Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning
Meeting Summary
Feb 29, 2012

Meeting Summary Feb 29, 2012
Including Public Comments from January 23 to March 16, 2012

Comprehensive Public Participation Program in Park Planning
Walnut Creek Wetland Center, Raleigh, NC

Summary Developed by:
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Cassie Schumacher-Georgopoulos, City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation

Wetland Rose on the Walnut Creek Trail Walnut Creek Wetland Center
Picture Credit: By Bobistraveling, Dec 27, 2009
AGENDA – FEB 29, 2012

1. Pre-Meeting Registration
   a. Orientation Materials
   b. List of Participants

2. Welcome and Purpose
   a. Introductions
   b. Purpose
   c. Current Path of Project
   d. Examples of Project Outcomes
   e. Future Project Activities
   f. Questions for Parks Director

3. Orientation: Agenda & Meeting Process
   a. Meeting Overview
   b. Roles and Responsibilities
   c. Process Guidelines
   d. Current & Historical Overview of Project
   e. Background of Master Planning Process

4. Presentation: Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning
   a. City of Raleigh’s: Public Participation Policy for Park Planning Draft, 2012

5. Discussion of Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning

6. Closing Summary & Next Steps

7. Public Review (through March 16, 2012): Additional Comments and Questions
**ORIENTATION MATERIALS**

1) As participants registered for the meeting, they were provided with the following handouts:
   a. Meeting Agenda
   b. Getting Involved in Raleigh Parks Planning
      1) Participation Sheet for Information Exchange Meeting
   c. Guidelines Document and Excerpts
      1) Public Participation Process Selection Guide
      2) Four Pathways of Public Participation for Park Planning
   d. Policy Document
   e. Staff Manual Document
   f. Spreadsheet of Public Comments, Internal Comments, and Facilitation Team Responses
   g. Capital Area Greenway Map
   h. Public Comment Form
   i. Sign in Sheet

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

1) List of participants who attended the February 29, 2012 meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Norman Camp</td>
<td>Citizen Advocates for Parks; Chair, South Citizen Advisory Council; former PRGAB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Crowder</td>
<td>Councilor, Raleigh City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan Pender</td>
<td>Parks Recreation Greenway Advisory Board (PRGAB) - current</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marsha Presnell-Jennette</td>
<td>PRGAB - former</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diane Sauer</td>
<td>City of Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
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<td>Dick Bailey</td>
<td>City of Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
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<td>David Shouse</td>
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<td>Stephen Bentley</td>
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<td>Cassie Schumacher-Georgopoulos</td>
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<td>Grayson Maughan</td>
<td>City of Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
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<td>Ken Hisler</td>
<td>City of Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
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<td>Emily Ander</td>
<td>City of Raleigh Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Lou Addor</td>
<td>NC State University Cooperative Extension</td>
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<td>Christy Perrin</td>
<td>NC State University Cooperative Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Smutko</td>
<td>University of Wyoming</td>
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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE & OUTCOMES
Present the revised Raleigh Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Parks for public review and comment.

The public:
1. Understands the comprehensive public participation program for park planning
2. Provides additional comments or recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Department.

The department/facilitation team:
1. Where appropriate, makes final changes to the comprehensive public participation program for park planning program prior to submitting it to City Council.
2. As part of the comprehensive package, submits all public comments received since March 25, 2010 including responses.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS
Diane Sauer, Director of Parks and Recreation, opened the meeting with introductions of parks staff and the facilitation team, and welcomed citizens in attendance. Diane stated that she was looking forward to hearing any additional questions or comments about the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning.

The purpose of the meeting is to present, discuss, and receive public feedback on the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning. Once the revisions are completed, the program will go forward to City Council for adoption. The Policy document will require City Council approval for future updates.

The expectations for public involvement in park planning are incorporated in hiring practices of consultants involved in both minor and major park planning projects for the city. Other examples have included process support for the newly created City of Raleigh park classification, Nature Preserves, and the designation of park properties as Nature Preserves. A dedicated group of citizens interested in supporting the city and the Parks and Recreation department, led this initiative in conjunction with parks and recreation staff. The program guided the public participation process for the creation of the Moore Square Master Plan. Moreover, the program will guide the interactions of the project consultants and Parks and Recreation staff during the Chavis Park Community Conversation project, and process and outcomes evaluations at subsequent steps of the project.

Diane expressed her appreciation for everyone taking time to be involved in the program and its future success.

ORIENTATION TO AGENDA AND MEETING PROCESS

A review of the meeting agenda, and the roles and responsibilities of the facilitation team were introduced. The process to date was summarized, including a review of the project timeline.
OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

Beginning in March 2010, comments and questions received from citizens about the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning were gathered and compiled, and organized into sections pertaining to the respective comments (i.e., General Comments, Policy, Guidelines, and Staff Manual). Public comments about the three documents were gathered before the March 25, 2010 Educational Forum, and through part of April 2010. Comments (or questions) appeared on the left side of the spreadsheet with responses to the comments on the right side. There was no attribution of the comments or questions; the intent is to capture what is being said rather than who is saying it.

The Natural Resources Leadership Institute (NRLI) took the lead in sorting the public comments received into respective categories. The NRLI faculty initiated responses to those comments, followed with responses from the Parks and Recreation staff, and then the Facilitation Team (the NRLI Faculty and Parks and Recreation staff) reviewed the comments together. This activity resulted in changes and revisions to the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning. The next round of revisions and review for consistency included internal comments from Parks and Recreation staff. The revisions of the three documents: the Policy, Manual, and Guidelines, prefaced the development of how citizens can be involved in park planning: Getting Involved in Park Planning.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Early in 2008, the NRLI was tasked with conducting an evaluation of two different public involvement processes for master planning that the City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department (and other agencies, in similar fashion) used for park planning: the Community Meeting and the Resolution process. This evaluation resulted in the January 2009 report, Involving the Public in Park Planning, An Evaluation of the City of Raleigh's Park Master Planning Processes. Feedback from residents who participated in master planning processes, Raleigh Parks & Recreation Department Staff, members of the Raleigh Parks Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board, and park planning consultants contributed to the holistic overview of public involvement with a review and assessment of Raleigh's public involvement processes. The report concluded with Eleven Recommendations of Involving the Public in Park Planning:

1. Adhere to core principles of public involvement
2. Manage the processes effectively using best practices
3. Develop a broad public involvement policy
4. Engage citizens in comprehensive and systems integration planning not just master planning
5. Establish clear definitions of park elements and programs
6. Decouple difficult issues from the process
7. Gather data on park uses and needs before planning
8. Improved communication mechanism including use of the internet
9. Use consultants with proven public participation skills
10. Evaluate every process
11. Maintain process flexibility

Then in 2010, Raleigh City Council tasked the Parks & Recreation Department to implement the study recommendations including:

1. Developing a comprehensive policy based around sound principles;
2. Creating and following a consistent process for all planning; and
3. Increasing flexibility within the process.
BACKGROUND OF RALEIGH’S MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The Master Planning process appears within the Policy document as Item 6, Actions and Responsibilities; this section lays out the process by identifying particular actions and responsible parties. This information is also represented graphically as a flowchart on the last page of the Policy. It will help us decide if we have been effective and when it is time to move on. The Staff Manual lays out the procedures for staff to implement the Policy. Master Planning is integral to the comprehensive documents. It is not just a linear process as there are opportunities to adjust mid-flow if we find it can be improved or dependent on type of park.

PRESENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FOR PARK PLANNING

The Facilitation Team, based on the initial charge and public input, developed the three documents, the Policy, the Guidelines, and the Manual, that form the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning. The Manual, Guidelines, and Getting Involved in Park Planning Participation Sheets (which will be introduced later) are hinged to the Policy Document. In this section, the Policy document was outlined, highlighting specific changes since 2010, followed with the Guidelines, and then the Manual for Staff.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY DOCUMENT FOR PARK PLANNING

The Policy is made up of 10 sections and is closely based on the 2010 document but with clarified language and minor changes such as ‘should’ to ‘shall’. It is a much better document because of the comments we have received. A brief description of the sections is as follows:

1. Section 1 = Purpose (why)
2. Section 2 = Policy directives/statements (foundation for policy)
3. Section 3 = Principles (to ensure that public participation integrates public values and needs into park design) (can evaluate each P&R job such as process management, process design, information integration, etc.)
4. Section 4 = Processes and Activities (comprehensive and encompassing)
5. Section 5 = Who is affected by policies (there is no general public (too broad) since people usually fit into these groups)
6. Section 6 = This section received a number of comments so it changed considerably and developed to address the comments received. The Flowchart directly reflects this section.
7. Section 7/8 = These two sections changed considerably and were enhanced dramatically.
   In 2010, the Policy referred readers to the Department Operating Instructions (now the Staff Manual) but based on comments the Facilitation Team determined the information needed to be within the Policy document. The Policy provides the minimal requirements for public notification and the Staff Manual expands on this.
8. Section 9 = What the Policy doesn’t cover and what processes it can’t impact.
9. Flowchart= On the left side of the Flowchart are listed the Activities; on the right side, the Responsible Party. An Arrow designates the ultimate party responsible; Dots, who is responsible for implementation, and the Check marks, who is responsible to review.


**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES FOR PARK PLANNING**

The Guidelines lay out four pathways of public participation for park planning. The initial section of the document introduces the four pathways followed with another section that describes the pathways in fuller detail including various techniques that can be used to implement a particular pathway. To assist with process selection, a process selection guide was introduced on page 22. An evaluation is conducted during and after a process to serve as a feedback loop and improve public involvement as desired. The Guidelines document is to guide staff to think about and incorporate information as they think about the Department’s public participation efforts.

With respect to changes in the Guidelines, comments received were editorial, including how to ensure clarity in the document. For example, from the initial review, people wanted to know how the Guidelines integrate with the other documents.

The chart on page 5, discusses the four pathways for park planning in detail and ways to involve the public in the park planning process to inform decision-making:

1. **Outreach** = one-way communication of Parks and Recreation staff to the public
2. **Information Exchange** = brings people together to learn from one another; two way communication that occurs between Parks and Recreation staff and the public
3. **Feedback and Consultation** = used when staff needs a better sense of how to approach planning process or when looking for advice on a project.
4. **Consensus Seeking** = the Resolution Master Planning Process that Raleigh has used although it is a longer process, much more structured, and involves a neutral facilitator. In most situations, someone from outside the Parks and Recreation Department is needed given the level of complexity and the level of contentiousness.

This document helps staff think logically about what process is needed. A point of clarification on the four pathways; even though the consensus seeking process is being used it does not impede Parks and Recreation staff from using the other processes; in fact, from left to right, each process supports the pathway to the right of it.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TEMPLATES FOR GETTING INVOLVED IN PARK PLANNING**

The templates for the *Getting Involved in Park Planning* Participation Sheets can be found in the Guidelines document. The Participation Sheets are designed to inform citizens about the methods and procedures of a particular public participation pathway, and what they can expect from the process. The Participation Sheets were designed to be customized for each public meeting. The purpose of the templates is to convey what process is being used and why, the project timeline, background, how feedback will be used in planning project, as well as how the public can engaged in the process.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STAFF MANUAL FOR PARK PLANNING**

The Staff Manual tells staff how to follow and implement the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning. Currently the information in the document is being tested with the first System Integration Plans. A result of this effort has prompted Parks and Recreation staff to think about how to keep the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning responsive and dynamic to changing technologies. For example, GovDelivery offers citizens the opportunity to sign up for topics and projects in which they have an interest. It allows citizens the opportunity and responsibility to get involved or remove themselves from the process as they choose.
Questions and comments from meeting participants are followed by responses from Parks & Recreation staff or a facilitator.

Adoption of Comprehensive Program or Policy by City Council
Question: Why is City Council only adopting the Policy? Aren’t the three documents interdependent?

Staff Response: This is a challenge; the Policy is expected to be adopted because it should not change. However, the manual will change over time due to changes in technology, methods of communication; the Guidelines should not change though remain flexible as best practices change. Communication will need to be customized based on location and user preferences in order to keep everyone engaged. As staff and consultants evaluate each process, flexibility is needed to amend the current process and improve future processes.

Notification Process for Changes to the Comprehensive Program for Park Planning
Question: How are people going to be advised on how communication will change? They may be used to a particular form of communication.

Staff Response: We must continue to use tried and true methods for communicating with the public including press releases, website, postcards but we will also be using other forms of communication as technologies evolve.

Question: People will need to know the Staff Manual has evolved. How do we notify them? How does the Comprehensive Program evolve from project to project?

Staff Response: Public notification requires 30 days notification of an initial meeting and 14 days for successive meetings; the notification occurs by road signs, website, and often postcards. How people retrieve the information is a different question.

Comment: I have general feedback related to communication and public notices. Larger signs that are easier to read are needed at the meeting site. It is nearly impossible to read the real estate signs placed on a park property when driving by. They only work for pedestrians.

Staff Response: We have a new standard we want to implement. Current sign ordinance is also a limiting factor.

Use of Advisory Committees (Public Leadership Group) for Each Park
Question: With respect to the Guidelines document (pg15), what is the feasibility of using Advisory Committees for each park? How could Advisory Committees be used to keep people involved in a particular park? Each individual park site has a manager. I would recommend having some sort of Advisory Committee for each park.

Staff Response: The Guidelines are not suggesting that there would be an Advisory Committee for each park.
Facilitator: Regarding the Guidelines description of Advisory Committees (AC), the AC mentioned here refers to the advisory broad reaching perspective. We did not address advisory committees for each park but it could be a great idea.

Comment: It could be difficult if word of the Advisory Committee did not get out to the entire community.

Comment: Chavis is an example given the opposition from the Chavis Heights Projects. Perhaps if representation was made available from a local Advisory Committee, the community would have been aware of the planned changes and been in on the decision making.

Staff Response: The Public Leadership Group serves in this role; it is their responsibility to get information out to their circles – neighbors, community groups, friends, family, etc. Within the context of the planning process, the Public Leadership Group has the responsibility of being that bridge to the community.

Staff Response: This clarifies the role of the Master Plan Committee. The name, Public Leadership Group, implies that members are serving in a leadership role in the redevelopment or development of the park. This raises the project to a higher level of awareness with the community rather than just to the few people that sit on the Committee.

Comment: If the Public Leadership Group is going to take ownership, they should devote energy and time to the process to ensure the park satisfies the needs of the community. Communities often seem uninvolved.

Public’s Role in Choosing a Pathway – What is it?
Question 1: How does the public get involved in choosing the process? The decision appears to be made internally without public participation. I represent a district that is very interested in Parks and consensus building process.

Question 2: I have a similar question. In the past, the feedback loop happened too late in the process. How can it happen sooner to avoid that occurring again?

Facilitator: The feedback loop comes into play at the initial public meeting. The public can be asked if this is the appropriate process.
Comment: We do not want a failure to communicate. We have to be upfront with the public at the first meeting.

Question: Can a citizen request a process come forward or does it always have to come out of the Parks & Recreation Department?
Staff Response: A citizen can bring forward a request as stated within the Policy.

Facilitator/Staff Response: The process selection guide within the Guidelines assists staff (and the public) in choosing an appropriate process. Conducting an assessment of a situation will help refine process selection in more detail. The situation assessment is a key element to any public involvement process. It does not mean you will address everything but you will get a lot closer.
Conditions for a Consensus Committee; Conditions not requiring a Consensus Committee

Question: If staff and city manager choose the process and it is not consensus building, what would be the circumstances for changing the process to consensus building? I see that as a fatal flaw. What would be the conditions that you would not have a consensus committee?

Staff Response: The type of improvements that do not fall within a consensus committee include capital improvements, those types that are mostly repairs and renovations. This is determined earlier on. Any kind of master plan or master plan amendment will put us into this consensus seeking process.

Change Pathway Mid-Stream – What Happens?

Question: What if a process chosen does not work and needs to change?

Additional Comment: Example, Horseshoe Farm, the question of park classification came up. We went through the process but in the middle of it, the issues of park classification was raised. The public did not want to master plan Horseshoe for the classification it fell under but instead wanted a different classification. It turned out that the wrong questions were being asked.

Staff Response: In the instance of Horseshoe Farm, the feedback loop happened after Park Design rather than after Process Design as it is laid out in the Flowchart. These are two very different things. It occurred because there was not a feedback loop at the beginning and thus the issue did not surface the way that it should have.

Facilitator: At the time of Horseshoe Farm, an appropriate park classification did not exist (Nature Preserve). Maybe we need another bubble around process design with the Flow Chart to clarify this means “process design” and not “parks design”.

Comment: The situation assessment accommodates these types of process design questions and thus helps raise the distinctions that need to asked/raised.

Staff Response: City Council has to approve both the consensus committee (Public Leadership Group), including the master plan consultant selection and their scope. Staff and consultant will make an assessment early on, of what the process should be. We will let the public know which process we are using.

Importance of Consultant Selection

Question: Regarding consultant selection, would it be more advantageous to choose a consultant after process design rather than before?

Staff Response: There is a dilemma in doing so. If the consultant is going to be charged with conducting the situation assessment, they need to be involved at the very beginning. The situation assessment is needed to design a process and thus the City hires a consultant first because it is the consultant’s responsibility to perform this step. This also allows the consultant an opportunity to build trust, serve as a neutral, and work with the community early on in the process. You will see this comprehensive program tested with the Chavis Park Community Conversation project.

Comment: Consultant selection is critical. The facilitator must possess maturity in order to be a neutral facilitator.
Parks Board Training
Question: *Can you all produce examples of the participation sheets and introduce at the Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board training?*

Facilitator/Staff Response: yes.

Review of Consensus Seeking Process
Comment: I want to read more and understand how the Consensus Seeking process is laid out. I am familiar with consensus building processes from my experience with the Quaker Church. It can be a power play but in order to be effective it requires patience and willingness to listen. Listening develops trust. I want to understand the sense of transparency for what process is chosen.

Staff Response: There are two specific sections in the Guidelines that address making consensus work. Please read these sections and let us know how it compares to your experience in the Quaker Church. We need to remind ourselves that City Council functions with majority rules. Citizens can invest a lot of time to build consensus and City Council may not support the recommendations; all that time, energy, and effort is discounted.

NEXT STEPS

Please submit any written comments by March 16, 2012 so staff can provide responses. We do not expect any major revisions; if that stands true then we hope to take the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning to City Council at the April 17th meeting. We anticipate that the Comprehensive Program will be sent to a Committee for further review. Staff wants to answer specific questions if they are still there. If the program goes to Committee, we will invite citizens to attend to provide input on the process.

Currently, comments or questions can be sent to parksfeedback@gmail.com. Email is the easiest form of contact but comments can also be submitted in writing by mail or in person.

A meeting summary from tonight’s meeting will be published on the Parks & Recreation Project webpage and will include any additional comments received.

Lastly, you will see the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning tested with the Chavis Park Community Conversation project.

Additional Comments: Received Online from January 23- March 16, 2012

From January 23 to March 16, 2012, the Natural Resources Leadership Institute, and the City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation staff, asked citizens of Raleigh for their comments (and questions) about the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning. The following comments were received and categorized based on thematic responses and according to the ideas being conveyed. The attached chart includes responses to the individual comments. The comments and questions received continue to help refine and improve the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning. The
facilitation team is very grateful to those citizens who have shared their time and expertise to ensure a robust public participation program for park planning.

Appreciate Opportunity to Comment
1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these documents! They are very important and I hope the Parks Board will work hard to thoroughly understand them and polish them up before sending them to City Council.

Value of Public Participation in Park Planning
1. I preface my comments on the updated Public Participation documents by first acknowledging this topic is of great personal interest and of some concern to me. From my years as a former Raleigh Parks and Recreation employee from 1973 until 1984, I learned how much Raleigh residents love their parks and the sense of ownership they feel. The cultural assets of our public commons (parks, greenways, plazas, etc.) mirror the collective “spirit” of a city or village. The values of democracy and community engagement are exercised and experienced in meaningful ways in our public parks. The opportunity for citizens to actively participate in park planning helps to grow the “muscles” of civic engagement, creating more understanding and commitment to the wider community. The ripple effects of such opportunities in an individual life, to the life of the neighborhood and the larger community is very valuable. This helps to build a sense of place, commitment to something beyond one’s self and makes for stronger and safer cities.

2. A city committed to being a strong, vibrant American community should look for opportunities to foster meaningful public involvement, especially in our public parks. The ramifications for improved public relationships, public health and good environmental stewardship are part of the big picture when we consider our public parks.

Size of Documents
1. It is from this concern that I undertook the daunting task of reading the Public Participation Guidelines, Policy and Manual for Park Planning. With a sense of civic responsibility based on my earlier paragraph and knowledge/experience of having served on the PRGAB and as vice chair of a park master planning committee, I took the ‘plunge’. I am not a ‘policy wonk’, I don’t enjoy reading this kind of material and have no background or training in crafting these documents. Truly, only my passion for the role of parks in my city would motivate me to spend the time and attention to read this material. From that perspective I ask: Who else will read these documents? It is a lot of information to digest. If they are not read and understood beyond the Parks Department’s planning staff, what is their value to Raleigh residents, the taxpayers?

2. I have talked with many parks fans, and do not know of a single person other than myself who has read everything. The sheer size of these documents is daunting, off-putting and a handicap to creating an educated and empowered citizenry and greater democracy in park planning.

Parks, Recreation, and Greenways Advisory Board (PRGAB) and City Council Review Comprehensive Program
1. I hope that both the Parks Board and City Council will read every page in these new draft documents (as well as all comments and responses in 2010 and 2012) prior to having any discussion or making decisions about them.
PRGAB:
A. Do they understand and are they working with the Comprehensive Program?
   1. Observing the seeming lack of interest among the current PRGAB, evidenced by the attendance of only one board member at the recent public meeting to explain the documents, I am concerned this material and policies will not be implemented, as no one will understand it beyond Staff.

   2. For the PRGAB to be involved in determining which process to use they need to be knowledgeable of the Guidelines. As mentioned earlier, I am concerned about Board members lack of interest in this material. I do realize that the intention is that new board members would be introduced to the Guidelines, Policy and Manual during their orientation. The material is too much to present in one of the usual orientation sessions where there is a lot to share with new board members.

B: What is Mechanism to Educate PRGAB and Public About the Comprehensive Public Participation Program for Park Planning?
   1. There is no clear and specific planning process outlined.

Ensure Accountability (Build Trust)
   1. Staff is given creative reign to design different process with each park. There is no consistency that the public would be familiar with from park planning process to park planning process. There is no accountability outlined beyond city administrative staff and PRGAB, only on as-needed basis. The PRGAB can decide if post-planning evaluations should be shared with City Council or not.

   2. When final drafts of these documents are eventually ready for Council action, the City Council should adopt them ALL so that they are all-official and cannot be changed without public notice or Council awareness.

   3. These documents have a lot of words and not much that will guarantee citizens a real voice. Citizens will feel (and be) more powerless than they were under Resolution 735 unless these documents are revised.

   4. Any future changes to these documents should be provided to the public and Parks Board for review with “track changes” so any alterations can be clearly seen.

   5. I am disappointed that so many of my last comments were dismissed or cut off in the “Comments and Responses” spreadsheet that was done. Many “pat”, unsubstantive and unhelpful responses were given to people’s comments and no real answers or rationale was often given for not incorporating people’s suggestions. A good example is comment #100: the response given is totally out of context and does not address the important issue raised.

   6. Since City Council is responsible for allocating funds for park planning and consultant fees, I think it is necessary that Council be informed of the processes chosen and copied on evaluation reports. Where is accountability determined otherwise? I feel the current document side-steps elected officials more than previous park planning policies and the lack of accountability beyond city administration is of concern to me.
7. While there are some advantages to the fluid, staff-makes-up-new-processes with each new park, the lack of consistency introduces some potential landmines for gaining public trust and ensuring accountability. The flexibility will help staff get the outcomes they desire, but citizens will likely feel frustrated without knowing what to expect with each park to be planned.

Ensure Transparency
1. Good quality transparency is still not ensured in these documents. This should be a priority and the documents should be corrected for this. For example it should be consistently provided across all documents that citizens, the Parks Board and Council will have the ability to review and comment on the Process Design and Communication Plan (Council should have the ability to make changes) based on this review. This should be required to ensure transparency. The Parks Board should review and recommend changes that will improve transparency and accountability for citizens.

Increase Public and City Council Approval of Process Design
1. The role of the City Council, the Parks Board, and the general public are still weak and diluted in these documents. The Manual and the Policy are especially tilted in favor of and focused on the Parks Department’s role rather than that of citizens. Citizens and the elected officials have been shut out of key, important decision making steps such as process design approval. This should be changed before these documents are adopted.

2. I repeat my previous comment #127. My comment is focused on the public’s right to review and comment on the type of process proposed, since the staff wants to retain the right to change up the process every time. The following things should be included for public review and comment and City Council approval:

   1. Situation assessment
   2. Goals of the planning process
   3. Selection guide judgments and outcomes
   4. How outreach will take place
   5. Process map
   6. How will the proposed design process/plan be advertised?
   7. Steps such as those under Techniques for Consensus Seeking Processes, e.g. how will stakeholders be defined/Stakeholder matrix completed.
   8. Expected timeline
   9. Will staff or neutral facilitator be employed as facilitator?
   10. Communication plan

Remove Redundancies
1. There are many, many redundancies that I commented on in 2010 that should be removed so the documents can be streamlined (one example: similar glossaries in all three documents.)

Ensure Consistency Between 3 Documents
1. Other than the Preamble of each document, there is little referencing the other documents, making it easy for a reader to think that one document is all there is. Each document is different from the others and lack consistency.
2. In my last comments, I pointed out many gross inconsistencies in the way things are addressed in the three documents. Many inconsistencies still exist and will be problematic in implementation – perhaps not so much for staff, but for citizens for whom these documents are intended to assist. Review documents in detail to correct for these inconsistencies. A sample of inconsistencies are:

a. Process design – who is involved, how the process design is made available for review and comment, etc. This is presented differently in Manual, flow chart, etc. Who does the broad outline mentioned in 7.1.2 of the Manual go to for approval to proceed?

b. Different terms used: Master Plan Team, Consensus Committee, Planning Committee, process type names, Public Leadership Group, task force, resource team, Design Review Team, etc.

c. in places it says that some aspects of the planning process (e.g. process design) will be done up front, and then in other sections of the documents it says that changes can be made as the process proceeds

d. promises that were made in the responses to comments on 1/16/12 that changes had been made to the documents have not been made; the Parks Board should review these comments and ensure that all changes agreed to in the comments have actually been made.

3. Once these documents have been approved, new terms such as “Public Leadership Group” should not be introduced or used when running processes, as this will cause confusion. Stick to the terminology you have developed in your policies.

Comments Pertaining to Policy

1. In the Policy for Park Planning the Principles for Public Participation outlines what Parks & Recreation Department will do while engaging citizens in a planning process. #B says: the department shall design public participation processes collaborative with those participating in them. Which indicates the public will actually have involvement in determining what the process will be. I think this is misleading, the department is not interested in relinquishing control to the degree necessary to have a collaborative involvement in planning the process.

2. There is still significant lack of clarity that should be improved. For example, last time I commented on 9. Activities Exempt From This Policy in the Policy (page 9) that examples of these situations should be given. 1) was improved with more explanation, but 2) and 3) need clarification as well. This is very important!

3. Citizens will not have adequate ability to learn about park renovation or redevelopment in the process that is recommended. Expecting citizens to delve deeply into CIP proposals every year is not reasonable. Changes intended for existing parks should be advertised to neighborhood groups, CACs, in nearby community centers, user groups, etc.

4. “Best practices commensurate with the scope and scale of the project” is too subjective and indefinite. Too much language like this still exists in the document, including the word “should” instead of “will” or “shall”.

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5. It should be written into the documents that if any citizen asks to be on the mailing list for any park planning effort, they will receive all correspondence and updates related to that planning process so they can stay abreast of progress and developments.

6. I did not find direction about who would chair and vice chair committees (advisory or consensus). Committee leadership and their roles should be made clear.

7. A situation assessment should be required, not strongly encouraged, and made available to the public for review on the City’s website. If not required, the circumstances where one is not needed should be clarified.

8. Section #C relates to transparency – with the diversity of methods for park planning, how will citizens know what the process will be until the process unfolds? The ‘unknowns’ of what the design process will be can foster confusion, making it hard for citizens to engage in the process, track the process (especially if they are not on the planning committee, rather an interested citizen) and to trust the process.

Comments Pertaining to Staff Manual

1. The Manual reads like a separate document. I note many places with the text is not consistent with the Guidelines or the Policy. I am pleased to see that this document does note on page 4, 2.9 that: “Deviations will be at the direction of the City Council.” There are few mentions of the City Council’s involvement in the other documents. And on page 20, 9.0 under Post Process/Implementation Evaluation: “The staff or consultant will prepare a report for the PRGAB, who may report to City Council as needed.”

2. Just as last time I suggested a role for citizens in public participation, I think it would be helpful to include a description of the role of Committee Members in the Manual under section 2.

3. Will roles be identified in the process design (see 2.0 first paragraph)? This entire section (2) is too focused on City staff and not balanced to show the partnership with citizens that should be encouraged.

Comments Pertaining to Guidelines

1. The Guidelines is a large document at 70 pages. I found it very informative and will provide a useful resource book for educating staff to issues they may face with citizens, a variety of methods for notifying the public about park planning, an array of methods of designing park planning processes, how to communicate with citizens, the responsibilities of all parties involved, etc. Park board members would find it informative and should be encouraged to read it, but only those most desiring to be educated in the details of park planning are likely to undertake the task.

2. A reader of the Guidelines will not understand exactly how a park planning process will be conducted, only that there are lots of ways it can be done and what the best practices are for these various methods.
3. Regarding the **Consensus** Section, I suggest a highly skilled facilitator with the capacity to maintain an atmosphere of respect for differences is paramount for consensus to provide the best outcomes. I have a concern that without a skilled facilitator consensus will not be achieved because of the time necessary to allow differing sides to speak and to feel heard.

4. The Guidelines note: “Allow time for the dissenting parties to express their concerns and reasons for dissent.” In my experience with many public meetings there is often impatience to listen to a dissenting voice. Using a one-minute time limit is not in keeping with the spirit of consensus.

5. The text is not clear enough about how and to whom dissenting opinions will be communicated beyond the conclusion of the process. These dissenting opinions should always be included in all reports and be part of the record of the process. In these documents PRGAB determines if and when reports are made to City Council. I propose that all dissenting opinions be included in reports to City Council and that all final reports from park planning meetings be given to City Council.

6. The Consensus section, beginning on page 16, should have the process for seeking consensus noted at the end of the Techniques for Consensus Seeking section. The Decision Process for consensus doesn’t appear until pages 50 – 55. One has to read significantly more pages to learn that it is a voting process rather than the Quaker method of pains-taking, respectful listening consensus.

7. It is not clear how an Advisory Committee in a Feedback and Consultation process (page 15 of **Guidelines**) is set up, and whether or not the PRGAB and City Council can review and approve this committee membership. If there is a need for an advisory committee, it should be set up by Council so that Open Meetings Laws apply. A committee of this kind should have a charter, etc. and be treated similarly to a Consensus Seeking Committee.

8. Bad outdated references still exist, e.g. see page 11-bottom paragraph.

9. The requirement for environmental stewardship recommendations that was in the Resolution process should be included in the **Guidelines** Charter section 4. FINAL PRODUCTS.

10. **Guidelines** Charter section 3. PURPOSE (page 45) should be amended to read “The purpose of the Planning Committee is to provide recommendations to the PRGAB and City Council for a total park program that will...” Same with section 5. AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE. Committees need to know that their recommendations will go to City Council and not be kept at the Parks Board level.

11. The statement in **Guidelines** section 5. AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE (page 46) that says the Parks Board can reject the work of a planning committee should be changed to read “Products generated by the Committee will be reviewed and considered by the PRGAB, who will forward them unchanged to City Council along with their own recommendation for Council action.”
Maintain Facilitator Neutrality

1. The Guidelines provide directives for facilitators and encourage neutrality of the facilitators. As well trained as parks staff may be, I suspect it would be hard for a member of staff to maintain neutrality during park planning processes. Hiring outside facilitators will allow staff to openly voice their opinions providing a more honest tone for meetings.

2. There are real issues with Parks Dept. staff trying to play the role of neutral facilitator. They are not neutral in any way. Perhaps a Planning Dept. staff person can be the facilitator or someone from outside can be hired for this purpose only?

2012 Parks and Recreation Plan Update

1. Has the Parks Board or City Council been fully briefed on the process design for the upcoming Parks Plan update? Both bodies should be informed of the detailed process to be employed.