Ramble Back Home
The Role of Historic Parks in the New Era of Urbanism
Case Studies from Three North Carolina Cities

Charles Dillard
UNC
Department of City and Regional Planning
Introduction

The American city has always been about open space. Colonial Americans demonstrated an agrarian ideal in spaces like Boston’s Common and Savannah’s and Philadelphia’s squares. No one better represents the philosophy of open space in American society than Thomas Jefferson, who, as one writer suggests, helped “lead to the integration of natural elements into town and city development.” Following right in line, New York City, which was the first to experience the onset of industrialization on a massive scale, turned to a park to holistically cleanse Manhattan of its inorganic growth. The result, Central Park, remains today one of this country’s proudest icons, as well as one of the best functioning and most loved open spaces in the world. And it is still solving the problems it was created to solve.

That foresight to plan and develop open space as a solution to a number of New York’s problems was not lost on the planners of other cities across the country. As America’s urban population expanded, parks and even park systems were platted in emulation of Frederick Law Olmsted and others’ landscape strategies. The roughly sixty-year period from Olmsted’s Central Park to the 1920s produced an incredible number of successful and cherished urban parks. Again, the fruits of this effort by American planners and landscape architects remain key elements of our built heritage. From Boston’s Golden Necklace to St. Louis’s Forest and San Francisco’s Golden Gate, early urban parks are inextricable elements of the American city.

Technological innovation eased access to the automobile and once again put the spotlight on open space as the guiding framework for the American city. Early visions of open space in an automotive America were indeed grand. Lewis Mumford, the influential member of the Regional Planning Association of America, said, “park planning cannot possibly stop at the edges of the parks. The park system is thus the spearhead of comprehensive urban planning.” The commitment to open space in American city
planning remained strong in theory, but in practice, market-driven development patterns stunted the evolution of the American urban park. Indeed, what ensued was a perversion of Penn, Jefferson and Mumford’s open space ideals.

Loosely regulated suburban and exurban growth has been based on that desire for open space. Large lots with large yards still offer Americans the appearance of country life, with private, open space for the family. Subsequently, as urban park historian Galen Cranz suggests, “park administrators were marginalized by urban planners.”

Parks and recreation departments, with less money and less influence, resorted to a piecemeal, standard, and homogenized open space strategy that has diminished the incredible impact that parks have on a city’s health and prosperity. Certainly, those cities, like New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco that retained a strong urban sense throughout the era of sprawl have managed their parks systems in different ways and can be held up as examples for other cities striving to reclaim their urban cores.

That is all in the past now as we enter a period of entirely new circumstances. Climate change and human development patterns’ effect on it has focused increased attention on higher densities and a return to urban lifestyles. Rising energy prices and economic recession are also contributing to the realization that the future of the United States is an urban one. Additionally, the social and cultural consequences of dispersion and socioeconomic segregation are well documented and in need of amelioration. A return to density and increased social interaction may be a necessary step toward depolarization and destratification. Parks are extremely well positioned to take back some of the influence that they exerted over early American city planners.

Indeed, the impending diaspora-in-reverse has already placed heightened interest on existing urban core parks. For these places, the twenty-first century is a reprisal role in which they have the opportunity to provide nascent revitalization strategies an open space balance, to become, as Paul Bray suggests, “the definers and organizing force for whole urban settings.”
Despite the overwhelming evidence stating that parks provide cities with valuable and unique resources and that they have proven vital tools in revitalization efforts the world over, many American cities have yet to return to the open space tradition that guided urban development in the United States for hundreds of years. The cities Winston-Salem, Greensboro and Raleigh in North Carolina represent three typical examples of American cities experiencing increased investment and activity in their urban cores. However, an analysis of each of these cities’ urban core park strategies reveals varying degrees of success, in both the maintenance of quality public parks, and in terms of the benefits reaped from these parks.

**Methodology**

In this report, I will analyze the efforts of three North Carolina cities in implementing historic park redevelopment strategies as part of more comprehensive urban revitalization schemes. Hanes Park in Winston-Salem, Fisher Park in Greensboro and Moore Square in Raleigh are three historic public spaces in their respective city’s core. Each park exists within a unique spatial, social and political environment that greatly affects the potential success of preservation and redevelopment techniques.

After providing a brief introduction of each park’s history, I will present a detailed study of the documented benefits of urban parks to cities. From there, I will present best practices in urban park space preservation from the United States and abroad. Cities throughout the world recognize those benefits accrued from urban parks and have implemented a number of innovative preservation strategies. Subsequently, I will return to the three North Carolina parks, analyzing past, current and future preservation initiatives. Finally, I will recommend context-sensitive solutions for each park, applying the studied benefits and best practices as a guiding framework. I hope to highlight the need for increased focus on urban park preservation as strategies within larger urban revitalization efforts, especially in North Carolina.
The Parks

Moore Square

Moore Square is a 4-acre park located in Downtown Raleigh. The park is bounded on the north by Hargett Street, Person Street to the east, Martin Street to the South and Blount Street to the west. The surrounding Downtown district is well built up and is experiencing rapid growth in terms of population and development investment.

Moore Square is one of only two squares remaining from the original 1792 William Christmas plan for Raleigh, which was largely based on William Penn’s plan for Philadelphia. Originally used as grazing space for farm animals, the square became the location for a number of churches in the early nineteenth century. Later, at the conclusion of the Civil War, occupying Union troops billeted at Moore Square, causing a great deal of damage to the site. Subsequent economic hardships during Reconstruction led the state, which owned the parcel, to authorize the city to maintain Moore Square. This agreement, from the 1870s, remains in place today.

As Raleigh grew in economic and political importance, Moore Square became an increasingly important public space in the city’s downtown. As early as the late 19th century, the area surrounding Moore Square had taken on a decidedly retail-based economy, eventually becoming the epicenter of Raleigh’s thriving black-owned business sector. The bustling economy and active street life of this era converted Moore Square into an important recreation and gathering space. Formal paths, ample tree cover and lawn space are among the amenities that dictated Moore Square’s future as a small urban park for the city of Raleigh.

Like the two other parks being studied here, Moore Square came into decline with the arrival of the automobile and disinvestment in downtown Raleigh. However, Raleigh’s successful revitalization strategy has pumped incredible amounts of investment into Downtown and Moore Square stands a chance to benefit greatly.5
Fisher Park

Fisher Park is a 12-acre park at the center of the historic Fisher Park neighborhood, located just north of Downtown Greensboro. The park is surrounded by mostly early-twentieth century houses and significant church structures. Elm Street, a major four lane urban thoroughfare, bisects the park and the neighborhood.

Fisher Park, like Hanes Park in Winston-Salem, was the gift of a wealthy local benefactor. Captain Basil John Fisher deeded 28 acres of land in 1902 for the development of a residential suburb for a growing Greensboro on the condition that an additional 14 acres be set aside “for the purpose of a public park and pleasure ground.” The two subsequent decades saw residential development fill in around the park, creating Greensboro’s wealthiest and most desirable neighborhood.

The park sits in a ravine, which limited the space to only passive use. Among the original features of the park were a 30’ diameter wading fountain and pool, a system of wooden bridges traversing the park’s network of streams, and the “Summer House,” wooden structure that served as a community gathering space.

The Fisher Park neighborhood remained a successful neighborhood well into the twentieth century. As a result, the park continued to receive a great deal of attention from residents and the city. Indeed, when the original wooden bridges failed, they were not just replaced, but improved upon. Today Fisher Park retains a number of the original granite replacement bridges from the 1930s.7

Like Moore Square and Hanes Park, however, Fisher Park suffered from disinvestment in the surrounding neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Chip Callaway, longtime Fisher Park resident and a leader in the park’s resurgence, remembers a time when the only users Fisher Park had were the dozens of men living in transitional housing agencies scattered throughout the abandoned neighborhood.
However, Fisher Park has benefited from a very progressive and vocal neighborhood association. Championed by Callaway and others in the neighborhood, Fisher Park secured its future in 1990 with an agreement between the neighborhood and the city for a community-led refurbishment. Discussed in advance later, Fisher Park is a model for historic neighborhood park revitalization.8

Hanes Park

Hanes Park is a 34.92-acre park at the western edge of Downtown Winston-Salem. The park lies in a valley, bordered by two turn-of-the-twentieth-century residential districts to the south and east, two early twentieth century school buildings to the west, and an urban commercial street to the north.

Hanes Park was born in 1919 out of a combined gift from two of the wealthiest families in the South. Katharine Reynolds, of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, and P.H. Hanes, a founder of the international textile giant, presented the City of Winston-Salem with the land as a gift, on the terms that the city would maintain and beautify the park, as well as forbid the creation of a road or railway through the park’s property. In addition to the park, the gift included land to be set aside for the construction of a new high school.

Hanes Park, described by designer Louis Miller as “the finest public park south of Washington,” was the centerpiece of a boom in Winston-Salem’s real estate development that saw the city become the largest and wealthiest city in North Carolina.8 West End, the residential neighborhood to the east of the park, was originally designed as a resort because of its natural springs and sloping terrain which provided excellent views of the still undeveloped land west of Winston-Salem. However, residential development soon came to dominate the neighborhood, which became home to the town’s wealthiest families. West End’s promise as the prime real estate in what was being billed as a “Piedmont Metropolis” garnered national attention for the city. Renowned streetcar developer Frank Sprague brought his hill-climbing transit
system to West End just three years after her installed the very first system of its kind in Richmond, Virginia. Hanes Park, then, was the crowning achievement for the proudest era of Winston-Salem’s history.

The park was to include ample passive-use space, a six-acre lake for boating, swimming and ice-skating, as well as recreational fields for brand new R.J. Reynolds High School, which at the time was part of the park space. Budget constraints prevented the creation of the lake, however, and the park developed for years both as a passive and active space. Suburbanization and disinvestment in the surrounding neighborhoods threatened Hanes Park in the latter half of the twentieth century and Hanes Park suffered right along. Rather than act as a unifying force, Hanes Park served more as a dead-zone at the nexus of a number of Winston-Salem districts.

However, revitalization of the surrounding neighborhoods, especially West End, has shed new light on Hanes Park. Reynolds High School and Wiley Middle School remain active stakeholders. Additionally, the West End Neighborhood Association, has taken on an increasingly involved role in the park’s maintenance and design. Further still, powerful constituencies like the YMCA and local tennis associations have a great amount of interest invested in Hanes Park.9
Benefits of Parks

Economic

Property values and the proximate principle

Parks have been shown to increase city tax revenues through the positive effects they have on property values. John L. Crompton and others have published extensively on the phenomenon known as the proximate principle, “which states that the market values of properties located near a park or open space frequently are higher than those of comparable properties located elsewhere.”10 In turn, cities reap the benefit of value added to properties through increases in property tax revenues.

The proximate principle is not a new idea. Central Park Commissioners in New York City in 1873 reported that after paying the annual debt charge of $830,000 for the acquisition and development of Central Park, the city of New York received a net profit of $4.4 million from the increments in tax revenues attributable to the park.” Recognizing this effect of his park, Frederick Law Olmsted, and later his sons, used the idea to press for increased park space in America’s cities in the nineteenth century. Indeed, Crompton writes, “from the 1850s to the 1930s, there was an insistent, almost inviolate conviction in the legitimacy of the proximate principle, not only among park and open space advocates, but also among planners and elected officials.”11 However, for a number of reasons, planners and parks officials in our cities discontinued the use of the proximate principle in making land use decisions.

Luckily, improved statistical methods are opening cities’ eyes to the tremendous benefits provided by the proximate principle. For example, in 2008 the Philadelphia Parks Alliance, in conjunction with The Trust for Public Land, published a report in which they suggest that Philadelphia receives $18,129,000 in tax revenues from the effect of park space on property values, even using purposefully conservative statistical methods. Further still, proximity to parks adds about $700 million to Philadelphia citizens’
combined property values. Similarly, a report commissioned by the Friends of Hudson River Park states that approximately 20% of the value of all buildings within two blocks of the park was attributable to the park. Hudson River Park thus adds about $200 million to the value of adjacent property.

The proximate principle clearly demonstrates the positive effect of park space on property values. The increase in public tax revenues and the benefit provided to property owners provides cities with a consistently high return on their investments in park preservation and maintenance. Discussion of the proximate principle as a component of park funding efforts will be discussed later.

**Redevelopment catalyzation**

Municipal redevelopment agencies, housing authorities and community development corporations are finding open space an increasingly beneficial component of urban revitalization initiatives. A recent survey of national CDCs found that around 29% of all such organizations now participate in open space development. Similarly, a 2008 survey by the Center for City Park Excellence found 75 parks created by redevelopment and housing authorities across the country. Ranging in size from 0.02 acres to 46 acres and in dollars from $130,000 to $48 million, this type of development is an encouraging sign that cities are once again recognizing that parks are an inextricable component of any successful urban strategy.

Redevelopment authorities are proving necessary companions for city parks and recreation departments, who are frequently underfunded and relegated to near the bottom on the pecking order of municipal departments. Innovative development strategies, greater degrees of fiscal autonomy, and “potent negotiating mechanisms allow these types of agencies to operate in ways that parks and recreation departments could never hope to do. Furthermore, redevelopment authorities benefit from their unified, comprehensive approach to planning. Whereas parks departments must coordinate, often with competing interests, with planning, public works and
transportation departments, not to mention elected officials, redevelopment authorities benefit from a comprehensive, unified approach. This organizational advantage allows these agencies to circumvent many of the processes that hamper development and renovation of open space in urban areas. As a result, parks are defining growth patterns for many distressed urban areas.

However, much work is still to be done if redevelopment agencies are to fully take advantage of the benefits offered by the development and/or redevelopment of urban parks. Peter Harnik writes that “too many redevelopment and housing agencies are constrained by lack of staffing, lack of resources, lack of statutory authority, or lack of imagination to add a park to their normal portfolios of housing, offices, hotels, or convention centers. Indeed the Center for Park Excellence survey found 20 agencies that could not name a single park that they had created or renovated.”

**Magnets for Jobs**

As significant determinants in the quality of life provided by cities, parks have been shown to be among the most important factors for the location of businesses. A 1997 study by Crompton et al shows that recreation/parks/open space was first among six quality of life elements in location decisions for small companies. Given small firms’ increasing importance in local economic development initiatives, parks then become crucial to the expansion of labor markets. Extending this notion, cities that are in transition from formerly agricultural and industrial-based economies and looking for new sources of employment can gain a competitive advantage by increasing park space provisions. This very same study, however, also indicates a “significant” undervaluing of park space on the part of city economic development offices. Business owners are telling cities that park space is extremely important in their location decisions; it is time that cities listen more attentively.

**Magnets for tourism**
Daniel Burnham, the highly influential architect and planner, once said that “beauty has always paid better than any other commodity and always will.” As John Crompton writes, parks are often the “engines” that drive local tourism industries. Among the services that parks provide are hosting festivals, sporting events, museums and historic sites and providing beautifully-designed passive spaces, or as Crompton calls them, ‘living works of art.’

Parks have been termed “regional commodities” because of their importance to local tourism strategies. Indeed, a study by North Carolina State University shows that nearly 25% of all visitors to North Carolina come for outdoor recreation and entertainment and more than 40% come for historic and heritage sites. Clearly, urban parks, especially those located in historic districts, offer cities tremendous benefits in terms of attracting business dollars. The Philadelphia Parks Alliance suggests that parks contribute more than $5 million annually in tax receipts from tourism. Additionally, Philadelphia citizens profit $40.26 million from parks’ positive impact on tourism. Similarly, San Antonio’s overall economic benefit, both public and private, from parks during its annual Fiesta San Antonio, is estimated at $16 million. Cities looking for tourism strategies to augment economic revitalization would do well to look to their parks for answers.

**Environmental**

Urban parks provide environmental benefits on the local, regional, and global scales. Beyond simply improving the health of ecological and hydrological systems, parks also bring tremendous economic savings by improving the performance of environmental system management.

**Urban heat island**

According to the American Planning Association, parks are “the first and best line of defense against the changes brought about by the urban heat island phenomenon. The Environmental Protection Agency defines the heat island phenomenon as an environmental consequence of the replacement of urban open space with impervious
surfaces. Simply put, “surfaces that were once permeable and moist become impermeable and dry.” Urban parks help to lower temperatures within cities by providing increased shade and through evapotranspiration (evaporation from leafy plants). Furthermore, parks contribute what is known as a “park breeze,” which effectively “creates a breeze from park interiors to city neighborhoods.” Among the other significant contributions parks make in fighting the urban heat island effect are increased precipitation mitigation (benefiting often over-stressed storm water management systems) and carbon sequestration.\(^\text{25}\)

The heat island benefits of urban parks extend beyond local microclimates to cumulatively effect climate change on a global scale. A 2007 study produced by the University of Manchester (UK) shows that urban park space has the potential of negating expected increases in global temperatures through the year 2080. The authors of the study suggest that “a mere 10% increase in the amount of green space in built-up centers would reduce urban surface temperatures by as much as 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit.\(^\text{26}\)

*Storm water management*

For years, parks included water elements because of their allure as passive recreation amenities. Now, however, cities are turning to water in their parks to assist storm water management initiatives as well. As Girling and Helphand point out, “opportunities emerge in site planning for the artful expression and interpretation of certain ecological functions.” Using Bellevue, Washington’s groundbreaking open space-storm water management partnership as an example, Girling and Helphand identify how cities can drastically improve their management of water systems. According to Bellevue engineers, the city’s “open stream” system costs 75% less than the conventional underground storm water system. Furthermore, “natural surface hydrology,” any combination of streams, ponds, lakes and wetlands, augmented by dams and weirs, can reduce flooding and helps to clean and greatly reduce pollutants in water systems (303-4).
The Western Research Station of the U.S. Forest Service has produced extensive research on the ecological benefits of urban open space, including a model that calculates the financial impact of urban open space as storm water management tools. The model suggests, for example, that Philadelphia’s park spaces save the city nearly $6 million per year in storm water management costs. Clearly, the link has been made between environmental and economic sustainability. Parks are perhaps the best way that cities can better manage their water systems.

**Biodiversity**

Decreased biodiversity is a well-known consequence of human development. Urban growth is one of the most frequently cited causes of species loss. Michael McKinney summarizes the findings of a number of studies on biodiversity in urban areas by noting that the “number of species at the urban core is reduced to less than half of that found in the rural, more natural areas.” Among the obvious causes of this loss in biodiversity are reduced vegetation, increased impervious surfacing, pollution and out-of-balance urban micro-climates (884).

Urban parks, then, represent the obvious solution to the problem of decreased biodiversity in urban areas. By providing land for the growth of native species and increasing the amount of vegetation within cities, parks offer tremendous benefits for increased flora and fauna diversity.

**Environmental education**

Parks have been identified as valuable tools in educating the public about important urban ecological and environmental initiatives. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission and the Prince George’s County Department of Environmental Resources joined forces in 1987 to create the Fairland Regional Park Stormwater Management Demonstration Area. While not an *urban* park,
this “outdoor classroom” provides the public with vital information on how storm water management processes help to create healthier environments and communities. We can extend the Fairland Park example to urban parks and suggest that cites use their open spaces as “outdoor classrooms” as well. Of course, an important prerequisite is the improvement and maintenance of quality parks so that the lessons they teach are positive, and not negative.

Social

Frederick Law Olmsted said that parks were places where a person “adds by his mere presence to the pleasure of all others, all helping to the greater happiness of each.”30 Indeed, parks have provided societies with a number of vital benefits for centuries. American cities in particular have a long history of parks as instruments of social well-being. Penn’s Philadelphia and especially Olmsted and his contemporaries’ park systems have at their core a strong belief that parks are necessary counterbalances to urban life. Penn sought to provide early Philadelphians with places where they could connect with nature while maintaining the pace of life in the city. Olmsted looked to open space as a forum for dialogue between the stratified classes of and industrialized, crowded, and polluted Manhattan. Today, the list of social benefits that parks provide has grown to confront the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Social Capital

The concept of social capital, popularized by Robert Putnam, among many others, “refers to the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other” (Need Reference). In this regard, parks act as spaces in which social capital is invested and grown.

Parks themselves can be products of initiatives to increase social capital. Examples from across the country illustrate collaborative community efforts in the revitalization of deteriorated park spaces. In Minneapolis, local community development corporation Hope Community Inc. led an initiative to help resuscitate the distressed Phillips
An important element of this effort was the revitalization of Peavey Park. Hope, in collaboration with the city’s elected officials and planning and parks departments, identified 18 community leaders and elicited the help from nearly 200 adults and children in the visioning of a new neighborhood park. As a result of this collaborative effort, Peavey Park’s revitalization plan won approval from city officials, representing a major step forward in the creation of a true community of individuals with common interests. Luckily for community development in this country, there is a long list of parks in need of such social capital investment. Another significant way in which parks can increase social capital is through the space they provide for social events. Concerts, festivals, athletic events, and farmers markets are just a few of the items on an exhaustive list of activities that can increase social capital. Among the communities in greatest need of increased social interaction and cooperation are low-income neighborhoods. A 1998 study by Kuo, et al. suggest that “for individuals who live in poor inner-city neighborhoods and who face an array of difficult circumstances, greener outdoor common spaces may make the world a more supportive place.” The study’s authors found that residents of poor communities with nearby green spaces are more socially active and have stronger feelings of belonging than residents of poor communities with no green spaces. As cities look to revitalize their traditionally poor, underfunded cores, they should look to parks as important tools of community development.

Public Health

The public health benefits of urban parks are perhaps their best-known benefits. The passive and active recreation that parks provide city dwellers is extremely vital to public health in cities. Furthermore, the role that parks play in regulating air and water systems, as mentioned before, provide healthier living environments for all city dwellers.
While obvious to many, a report by the U.S. Surgeon General links regular exercise with a vast array of health benefits. From reduced risk of premature death, to reduced heart disease and cancer and more, the benefits of active recreation are undeniable. In this regard, parks provide city dwellers with much-needed recreation space in order to stay healthy. A number of studies published in the last decade have statistically proven the health benefits of urban parks. Provision of park space has been shown to produce a 48.4% increase in the frequency of physical activity, a 5.1% increase in aerobic capacity, and a greater incidence of physical activity among children who live close to parks than those who live far away from park space. As such, it is important that cities expand their provision of park space in order to guarantee that all segments of the population, in all areas, have access to spaces for active recreation.

Passive recreation space also provides a number of important psychological benefits. Recent studies back up claims made long ago, such as those by Olmsted, about the harmonizing effects of park spaces. “Horticultural therapy,” suggests Howard Frumkin, “is used today in community-based programs, geriatrics programs, prisons, developmental disabilities programs, and special education.” Frances Kuo suggests that nature in human environments produces beneficial effects on blood pressure, heart rate, mood, day-to-day effectiveness, social behavior cognitive functioning and work performance. Furthermore, Kuo notes that residents of Chicago housing projects with views of open space “reported less mental fatigue, less procrastination in dealing with life issues, and feeling that their problems were less sever, more solvable, and of shorter duration than residents with no views of nature.”

**Children and the Elderly**

As mentioned before, parks are important recreation spaces for children, benefiting their minds and bodies, as well as providing them important and safe social environments. In addition, parks serve as valuable resources for Safe Routes to School programs, as they provide car-free walking and biking environments for children.
Obviously, physical recreation is the means by which parks exert a positive impact on children’s bodies. Muscle strength and coordination are the two developmental benefits of parks, whereas parks also help to fight against such diseases as asthma, obesity and heart disease. Increased park space in our cities means more opportunities for children to recreate.

Recently, the mental health benefits of urban parks are coming to light. While attention deficit disorder itself remains a debated topic, studies have shown that “children with ADD can concentrate on schoolwork and similar tasks better than usual after taking part in activities in green settings.” It only seems logical that parks are a constructive substitute to television, computers and video games when it comes to how children spend their free time.

Language and cognitive development also have been proven to benefit from open space. According to the Association for Childhood Education International, “research on the brain demonstrates that play is a scaffold for development, a vehicle for increasing neural structures, and a means by which all children practice skills they will need in later life.” Furthermore, public parks also provide children an arena in which to develop interaction and cooperation skills, which are vital for success in school and later in life.

Like children, the elderly have special needs in terms of recreation and socialization. Parks offer older people passive and active recreation facilities. Additionally, time spent in public spaces helps to combat the isolation that is so prevalent with the elderly in the United States. Urban parks are especially well equipped to serve the elderly in that their setting in densely developed environments often does not require them to have an automobile. When the elderly can walk within their neighborhood for their daily needs they are much better off than they would be in suburban, auto-dependent neighborhoods.
Best Practices in historic urban park revitalization

Despite the proven benefits of urban parks, funding for these spaces is traditionally insufficient. Furthermore, economic crises, such as the one in which we find ourselves today, tend to cut park budgets even more, severely limiting the public’s capacity to maintain quality park systems. Consequently, park management authorities, namely planning and parks and recreation departments are unable to thoroughly manage the tremendous amount of resources that exist within urban parks. Thankfully, a large and growing contingent of park proponents has developed a diverse set of practices in the protection of urban parks. The list of funding sources for urban parks is extensive. Therefore, I will only focus my efforts on identifying strategies specific to treating historic urban parks. I will also identify and describe a number of unconventional management strategies, from conservancies to unique and powerful parks commissions.

On the national scale, The National Park Service in the United States and English Heritage, it’s equivalent in Great Britain, have established historic urban landscape protection initiatives. These agencies, rather than directly providing funding, offer assistance and serve to illuminate the importance of historic urban parks, thereby fostering park preservation and redevelopment movements.

State and local governments provide the vast majority of park funds, with municipalities implementing increasingly sophisticated and innovative strategies to preserve and protect urban park space.

Finally, parks conservancies have proven to be vital to the success of many urban park space preservation efforts. These private, not-for-profit organizations often have access to funding sources unavailable to public bodies, making them especially well-suited to reverse the culture of neglect that is so prevalent with urban parks today.
National Strategies

National governments play an important role in publicizing the importance of urban park space preservation and assisting municipalities and other organizations in developing preservation and redevelopment strategies. Charles Birnbaum, who spent fifteen years as the coordinator of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative, provided national guidance for the protection or important landscapes, including historic urban parks. Birnbaum defines the “historic designed landscape:”

A landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.38

Despite the recognized importance of historic urban parks, Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits, a staple of the movement to preserve historic buildings, remain off-limits to landscapes. The theoretical complexity of landscape preservation presents difficulties when considering the historical significance of historic public parks. For example, the array of often conflicting stakeholders and the fact that landscapes evolve naturally much more than buildings means that determining one single legacy, or time-period, is often impossible. Furthermore, with public parks, there are no private developers paying taxes on privately managed landscapes. It is difficult to apply tax credits to a project that is not taxed in the first place.

Great Britain has gone farther than the United States in creating a national urban park preservation strategy. English Heritage is a public agency sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Established in 1983, English Heritage received £129
million in public funding and £41.9 million from other sources in 2005/06. The major English Heritage landscape project is the *Register of Parks and Gardens*, a national listing of historic designed landscapes of national significance. English Heritage considers any park over 30 years old to be “historic.” However, to be included on the *Register*, a park must exhibit a degree of significance, based on a number of criteria, including the “age of its main layout and features, its rarity as an example of historic landscape design and the quality of the landscaping.” The first *Register* was the product of a comprehensive analysis of public parks in the U.K. by consultants from English Heritage and local officials. Once registered, a park is protected by provisions that require local authorities to consult with English Heritage before undertaking any significant maintenance or development plans.  

These two examples of national urban park preservation strategies illustrate that across the globe, societies are recognizing the importance of urban open space, especially those places with a demonstrated historic significance.

**State and Local Strategies**

State and local authorities, as the primary funding bodies for urban parks, have established a number of innovative strategies to pay for park preservation and redevelopment. Examples include grants, sales and property taxes, transit funds, bonds, community development block grants, impact fees and tax increment financing. Regardless of type, municipal and county initiatives, especially, have enjoyed great success. Abberger et al note that “from 1996 to 2004, 201 out of 259 (78%) county funding measures put before voters were approved generating $9.3 billion in conservation funds. In that same period, 835 out of 1065 (78%) municipal measures also passed, producing an additional $6.3 billion.”

A widely used strategy that plays off of the benefits of park space is tax-increment financing (TIF). The initial step in implementing a TIF strategy is delineating a Redevelopment District. In the case of a park, it is all the taxable property surrounding
the park space, within a defined boundary. The assessed value of all of this property is frozen while preservation or redevelopment projects are undertaken. Once the project is completed, the value of property within the Redevelopment District is assessed once again and the difference in before-and-after tax value is used to retire debt or pay for park redevelopment bonds. Essentially, a TIF is “a means of borrowing against the speculative gain that a project should bring.”

Bonds can be part of funding mechanisms like TIFs, or can be used alone to pay for park development or improvements. Regardless of how they are implemented, bonds have proven to be popular with American voters. Since 1988, more than $48 billion in open space bonds have been approved through referendum in the United States. To illustrate the success rate of ballot measures for park bonds, we can look at municipal bonds for the state of North Carolina. Of 31 municipal measures in the past 20 years, 29 have passed, totaling in $350 million for city parks in North Carolina.

Impact fees are a common planning mechanism used throughout American cities. Such fees are applied to development project in order to create public revenue for goods and services that the developer would not normally provide. Parks are often the beneficiaries of impact fees. For example, in May of 2008, the City of Raleigh expanded its open space impact fee program, originally established in 1987, to collect between $924 and $1,219 on all new single-family homes. These funds are used to pay for often-new open spaces. However, impact fees can be used for park preservation and redevelopment work as well.

Perhaps the most straightforward way that states and local governments pay for parks is through the collection of sales and property taxes. While such taxes, and proposed ballot measures to increase them, often absorb the scorn of voters, specific efforts to increase taxes to pay for parks have proven successful in the United States. Of nearly $13.5 billion in proposed property tax increases to pay for parks since 1988, $10.1 billion has been approved by American voters.
While not exhaustive, this analysis illustrates those financing strategies that have achieved the greatest amount of success in the United States. Furthermore, these funding strategies are used for general park conservation, maintenance and development. Specific funding initiatives for historic urban park spaces generally remain the domain of conservancies, which will be discussed in detail shortly.

In addition to funding, municipalities and county governments are the managing authorities of urban park systems, most often through a parks and recreation department. As mentioned before, city parks departments were marginalized in the latter half of the twentieth century in the vast majority of American cities. The few that bucked that trend, however, stand today as models for city park system management.

Among the best example is the Fairmount Park Commission of Philadelphia. Formed in 1867 by the Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Commission was charged with overseeing the creation and maintenance of a large public park along the city’s then-polluted Schuylkill River shoreline. Over the years, the Commission has come to encompass 63 Philadelphia parks and is supported, on top of general funds, by the Fairmount Park Conservancy, which has collected more than $18 million since 2001. In 2008, the Commission and the City of Philadelphia produced a strategic plan entitled “Bridge to the Future.” The plan extensively lays out a strategy for the conservation, preservation and development of park space in Philadelphia over the course of the next few decades. The plan is of special note for its extensive planning for historic parks. Philadelphia is graced with a tremendous heritage of open space, from Fairmount Park itself to the squares of Central City, headlined by Rittenhouse, which has been called one of the best used public spaces in the United States.

Although the Commission has seen its budget cut by nearly half in the last three decades, it still manages to maintain a key presence in the city. The main reason for this great success is its support of Philadelphia’s historic public spaces. Among the fundamental objectives of the strategic plan:
• Preserve and enhance the historic properties and attractions within the Fairmount Park system for increased public appreciation and use (A strategy under this heading is the development of a system wide Historic Preservation plan).

• Educate the public about the role and importance of the environment and history of the Fairmount Park system to the City of Philadelphia

• Promote and market the Fairmount Park system as a signature City asset that encourages users to experience all elements of the park. 45

Of course, Fairmount Park depends on public funding for support. If the trend of budget cuts is continued and is worsened by economic crises, the future of Philadelphia’s cherished parks systems is certainly in jeopardy.

Another way in which cities are protecting and managing historic urban parks is through the use of special district mechanisms such as historic overlay districts (HOD). Historic overlay districts function by “overlaying” an area with a set of required criteria, most often relating to appearance of structures and landscapes. Because older neighborhoods in American cities almost always came equipped with park space, many historic overlay districts contain some public spaces. If properly enforced, this mechanism can augment and guide normal maintenance procedures carried out by parks and recreation departments. Historic overlay districts will be discussed in further detail later, as they play a role in the preservation and future of Winston-Salem’s Hanes Park.

**Conservancies**

Park conservancies in the United States have been instrumental in preserving historic urban landscapes. Beginning with the founding of the Central Park Conservancy in
1980, the subsequent three decades have seen a number of conservancies come on board, providing billions of dollars in support of America’s urban parks.

Park conservancies work by combining public and private efforts and funding strategies to funnel resources into park restoration, maintenance, programming and planning. Because public park funding is almost always inadequate, corporate donations and partnerships are an almost necessary component of park preservation efforts. Leaders in developing the model of park conservancies include the Central Park Conservancy, the Piedmont Park Conservancy in Atlanta and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

The Central Park Conservancy, founded in 1980, was the country’s first urban park conservation group. After decades of neglect, New York’s famed Central Park was in a state of crisis at the dawn of the 1980s. The Central Park Conservancy is a private, non-profit organization that manages the Park under a contract with New York City’s Department of Parks and Recreation. The Conservancy has invested more than $500 million into Central Park and provides 85% of the Park’s $27 million annual budget. In addition the Conservancy is in charge of day-to-day care and maintenance of the Park. As a result of the Conservancy’s efforts, Central Park is now the most visited urban park in the United States, not to mention one of the city’s and country’s most cherished public spaces.46

Recognizing the success of the Central Park Conservancy, a large and growing number of U.S. cities have established their own park conservancies. It is not surprising, given Frederick Law Olmsted’s revered status, that almost every city that is graced with an Olmsted design has its own conservation plan specifically for those spaces. Indeed, cities like Seattle, San Francisco, Atlanta, Boston, Louisville, Rochester, Buffalo and more all have conservancies to protect Olmsted’s landscapes. It does not take an Olmsted park, however, to create the impetus for an urban park conservancy. The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, for example, has raised more than $40 million dollars in its 13-year existence and has expanded its domain to include more than 1,700 acres of open space.
in the city of Pittsburgh. Park conservancies provide cash-strapped city governments with valuable partnerships in the protection and care of urban parks.

**Case Studies**

Given the incredible amount of evidence that parks are among a city’s most valuable assets, in addition to the imminent return to a focus on urban cores in American cities, it is worth analyzing what North Carolina’s cities are doing to conserve and preserve their open space heritage. As mentioned briefly in the Introduction, Winston-Salem, Greensboro and Raleigh are all experiencing a shift in development away from suburban fringes back to downtown. As this trend picks up speed in the coming years, the cities’ open spaces will once again be asked to provide the services for which they were originally designed.

**Moore Square**

**Location**

Moore Square is located in Downtown Raleigh. Bounded by Hargett Street to the north, Martin Street to the south, Person Street to the east and Blount Street to the West. The Square is just two blocks from “North Carolina’s Main Street” Fayetteville Street, the epicenter of Raleigh’s resurgent Downtown. Furthermore, the Square is one of two remaining squares from William Christmas’s original plan. The old State Capitol, the center square of Christmas’s plan, is just two blocks away from Moore Square.

**Stakeholders**

Moore Square has a number of important and vocal stakeholders. The City’s Planning Department and Urban Design Center have studied the space for years and regularly help in programming events for the space. The Raleigh Downtown Alliance, an economic development, marketing and advocacy organization, sees Moore Square as a major element in the area’s continued revitalization. The Moore Square Partnership, a coalition of property owners around the square, is actively involved in planning the
Square’s future. Three agencies for the homeless are located along Moore Square’s border and these organizations have a vested interest in the space, as their clients regularly use the space during daytime hours. Finally, the Square was once known as the center of Raleigh’s black commercial district. The remaining black-owned businesses, of which there are many in the district, as well as predominantly-black Southeast Raleigh, also consider Moore Square their own space. Clearly, Moore Square is at the heart of an intense struggle for ownership and control over the future of the space.

Planning at Moore Square

Moore Square is part of the Moore Square nationally registered Historic District. However, this designation means little for the square itself, as the national register has yet to delineate specific guidelines for the treatment of landscapes in such districts.

The Raleigh Urban Design Center, part of the City’s Planning Department, has recently begun an effort to study Moore Square and prepare the space for a redesign. The Raleigh Historic Districts Commission has been charged with researching the park’s history, in hopes of informing the conceptualization of a new Moore Square. Subsequent to the research findings, the City will conduct an “Open Call for Ideas” and then a “Juried Conceptual Design Competition.” (rdhc2). This initial Open Call for Ideas will be open to the public and will feature input from anyone interested in helping to guide the planning process. This process will produce a number of important criteria, which will then be given to potential entrants to the Juried Conceptual Design Competition. The jury will then choose a winning design strategy, with hopes of beginning construction by early 2011.

Current Conditions

Moore Square is a complex space with a complex set of conditions. The park was originally platted as grazing space for the City’s first residents. Subsequent uses included the siting of churches and billeting by Union troops during the Civil War.
Perhaps the most prominent period in the Square’s history, although this is debatable, was during the city’s economic boom of the early twentieth century. Of special significance is the Square’s role as the center of Raleigh’s thriving black business community of that time. Because of this complex history, it is nearly impossible to compare the Square’s conditions today to a certain period in history. However, it is doubtless true that Moore Square is in need of a complete revitalization strategy.

**Fisher Park**

*Location*

As mentioned briefly before, Fisher Park is a 12-acre neighborhood park in the locally and nationally registered historic neighborhood of the same name. The Fisher Park neighborhood was the first of Greensboro’s street-car suburbs. Fisher Park is located just .5 miles from the center of Elm Street, Greensboro’s bustling downtown thoroughfare, and .3 miles from the city’s new baseball stadium.

*Stakeholders*

Of the three parks being analyzed here, Fisher Park is the least complex in the number of important stakeholders. The Fisher Park Neighborhood Association, a “vocal and progressive group,” according to Chip Callaway, was the catalyst for the park’s revitalization. The Association managed to convince the City’s Recreation and Parks and Recreation Department to hand over management of the park to the area’s residents. The Association, led by Callaway (a distinguished landscape architect in the area), as well as David Craft and his father Bill, a local horticulturalist, drafted a unique set of guidelines for the management of the park (see Appendix). The Parks Department is still in charge of maintaining the park. Other prominent stakeholders include First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and Temple Emanuel. First Presbyterian, in particular, has played a leading role, catalyzing a major tree and shrub planting in the Park’s western area.
Planning at Fisher Park

As mentioned before, the planning process at Fisher Park is well established. The Park is part of the Fisher Park nationally registered Historic District (see Appendix). To complement this status, the neighborhood’s residents, steered by the design leadership of Chip Callaway, pushed for local control over the park's future. The existing agreement between the City and the neighborhood group for the management of Fisher Park serves as a model for historic urban park preservation.

Current Conditions

Fisher Park today is a highly valued public space. The Park has been restored to protect its intended use as a passive recreation space for Greensboro’s citizens. Chip Callaway’s 1990 Restoration and Reforestation Plan has been implemented with great success. Today, no signs of the neglect that hampered the park throughout much of the latter half of the twentieth century exist today.

Hanes Park

Location

Hanes Park is situated about .75 miles from Downtown Winston-Salem, although to locals the West End area is considered part of “Downtown.” In addition, the park is located less than half a mile from the main campus of Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center and the University's Medical School, which combined are the city’s largest employer. Immediately surrounding Hanes Park are two historic neighborhoods, nationally registered West End and early twentieth-century street car suburb West Highlands. To the north and northwest of the Park are an increasingly vibrant commercial district and Reynolds High School, itself a nationally registered historic place.
Stakeholders

Hanes Park, located at the nexus of a number of Winston-Salem districts, is a space in which many stakeholders have a vested interest. The West End Historic District, in which half of Hanes Park is included, has a vocal neighborhood association that retains a major presence in park issues. The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System, and specifically R.J. Reynolds High, Wiley Middle and Brunson Elementary all use the park on a daily basis. In fact, Reynolds has used the park for athletic events since the school was opened in 1923. Local business owners, especially those located along Reynolda Road at the Park’s northern boundary, also consider themselves stakeholders in Hanes Park. The City’s Recreation and Parks Department plays an active maintenance and upkeep role. The Planning Department also oversees the park, especially the eastern portion, which is part of the West End Historic Overlay District.

Planning at Hanes Park

Winston-Salem’s Planning Department has used a Historic Overlay District for the eastern side of Hanes Park since 1993 (see Appendix). The Planning Department’s Historic Resources Commission defines such a designation:

The purpose of the Historic Overlay District is to protect the unique character of the neighborhood, while at the same time recognizing the need for adaptations necessary to accommodate modern lifestyles. The authority of the Historic Resources Commission to review significant changes within the West End Historic Overlay District gives protection to the neighborhood.

The HRC notes that the portion of Hanes Park that falls within the HOD is significant because it retains such features as the “impressive stone entrance near Clover Street, the avenue of maples, the footbridges over Peters Creek and recreational areas.” The Design Guidelines states that the park’s amenities, including street furniture, trash receptacles, benches, fences and planters, as well as open space, “add to the visual
appeal of the District.” Furthermore, the document states that “the historic character of the neighborhood should be considered when selecting the type, size, location, and character of these elements.” (48)

The mechanism through with the Design Guidelines are enforced is a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). A COA is required for the following commonly requested projects:

- Change in pavement material and addition of any paved area.
- Construction of new features including athletic buildings or courts, outbuildings, fences, walls, fountains, furniture, and trash cans.
- Construction of new sidewalks, bicycle paths, and walking trails.
- Installation of lighting.
- Installation of Signage.
- Significant pruning and/or removal of trees eight inches and larger in diameter, measured four and one-half feet above ground level.
- Planting of new trees.
- Review of landscape master plans.

Furthermore a set of 4 major design Guidelines are designated as well:

- Preserve and maintain features such as stone entrances and steps, creek beds, bridges, and mature trees that contribute to the overall historic character of the District.
- Design street furniture, trash receptacles, fountains, and other public site features to enhance and blend with the surroundings.
- Replace street furniture, trash receptacles, and other park features with new features that are compatible in design, material, and scale with the District’s historic character.
- Locate necessary street furniture, trash receptacles, mailboxes, publication racks, and other similar elements in locations that do not compromise the historic character of the District or obstruct sidewalks or the streetscape.

The western portion of Hanes Park, which is not part of the West End Historic Overlay District, nevertheless was laid out at the same time and retains a number of historic landscapes and structures. Among these amenities are stone footbridges, water fountains, stone steps, landscapes and Herman Bryson Gym and Wiley Middle School, both of which were built around 1930. No reason was given for the western portion’s exclusion from the West End Historic Overlay District. However, this portion of the park
is generally closer to the West Highlands neighborhood, which has not yet received designation as a historic district. For the purposes of this study, I will consider the park as a unified landscape.

**Current Conditions**

As mentioned before, Hanes Park was designed in the tradition of Frederick Law Olmsted’s passive-space parks. Its designer described it as “the finest public park south of Washington.” Based on conditions at the park today, such a claim could never be made. Over many years, the original design of the park has been drastically altered.
**Recommendations**

Based on best practices research, a theoretical foundation that supports the idea that parks provide economic, environmental and social benefits to cities, and research and documentary analysis of three parks in North Carolina, I will recommend further action for each of the parks, as well as make suggestions for policy decisions on local, state and national levels.

**Moore Square**

Moore Square is at a critical juncture. Spearheaded by the Raleigh Urban Design Center, a major planning process that will dramatically reshape the park is underway. Discussions with Daniel Douglas, Director of the Urban Design Center, and Trisha Hasch, Project Manager for the Moore Square Enhancement Project, revealed a delicate sensitivity to the need to succeed with this project. A similar proposal to initiate a redevelopment strategy for Moore Square failed in 2001 due to the lack of “buy-in” from important stakeholders, namely the North Carolina Planning Commission and neighborhood activists. Thus, community support is critical for the success of any future change to Moore Square.

When considering the future of Moore Square, it is important to place this historic public space in the context of Raleigh’s rapidly developing Downtown. The City completed its brand new, state-of-the-art convention center in 2008. In addition two new prominent public spaces are set to open in the coming months. City Plaza, at the site of the former convention center on Fayetteville Street, is set to become the city’s premier gathering space. Led by Dan Douglas, the Urban Design Center’s plan for the Plaza includes amenities such as video projectors, interactive fountains, electrical, water and telephone connections for programmed events, and potentially a large projection screen. Additionally, the Plaza will have four small pavilions to house uses such as restaurants and newsstands.
The second prominent space set to come on-line within the next few months is a large, festival site performance space just south of the new convention center. This space is intended to attract national musical acts, as well as local music festivals.

In addition to these two new spaces, the city has also recently unveiled Lichtin Plaza, fronting the successful Progress Energy Performing Arts Center. According to the Performing Arts Center, the Plaza will host festivals, concerts, gatherings, and tented social functions. Furthermore, in recent discussions, Douglas hinted that Raleigh might be looking to establish a number of underground parking decks, paid for by park bonds that would place public spaces on top of the decks.

Given that Raleigh already has a number of programmable public spaces at its disposal, and many more on the way, it is worth considering that Moore Square, as one of only two remaining squares from the city’s 1792 plan, should be preserved as a historic, passive-use public space.

Certainly, the process of defining exactly which history to interpret when considering Moore Square is nearly impossible. The long and varied history of the park makes dating a period of significance extremely difficult. However, a close analysis of Downtown and the city’s social environment reveals a hint of what should be done with the park. As mentioned before, the predominantly black neighborhoods directly east and south of the Moore Square Historic District feel the pressure of Downtown’s development more and more each year. Neighborhood leaders from these areas have been vocal opponents of development that they see as encroaching on their space and threatening their way of life. Downtown Raleigh’s black residents and business leaders should take a cue from the Fisher Park Neighborhood Association and begin thinking about how they can reverse the tide of development and gain some control over the future of Moore Square. After all, the Square is at the center of what was once the hub of Raleigh’s black business community. Concurrently, the City should reach out to its black residents and business-owners for leadership on this issue.
Recent developments, however, shed light on some city leader’s initial thoughts for Moore Square’s future. David Diaz, President of the Downtown Raleigh Alliance, suggests “What you really want to do is redesign it in a way so that event producers can do something there.” In the past, Moore Square has been the site of a number of popular programmed events, including the annual SparkCon “potluck creative conference,” movies, concerts, wine tastings and more. However, as the city opens City Plaza, Lichthin Plaza and the festival space, it should look to move programmed events like those formerly held at Moore Square to these new spaces that are already equipped with the necessary infrastructure to support their needs. Should Raleigh look to redesign Moore Square as a “programmable” public space, they will not only finally lose all semblance of the historical legacy of Moore Square, they will also run the risk of creating an overabundance of event space and a lack of passive-use recreation space.

**Fisher Park**

Fisher Park is in great condition. Thanks to the foresight of the Fisher Park Neighborhood association and the groundbreaking landscape restoration work of Chip Callaway, Fisher Park represents a model for historic urban park preservation, not only in North Carolina, but also around the world.

The only significant challenge for the community and the Park is the inevitability of financial insecurity in the coming years. As the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department is sure to see its budget cut, the Neighborhood should look to form a Fisher Park Conservancy, much like those that support Central Park and others around the country. Donations from individuals and corporations can augment public funding of the park’s expensive maintenance costs.
Hanes Park

Of the three parks analyzed here, Hanes Park is in the most precarious situation. Whereas Fisher Park’s success was secured long ago, and Moore Square is set to undergo an energetic Enhancement Project, Hanes Park remains a public space pulled in many different directions by a number of stakeholders. Any revitalization strategy for Hanes Park will have to start with a definition of what the park means to the City of Winston-Salem.

Hanes Park was meant to be a passive- and active-use public space, “the finest public park south of Washington.” Indeed, the park was the City’s prominent public park as it grew to become the largest city in North Carolina and-at more than 200 miles from the sea-the country’s eighth-largest port-of-entry in 1916. (169TursiBook). However, since then, a number of stakeholders have taken root in the park and their presence cannot be ignored. R.J. Reynolds High and Wiley Middle Schools, along with local tennis associations, use the park every day for active recreation use. Additionally, residents from all over Winston-Salem use the park regularly as well. Finally, the West End Neighborhood Association has come to view the park as it’s own neighborhood park. Clearly, there are many conflicting views on what Hanes Park really does mean to Winston-Salem.

The Historic Resource Commission is in a position to help clear up much of the confusion about the park. The HRC should extend the Historic Overlay District to encompass the entire park, including the lands now ceded to the School system for Wiley Middle School and Reynolds’ High’s athletic facilities. Such a move would at least standardize the design guidelines for the park. Additionally, the Planning Department should actively enforce the HOD Design Guidelines, paying special attention to the actions of the Recreation and Parks Department and the local school system.

Ultimately, however, a HOD is not likely to solve the problems at Hanes Park. The Planning Department should spearhead a visioning process for the park, much like that
employed at Minneapolis’ Peavey Park. The American Planning Association provided Hope Community, Inc, a community development corporation, with grant money through its City Parks Forum, to construct a community-led process of “listening sessions” revolving around a troubled city park. Such an initiative for Hanes Park would bring together established stakeholders, as well as city residents, in a common space to discuss the park and its potentials. Such a step is critical if Winston-Salem hopes to reclaim its once-proud public park for the use of the city.

An important prerequisite in such a case would be a historical analysis, much like that carried out for Moore Square in Raleigh. Telling Hanes Park’s story to the residents of Winston-Salem has the potential to evince a sense of pride in this public space and perhaps focus attention on its history as its future is planned.

**Conclusions**

Clearly, there is a great need in this country to examine the many historic urban parks that grace our cities. Research reveals that historic preservation and restoration are not always possible. Public landscapes like Hanes Park, and Moore Square to a lesser extent, show that the complexity of stakeholder environments and natural landscape evolution make traditional historic preservation work, as it is practiced on buildings in this country, nearly impossible. On the other hand, when stakeholders share a common vision and are few in number, historic preservation of landscapes is entirely possible. Simply put, historic parks with many diverse stakeholders will find historic landscape preservation an extremely difficult process. This is not to say that all is lost, however. We retain the teachings of Frederick Law Olmsted, Lewis Mumford and others, who promoted passive-use public spaces as unifying elements of urban life. Those parks that are far beyond the point of historic restoration should nevertheless be examined for a rebirth of a different kind, one where we once again realize the virtues of spaces where each of us “adds by his mere presence to the pleasure of all others, all helping to the greater happiness of each.”
Municipal planning and parks departments in all cities should begin comprehensive reviews of all urban parks. As America is set to enter a new era of inward-looking urban growth, our cities’ established urban parks will be relied upon to provide vital recreation needs. Cities should seek a balance between passive and active space within their parks, as both types of recreation have their own invaluable and unique benefits.

In terms of policy, cities should take an active redevelopment role in older urban parks. Many of these spaces lay waiting, from years of neglect, for some kind of positive change. Cities should recognize the economic, social and environmental benefits that parks provide and be proactive in harvesting them. Parks bonds, tax-increment financing and the creation of conservancies are proven models of success in the conservation of urban park space.

On a state and national level, governmental historic preservation offices should also recognize the important role that historic urban parks play. The National Park Service should emulate the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens, and take a more proactive role in protecting America’s historic urban landscapes. Innovative tax-credit programs, like those available to historic structures, should be made available to landscapes on a large scale. More so than buildings, historic parks offer cities a great deal of benefits and any money invested in parks is likely to have a very positive return. American cities have always relied heavily upon park space. That cities like Chicago are now investing millions in prominent new public spaces should not be lost on us all. We should recognize that our older parks have just as much potential to serve us today as they did when they were planned hundreds of years ago. Whether through outright restoration or brand-new redesign, there is an urgent need in this country to reconsider our older urban parks. The future depends on the spaces of the past.