that these three groups must work together to craft it.</td>
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<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>The report and future policy documents should maintain consistent reference to System Integration Planning; using the word “site” in this context is confusing to the reader.</td>
<td>Made correction in final draft.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Notification about SIP draft availability should continue to be sent to the following parties as required by the policy: City Council, the PRGAB, all CACs, registered neighborhood groups (Community Service Department) and all registered park support groups, and appropriate City appointed bodies. This should always include the Arts Commission, the Appearance Commission, and the Environmental Advisory Board.</td>
<td>We agree that the draft should be widely distributed.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Establish Clear Definitions of Elements and Programs. This step would be helpful to remove some of the controversy of the planning process, but I believe it should be done during the SIP phase (not after) so that there would be an opportunity for the public to comment on these very critical decisions that will have a huge impact on park planning. These recommendations should be made based on public input received in this SIP process, and should serve as general recommendations for the planning process, not “minimal” or required elements or programs to be included in the park plan.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Decouple Planning for Controversial Elements from Park Planning. I agree that the City should do a system-wide study for dog parks, adventure elements and high intensity use facilities to determine how to achieve regional distribution and adequate facilities to meet demand that involves meaningful public participation. I would go a step further and suggest that planning for these types of facilities should look more regionally, not just within City limits, and include all of Wake County, to reduce duplication of facilities, save money, and assure even distribution. This report should better define “high intensity use” and “special” facilities. The Parks Board could be helpful in this effort.</td>
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<td>We agree that the SIP, with significant public input, should serve as the basis from which other, more specific program elements are identified as appropriate or inappropriate.</td>
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<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Use Consultants with Proven Public Participation Skills. This recommendation is very important, and applies to both the Master Planning Committee process as well as the Core Team Format process. I am troubled, however, that even the most highly trained facilitator/consultant is not a neutral party and is under direction of the Parks staff. This points to a serious potential conflict of interest, as the consultant wants future work and therefore does what they are asked to do by staff even if sometimes this is not in agreement with their professional standards. This is a serious shortcoming of this report in practice.</td>
<td>The City is ultimately responsible for hiring consultants who follow professional standards of practice. Violation of these standards should be grounds for cancelling contracts and/or not hiring for future work.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>At a minimum, the RFQ selection criteria should include and give bonus points for specific experience and training re: facilitation and collaborative decision making processes as well as conflict resolution and management. Consultants should be charged with running meetings and designing participation formats within policy guidelines. This goes hand in hand with “Manage Processes Effectively.” Roles and responsibilities of the consultants/facilitator must be made transparent from the start, preferably in the planning policy, and they should be allowed to function in this role in a full capacity.</td>
<td>We agree.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Any future [public involvement] policy that includes another type of process (such as Core Team/Community Meeting Format) must outline clearly the conditions under which this alternative should be used, as well as other details such as required notification procedures, how core team members are chosen, etc.</td>
<td>We agree.</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>This report recommends a Core Team/Community Meeting Format for Neighborhood Parks and a Master Planning Committee process for all other types of parks on page 53; it would help to highlight this important recommendation up front and more clearly. I would also recommend that if neighborhood residents request a Master Planning Committee process for planning of a Neighborhood Park, this request should be honored since there are very clear benefits in terms of improved representation quality, citizen decision-making, continuity and full transparency. I believe the only scenario where the Core Team format should be used for parks larger than Neighborhood Parks is if there is another local government involved... such as a joint park(City)/library(County) project.</td>
<td>We refrained from making this a major recommendation because (1) a wide range of formats can be used successfully for park master planning as long as core values of public participation are upheld; (2) the Community Meeting Process could be employed for parks with a larger service area than a neighborhood under the right circumstances; and (3) the Resolution Process needs some adjustment.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Diversify Meeting Promotion Methods. Meeting promotion should also include what was mentioned above under “Improve Communication Mechanisms” – all meeting participants should be followed up with and provided updates, reminders and minutes of all meetings, not just those they attend.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Be Clear About Program Constraints. Again, I agree with this but refer to my comments in f. above [comprehensive and system integration plans], and recommend strongly that the policy allow for citizen involvement in the decisions about program elements that are to be givens in the planning process. This should be part of the SIP process if restructured.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Add Community Members to the Core Team. I agree with this report’s general recommendation that the Core Team Format is to be used for Neighborhood Parks, and not more complex park planning efforts. I think that this could be successful if the Core Team Process is understood as and represented as a real partnership by all involved. Neighborhood organizations can provide substantial help in terms of promotion of meetings, information transfer, etc. The City should strive to work with homeowners associations, CACs, and other forms of neighborhood organizations in productive, mutually respectful ways. The Core Team / Community Meeting Process can be an effective public participation format if it is structured and run according to core principles.</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>There appear to be many unanswered issues related to [adding community members to the core team] and these should be spelled out in detail to foster better understanding and trust. I am concerned about how the community members would be chosen and how good representation would be achieved with this method. Just as this report states that “balanced representation on the planning committee is the linchpin to legitimacy of the Resolution Process,” this is also true for the Core Team Format. Saying that there should be “two to four” community members seems arbitrary and does not assure adequate representation. Community / neighborhood representatives should be nominated by neighborhood groups, not chosen by the Parks Department staff. It is not clear how the Core Team makes decisions: what if the community members do not agree with the staff and consultants? Is this process to work on a consensus basis as well? How many staff are allowed to be on the Core Team? Should there be a balance of non-community and community representatives on the team? There is an assumption here that the core team and community meetings will occur in an adversarial environment. If, through data collection efforts recommended in General Recommendation #6, the Department discovers that the issues and environment in which the park is being planned are highly contentious, then a more bounded, participant-intensive process may be warranted. Regarding specifics on the number of participants and how they are selected, we believe that community members should self-nominate, and that the number (2, 3, or 4) should be determined by the level of community interest. The purpose of citizen participation on the core team is to help maintain communication among community members and other core team members in between community meetings.</td>
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<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>The Core Team should be initiated by the City Council and all Core Team meetings should be public meetings, with proper notices provided to enhance transparency and trust.</td>
<td>We are silent on the issue of City Council initiation of Core Team meetings since this action does not speak directly to public participation practices per se. We do agree that core team meetings should be open to the public proper notices should be provided.</td>
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<td>Provide Handouts. This recommendation would be extremely helpful. Contact information should be provided for all Core Team members, not just staff and PRGAB members.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Establish Communication Links with Participants. The same communication requirements should apply for Core Team and Master Planning Committee processes.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Provide Clear and Timely Meeting Summaries. This could be combined with the recommendation above.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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| 34   | **Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member**  
Increase the Venues Through Which People Can Participate. All input received should be available for all (the general public) to see via the web, and should collect addresses of citizens commenting including zip codes. This is important because then you can know if the person commenting is from within or without the service area of the park.  
Noted. |
| 35   | **Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member**  
The Core Team should provide aggregated summaries/counts of various types of comments received and explain why most popular wishes expressed by the public were not incorporated or explain why there continue to be elements not wanted by the public in the plan.  
Noted. |
| 36   | **Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member**  
Improve Criteria for [Master Planning] Committee Selection. I agree with this section and would like to add that the past practice of identifying “alternate members” of the master planning committee should not be done in the future because this places people in sort of a limbo situation where their role is not clear. The Committee size must be limited to some degree to make the group size functional – too large a group can cause problems as well. I believe the key is to make it possible for the Committee to continue to receive input from the public as they do their work, not to oversize the Committee. A balance must be struck here.  
The size of the group should be determined in part by the issues and interests pertinent to the park site being planned. |
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<th>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</th>
<th>Develop a Process Charter and Ground Rules. This would be very helpful, and has never been done before. To some extent an adopted policy is helpful in this regard, and it should be fully reviewed with the Committee. Giving the Committee the chance to know in advance what they can expect and what is expected of them will help them do their job better. It should be up to the facilitator, not the chair, to enforce the ground rules once they are agreed upon by the Committee.</th>
<th>Agreed.</th>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Encourage Openness of Design. Did you mean to say that this provides the opportunity for participants to have control over the process itself? (There is a key word missing.) I agree this is important.</td>
<td>Yes, our mistake. Corrected in final draft.</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Use a Consensus Decision Rule. I agree that consensus-based collaborative decision-making is the best way to go. The key is having a very qualified and skilled facilitator who is given the latitude to run an honest process to allow this to happen.</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
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<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Use a Neutral Facilitator. Please refer again to my comments under 2.j. above. I am very concerned about the real (or perceived) neutrality of a consultant hired by the Parks Department, who clearly has their own agenda in planning parks. This agenda is sometimes at odds with what the public wants, and it can put the consultant in a difficult situation as they want to continue getting contracts from their client (the Parks Department). Is there a way of organizing the hiring of the consultants or the provision of a truly neutral facilitator that can correct for this problem? I think it would make a positive difference in the outcome and the experience for the public.</td>
<td>As we responded under 2.j., we believe that planning consultants who are competent public participation practitioners should be judged on their professional standards.</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>Train the Committee in Principled Negotiation. This is another very worthwhile investment early in the process, and can be combined with the group charter and ground rules step. Perhaps it could be asked of people via the application to serve on the committee if they already have skills and experience in this area.</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>While many of the specifics of [current park master planning] policy are not mentioned in your report, it is worthwhile to note that these policy details have made huge improvements in process legitimacy, quality and capacity compared to previous experiences.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>While this report provides a limited picture of the City’s recent park planning experience, it does not really delve into the history of this issue or why the park master planning process was revisited in the late 1990’s. This information is critical to understanding our current situation – the report (and all future decision makers regarding this issue) should take this history into account as it will help inform future decisions to be context appropriate.</td>
<td>While the history of Raleigh's park master planning process provides important context, it was beyond the scope of this report to conduct an historical investigation. Our focus was to assess and compare the two planning processes currently in use by the Department.</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>This report makes it clear that staff should be enthusiastic, open, responsive and committed to an honest process. This is a precondition of success in all park planning endeavors. I don't know how you assure this, but I do believe that accountability should also be a key factor built into the process somehow.</td>
<td>Yes, public agencies must be held accountable to the citizens they serve. An active, engaged citizenry is one means of assuring that accountability.</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>[The report] appears to be a very thorough and thoughtful study that offers concrete and realistic advice on how to improve the process. Thank you for all your work. I hope it gets lots of attention and generates much needed improvement for Raleigh’s current and future citizens.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Horseshoe Farm Park Master Planning Committee member</td>
<td>I agree that HSF was a poorly-handled process, not necessarily a poorly-designed one.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Horseshoe Farm Park Master Planning Committee member</td>
<td>These processes should be flexible - not manipulable.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Horseshoe Farm Park Master Planning Committee member</td>
<td>SIPs must be a non-negotiable prerequisite for master planning. SIPs must be required - without exception - for all parks in Raleigh, and I agree that the public should be involved in that process as well.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>The report should give more examples of what P&amp;R is currently doing and how those could be expanded and improved.</td>
<td>We agree that this would be useful, but is beyond the scope of this project.</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Public Involvement in the System Integration Plan process – would/could this follow a condensed public input process?</td>
<td>We see no distinction between public involvement and public input. We recommend that public input/involvement be incorporated in the SIP.</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Pg 35 has discussion of appropriate meeting times and places – any suggestions? Currently meetings are held at 7pm (unless working with the seniors).</td>
<td>We heard no comments that meeting time and location were barriers to participation. Your existing practice must be working. Keep it up.</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Suggestions on how to provide &quot;equal and easy access to relevant information.&quot; Currently all meeting information is posted to P&amp;R website.</td>
<td>We suggest that you explore methods of alerting citizens to the existence of planning information that don't place the impetus on citizens to find out how to get the information. One such method is to create an email list serve.</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Expand on definition of flexibility in regards to meetings – would this mean more meetings, switching content of the meetings, etc?</td>
<td>In regards to planning and implementing public participation processes, we recommend both flexibility in format, and flexibility in implementation. Flexibility in format means that the Department should be able to fit the forum to the context – the characteristics of the site, its intended service area, the perceptions of neighbors about the site, and so on. Flexibility in implementation means that the Department should adjust process parameters such as meeting schedules, meeting times, number of planning committee members, etc., to accommodate the needs of citizens so as to improve process legitimacy, quality of planning, and citizen capacity.</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Expand on wider direct mailing besides adjacent neighborhoods – what about park service areas?</td>
<td>We recommend that the Department use the service area only as a starting point for identifying interested citizens and then expanding to 'real' boundaries. Service area boundaries defined as circular areas within a specified linear distance from a park site do not necessarily match up with how people relate to the site. Most citizens perceive a relationship of a particular site to their neighborhood or subdivision, or their commute to work or school.</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>...methods of communication outlined are already employed, perhaps to a lesser degree in terms of direct mailings to immediate property residents or within the “theoretical” service radius. Already do adjacent properties, CAC’s neighborhood and homeowner associations, press releases, web site, post our P&amp;R facilities, signs on sites.</td>
<td>Admittedly, it is impossible to reach everyone who has an interest in participating in a park planning process. We understand that the Department uses a number of communication methods to reach stakeholders. However, from our interviews with interested citizens, we believe that some changes in outreach methods are warranted. We believe that an effective method would be to redefine service area boundaries so that they conform to 'natural' boundaries such as neighborhoods and commuting routes. Direct mail to an enhanced service area, although more costly, may produce significant results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Liberal distribution of the project web site URL, and the <a href="mailto:parkplan@ci.raleigh.nc.us">parkplan@ci.raleigh.nc.us</a> email address has been the practice rather than the potentially cumbersome maintenance of an email data base. Also once a public data base is established it becomes public information that is available upon request to anyone. Although we have not had the request, there is a concern that this information could be used outside of the intended communication on a park planning matter, or to communicate special interest information as part of the effort to influence the park planning effort. Maintaining and update web page has been a valid concern. With so many projects it is quite challenging for our human resources. We believe that commitment to public participation processes should include the Department taking a more active role in getting information into the hands of stakeholders. Citizens should be spared the time and expense of having to seek information about park master planning meetings and processes. Use of a list serve is one method to actively disseminate information. List serves are used by other local governments in North Carolina.</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>In effort to be more representative, committees larger than 15 increases management. More difficult to schedule (morning vs. late afternoon, day vs. evening, which weeknight, etc). Quorum (not mentioned in the report?) becomes larger, round table discussions become longer, etc. It is true that adding people to the mix increases management costs. It is unwise to increase the size of a committee beyond the capacity to manage it. However, it can be costly to leave some parties out of the process. Our experience in convening stakeholder groups has led us to consider group composition first in terms of resources and interests that need to be represented in the process, and second by the number of people participating.</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Criteria for selection (citizen committee, citizen reps on Core Team): [We] have used the collection of this information in effort to promote balance of backgrounds and interests, but report seems to suggest a matrix that is more site/situation specific. Specific suggestions to improve? Model of ‘citizen interest’ form? The stakeholder matrix is a tool that can help staff identify stakeholders by defining key interests that need to be addressed in the park plan and then seeking individuals who can speak to them.</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>The eventual classification is not (or at least should not be) what determines what elements are included in a plan, but what the site can reasonable handle and the facilities most in demand in a particular area. ... The (2004) Park Plan carefully uses the words “typical” and “list that includes, but is not limited to...” when suggesting facilities. The Comprehensive Plan is intended as a guideline and should be flexible as to site conditions, trends, and system-wide balance.</td>
<td>The comprehensive plan and SIP are important policy documents that guide the development of new parks and recreation spaces. We understand the need for a comprehensive plan to serve as a broad guideline for future park development, and that the specifics should be determined in the park master plan. The SIP may serve as a proper mechanism for vetting particular park elements. But the focus of our recommendation was to speak to the importance of linking public participation processes across the entire spectrum of parks planning, from comprehensive planning down to individual park master plans. The purpose of which is to clarify and document the public's role in defining the vision and mission of the City's park system, align the park system with the needs and desires of the public who use and pay for it, and provide a rational basis from which to add or exclude general classes of park design elements.</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>Random citizen surveys: We are all for this. At Leesville the interest in an off-leash dog park was documented in this manner...</td>
<td>We were not informed of that survey, nor did we see mention of it in the minutes of core team meetings or, more to the point, community meetings.</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
<td>The summary of Council actions for HSF/Resolution process is wrong.</td>
<td>This has been corrected in the final draft.</td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation Department staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Former Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board member</td>
<td>It does seem to me that you should have listed the names and credentials of all of us that participated in the first part of your study summary. Several of us specifically requested that you at least give us credit for taking the time to do this and help out with this process.</td>
<td>Because we did not ask committee members for their permission to use their names in report, we refrained from doing so.</td>
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