

Summary of Eastern Market Metro Park Task Force Meeting Wednesday, February 26, 2014 – The Hill Center

The Eastern Market Metro Task Force met with the project's Design Team on Wednesday, February 26th at 5:00 p.m. in the Sousa Room at the Hill Center. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and come to a consensus regarding the design elements that the Design Team is to carry forward and incorporate into the Preferred Alternative Design Concept.

The Design Team's leader, Amy Weinstein, began the meeting by noting that the team had received literally hundreds of comments from the community on the two master plan concepts (Master Plan Concepts A and B) that had been presented at the December 8th and 11th community meetings. All of those comments were compiled and organized by topic and had been sent to the Task Force in advance of the February 26th meeting. The community comments are posted on the project website at: easternmarketmetropark.org.

Ms. Weinstein presented updates on recent feedback from government agencies and other stakeholders on the two concepts presented at the December community meetings. Noting that there had been many comments favoring a mid-block pedestrian crossing in the 700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, SE (where lots of people currently jaywalk going to and from the Eastern Market Metro Station), she said that DDOT has indicated that such a mid-block crossing is not acceptable. The 700 block, according to DDOT, is too short to permit such a crossing – vehicular traffic would back up into 7th and 8th Streets if there were a traffic signal mid block.

The Task Force discussed, one at a time, each of the six parcels of public land along Pennsylvania Avenue between 7th and 9th Streets and arrived at the following decisions to guide the Design Team's development of the Preferred Alternative Design Concept.

For Parcels 2 and 5, the two Pennsylvania Avenue median strips between 7th and 9th, the Task Force selected the option with landscaped bioswales that will capture and manage stormwater runoff from all or part of the Pennsylvania Avenue roadbed, with a historic-type wrought iron fence at the perimeter.

For Parcels 3 and 6, the two bow-tie parcels in front of Hine School and Community Connections / Dunkin Donuts, respectively, the Task Force selected the planted rain gardens for stormwater management. The rain gardens are to include trees for shade and are to be surrounded by a continuous, outward-facing bench.

For Parcel 1, the Northeast Parcel, the Task Force said that the main walkway between South Carolina Avenue and 8th Street should be aligned with the South Carolina Avenue axis (as shown in Concept B). With respect to the children's play area, the Task Force said that the targeted age ranges for the design should be: toddlers (2 to 5) and older kids (5 to 12). The Task Force's preference is for the play areas for both age groups to be south of the walkway, with one fence around the entire play area. The area north of the walkway would be for adults. However, Ms. Weinstein said that the choice to align the main walkway with the South Carolina Avenue axis may necessitate moving the play area for toddlers north of the walkway and older kids to the south in order to preserve large enough play areas for both groups.

The Task Force said that the play areas should include a mix of low maintenance, traditional and “new design” equipment. Low maintenance water for play is to be provided within the play area but the design will *not* include “standing water.”

For Parcel 4, the Metro Plaza, the Task Force said that the project is to move forward with a hybrid scheme to include an entrance pavilion to a below-grade addition to the Southeast Library, with a smaller tree bosque to the south and east (parallel to D Street). In addition, a fountain is to be provided on the Metro Plaza, with the design to be responsive to the Task Force’s concerns regarding safety, functionality, and low maintenance.

Traffic and transportation issues: The Task Force discussed eight transportation / pedestrian safety issues that were the subject of the transportation survey posted on the project website immediately following the December community meetings. The Task Force decided to include the following recommendations in the Final Report. *However, the Task Force will recommend to DDOT that before any of the recommendations are implemented in final form, they should be tried out on an experimental basis, for a fixed period of time, before making any final decisions.*

Only three of these eight issues have a direct bearing on the design of any of the six parcels described above. The Task Force recommends closing the short section of D Street, SE (in front of Community Connections / Dunking Donuts) that connects 8th Street to Pennsylvania Avenue. Closing this section of D Street would increase the size of Parcel 3, the southern bow-tie parcel. The Task Force further said that if this section of D Street were to be closed, it favors moving the northbound METROBUS stop on 8th Street from E Street to the corner of 8th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE.

The other transportation recommendations are as follows:

- Remove one of the two designated rush hour taxicab spaces on the west side of Parcel 4 (the Metro Plaza) and substitute a car share space for that taxicab space.
- Change the direction of D Street north from its current one-way westbound (from 9th Street to 8th Street) to one way eastbound.
- Add pedestrian bump-outs adjacent to Parcel 1 (Northeast Parcel) at 9th Street and South Carolina Avenue, SE.
- Add pedestrian bump-outs adjacent to Parcel 4 (Metro Plaza) at 8th Street and D Street, SE and at 7th Street and D Street, SE.
- Change the direction of D Street south from its current one-way eastbound (from 7th Street to 8th Street) to one-way westbound and add a left turn queuing space on 8th Street so that northbound traffic on 8th Street could access westbound D Street.
- Move the southbound METROBUS stop on 8th Street from in front of Starbucks to the Metro Plaza.