



Town of Cary Officially Celebrates Groundbreaking of Downtown Cary Park
Citizens, leaders come together to celebrate milestone progress of a resilient open space amenity, slated to open in the summer of 2023



Natural Pond Features

As a natural feature within the park, the curated series of terraced ponds create a beautiful water moment that can be walked beside and across. It also functions as a resiliency feature for stormwater, with the ability to capture and hold a 500-year storm water event.

Cary, North Carolina - June 30, 2021 - The beginning of construction and development of the Downtown Cary Park was officially recognized in a community-wide celebration last Saturday in Cary, North Carolina. Slated to open in the summer 2023, the park is the result of more than 20 years of dreaming and inspired planning. Designed by award-winning landscape architecture and urban design firm OJB Landscape Architecture, the 7-acre state-of-the-art, highly programmed urban open space is the first of its kind in central North Carolina.

Showcasing the extraordinary natural beauty native to North Carolina and the Piedmont, this downtown park balances active programming with a unique botanical experience. Shade gardens, perennial gardens, wetland and aquatic plantings, pollinator gardens, native meadows, and many more plant communities will be on display throughout the seasons.

Water management and sustainability are key drivers of the park design. Being at the top of an important urban watershed, the park is designed to manage and control the flow of water downstream, significantly reducing the risk of flooding offsite. The green infrastructure solution is high performance, but also scaled for public enjoyment. A series of water features, swales, and rain gardens are designed to create a public amenity where visitors can enjoy and interact with water throughout the park.

“We see parks and open spaces as critical public infrastructure that make our communities stronger, healthier, and more connected,” said Cody Klein, ASLA, Partner with OJB Landscape Architecture, principal designer of the park. “We applaud the Town of Cary’s visionary investment in this type of public infrastructure as a critical foundation for the future growth of their downtown. This will be a park for the community, based on the community’s aspirations, for generations to come.”

A series of outdoor rooms are knit together by multi-dimensional vantage points, including elevated walkways, meandering paths and water features that take advantage of the change in grade across the site. The diverse programmed “rooms” were derived from an extensive community engagement planning process.

Key Park Features

- **Academy Plaza** will be an extension of and expand on the successes of the existing one-acre park, which is being renovated. Seamlessly expanding from Academy Street, the plaza will offer expansive views of the park, intimate (and shaded) seating, an animated and interactive water feature, and a multi-use pavilion building including a marketplace and public restrooms.
- **The Nest** will be a one-of-kind experiential and inclusive play environment that will stretch the imagination for kids of all ages and abilities. The play elements are focused on connecting with nature, creating opportunities for non-prescriptive play, and promoting a healthy, active lifestyle.
- **The Great Lawn** is the beating heart of the park and will act as a flexible gathering place for large community events and concerts, along with unique and exciting daily programming.
- **The Gathering House and Garden** will be a quiet place in the park, nestled into the large existing trees, and surrounded by a lush botanical garden. It will welcome special events and celebrations and also offer a place for quiet contemplation.

- **The Park Street Courts** will be a dynamic hub for active and social recreation. From ping pong to big Jenga to cornhole and even a putting green, the Courts offer fun games and social interaction for everyone.
- **The Bark Bar** will be the first of its kind in the region, offering light food and beverage for folks wanting to enjoy the Park Street Courts, a nice fire pit on a cool evening, or to just relax and watch the pups play. So, whether you have a four-legged friend or not, all will be welcome!

In addition to these amenities, the park will offer robust programming including art exhibitions, arts and crafts classes, performances and concerts, cardio and fitness classes, book clubs, story time programs and movies. While active programming will be a defining feature of the park, the design team planned for extensive passive landscape spaces where residents and visitors can be immersed in nature in the heart of the city as well.

“Downtown Cary Park has come together as part of a decades-long vision to offer inspiring amenities to our community and propel future economic development in the heart of downtown,” said Ted Boyd, director of economic development for Cary. “We’re proud of the positive impact this will have locally, regionally and beyond, as the mark of a thriving community is a strong downtown. Downtown Cary Park was created for the citizens by the citizens and will serve as a catalyst for growth for years to come.”

To learn more about Downtown Cary Park and stay up to date on construction progress, visit downtowncarypark.com.

About Town of Cary

Cary is a thriving community in the heart of the Triangle area of North Carolina, between Raleigh and the renowned Research Triangle Park. The Triangle area repeatedly has ranked among the top regions in the country to live or work, to find a home or start a business, to raise a family or retire.

About OJB Landscape Architecture

OJB Landscape Architecture is a collective landscape architecture and urban design practice inspired to create beauty and find unexpected moments in the natural world. Founded by James Burnett in 1989 in Houston, Texas and led today by Burnett and his partners in offices around the country, OJB shapes public spaces into community resources that rejuvenate the human spirit, promote discovery and wellness, celebrate the genius of place, restore connectivity, and respect natural ecologies. Among its

many honors, OJB is the 2020 National Design Award winner for landscape architecture, bestowed by the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. In addition to Downtown Cary Park, notable projects include Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, Texas, Myriad Botanical Gardens in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Sunnylands Center and Gardens in Rancho Mirage, California. www.ojb.com

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All renderings courtesy OJB Landscape Architecture



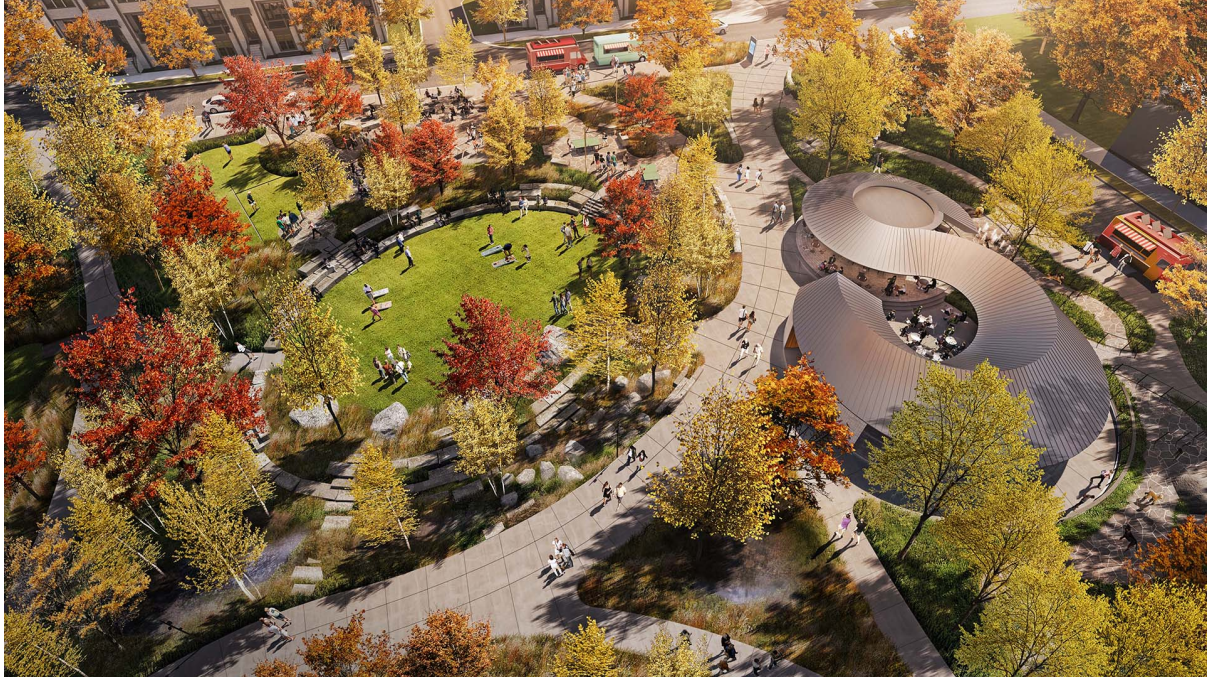
Great Lawn Performance Pavilion

At the center of the park, a performance pavilion floats among the trees. The well-equipped stage and pavilion provides infrastructure for large events, and is also an open and porous pavilion throughout the day. The programmed stage will host many types of events and be connected to the great lawn and the natural pond feature on its east facing side.



Academy Plaza and Pavilion

The plaza showcases a playful interactive fountain, shade trees, and prominent overlooks. The Pavilion features comfort amenities and an event space, along with a unique market concept that provides park-goers with access to snacks and sundries for their visit.



Park Street Courts

The corner of Park Street and Walker Street features an engaging area of game courts and active zones. Park Street allows for the flexibility of pop-up markets that permeate into the courts. The adjacent Bark Bar serves the Park Street Courts; food trucks will line the active corner.



The Bark Bar

The Bark Bar is an open-air all season pavilion that offers libations in the park. It is adjacent to an off-leash dog area with play mounds, natural elements, and water features. The Bark Bar's undulating roof creates covered outdoor seating and provides restroom amenities for park patrons.



The Nest

The Nest is a custom children's play area that features imaginative children's structures, with integrated climbing features and slides that are sited into the slope of the surrounding hill. Accessible and inclusive play elements are integrated throughout. A connective bridge spans across the area connecting to the new Downtown Library and Parking Deck while providing views into the play area below. A nature-inspired splash pad is nestled into the grade and surrounded by quarried boulders.



The Gathering Garden and Gathering House

Situated in a quiet corner of the park, the Gathering Garden provides more intimate lawn spaces intertwined among existing trees and along the origin point of the recirculating pond feature. The Gathering House's transparent walls open completely to the garden and allows for porosity between inside and outside.