

South Park at Potomac Yards

Meeting #3 Summary

May 3, 2017 (Wednesday)

Gunston Community Center, 7:00-9:00PM

Purpose of the Meeting: The purpose of this meeting is to learn more about the project and to review three draft park concepts. The concepts were presented at public meeting #3 and developed based on community feedback, guidance from the Four Mile Run Restoration Master Plan and Design Guidelines, careful consideration of the site constraints and sensitive environmental areas, need for improved pedestrian/bicycle circulation, and the projected budget.

The room was set up for the display of informational boards as well as tables where participants were encouraged to express and record their ideas on drawings. Attendees spent time at each of the display stations and were able to speak with the project team members before and after the presentation. There were many opportunities to provide feedback, including survey forms and display board mark ups. All input is summarized below.

Staff Attendees:

- Bethany Heim, Associate Planner, Arlington County, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

Consultant Attendees: Rhodeside & Harwell

- Kevin Fisher, Principal Landscape Architect
- Qiaojue Yue, Senior Associate
- Rachel Schneider, Landscape Designer
- Sam Shreder, Urban Planner

Public Attendees: Approximately 15 people attended the meeting.

Questions and Answer, Community Discussion:

The staff and consultant team delivered a presentation, which is posted on the project website. Attendees asked questions during and after the presentation.

- Q. Will there be lots of regrading or do any of the schemes follow existing contours?
A. KF: There will be significant regrading on the site.
- Q. Will the soil be remediated?
A. KF: Yes the soil will be either removed or remediated.
- Q. Will there be methods used to slow the bikers down?

A. KF: There will be areas where pedestrians can step off the path, there is a jog in the path to slow the bikers, and there will be a speed table designed to slow the bikers passing through

- Q. Is there access to the water in concept two?

A. KF: Concept 1 allows for access to water w/ steps, concept 2 brings pedestrians above the trail with no directly to the water.

- Q. Is there a difference in maintenance cost between concept 2 and 3?

A. KF: Lawn takes more maintenance in the long run. But the native plants in concept 3 would cost more up front.

- Q. Can we combine the dog run amenity with the natural approach of concept 3?

A. KF: Yes the amenities can be combined in a number of configurations.

- Q. Who can use the fenced-in playground that is shown in white on the draft designs?

A. KF: That is the child care facility playground and it is used exclusively by the child care center. The playground was purchased and constructed at the expense of the child care center and they are responsible for all maintenance and liability.

- Q. Where will the dog run be?

A. KF: Must be out of the Resource Protection Area (RPA) according to current County policy.

- Q. Will there be lighting and police patrol?

A. KF: There will be lighting in the park at night.

A. BH: There will not be scheduled police patrol. They will come if they are called for assistance. Park Rangers are also available if there is a situation.

- Q. Will there be parking?

A. KF: Off-street parking is not provided.

A. BH: Many of our parks do not have off-street parking and rely on alternate modes of transit (walk, bike, bus, Metro) and on-street parking.

- Q. Will there be planting implemented in the first phase?

A. KF: First phase of construction could introduce planting, but only in areas that will have no regrading.

Summary of Park Name Board:

Suggested Park Names: Lincoln Park, Switchyard Park, Unity Park, Junction Park, Heritage Park, Locomotive Park, National Gateway

Summary of Surveys Received

A survey was distributed after the presentation and participants were encouraged to complete and return. 15 total surveys were received.

Please rank the following ideas from favorite (1) to least favorite (3).

1. Concept 3 – Native plantings –
 - **1.25** average, 10 ranked as favorite
2. Concept 2 – Blend of urban lawn and native plantings
 - **2.25** average, **0** ranked as favorite
3. Concept 1 – Urban Lawn
 - **2.5** average, **1** ranked favorite

What do you like/dislike about this idea?

Top Rated Features/Amenities: Riparian Meadow, Water Access, Natural Setting.

Lowest Rated Features/Amenities: Large Lawn, Central Plaza, Dog Run.

What other features/amenities would you like to see included in the park?

- Natural features as attractive as possible to urban wildlife (so ducks might be more inclined to nest closer to the water) and native plants that ultimately require the least amount of ongoing care. Interpretive information about local history native plants and wildlife. Access for fishermen.
- Lots of places to sit - not fancy or elaborate. Simple benches.
- Plenty of light for safety at night.
- Concerns about seating and homeless shelter/habitat.
- Like big/open lawn.
- Don't like path through park - breaks it up - bikes will go too fast.
- Like connection to water.
- Like artificial turf in dog park.
- Concerns with tall plantings.
- More greenspace.
- Small observation deck (1 or 2) accessible by bike and walk paths on hillside.
- Kayak/canoe launch.
- Lots of trees between park and Highway 1 planted asap.
- Appropriate meadow and riparian features are most important parts. Features children can climb on rock groupings, other simple things.
- Bikes good - but need to slow down.
- Bathroom.

- Concern about losing the fenced-in playground that is publically accessible. The park is surrounded by heavy car and service truck traffic.
- More trees/native plants along all walking paths.
- Lighting along trail especially under bridges.
- Ground markings at predictable bike and pedestrian conflict areas.

Which of the following park name suggestions for the park do you like best?

- Waterside park 5
- Luna Park 4
- Short Bridge Park 2
- South Park 2
- Overlook Park 1

What else do you want us to know?

- Don't overbuild or end up with something that looks overdesigned. This is a great opportunity in S. Arlington to create a natural looking space for quiet uses. Please get larger trees planted soon for sound mitigation.
- Like artificial turf in dog park!
- Native plantings are great but we, who live close by to the planned parks, are humans who need as much green space as possible - not concrete, not building/paving
- Nothing but riparian planting within 15 feet of water's edge. That is critical area for wildlife. Could still have small section of water access.
- Wish you would have these meetings on different days of the week and/or times. Wednesdays I can only ever stay for the first 1/2 hour.
- I'm excited to know this is coming...
- Make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists - avoid conflict. Mark lanes.

Next Steps: The project website will be updated to include the presentation and a meeting summary. Please visit the project page for more information and to sign up for notifications. There will be an online feedback for available, and the results will be summarized at the next public meeting, which will be late June or early July.