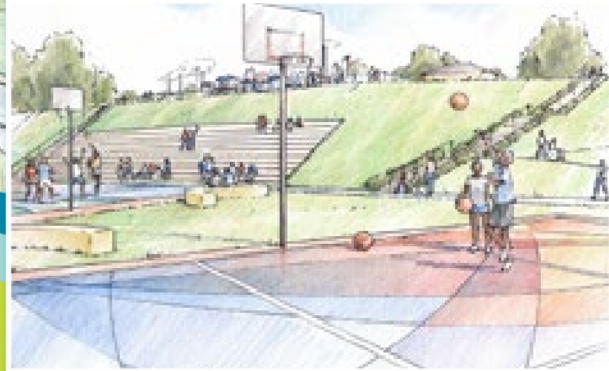


Pearington

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



Includes the Jefferson Park Master Plan

Adopted October 11, 2022

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JEFFERSON PARK EVALUATION

Jefferson Park is a major landmark in the Dearington Neighborhood and a key component of this plan document. It contains approximately thirteen acres of park land at the heart of the Dearington Neighborhood. Its basketball court and pavilion are well used; however, staff heard when talking with the neighborhood that Jefferson Park and its history often felt “forgotten” compared to other City Parks.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Jefferson Park is primarily bound by Chambers Street, Kirby Street, and York Street, and steep topography to the northwest where an earthen trail ties to the City’s larger trail network. Privately owned land and one single-household dwelling line the park side of the York Street Boundary while Lynchburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority’s (LRHA) Dearington Apartments border the park along Chambers Street. The park is defined by its topography, as the surrounding streets quickly slope down into a “bowl” shape and allow for great views into the park and beyond. The tennis courts and connector trail to the Dearington Apartments provide spectacular views in particular.

The Jefferson Park Neighborhood Center and the parking lot sit at the center of the park and act as a divider between the portion of the park that was formerly used as a landfill and the more programmed side of the park, where the majority of active recreation takes place.

PARK INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

The map on the following page identifies key features in Jefferson Park. This section contains an inventory of those features and assesses their current conditions.

- 1 JEFFERSON PARK TRAILHEAD.** This trailhead ties Dearington and Jefferson Park to the City’s larger trail network via a steep, approximately ¼ mile trail. However, it is not well marked, hidden, and tucked away. Lack of use leads the trail to sometimes be overgrown.



- 2 LANDFILL.** The dashed blue outline on the map shows the approximate area of the park that is thought to have been used for landfill operations following the closure of the City’s swimming pools. It is distinguished from the rest of the park by undulating terrain due to uneven settling and stormwater drainage that has flowed through the site throughout the years. The landfill now has channels along the perimeter to divert run-on stormwater around the site. Both active and abandoned sewer lines remain underground throughout this area.



Neighborhood Context

- 3 FORMER SWIMMING POOL.** This site was identified by overlaying aerial photographs from the 1940s and 1950s (where the swimming pool is clearly visible) with present day aerials. Nothing distinguishing remains on this site as it was part of the landfill operations in the 1960s.



Swimmers at Jefferson Park Pool
Photo: Mae Berry

- 4 ACCESS ROAD/TRAIL.** A gravel access road ties the Jefferson Park Trailhead to the dead end of York Street. It is also used by maintenance vehicles to access stormwater and sewer infrastructure.



5 COMMUNITY GARDEN. One of the City's newest community garden facilities, it was installed in early 2020.

6 JEFFERSON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER. This beloved community facility was constructed using local and federal dollars in 1976 and over the years has hosted many reunions and after school programs, along with numerous other community services and events. After being managed by the local Boys & Girls Club for a few years, in 2020, the City reopened the facility under their management following interior renovations to upgrade and upfit the facility to current needs. The exterior of the facility remains largely the same and unlike many other neighborhood centers, benefits from being directly adjacent to a relatively large City park. A parking lot, the only dedicated parking in Jefferson Park, abuts the front of facility and physically divides the park into two sections – the more passive, landfill portion to the north and the active, more programmed side of the park to the south.

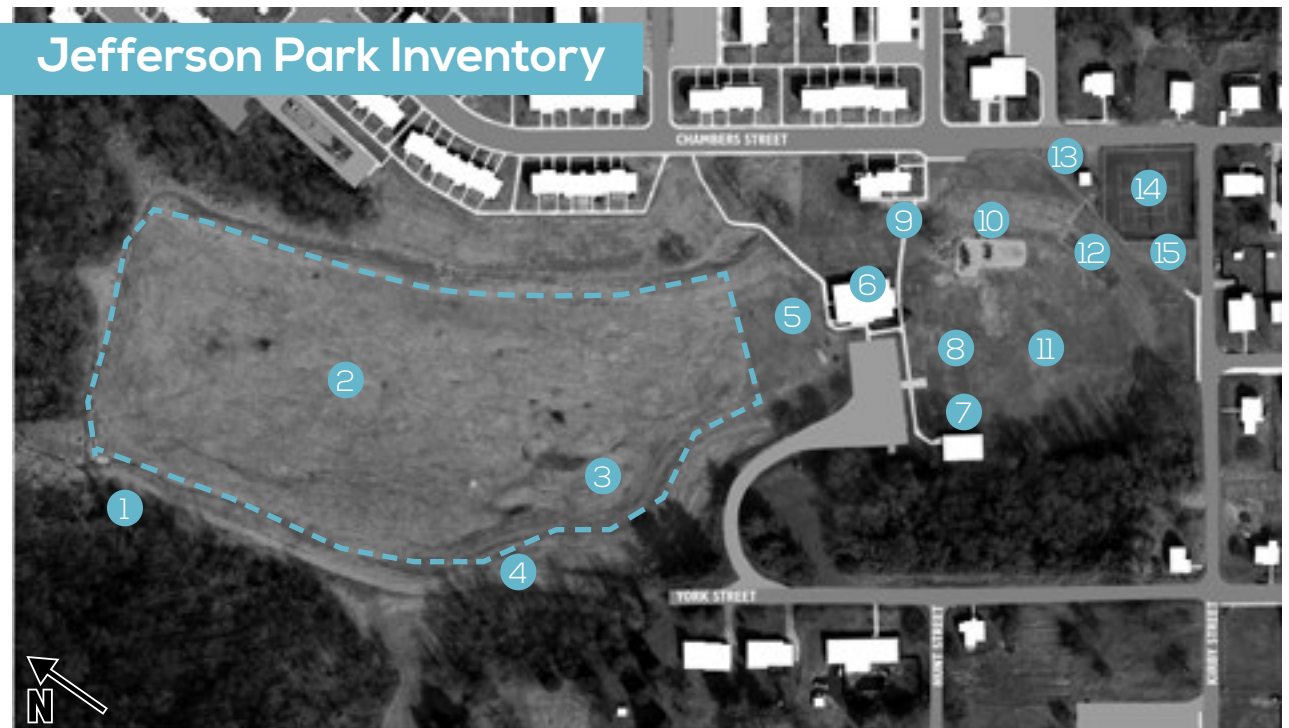


Jefferson Park Neighborhood Center Building



New community garden in Jefferson Park

7 PAVILION. This shady picnic shelter is one of the most rented in City. However, staff and neighborhood residents reported concerns regarding visibility and illicit activity when it is not being rented. Sitting against the densely vegetated hillside, the site remains shaded much of the time and is somewhat difficult to monitor.



8 BASKETBALL COURT. The court is one of the most used facilities in the park despite an aging playing surface in need of upgrades.



9 STAIRS. Two sets of stairs provide pedestrian access from the Dearington Apartments and Chambers Street down to the neighborhood center.



10 PLAYGROUND. The current playground, with two play structures and a swingset was installed in the early-mid 2000s and is likely nearing the end of its lifespan. The area lacks benches for caregivers and could use more shade. The neighborhood has expressed that the equipment is sometimes too hot for use in the summertime.



11 MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD. The field in front of the amphitheater appears to have originally been leveled for use as a baseball diamond. Today, it has no specific use, is in a good, level condition, and is used for a variety of activities.



12 AMPHITHEATER. The amphitheater seems to be the oldest structure remaining in the park today as it is visible in aerial photographs from 1941 and appears in City plans in the mid to late 1930s. It is currently accessed from either the multi-purpose field at the bottom or from one set of stairs from the connector trail. The stairs end at the top riser leaving users to navigate the large amphitheater terraces. Despite accessibility problems, the amphitheater is in relatively good condition and provides a nice viewing experience into the park. The hillside surrounding the amphitheater, planted with grass, tends to become overgrown in the summertime making the amphitheater feel like a forgotten component of the park.



13 FORMER CONCESSIONS BUILDING.

This small cinderblock building is unused and does not contribute to park activities or aesthetics.



14 TENNIS COURTS. These courts are one of the older features of the park and their establishment in the 1930s in Jefferson Park appears to have been aided by Dr. Robert Walter Johnson, a local African American doctor who helped train Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe at his home on Pierce Street in Lynchburg. Whirlwind Johnson appears to have filed the petition to City Council to construct these courts. While the courts have been resurfaced numerous times over the years, today they have large cracks and are in disrepair. The location of the courts at the corner of Kirby and Chambers Street, generally negatively impacts the neighborhood as they serve as a divider between the Dearington Apartments and the single-household neighborhood. The tall chain link fence, creates a physical and visual barrier between the two. Additionally, these courts host some of the best views of Jefferson Park and the mountains beyond.



Jefferson Park Tennis Courts today



*Juan Farrow playing tennis in Jefferson Park, 1968
Photo: Lynchburg Museum System*



View of Jefferson Park Tennis Courts from Chambers Street

15 CONNECTOR TRAIL. This narrow trail is the only dedicated pedestrian route from the Dearington Apartments to Kirby Street and the rest of the neighborhood. It narrows to less than five feet where it is bound by the tennis courts and the steep hillside down towards the amphitheater.



MATERIALS & FURNISHINGS

ROADWAYS AND TRAILS. The apartments' connector trail, the vehicle access road, and the parking lot are all paved with asphalt. Sidewalks to the neighborhood center are concrete. The access road to the Jefferson Park trailhead uses large gravel stones that are somewhat difficult to walk on.



SITE FURNISHINGS. Visitor amenities and furnishings in the park include benches and a water fountain at the tennis courts, trash receptacles, the pavilion and its picnic tables. While more recent additions are dark green, overall the furnishings do not have a consistent style or color and are constructed from a variety of materials.



SIGNAGE. A variety of identifying signs with an array of styles are seen around Jefferson Park and the neighborhood center.



TOPOGRAPHY & DRAINAGE

As previously mentioned, the topography of Jefferson Park is a defining feature. The elevation changes about thirty feet from street level down to the multi-purpose field. The three-sided bowl shape of the park allows for great views from tennis courts, connector trail, and the surrounding streets into the park and beyond. However, due to the topography, the area is also a route for both a combination of storm and sanitary infrastructure and stormwater runoff from the streets and surrounding neighborhood. That leads to soggy areas and the drainage concerns on the landfill portion of the site that had to be addressed in the mid 2010s. While not ideal, the excess stormwater flowing through the site may also be an opportunity for the City to address its pollutant removal requirements with landscaping and green infrastructure.

CIRCULATION & ACCESS

The topography makes accessing Jefferson Park difficult. Currently there is no American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible route into Jefferson Park. Many residents reported walking down the hillside from Kirby Street to reach the park and the neighborhood center. Other options include two staircases from the Dearington Apartments or walking down the access road where vehicles enter from York Street to reach the parking in the center of the park.



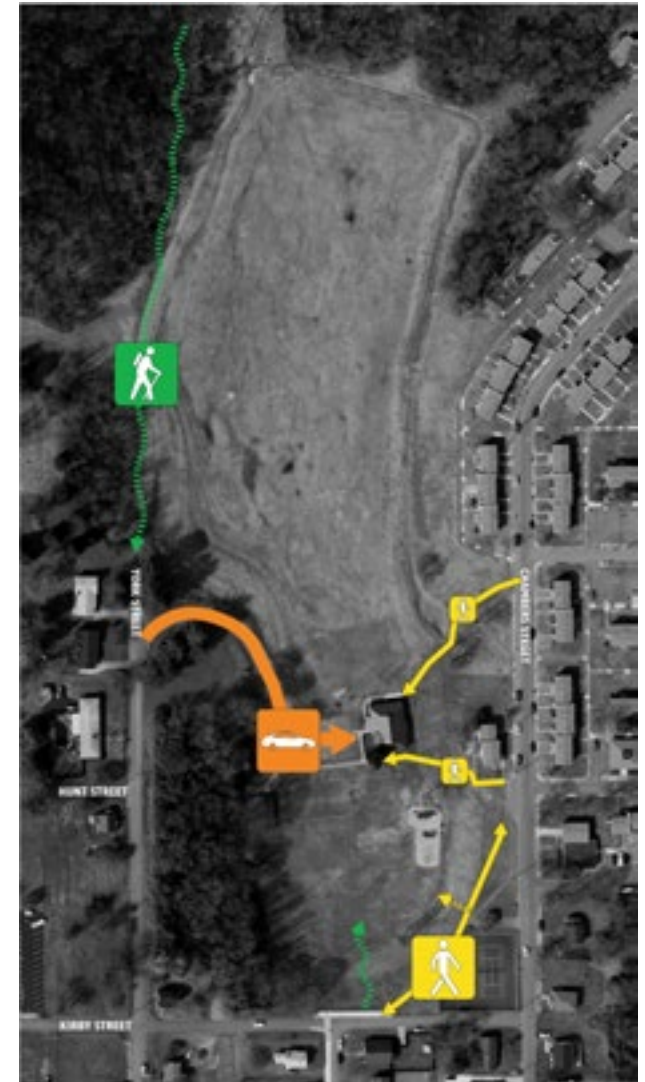
Access Road from York Street



View of hillside behind pavilion along York Street

VEGETATION & PLANTINGS

Jefferson Park has areas that are densely vegetated and overgrown as well as areas that are sparsely planted where residents have requested more trees for shade. The York Street edge contains dense trees-some quite mature- and an invasive bamboo forest that keeps the pavilion shaded and secluded. A few mature trees are scattered on the hillside from Kirby and on the hillside behind the neighborhood center. However, the areas around the basketball court, playground, amphitheater, and tennis courts all lack landscaping and shade. Recently a pollinator garden was planted at the front of the neighborhood center as part of an ongoing effort around the City.



Current Park Circulation requires either driving, navigating steep slopes or stairs.

STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS

The following chapter contains the strategies and actions that should be followed by the City to help achieve the vision and goals outlined for Dearington's recreation facilities. Support from the neighborhood and Lynchburg's citizens will be essential to help make all contained here a reality. The strategies range from specific proposals for new amenities and facilities to more general goals and ideas that will need more thought and study. Overall they work together to create a neighborhood with valuable public amenities and a street network that supports recreation and access.

- JEFFERSON PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- STREETS & ACCESS
- MATERIALS STORAGE SITE

neighborhood patio, pages 51-55



basketball court and amphitheater, page 49

gymnasium, page 50



playground improvements, page 56



splashpad, pages 53-54



outdoor fitness equipment, page 57





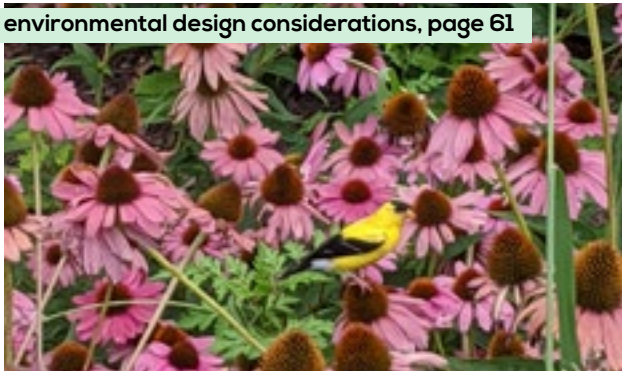
Jefferson Park circulation & access, pages 68-71



Jefferson Park pool marking, page 57
history & interpretation, page 60



public art, page 59



environmental design considerations, page 61



neighborhood trails & access improvements, pages 68-71



Caroline Street Gateway, pages 72-73



Chambers Street Gateway, pages 74-77



neighborhood center, page 66-67



Materials Storage Site and pump track, pages 78-81





*Birdseye rendering of the 20-year vision for Jefferson Park
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau*

JEFFERSON PARK

As the primary park facility in the Dearington Neighborhood today, the revitalization and renewed investment in Jefferson Park is a key component towards achieving the neighborhood's vision. Jefferson Park was the primary focus of the October 24, 2020 outdoor meeting held on the tennis courts. The neighborhood gave tremendous feedback that was honest and sincere regarding a feeling of Jefferson Park being forgotten over many years, yet what huge potential they see in the park and the role it plays in the neighborhood. A follow-up report from the October 2020 workshop is available as an appendix to this plan.

That feedback culminated in Jefferson Park being the target for the majority of the plan's goals that will help us achieve this plan's vision (see Vision & Goals chapter). The neighborhood wants Jefferson Park to be a gem in the City's park system, first becoming a park that primarily serves the surrounding neighborhood, but as it redevelops is also able to welcome all City residents to enjoy the amenities it has to offer. Revitalization should revolve around creating spaces that meet three major themes that enable new community building in Jefferson Park: reflect (remember & learn), restore (heal & build), and recreation (play of all types).

OVERALL PLAN

The final build-out for Jefferson Park envisions a park that both serves as a neighborhood asset and transforms Jefferson Park into one of Lynchburg's premiere park facilities. It focuses activity and amenities on the Kirby Street side- areas that are most accessible to the neighborhood- and hopes to create peaceful, passive recreation spaces in the more distant park spaces- where the landfill restricts possible programming and more research is needed before improvements can be made.

REFLECT (remember & learn),

Elements under the Reflect theme highlight ways to tell and absorb the dynamic history of the site (Dearington Stories) in physical form, strengthening community pride.

Thomas Randolph Jefferson Recognition
Pool Location Marking and Capturing Views
Historical Markers / Images of the Pool
Seating Areas
Chalk Wall
Shade Elements to Simulate Water
New Park Welcome / Historical Signage

These three themes were proposed at the October 24, 2020 outdoor meeting in Jefferson Park. Park improvements should work towards creating spaces that encapsulate these three ideas.

RESTORE (heal & build)

These elements focus on healing (of individuals and groups), and community building. Design ideas in Restore become the "soul" of Jefferson Park, where residents take pride through community celebrations, events, and daily activities - creating consistent energy in the Park.

Picnic Areas
Annual Celebrations
Passive Trail Use
Educational Garden
Pool Marking
Art
Community Garden
Pavilion Structure / Shade Structures
Amphitheater / Performance
Space / Movies in the Park

RECREATION (play of all types)

This theme focuses on enjoyment and amplifying park activities to meet the wishes of the residents. It allows for further meaning and connection in the Park, with new activities increasing overall happiness for all ages.

Splashpad
Basketball Courts
Gym Facility
Fitness Trails
Outdoor Game Tables
Playing Fields
Hillside Slides/Zip Line



proposed park circulation

PARK CIRCULATION

Accessibility was identified as a major limitation of Jefferson Park. Additionally, there is a neighborhood desire for more exercise trails and a trend in parks and recreation best practices to create more trail loops of all sizes to accommodate varying abilities. The many trail improvements proposed here will help meet those goals.



grand staircase

trail to materials storage site

Trail and Access Improvements

KIRBY STREET. The hillside at the intersection of Kirby Street and Stoneridge is probably the most gradual in the entire park, yet still has approximately thirty feet in elevation change. This location would be the best suited for an accessible trail that ramps down from street level into the park. It should join up with a small loop trail that provides access to the neighborhood center.

GRAND STAIRCASE. This staircase directly aligns with the site of the former Jefferson Park Pool. Combining a highly visible marking of the pool site, the overall view into the park at the location with the mountain backdrop, and historical interpretation at street level, will be a dramatic and memorable way to access the park.

LOOP TRAIL 1. This initial loop trail is less than one quarter mile and provides an accessible connection from the Kirby Street trail to the neighborhood center. It is shown to be lined with exercise stations for circuit training.

LOOP TRAIL 2. This larger loop trail is approximately one half mile and follows the outer perimeter of what is thought to be the former Jefferson Park landfill. Implementation will require further due diligence and site investigation. It is shown here lined with meadow grasses or wildflowers to separate it from some of the other potential activities. Depending on site evaluation, the exercise stations from Loop Trail 1 could be continued along this trail for a longer course.

The plan adds a number of routes to reach the lower levels of Jefferson Park, shown in yellow. ADA accessibility is still challenging due to topography but Kirby Street trail is a high priority improvement. Additional ADA access is provided through the proposed gymnasium facility from both York Street and parking levels. Once in the park, all paved trails should be constructed to accessibility requirements as well.

Strategies & Actions - Jefferson Park



*Loop trail through landfill site looking back towards park improvements.
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau*

CONNECTOR TRAIL. In the near term, this existing trail should be given railings and bollard lighting to improve the pedestrian connection from the Dearington Apartments to Kirby Street. In the long term, the plan shows this connector trail being pulled back and routed through a neighborhood plaza. It may even become a significant trail for highlighting prominent African Americans from Lynchburg, similar to a “walk of fame.”



connector trail solar powered bollard lighting and minimalist railings to preserve views

TRAIL TO MATERIALS STORAGE SITE.

This trail connects to another key site discussed in this plan: the Materials Storage Site. This site is also a former landfill, and in fact, may have received far more waste than Jefferson Park. As this site is redeveloped as a recreational amenity, a trail should be routed through existing public right-of-way to create a connection. Additionally, from that site, an earthen trail may connect via steep topography to the Kemper Street Trail. As the trail approaches the plaza site, it is directly aimed at the proposed splashpad “wedge” that directs views out to the former pool site for another dramatic entrance into Jefferson Park.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER TRAILS. As an area that will likely be a hub of activity, these trails provide a variety of short walking loops that can be used by those with limited abilities and can be an area to focus some of the historical interpretation of Jefferson Park. Trails in this area should retain limited vehicular access to the neighborhood center for loading and unloading as needed.

SIDEWALKS. Stoneridge Street and the trails from the Dearington Apartments are the only routes to Jefferson Park from the surrounding neighborhood. The plan calls for new facilities on Chambers Street, Kirby Street, and York Street to improve walkability to Jefferson Park from the Dearington Neighborhood.

Jefferson Park 20 Year Concept Plan



meadow
grasses and
wildflowers

playing fields

parking

York Street
extension

permanent
pool site
marking

gymnasium

fitness
equipment
stations

new housing

ADA Access

environmental
learning area

neighborhood
center outdoor
space

hillside slides

basketball
court

amphitheater

splashpad

pavilion

grand
staircase

BIG MOVES

Basketball Court

Basketball was identified as the most popular park use today. The plan shows shifting the basketball court over to the location of the amphitheater so that people may watch games and it could become an event space. An additional half court was added to match the facilities at other neighborhood centers and parks. The courts should be lit to prolong evening use, but use full cut-off fixtures to prevent spillover light towards neighboring properties. Being in the amphitheater location, where people will look down on games from the amphitheater and the plaza above, lends itself to possibilities for public art. Installing a mural on the surface of the court will create an iconic space.



Community members painting mural on basketball court in Springfield, Ohio
Source: Springfield News Sun



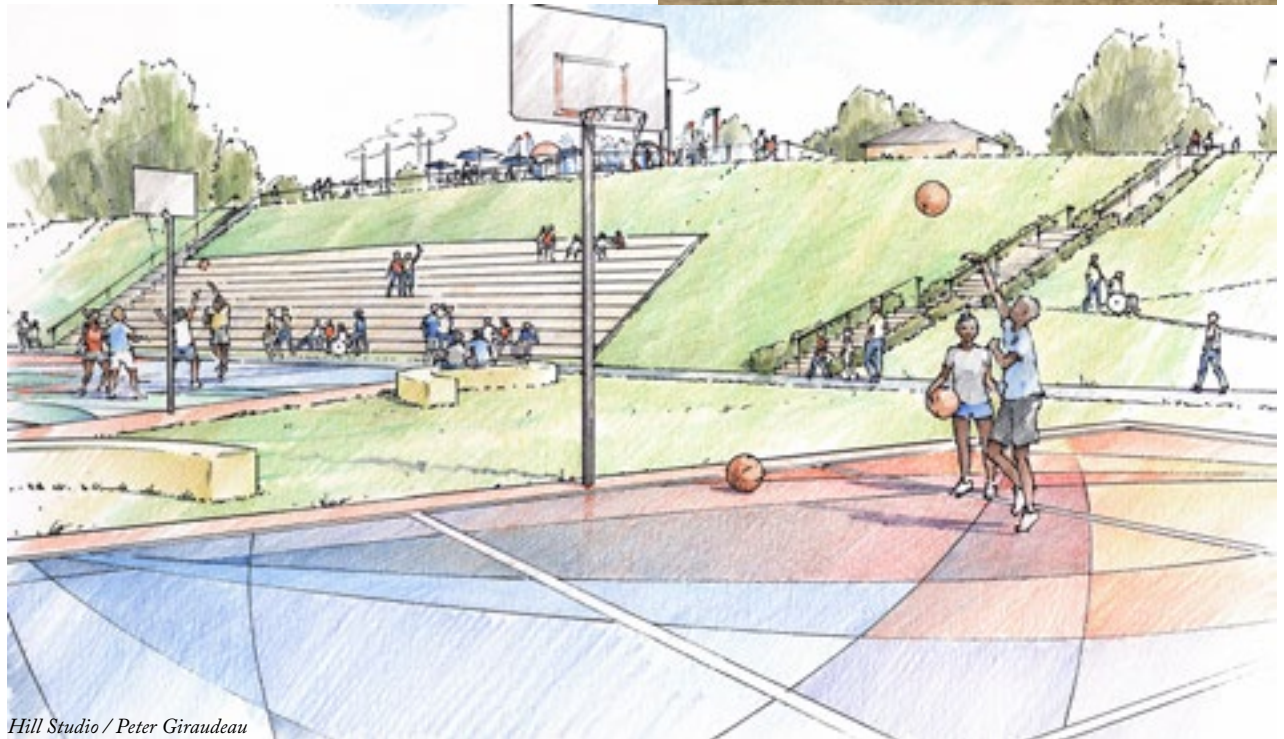
Mural painting on basketball court in Brooklyn, NY by artist MADSTEEZ
Source: hypebeast.com



Mural painting on basketball court in Brooklyn, NY by artist MADSTEEZ
Source: hypebeast.com

Amphitheater

The current amphitheater needs upgrades to improve accessibility for people of all abilities. The stairs need to be extended to the bottom of the hillside, the bottom level could be retrofitted for accessible seating, and an additional ramped access could be provided from the adjacent trail that connects Kirby Street in to the park. A fully accessible amphitheater here would also lend itself towards performances. The groundcover on the hillside surrounding the amphitheater should also be replanted to require less mowing and maintenance as it tends to become overgrown in the summer.



Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau

Gymnasium

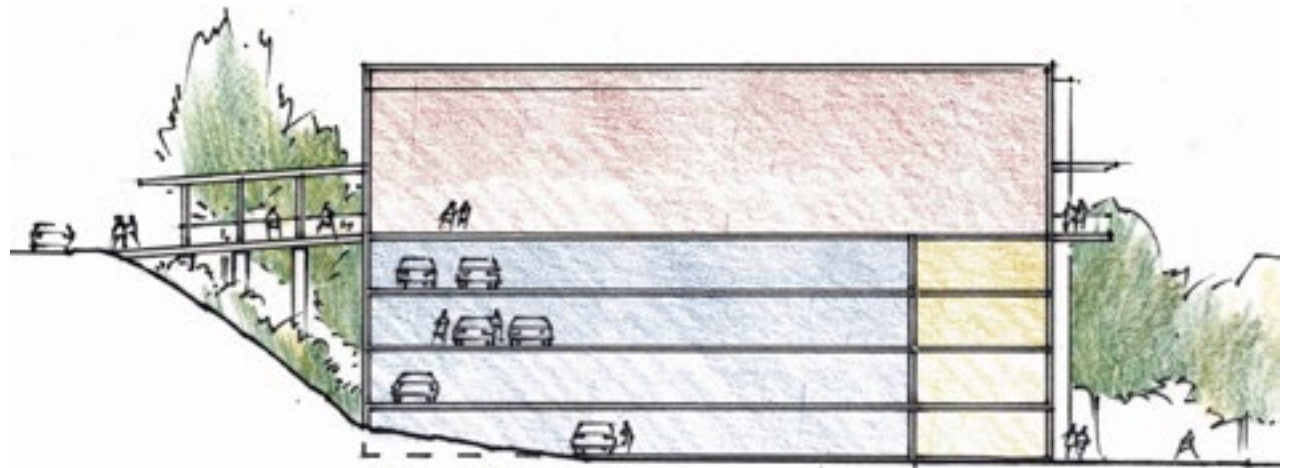
The City's Parks & Recreation Department currently has no dedicated gymnasium space of its own for programming. Instead the department relies on schools and the City Armory building, which comes with a number of limitations. Building upon neighborhood desires for Jefferson Park, this plan shows a multi-use building that could contain approximately 200 parking spaces, classrooms in the spaces fronting the park, a fitness center, and a basketball gymnasium on the top floor. The gymnasium would be multi-functional, with the ability to host basketball games as well as a sport in growing demand across the City: pickleball. The building is set into the hillside along York Street so to blend into the neighborhood at street level and not be an overwhelming presence on neighborhood homes. Its placement across from the neighborhood center helps to frame the views out towards the Jefferson Park pool site. The exterior contains balconies and the potential for rock-climbing programming. As this project moves towards implementation, more information regarding design constraints are available in the appendix.



*New gymnasium building with parking, classrooms, fitness center, rock climbing wall and balcony overlooking Jefferson Park.
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau*



*View of the proposed gymnasium building as it blends into the neighborhood on York Street
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau*



*Gymnasium building with walkway over to York Street, gym space on top level, programmed space on the front, and parking tucked into the hillside.
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau*

“Neighborhood Patio”

The existing tennis courts in Jefferson Park sit on a key corner in the neighborhood – a point of transition between the Dearington Apartments and the rest of the Dearington neighborhood, and the highest point in Jefferson Park – with great views towards the Blue Ridge Mountains. Like most tennis courts, they also have a tall chain link fence surrounding them. This fence creates a visual and physical barrier in the neighborhood at a key location. The courts themselves need maintenance; however, have not been indicated as a strongly desired park use by the neighborhood. Because the potential for this particular location far exceeds the benefits of the tennis courts here, the plan recommends removing the courts and creating a neighborhood plaza that brings both the neighborhood and the Lynchburg community together in an engaging space that restores the joy lost when the pool was closed, remembers the pool and its significance, and provides key community needs. It should be a place to reflect (remember & learn), restore oneself (heal & build), and for recreation (play) all in one engaging space.

NAMING. The patio could be named for Dr. Walter Johnson as “Whirlwind Johnson Plaza,” as Dr. Johnson was instrumental in establishing the tennis courts here, or honor a broader spectrum of notable African Americans from both Dearington and Lynchburg as “Community Hero Plaza.” Names, accomplishments, quotes, and other remembrances can be incorporated into sidewalk design with plaques and letters embedded into the walkway as a “community walk of fame.”



Street space converted into an interim plaza using low-cost materials (paint, tables and chairs, basketball hoop) in Los Angeles, CA
Source: NACTO

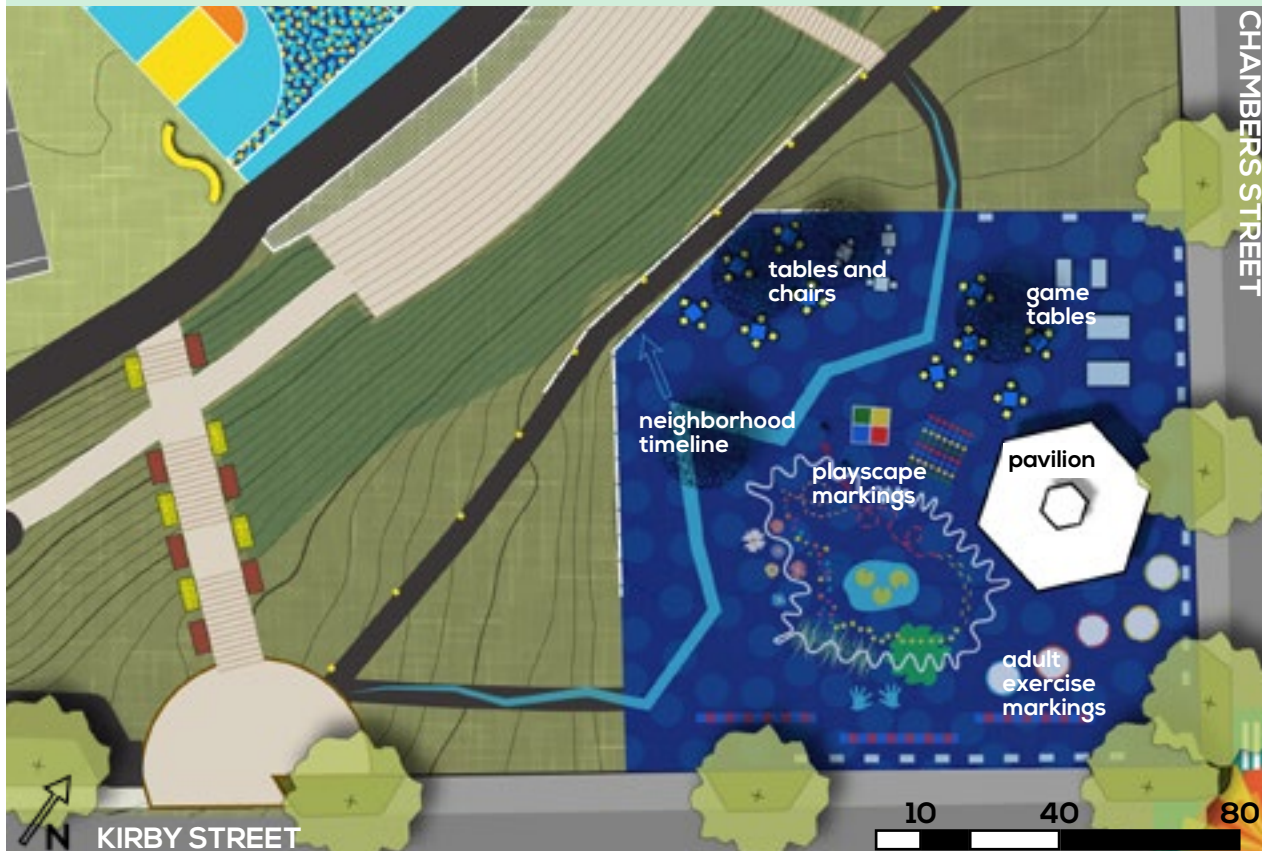
INTERIM PATIO PLAN. Because the final plan for the neighborhood plaza will require a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project to realize (grant funds may help) and thus take a significant amount of time to implement, the plan proposes pursuing a low-cost, interim plaza in the meantime to help kickstart park revitalization and repurpose the tennis courts in the near term to better serve the neighborhood. Implementing a plaza with low-cost materials will allow staff to understand how the neighborhood will use the plaza and make changes to the final design as needed.



Interim patio concept shows how the current tennis courts could be transformed into an engaging space using low-cost materials. Eventually the space would be redeveloped with a splashpad and final furnishings.
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau

Interim Patio Improvements

- Remove chain link fence, install railings that preserve views into the park.
- Improve connector trail with lighting and railings.
- Resurface the tennis courts to fill in cracks and create an engaging surface. This could be coordinated with the basketball court mural, incorporate a neighborhood history timeline/path, and provide markings for exercise/play.
- Provide tables, chairs, shade, and lighting to create a gathering space for neighbors. Moveable chairs have proved vital to many of these interim (and permanent) plazas in other cities as they provide flexibility to users and make the space more dynamic.
- Activate the space with outdoor games as desired by the neighborhood. They may include outdoor ping pong, chess, foosball, bag toss, etc. A small “library” of the needed equipment could be provided on site.
- Build a new pavilion as part of the permanent plan that improves visibility and access, but also provides lighting, charging stations, and wifi to the plaza.
- Initiate discussions with the neighborhood by providing interactive features like a chalk wall, memory box, etc.



Pop-up plaza in Downtown Lynchburg

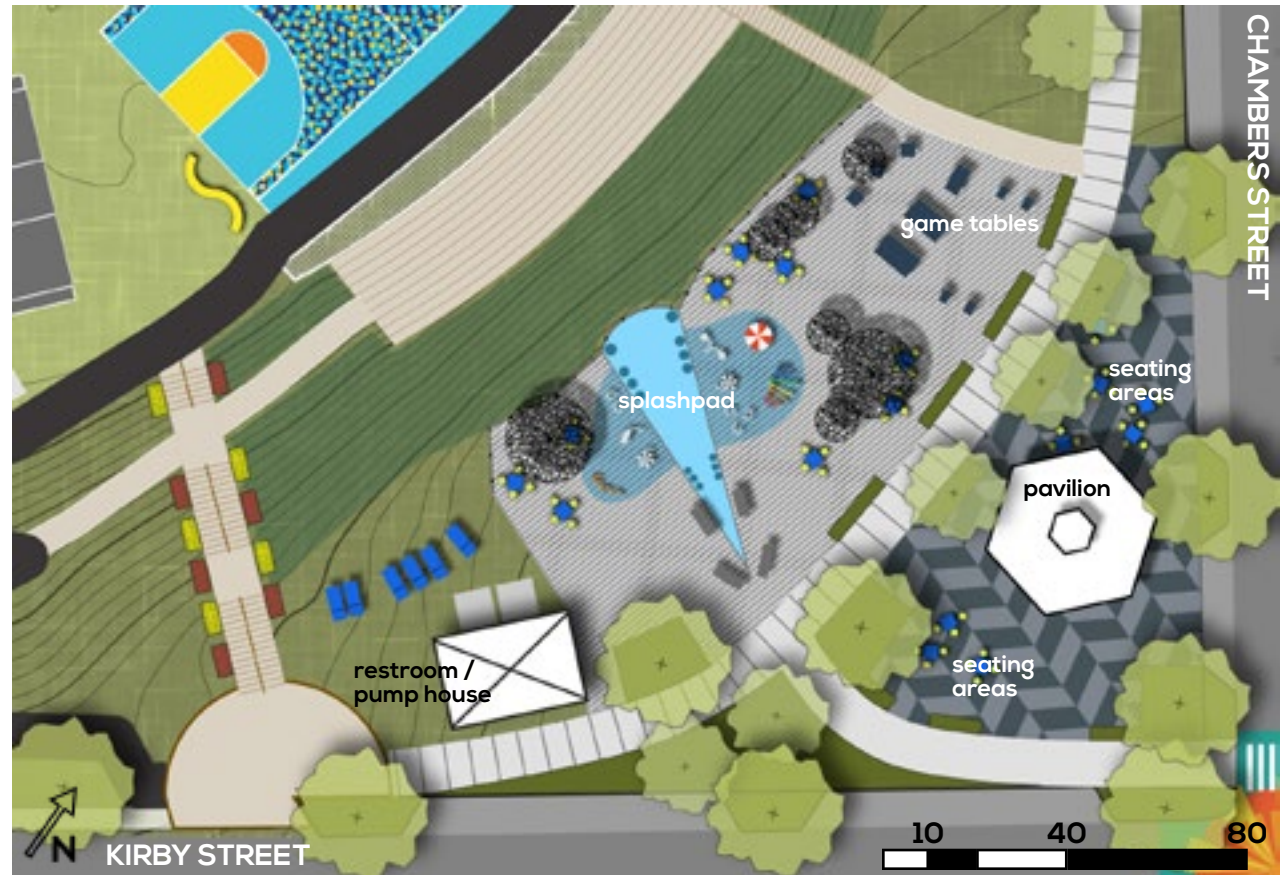


Stencil markings used to activate public space and encourage physical fitness
Source: fitandfunplayscapes.com

FINAL PATIO PLAN. Due to limitations of the landfill site and the value of the tennis court site being the most accessible area to the surrounding neighborhood and providing views into the park, to the former pool site and beyond, creating this neighborhood plaza may be the most significant component of this plan. The final plaza is proposed to include many of the amenities that the interim plaza has to offer but to use long-term, quality materials that will last and create a significant and permanent public space in Lynchburg.



Splashpad should incorporate a combination of active and passive water elements



Final Patio Improvements

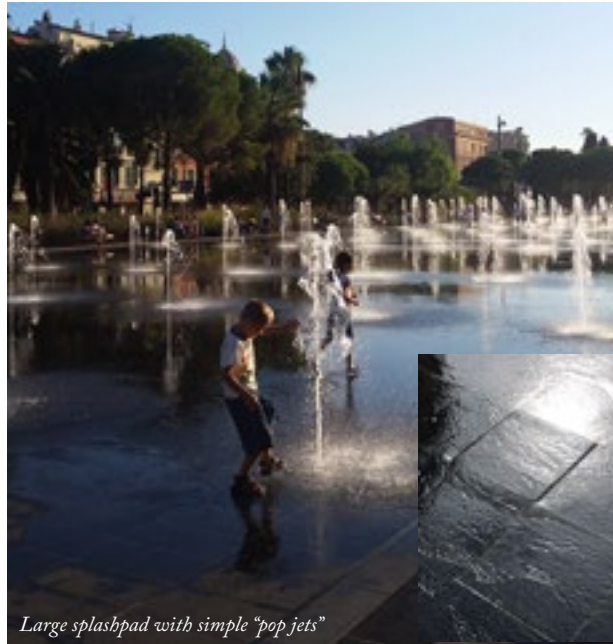
- Install splashpad with nearby restroom and pump house facility.
- Add additional shade structures as necessary.
- Finish with permanent material treatment, differentiating the pavilion space from the splashpad and game areas..
- Formalize on-street parking with curb extensions
- Reroute connector trail to the Dearington Apartments through the plaza space and away from the hillside. Incorporate community “walk of fame” elements as desired..
- Provide additional programming as desired by the neighborhood during the interim plaza years.

SPLASHPAD. The neighborhood has frequently expressed a desire for the Jefferson Park Pool to be restored. Due to limitations of the landfill and the proximity to the Miller Park Pool, a full swimming pool is likely not feasible or realistic in Jefferson Park. Splashpads have however become a popular park use in Lynchburg over the years and may provide an even better alternative as the space can remain an active and engaging space year-round. The plan calls for a splashpad as a key component of the final plaza as a way to both remember Jefferson Park Pool and restore the joy it brought the community.

A portion of the splashpad is shown as “wedge” shaped to frame views out to the site of the Jefferson Park Pool. This area will have a flat surface of steadily flowing water with simple pop jets and benches for people to sit with their feet in the water together. When the more active portion of the splashpad is not engaged, perhaps in the evening hours, this should be a place of reflection.

On the outer sides of the “wedge” are more active play elements that work to restore some of the joy lost when the pool closed. The splashpad spray elements should be abstract and organic feeling sculptural elements that help the space remain engaging during cooler weather, October – May. Equipment should not be “climbable” to prevent damage and ongoing maintenance.

RESTROOM/PUMP HOUSE. The plan shows a small outbuilding for restrooms and above ground pump equipment. When this is designed it should provide clear sightlines from the pump equipment to the splashpad. Moving into design, adequate space needs to be preserved both for an underground filter basket and tanks between the splashpad and the pump house. It will also need occasional vehicular access for chemical delivery and maintenance vehicles.



Large splashpad with simple “pop jets”



Abstract, sculptural splashpad elements



*Splashpad Design
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau*

PARKING. Park space at street level is limited and incorporating a large parking lot for splashpad use would take away valuable space for the plaza. Limiting parking to on-street options will also deter buses and large crowds, helping keep the plaza and the splashpad principally for the neighborhood. If needed, there are larger parking areas available nearby at the Dearington Apartments and the City should pursue an agreement with Lynchburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (LRHA) for use if needed in the future.

SEATING. Different types of seating should be provided in various areas on the final plaza. Tables and chairs should be focused around the splashpad for families and to provide views down to the basketball court and into the park. Additional tables and chairs, in a shadier “grove” around the pavilion, separate from the splashpad, should provide a quieter area. Hillside lounge chairs or hammocks could be used in the grassy areas to make a relaxing and calm park experience.

SHADE STRUCTURES. The shade structures shown on the plan illustrate a way to create the feeling of being underwater with light refracting on the surface above you. This provides needed shade while also continuing the theme of water on site through all months of the year.

PAVILION. When the gymnasium is built, the current pavilion in Jefferson Park would be removed. The neighborhood patio incorporates a new pavilion in a more prominent, visible and accessible location for the neighborhood. It also provides shelter, full shade and lighting for evening use. The pavilion should be equipped with wifi and charging stations to enable public internet access and provide an important service. It is separated from the splashpad by the connector trail, landscaping, and trees to make it usable for special events and planned gatherings.

GAME TABLES. Outdoor game tables such as chess, ping pong, foosball, and others should be installed to program the space for play year round. Equipment for these activities could be stored in a small cabinet, similar to the “little free libraries” already around Lynchburg.

OTHER PROGRAMMING. This neighborhood patio could serve as a second community market location or food truck event space. Vendors could line the street via on-street parking while shoppers use the plaza to access the service windows and displays.



*POPP customizable outdoor ping pong table in Irving, TX
Source: popp.world*



Pavilion structure to provide shelter and shade at the plaza space, as well as frame views into the park and beyond. Solar panels could be incorporated into the roof to power charging stations and public wifi.



Shade structure inspirations



5 and 10-year improvements

ADA access

restrooms / pump house

splashpad

hillside playground

shade structures

game area

pavilion

street mural

Playground

The plan calls for the playground to remain largely where it is today but 1) shift the existing swing set closer to the neighborhood center to provide more distance from the amphitheater and 2) expand the facilities to utilize the natural topography of the site. Hillside slides and climbing equipment could add a new dynamic to the playground. Zip lines are also becoming popular playground facilities. In the near term, trees or shade structures should be added and benches installed to make the area more family friendly.



Playground equipment using hillside for slides and climbing features
Source: habitat-systems.com



Playground zip line

Fitness Equipment

Outdoor fitness equipment was requested on multiple occasions by the neighborhood. The plan shows them as stations along both of the loop trails. A variety of equipment – cardiovascular and strength training equipment, as well as stretching and other wellness equipment– is available for a curated circuit that serves many needs and abilities.



Hiawatha Fitness Zone in Seattle, WA
Source: playcreation.com

Jefferson Park Pool

The location of the Jefferson Park Pool needs to be physically marked and interpreted at the site where it once existed. The memory of the pool currently relies on oral history by current and past neighborhood residents, the oral history project video from 2012 that captured some of these memories, and a few scattered photos of the pool. The stories of the pool and of Jefferson Park are both those of joy and sorrow and need to be remembered physically on site. Doing so will not only bring a greater sense of meaning to the neighborhood and Jefferson Park users, but also provide an opportunity for the Lynchburg community to learn from its past.

INTERIM MARKING. Due to unknown factors regarding the presence of the landfill in Jefferson Park, more due diligence is needed before a permanent memorial can be planned, designed, and installed. In the near term, the site should be marked using surficial materials, those that remain on the surface of the land. One option may be to use survey whiskers with six-inch nails to tack them to the ground as land artist Stacy Levy did in a 2011 installation that marked the route of an underground stream. Survey whiskers are low cost and “mow-able” so should be a low maintenance option. They also come in a variety of colors and could be used to create an interim, temporary, eye-catching design that celebrates and memorializes the pool’s former



“Blue Grass” by landscape/environmental artist Stacy Levy

location without disturbing the integrity of the cap material. This could be done as a community event, where attendees are asked to participate in the installation by helping to place the whiskers into the ground in a preset pattern. Given Jefferson Park’s topography, they would be visible from the surrounding streets. A similar effect may be able to be achieved with painted rocks, cloth, or other temporary materials that remain on the surface. Signage at street level could explain the installation.

PERMANENT MARKING. Once adequate due diligence has been performed on the landfill site and the design parameters can be set for what is allowable, safe, and affordable, a permanent marking of the pool site should be pursued. It deserves to be marked in a lasting way that allows interaction with the site, while learning about Lynchburg’s segregated past, the events and poor decisions that led to filling in Lynchburg’s pools and the use of Jefferson Park as a site of waste disposal. This could be done via a design competition or through hiring a single designer to propose options for a memorial. In either scenario, residents should be involved in selecting the design. Depending on budget, the permanent marking could be a significant memorial at the site or as simple as creative landscaping and interpretation. Interpretation projects costing up to \$50,000 may be able to be funded through the National Park Service’s African American Civil Rights Grants. The site should be eligible as it was a segregated public facility, closed in 1961, prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned racial discrimination in public accommodations.

Environmental Learning Area

The presence of the landfill is a major limitation on Jefferson Park and the ability to use its entire acreage. Specific plant varieties can be used to cleanse soil and, once harvested, be used for biofuels or electricity production. When used on applicable sites, harvesting removes hazardous elements absorbed from the soil into the plant material. There may be an opportunity to use plants to remediate the landfill over the long-term, using ecological restoration techniques. In addition to having Jefferson Park be a place to learn about history and environmental justice, those lessons can be combined with learning about the degraded ecosystem from the landfill and how it could be restored naturally. Lessons relating to stormwater and native plants can be incorporated as well for a holistic understanding of the park's environment.

Neighborhood Center Outdoor Space

The plan for Jefferson Park illustrates Jefferson Park's potential to serve a variety of needs and make use of the large amount of available outdoor space. With the removal of the existing pavilion, the predicted popularity of, and the distance to the "neighborhood patio," the neighborhood center could use outdoor space for programming and gathering directly next to the facility. The plan shows the new community garden remaining in its current location and the construction of a small shade structure and outdoor seating area. This may also be a good place for interpretation of the Jefferson Park Pool site before people begin to walk to it.



Potential shade structure shown here in Racine, WI



Neighborhood center outdoor space shown along trail, next to community garden

Housing

The plan illustrates the potential for new housing bordering Jefferson Park. Much of this land is privately owned so it is only shown as an idea and will require partners and more study to pursue. Providing rowhouse style housing on adjoining properties would rebalance the stark contrast between the architecture of the Dearington Apartments and the single-household neighborhood, provide needed housing units in a central, accessible area of the City, and provide the City with a return on investment in Jefferson Park. Rowhouse units are an efficient land-use pattern that can be designed to blend surrounding standalone homes by having similar setbacks, heights, and landscaping. Virginia Housing awarded the City a grant to further study housing in the neighborhood in 2022. That effort will result in a final document that will be incorporated as an addendum to this plan.



*Design for new housing to blend with both the Dearington Apartments and the neighborhood.
Hill Studio / Peter Giraudeau*

DETAILS THAT MATTER

This section includes plan recommendations that are smaller in scale, should be incorporated with other improvements discussed elsewhere, included throughout the park, or are more peripheral to the main improvements. These recommendations should be looked at continuously as projects are implemented to see where they can be incorporated.

Neighborhood Culture

Jefferson Park contains a rich and important history for both Dearington and the City of Lynchburg. Yet that history is barely visible when visiting Jefferson Park. A few remnants, such as the amphitheater, exist today and hint that this is quite an old park, but neighborhood stories can and should be recorded and conveyed here in this park for all who visit to understand and learn from. There are a variety of ways through various public art, site interpretation, and interactive elements that this can be accomplished.

Public Art

Public art should be incorporated into the park to create a unique and engaging public space that both remembers the history of the site and celebrates the joy Jefferson Park has brought to the Dearington neighborhood over the years.

The City should engage an artist from the neighborhood or reach out to local arts organizations, such as Riverviews Artspace, to find an appropriate local artist who can work with the neighborhood in public art designs. It may be wise to hire a facilitator to continue discussions of the themes discussed at the October 24th 2020 meeting (black joy, community heroes) and allow the artist to take inspiration from those discussions to come up with three proposal options from which the community can select. Alternatively, the City could work with Lynchburg City Schools and E.C. Glass students to learn about the Dearington neighborhood and come up with designs.

FUNDING. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has matching grant programs for \$10,000 -100,000 available that appear to be well suited to this work. Current Grants for Arts projects are being targeted to projects that “use the arts to unite and heal in response to current events, as well as address any of the following:

- Celebrate America’s creativity and/or cultural heritage.
- Invite a dialogue that fosters a mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups.
- Enrich our humanity by broadening our understanding of ourselves as individuals and as a society.”

LAND ART INSTALLATION. As discussed previously, in the near term, the City could take queues from various land art installations to temporarily mark the surface of where Jefferson Park pool once sat. A community event or celebration could bring the neighborhood together to place survey whiskers and create a land art installation visible from many areas of the park. An artist may help design the pattern and coordinate with the murals discussed below.

BASKETBALL COURT MURAL. The near term recommendations to focus on the already active side of the park and relocate the basketball court, revive the amphitheater, and create an interim public plaza on the tennis courts are a perfect opportunity to start imbuing Jefferson Park with public art. A mural on the basketball court would be viewed from above by those sitting in the amphitheater and looking down from the interim plaza and incorporate views to the site of the old swimming pool location.

PATIO SURFACE TREATMENT.

The plaza itself, while an interim step to a final design for a neighborhood gathering space, could also incorporate related mural and interpretation elements.

STREET MURAL. The concept plan shows a street mural at the corner of Chambers and Kirby Street. Traffic tends to speed along Chambers Street and a street mural could be done here to calm traffic and alert drivers to the plaza nearby. The design could be tied together with the plaza surface and the basketball court mural.



City Repair in Portland, Oregon, has completed over 70 street paintings across the Portland Metro Area. Photo: CityRepair.org

Interpretation

Site interpretation is vital to ensure the history of Jefferson Park is not forgotten to future generations and to ensure accurate and collective learning of the City's history. Site interpretation can be incorporated in different ways, through traditional signage, public art as discussed previously, embedding artifacts into the site or through interactive features discussed in the next section. The Lynchburg Museums System should be involved in research and implementation to ensure accuracy and appropriate messaging.

SIGNAGE. Traditional interpretive signage has been used in public spaces around Lynchburg already to highlight local history. Photos and text can be woven together in a traditional way to tell the stories of a place. Maximum information is conveyed this way, however, they are easy to overlook or ignore. A combination of signage with other interpretive methods should be incorporated into Jefferson Park.

NEIGHBORHOOD TIMELINE. The interim plaza concept plan shows a zig zagged line along the paths and through the interim plaza space. While not intended as a specific design, this could be a timeline of neighborhood history that marks important points in Dearington's and Jefferson Park's development.



PHOTO WALLS. Historic photos of Jefferson Park can be put into "photo walls" or railings. New technology can now create perforated metal for use in site design that displays old photos.



Sample of neighborhood timeline highlighting significant events in Dearington's development that could be painted on the interim platio.



Bronze sculpture embedded into Haymarket Square in Boston illustrates the centuries of use as a public market space. Source: Harriesbeder.com

PLAQUES, EMBEDDED LETTERS, SIDEWALK ART. Incorporating history and remembrance in unexpected ways tends to make the lesson that much more thought provoking or memorable. The neighborhood patio could celebrate heroes from the local community and remember their stories in unique ways by embedding plaques, lettering or art into the plaza surface. Trails and walkways could include quotes about the park and it's significance in the community. In the 2012 oral history project, a former pool lifeguard, Francis Moorman, called the pool "Dearington's Smile." Embedding that lettering in the sidewalk would enhance the positive memories of the place.

Interactive Features

At the October 24th 2020 outdoor meeting, attendees responded to examples of interactive installations where the public is invited to engage with a space and express themselves. Chalk walls are one way this is done and various prompts can be changed throughout the year. An artist working on public art in the park should think about ways the neighborhood could engage with the space. Ideas and themes gleaned from this engagement over the years the interim plaza is in place should be used to inform the design of the final plaza.



Interactive chalk wall allows people to engage with a space and each other. Source: Visit Charlottesville



phrases embedded in walkways and public spaces can bring new meaning and experiences. Source: thespec.com

Signage

In addition to interpretive signage, park identifying and directional signage should receive a uniform branding and treatment.

Specific signage is needed to:

- Identify the Jefferson Park Trail at the end of York Street in the near term.
- Provide a park map in the patio area. In the near term, that may incorporate images from this plan of what is to come.
- From street level, note the location of the Jefferson Park Pool and interpret the interim marking that occurs on site.

Materials and Furnishings

While longevity is necessary due to limited budgets, site furnishings should be both high quality and enticing. Brightly colored and flexible furnishings can breathe new life into Jefferson Park and allow park users to interact with a site in different ways.



Colorful and flexible seating options
Lower photo: Loop Arc by out-sider

Environmental Design Considerations

Climate change has been experienced locally in recent years in the form of heavy rains and storms that cause stream and trail erosion as well as power outages. Lynchburg's Parks & Recreation Department is committed to improving the City's parks sustainably by managing stormwater, utilizing solar powered infrastructure, and creating more environmental awareness in our park facilities. Below are recommendations for Jefferson Park specifically to address changing environmental conditions.

Stormwater

Existing topography forces Jefferson Park to serve as a large drainage basin for the Dearington Neighborhood before the water reaches a tributary for Blackwater Creek. The City's creek system regularly experiences the erosive force of stormwater and has experienced significant damage to trail facilities in recent years. The park will need a stormwater plan to carefully route drainage through new improvements, help combat runoff issues experienced downstream, and plan nontraditional ways to incorporate stormwater infrastructure into park facilities.

BIORETENTIONS. These facilities can be highly efficient in both reducing the quantity of stormwater runoff by slowing water down so that it absorbs into the earth and improving the quality of stormwater by filtering out pollutants before the water reaches our streams. They also provide aesthetic benefits.

PERMEABLE HARDSCAPES. Permeable asphalt, concrete, and various paving systems allow for new hardscapes to be installed without contributing to stormwater runoff. New trails in particular may be well suited for permeable asphalt and the final plaza design should consider permeable pavers where feasible to help reduce overall impervious area in the park.



Rain Gardens lining a pathway in Riverfront Park add beauty to the park while also helping treat stormwater runoff from 11 acres of Downtown Lynchburg.



PerVIOUS hardscape used on a trail that will allow stormwater to infiltrate into the ground
Source: perviouspavement.org

Solar Power

The City's first solar powered pavilion has been retrofitted in Peaksview Park and as a way to reduce the City's electricity burden, similar infrastructure can be incorporated elsewhere. This plan calls for the new pavilion at the "neighborhood patio" to include solar power for lighting, charging stations, and publicly available wifi. If connected to the electrical grid, it may be able to offset some of the energy needed to power the splashpad. Solar powered bollard lighting is also proposed along the connector trail from the Dearington Apartments. As the design progresses, other opportunities will arise.



Solar powered pavilion in Peaksview Park in Lynchburg. The solar panel is barely visible on the right hand side of the roof.

Landscaping

Park landscaping should include the addition of more shade trees as requested by the neighborhood and to provide environmental benefits: cooling effects, stormwater absorption, and air filtration. Their location should avoid blocking views from the "neighborhood patio" towards the Jefferson Park Pool site. The steep hillside around the amphitheater should be replanted with a new low-maintenance groundcover that will not become so overgrown in the summer but still allows people to sit on the hillside if so desired. Other landscaping throughout the park should be drought tolerant and use native species.

LANDFILL AND LIMITATIONS

A portion of Jefferson Park is a former unregulated landfill that was in operation from approximately 1961 until approximately 1970. Modern standards for closure and post-closure care of landfills went into effect in the early 1990s; however, landfills closed prior to those regulations, like Jefferson Park, were not regulated by those standards. The Jefferson Park landfill appears to have been "closed" with an earthen cover in the early 1970s.

This area was evaluated in 1997 and 2015 for potential gas release and waste exposure. Both evaluations found the presence of methane gas and it was determined that waste exists within the park with only a foot of cover in some places.

The 2015 evaluation was precipitated by the exposure of waste due to the erosive forces of stormwater through the park. This evaluation led to stormwater mitigation work that routed drainage around the perimeter of the landfill to prevent further erosion within the park and the drainage outfall. Today, the landfill remains relatively unusable for active park space and only contains an access road that connects to the Jefferson Park Trail, an earthen trail that ties into the City's larger trail network.



View of the Jefferson Park landfill from parking lot in Jefferson Park

Additional Study Required

As the area encompasses over seven acres of available park land, which is centrally located and with an overall moderate grade, the landfill portion of Jefferson Park has great potential as a recreational asset for both Dearington and Lynchburg. Landfills across the United States have been converted into innovative and even beloved park uses. However, in order to achieve that status here, more study is needed. Additional due diligence, including further surface gas monitoring studies and geotechnical/geophysical exploration, should be conducted prior to any reuse of this historic landfill area. This additional study is required to both inform the community and protect the City's future investments at this site. Further study will provide options for reuse of the site as well as associated cost estimates.



Cully Park in Portland, OR is a 25 acre park built on top of a former landfill
Source: letusbuildcullypark.org

Proposed Concept Plan

SHORT TERM. Work in the vicinity of the landfill is not proposed in the near term to leave time for the necessary additional study and understanding of the area. Should the opportunity arise to begin work, initial work in the area may take the minimally obtrusive approach of only adding fill, and thus further capping the existing waste in the area. A half-mile perimeter trail, a gradual 5% slope across the entire seven acres to make a reasonable playing surface, and a surficial marking of the historic swimming pool location may be possible, dependent on further study.

FINAL VISION. The concept plan more accurately reflects the Dearington community's desire and the site's potential as a community asset. It includes construction of trails, more level playing/ball fields, exercise equipment, an environmental learning area, parking, and a permanent memorial to the Jefferson Park Pool. It also recognizes some of the realistic constraints of park facilities on landfill. Those constraints include:

- Landscaping – Tree and shrub survival is uncertain and in the future they may expose waste should they fall. Landscaping should include wildflowers and grasses.
- Structures and Buildings – No buildings with interior spaces can realistically be constructed due to settlement and the presence of methane gas and the risks it poses. Light structural bases may be okay. Structures that require footers or foundations, such as fitness equipment and playgrounds, may be possible but there needs to be further study on the specific conditions.
- Trails – Paved trails are likely more feasible than earthen trails on this surface because of the potential for erosion.



View of the Jefferson Park landfill from Dearington Apartments

- Recreational fields – Competition quality fields will be difficult to establish due to continued settling. Casual playing fields are likely possible.
- Hardscapes (basketball courts, tennis courts, parking areas, etc) – These uses would likely be safe to establish on site but geotechnical and geophysical evaluations should be done to determine risk of further settlement. A geogrid or soil stabilization may be required to establish these uses.
- Uses that require excavation (i.e. splashpad) – A splashpad is not proposed for the landfill site because while excavation is possible, it requires disposal of all waste to an approved site, which would drive costs unreasonably high.

To realize the concept plan, in which the surface of the actual landfill would receive programmed daily use, further studies are required to determine whether the landfill gases are a public health concern and the subsurface conditions are suitable for use as an active park. These studies will define potential limitations to the amount of fill to be placed on site to provide more level fields without causing further settlement; installation of structural features, such as exercise equipment and a memorial to the pool; types of landscaping proposed; and frequency of use of the site.

JEFFERSON PARK PHASING

Short Term (5 years)

Capital Improvements:

- Redevelop tennis courts into interim design for neighborhood patio.
- Improve Dearington Apartments connector trail with lighting and railings.
- Improve streets next to neighborhood patio:
 - Chambers Street, 40' ROW (add small amount of ROW from plaza side) – 8' parking interchanged with street trees and enhanced bus stop, 10' travel, 10' travel, 8' parking interchanged with street trees, 5' sidewalk.
 - Kirby Street, 30' ROW (Add parking to plaza side mixed with parking)
- Mark Jefferson Park Pool site in a low-cost, low-maintenance, high-visibility way
- Add interpretive signage at street level and within park
- Construct Kirby Street ADA Access trail and the “grand staircase” that frames views and provides a formal access point into the park.
- Move basketball court to amphitheater location. Construct an additional ½ court. Add lighting for performances and basketball.
- Make amphitheater accessible. Improve adjacent hillside groundcover.
- Install outdoor fitness equipment along trails.
- Improve York Street trailhead to Jefferson Park Trail.
- Incorporate public art via a mural on the basketball court, patio artwork, and street mural as deemed feasible.

Research:

- Monitor and collect feedback on interim patio use to help inform final design.
- Perform full feasibility study potential for basketball gymnasium and structured parking into hillside. Acquire properties along York Street for future housing and gymnasium.
- Begin necessary geotechnical and geophysical studies of landfill.
- Find partners and conduct feasibility and planning studies for new housing on park's edges.

Mid Term (10 years)

Capital Improvements:

- Replace interim patio design with permanent design to include splashpad and pool remembrance fountain. Reroute Dearington Apartments connector trail through the patio.
- Improve playground and install zip line, hillside slides and climbing equipment.
- Build multi-use basketball gymnasium and parking below. Pursue housing on street level as opportunities arise. Remove parking from center of park but retain maintenance vehicle accessibility.
- Use excavated earthen material from gymnasium to help level landfill areas into usable fields
- Provide neighborhood center with outdoor shade canopy and picnic area.
- Improve routes to and from Jefferson Park to create “safe routes to parks” and community walking loops. Improve specific intersections with street murals to slow traffic, signal importance, and connect to park. Construct sidewalk down York Street access road.
- Install permeable asphalt trails on landfill site with meadow grasses and wildflowers. Include more outdoor fitness equipment as determined feasible.
- Work with the community to find a way to permanently mark and remember the Jefferson Park Pool site while maintaining visibility from street level.

Research:

- Continue research on landfill site as necessary.
- As feasibility for additional recreational improvements on landfill site comes into focus, discuss desired uses with neighborhood.

Long Term (20 years)

Capital Improvements:

- Connect York Street around to Smyth in existing right-of-way to facilitate development and access to landfill site.
- Create an environmental learning area that teaches about natural land remediation
- Construct usable playing fields and other recreational uses as determined feasible
- Provide additional parking as needed

5 YEARS



10 YEARS



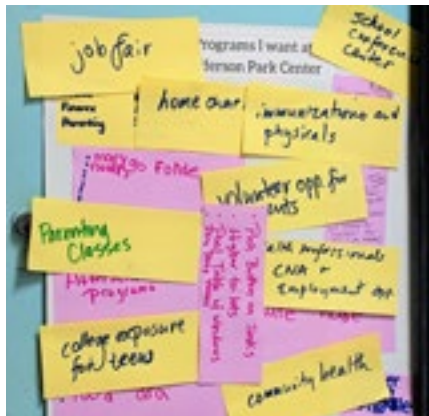
20 YEARS



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

The Jefferson Park Neighborhood Center was constructed in the mid 1970s and operated continuously in Dearington except for a few years in the mid-2010s when the local Boys & Girls Club rented the facility and provided programming. Many current and former residents have fond memories of the center over the years and appreciate the longevity the Center has had in their lives, serving both them and their children. Reunions and community events have been held here and it clearly has been a place of good memories and support for the neighborhood.

In 2019, the center underwent an interior renovation project funded through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to revive the space for continued use and adapt it to current needs. Prior to this project, staff held a public meeting at the neighborhood center in April of 2019 to discuss center programming as Department of Parks & Recreation staff would once again operate the facility. A strong group of current and former residents expressed their desires for what the center should be and how it can best serve the neighborhood moving forward. That feedback is represented here.



Feedback on desired center programming at the April 2019 meeting

SERVICES

Neighborhood centers across the City aim to serve all ages and provide valuable programming based on the neighborhood's needs that connect to three broad areas: work, family, and education. In 2020, Jefferson Park Neighborhood Center was just reopening and reestablishing neighborhood connections following the renovation and its operation by the Boys & Girls Club when the COVID-19 pandemic began, severely limiting the ability of staff to interact with the public. Services continued throughout the year as they were able in a "light touch" model. Summer Lunch & Play and Fall/Winter Learn & Play have helped to keep kids active and provide help with school assignments while following safety guidelines. Fresh produce, school lunches, family food bags, and "care bags" with personal protective equipment (PPE) have been made available to the community through the neighborhood center in coordination with various local partnerships. Moving forward, valuable services such as these will continue and expand in 2021 in support of the efforts of this plan and the neighborhood's needs.



Jefferson Park Neighborhood Center programming continued during the COVID-19 pandemic

Classes

Lynchburg's neighborhood centers already offer a variety of classes that can be expanded or brought to Jefferson Park. The following were specifically desired:

- Employment Training, specifically for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL), and hospitality work. A partnership with neighbor, Centra Health, should be explored to increase employment opportunities.
- Finance, Home Ownership, and Housing Maintenance
- Parenting
- Fitness, Exercise, and Nutrition
- College Exposure for Teens

Resource Access

Virginia Career Works' workforce navigators could host regular office hours at each of the centers to make themselves readily accessible.

School Meetings

Residents expressed that many times parents or students may be intimidated by school meetings. Holding those conferences off-site, at the neighborhood center, can reduce those negative connotations and provide a neutral meeting ground.

Healthcare

Immunizations have been done in centers previously and could be expanded. A regular schedule would help the neighborhood take advantage of these services. Additionally, over the summer, prior to a new school year starting, it would be helpful for students to be able to receive their routine pediatric physicals so that they are eligible for athletic opportunities at City Schools.

History Archive

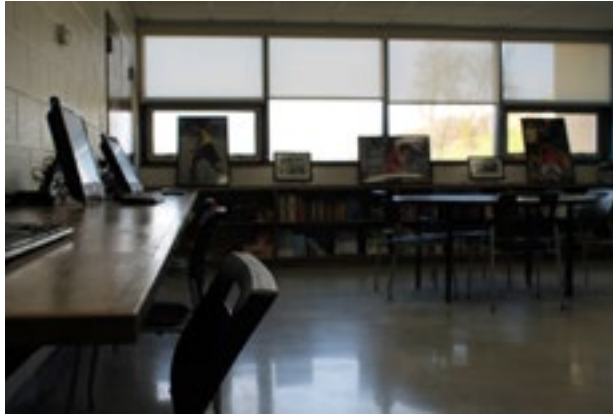
During the development of the oral history project “Reflections of Jefferson Park Pool” in 2012, many neighbors provided memories and photos of activity in Jefferson Park. The center should be equipped to receive photos and record memories people have of Jefferson Park. This may require equipment, such as scanners, and a network drive for this repository

Annual Celebration

In the past, residents have hosted a “Dearington Day” as a reunion for current and former Dearington neighbors. Supporting or continuing this effort will help build relationships with the community and could be a venue for remembering and celebrating the history of Jefferson Park. Until a permanent marking can be decided upon, this would be a time for the community to come together and participate in marking the Jefferson Park Pool site.

Resource & Information Hub

Neighborhood centers are the most accessible city building in some of Lynchburg’s neighborhoods. They already play critical roles in after-school care and enrichment programs, but can also offer additional services from all City Departments, as they are valuable outlets to extend the City’s reach into the community. The center will serve as a resource and information hub, with public access to wifi, a computer lab, and community resources. Given the right resources and support, Jefferson Park Neighborhood Center (and all Centers) could even act as miniature “city halls,” or more accessible extensions of City Hall, by providing access to many of the resources and services without requiring the travel to get Downtown. Ways to work towards this concept are included here but will require interdepartmental coordination and additional planning.



Renovated computer lab



Community members enjoying the renovated Center space

RESOURCE BINDERS. Centers already have binders stocked with many of the commonly requested forms. These should be regularly checked and updated.

COMPUTER LAB. As more and more services move online, the computer labs in the centers will become more and more valuable for connecting citizens with services. Computers there should be preloaded with links to commonly used services.

STAFF TRAINING. Regular training in the services citizens need access to is key to being able to help people navigate these resources and make use of all that is available.

HOURS. Centers are currently staffed by one full-time and one or two part-time employees. This means that the center buildings cannot be open every day during all business hours because the staff needs to run programming and attend off-site meetings. However, consistent operating hours will be important for citizens to be able to make use of the services the centers can offer under the “city hall” model. Additional staff would be able to help expand access.

City Services to Consider Expanding to Neighborhood Centers

- Bill Pay – through computer lab and/or kiosks as technology becomes available
- Citizens First Hotline and Online Chat
- Library Card Application, Book Delivery
- Workforce Navigators, weekly or biweekly hours