

First look: Design of \$10M LeBauer Park in downtown Greensboro unveiled

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Owen Covington



Courtesy of the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro

The \$10 million, 3.5-acre LeBauer Park in downtown Greensboro was designed to incorporate various activity centers including a dog park, performance spaces, a water feature and vendor locations.

The design for the Carolyn & Maurice LeBauer Park in downtown Greensboro unveiled Tuesday shows a 3.5-acre hub incorporating activity spaces for children and adults alike while tying together different cultural assets in the city's center.

Funded by a \$10 million gift from the late Carolyn LeBauer, the park is designed to provide programming that will keep the area active night and day, said Reid Phillips, a Greensboro attorney and chairman of the LeBauer Park Steering Committee.

Click on the image above to see renderings of the park.

"This is not your grandmother's park," Phillips said. "This is something different. It's going to attract attention from a lot of places."

Following a groundbreaking Wednesday, Frank L. Blum Construction Co. will begin work on the park, which is being built by the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro but will be handed over to the city at its completion in spring 2016.

Key elements include:

- A 17,000-square-foot event lawn with performance space that can accommodate up to 2,000 people.
- An aerial sculpture by Janet Echelman funded by a \$1 million gift from the Edward M. Armfield Sr. Foundation hanging above the performance space.
- An interactive water feature plaza.
- A children's garden with playground structures for different ages.
- A dog park, an outdoor reading room neighboring the Greensboro Public Library and other activity spaces.

A steering committee of about 30 people crafted a plan that established an end goal for the park, Phillips said. The group then worked backward to determine what elements and design could achieve that goal.

Phillips said the goal was to create a space that would be an example for the entire country, serve as a connector to help create a cultural district and be "the most popular, the most exciting destination in Greensboro."

The city plans to dedicate Parks and Recreation Department staff to oversee active programming in the park.

Nathan Elliott, a landscape architect with the Office of James Burnett, said the park includes areas for large performances and smaller spots for quiet reflection, reading or gathering. "It's intended to be a 24/7 activity spot," Elliott said.

Along with the main performance venue, there are smaller open spaces to accommodate different types and sizes of performances, with a new venue at the neighboring Greensboro Cultural Center on the park's southern edge integrated into the park.

Chris Wilson, head of the Parks and Recreation Department, said city officials hope the park will eventually become self-sufficient. Revenue opportunities including renting vendor space in the park's Market Square that borders the performance venue at Bellemeade, as well as other vendor spots in the park. There will also be opportunities to generate fees from certain events, he said.

Wilson said the department will submit a funding proposal to the city, but he declined to say what he anticipates the operating cost of the park to be.

"At no time will you go into the park and it won't be active," Wilson said.

Along with the construction of the park, Bellemeade Street will be realigned to end at the Market Square spot on the park's northwest corner. The street will receive new streetscapes and a curbless design, with crowds from the nearby Steven Tanger Center for the Performing Arts hopefully flowing out and into LeBauer Park, Elliott said.

"This is really going to be a gathering place for the entire community," Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan said.

Vaughan said the Echelman sculpture will be a draw beyond just the local community. "People are going to come to look at that sculpture, and they are going to see the rest of our city," she said.