

# Welcoming, Inclusive, and Celebratory Public Spaces and Events

**OBJECTIVE:** We need to welcome and celebrate the diverse identities of Durham’s residents through our recreation centers and activities, cultural events, and public spaces. We need community members to be directly involved in planning and creating recreational spaces and opportunities. We need spaces that are welcoming to, reflective of, and relevant to residents, particularly our youth, seniors, Black and Hispanic/Latino residents, LGBTQIA + residents, and those with disabilities.

**BACKGROUND:** Residents want to see more events that bring together people with differing identities and celebrate the rich variety of Durham’s culture. Seeing the Bimbe Festival remain outside of the downtown while CenterFest has been brought back to the center of Durham contributes to the feeling that Durham is not investing equitably in Black residents and culture. Our growing Hispanic/Latino population and cultures are not celebrated as much as residents would like to see. Young people see many options in Durham that either are not open to them or are only open to them during certain times, and do not see the community creating spaces and activities with them in mind. Event organizers and space programmers often do not look like, relate well to, or have similar experience as those they are aiming to serve. This results in opportunities that do not feel safe, welcoming, and inclusive to all residents.

We want to invest in residents’ abilities to make spaces that are of, by, and for the community. We want residents to easily reach and know about events because they are directly involved in creating them. We want people leading in these spaces that are reflective of the identities of participants, whether focused on youth, LGBTQIA+ residents, or Black and Hispanic/Latino residents.

## Quotes from Durham Residents

“We need to FUND existing POC owned and operated community spaces and make it easier for them to thrive. What we don't need is white-led nonprofits to enter these neighborhoods with the intention of "welcoming" Black/Hispanic residents. We need the leadership in these spaces to come from the community and be accountable to the community”

“Want more inclusion, community involvement, community event (carnivals, festivals, free community events with vendors, more activities for youth (both in each neighborhood and downtown)) Example for event in Bragtown = big public cookout with games, music, free to the public”

“Events that bring people together of all colors”

“Organizations / groups who have historically been able to hold festivals and celebrations in downtown and desirable places should be given an equitable way to continue to do so without getting priced out.”

“Need more programs for poor/middle class families; community centers, before and after school programs, home ownership, better parks, more black culture events in different areas of Durham and downtown, keep Northgate open.”

“Welcoming to all cultures by hosting different events as well as different art work around the town”

“Free or reduced recreational and cultural resources need to be widely advertised, clearly communicated, and easy to access. This is of utmost importance in underserved communities who might not have easy access to internet, computers, etc. When these opportunities are available, we should include all Durham residents.”