

## Greenville seeks ideas for next downtown park

*Written by Rudolph Bell Staff Writer*

*Feb 14*

greenvilleonline.com

---

If you've got some ideas for the next downtown park, Greenville officials are inviting you to sit around a table and sketch them out with pencil and paper.

You'll get a free boxed lunch, too, if you go to the workshop on Saturday, Feb. 23, at the Kroc Center downtown.

The workshop, which runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., is one of a series of upcoming meetings the city has organized to gather ideas for a proposed park along the Reedy River and Swamp Rabbit Trail, just past the Kroc Center and A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School.

They've envisioned a major park in that area for years, but they can't develop it until they move the city's public works operations center from the site.

The city has hired an architect to figure out how much that's going to cost.

In the meantime, it's working with a landscape architecture and civil engineering firm to design a potential park on about 18 acres on both sides of the Reedy between Mayberry and Wellborn streets.

Chris Watson, director of landscape architecture for Seamon Whiteside + Associates, the firm designing the park, said the Feb. 23 workshop at the Kroc Center is the best opportunity for members of the public to influence the park's design.

"We hope to get as much input as we can," Watson said.

His firm was hired as part of a three-year planning program, funded by \$1.8 million from the federal government, that will produce a comprehensive plan for the Westside.

The city has already demolished an old building next to the park site to make way for a trailhead with 50 parking spaces.

The process of gathering public input for the proposed park begins at the Kroc Center at 6 p.m., on Thursday, Feb. 21, with a kickoff and review of the process, Watson said.

Following the Feb. 23 workshop, the design team will brainstorm for three days at Tabernacle Baptist Church next to A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School and members of the public are welcome to drop by.

Finally, the team members will present their preliminary sketches and ideas to the public for more input at the Kroc Center on Thursday, Feb. 28, at 6 p.m.

"It's going to be an exciting project," said Dana Souza, the city's director of parks and recreation.

The city is moving the public works complex not only to make room for the possible park, but also because it's currently located in a floodplain. That led to extensive damage during an historic flood of the Reedy in 2004.

City Councilman David Sudduth, chairman of the city's Finance Committee, said DP3 Architects should be presenting options for moving the complex sometime in the next month or six weeks.

If the city can find the money, it will move the complex to a 33-acre site on Fairforest Way that it has already procured for that purpose.

Once the city figures out how to move the complex, it will begin discussing what goes in its place and that's a "little bit of a separate conversation," Sudduth said.