

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES



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## Eastern Market Metro Park Advisory Team Progress Meeting

Date: January 29, 2019  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
Location: Hill Center (921 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE)  
Attendees: [Sign-In Sheet Missing]  
Distribution: EMMPAT; Posted to EMMP Website; Cassidy Mullen (DGS); Lisa Dixon (DGS); Alphonso Fluelling (DGS); Anthony DeLorenzo (DGS); Stephen Campbell (DGS); Donna Harris (DGS); Claudia Barahona (DGS); Tommie Jones (DGS); John Stokes (DGS);

### Minutes

- I. Welcome and Introductions
  - a. Members of DGS, DPR, the Design-Build team, EMMPAT and community were introduced.
  - b. DGS gave an overview of events since the last EMMPAT meeting on December 10.
    - i. DGS held interagency meetings with DDOT, DOEE, OP, DPR.
      1. Agencies supportive of many elements of the plan. The agencies offered multiple comments.
    - ii. Federal government shutdown impacts
      1. DGS had planned to meet with the Council on Fine Arts (CFA) in mid-January to present the latest concept plan. This meeting could not take place and is being rescheduled.
      2. DGS had planned to conduct a traffic study beginning in mid-January to analyze the proposed road closures and traffic changes. Due to the shutdown, the traffic counts would not be accurate, so the study had to be postponed until the government re-opened.
      3. Discussions with NPS regarding the Pennsylvania Avenue medians could not take place.
- II. Interim Playground
  - a. DGS clarified that the goal is to plan the interim playground pieces so that they'll be able to be reused in the final layout of the playground.
  - b. DPR gave some background: \$75K funding was donated to DPR. That's being transferred to DGS. The interim playground will be two pieces and surface mounted so as not to lose the warranty or compromise safety. Playground will have DPR standard ornamental fencing. DGS said that it would provide to the EMMPAT members images of the selected equipment.
  - c. DGS believes the work for the playground can be done in April.
- III. Community Survey
  - a. DGS presented some highlights from the community survey. DGS noted that the full results were posted on the project website and had been emailed to the EMMPAT members in advance of the meeting.
  - b. EMMPAT requested to hear the exact wording of the question regarding the implementation plan.
    - i. EMMPAT was concerned about the clarity of the implementation question. All the implications of both implementation plans need to be included.
    - ii. EMMPAT suggested reframing the implementation question as construction strategies that

- include pros and cons.
    - iii. EMMPAT suggested emphasizing that the goal is to have all the parcels permit ready—that implementation means a construction plan.
  - c. DGS noted a second or follow-up survey could go out.
  - d. EMMPAT requested further analysis of the survey and asked how much weight the survey will have in decision making.
    - i. DGS noted it would provide some follow up analysis after further review of the data.
    - ii. DGS noted that the survey is one element of the decision making process which also includes the EMMPAT, community meetings and agency feedback.
  - e. EMMPAT inquired about a higher-level budget estimate.
    - i. DGS stated that it would provide a high-level budget for the concept plans.
  - f. EMMPAT noted the focus on Parcel 1 is the least disruptive.
  - g. MOYA suggested it's possible the survey result reflected that overall safety was more important to the respondents than the playground's location.
  - h. EMMPAT suggested reframing the implementation question as construction strategies that include pros and cons.
  - i. DGS noted there will be follow-up surveys. DGS invited EMMPAT to discuss future survey questions in advance.
- IV. The Design-Build team presented takeaways from the one-on-one meetings with EMMPAT members.
- a. Priorities included safety, pest control, maintenance, more trees, saving the “George” trees, reducing overall pavement.
  - b. Vehicular circulation: The location of the bus stop is a key concern.
  - c. There were mixed opinions on the reversal of D St.
  - d. For the northern bowtie, the preference was for changing the surface material.
  - e. Loading zone ideas were raised for D Street and or 8<sup>th</sup> Street south of D Street.
  - f. The preference was for prioritizing Parcel 1.
- V. Pennsylvania Avenue Medians
- a. DGS noted that it had hoped to have more detailed feedback from NPS regarding the medians, but that the government shutdown put any further conversations on hold.
  - b. DGS noted that there has been a lot of community desire for fencing or other barriers in the medians. Some of the utilities there prevent tree planting. DGS had discussed with NPS some alternatives like raised planter beds but hasn't gotten any feedback. This is a very preliminary discussion.
  - b. EMMPAT thinks the raised planter idea is acceptable, so long as it keeps to the character of the neighborhood. EMMPAT asked if there's room for footings. D/B noted that's something to be negotiated with the agencies.
  - c. EMMPAT asked what the effects a raised planter or berm would be on traffic and/or sight-lines. DGS noted that's a good point. That should be discussed with DDOT.
  - d. EMMPAT asked whether there's been any coordination with Vision Zero. DGS noted Vision Zero will be incorporated through DDOT.
  - e. EMMPAT asked about narrowing the intersections of South Carolina Ave and D Street by the library and whether it would be approved by CFA. DGS noted that CFA can weigh in on that, but generally they don't the mitigation of pedestrian hazards and that their chief concern has been maintaining the South Carolina Ave view-corridor, which is not being interrupted by the changing intersections
- VI. Northern Bowtie and D Street North Reversal
- a. DDOT is in favor of closing it, but there's been a lot of community concern due to the daycare and Trader Joe's. A compromise would be to change the paving surface.
  - b. EMMPAT was concerned that having a drop off on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, as opposed to the D Street slip lane would create traffic jams in southbound lane and may encourage U-turns.
  - c. EMMPAT noted it would be helpful to see the traffic study. EMMPAT is concerned about a few of the traffic implications.

- i. DGS agreed that it would share the results of the traffic study
- d. EMMPAT emphasized the need for members to meet with DDOT to discuss some of DDOT's proposed modifications to D Street South.
  - i. DGS noted that the proposed D Street South modifications are not part of their Eastern Market scope
- e. EMMPAT asked what the rationale is for the D St. reversal. DGS noted the goal is to relieve congestion at the intersection of D Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Street.
- f. EMMPAT raised the question of commercial traffic. DGS noted DDOT is still doing those studies, also for emergency vehicles. EMMPAT noted that ambulances sometimes idle at Community Connections.

## VII. Playground Location

- a. The plan shows it south of the South Carolina Avenue corridor. DGS and D/B have received a number of comments about safety. One option is to swap the playground and the lawn feature so that the playground would be north of the South Carolina corridor.
- b. EMMPAT asked about the size of those two features. D/B noted bioretention needs to be considered, but D/B needs to have more detailed conversations with DOEE to work out the exact requirements for the site. The other piece is the walkway on the South Carolina axis, and what CFA will allow as far as shifting that. The goal is to make the playground as large as possible given those components.
- c. EMMPAT noted the original placement of the playground was based on the wishes of the homeowners there. Members suggested that could be surveyed at the same time as the D St. survey.
- d. DPR spoke to playground safety issues. DPR's recommendation from purely a safety perspective would be to place the playground north of the South Carolina Ave axis. DPR would normally prefer it to be squarely in the middle of the park. DPR noted that a lawn might be louder than a playground. DPR's recommendation is to place the playground as far away from Pennsylvania Ave as possible.
- e. EMMPAT asked whether children scale the fence or escape through gates. DPR has seen both, especially with older children. DPR noted that another concern is drivers crashing their vehicles into the playground.

## VIII. Public Benches/Seating

- a. There are a lot of concerns about undesirable uses, but people also need to be able to sit down and rest. DGS asked EMMPAT to comment on the quantity and location of benches.
- b. EMMPAT raised a major concern about pockets that will turn into 'popup shops' and encouraged that DGS refrain from using the word "bench" and instead use the term "seating" instead.
  - i. DGS agreed that this was a better description
- c. EMMPAT brought up Bryant Park in NYC with moveable chairs with bright colors that seem to deter theft.
- d. EMMPAT raised the topic of the Seward Square issues—the south side on Penn Ave. There are concerns from residents about policing it. There are mental health issues there.
- e. EMMPAT asked about lighting. D/B noted lighting and seating can be addressed together. Key areas have been identified, and the plan is to dive into the details of light levels. South Carolina Ave corridor will have lighting.
- f. EMMPAT asked D/B Team for recommendations around seating. D/B Team noted that seating is part of a healthy park. The type of seating and its placement can be studied. Moveable furniture can be used for activities. Swings can be used to draw the right kind of attention to the space. Along the pathway: park benches; on the plaza: fun sculptural seating for waiting, not lingering. Consider stroller and wheelchair access. Think about what kind of activation you want in the space.
  - i. D/B also suggested using different types of seating based on areas of the park.
- g. EMMPAT asked about evening / nighttime conditions. D/B noted the playground would be locked and provided with low lighting. Having the lawn on the north side allows that parcel to have some pedestrian activity through it at night. DPR noted installing security cameras in the park is an option and that they have begun incorporating cameras into some of their park designs.

- h. EMMPAT noted that painting moveable furniture bright colors cuts down significantly on theft. The BID should be able to come up with a system. EMMPAT noted landscape elements like stairs and retaining walls can also be seating options. Making furniture too heavy to lift is also an idea.

IX. Bus Stops

- a. DGS noted they're exploring modifications inside of curbs to improve bus stops (Pennsylvania Ave eastbound and 8<sup>th</sup> Street southbound), but that the locations of bus routes and stops is solely within DDOT's jurisdiction.
- b. EMMPAT would prefer to see the new bus stop on 8<sup>th</sup> Street included in the plan. DGS stated that it would identify this area as a potential future bus stop.
- c. D/B noted the entire concept will have to be approved by all agencies to get to advance to a schematic phase and ultimately to permit drawings. EMMPAT noted that's another reason to include it in the concept plan—to show the will and the intent of the community. DGS agreed to put it in the concept plan going forward.
- d. EMMPAT noted the existing bus stop could become a loading zone and that it was part of the 2015 Master Plan. That would be the preferred location for a loading zone.
- e. EMMPAT brought up the issue of stacking buses. DGS noted that's it was one of the concerns of DDOT but that DGS nor members of the D/B team did not have the expertise to discuss the matter of bus routing in detail.

X. Pavilions and Structures

- a. Some members of EMMPAT and community have suggested adding a covered pavilion or a more permanent kiosk or meeting space to either Parcel 1 or Parcel 4.
- b. EMMPAT noted the current library garden patio has programming, and you can't hear anything due to ambient noise. More space is clearly needed, so a covered space would be a good idea. Could it be climate controlled? How big could it be? Could it have restrooms? Who's going to have the key and book it? Does the library want it?
  - i. DGS noted there have been high-level meetings with DCPL where there have been similar questions.
- c. EMMPAT asked if this is part of the food and beverage kiosk idea. DGS confirmed yes, it could be combined with food and beverage and public restrooms. DPR noted there's a facility they're looking at in Franklin Park that's a small café structure with restrooms attached and operated by a third-party vendor.
- d. EMMPAT asked about maintenance of the parcels. How will they be kept clean and rat free? The BID noted it provides trash removal and other maintenance services. There was a discussion of how to fund that. Creating a 'friends of the park' group would be an option if there were a way to fund it properly.
- e. EMMPAT asked about restrictions on buying and selling on park property. DPR agreed that's a good question. DPR will go back to their legal department and find out whether the rules have been made less stringent. DPR noted that it had reached an agreement about sales on property for the Franklin Park project.
- f. DGS noted a lifecycle cost analysis will happen to estimate maintenance over the lifetime of the park that will be created during the schematic phase.
- g. DGS asked whether EMMPAT were receptive to the kiosk idea. EMMPAT agreed that the committee is receptive.
- h. EMMPAT noted it would be great if the kiosk could be architecturally interesting and pleasing.
- i. DPR noted the need for shade for health reasons. EMMPAT was receptive to introducing shade structures into the design for either Parcel 1, Parcel 4 or both.
  - i. DGS said it would share some examples of shade structures built at District parks.
- j. EMMPAT suggested Centennial Park in Nashville as a model for shade structures.
- k. EMMPAT noted that shade structures at both Parcel 1 and Parcel 4 could create a visual connection.

- XI. Public Restrooms
  - a. There have been some community requests for restrooms.
  - b. DPR noted that previously built standalone restrooms for District parks had to be removed due to loitering and vandalism. DPR is implementing a pilot projects of Portland Loos at some other parks around the city, and based on feedback may look to install something similar at Eastern Market Metro Park. EMMPAT was open to exploring this option.
- XII. Splash Pad
  - a. DGS noted that due to the water main under the South Carolina Ave corridor on Parcel 4, it was unfeasible to build the originally planned water feature. DC Water objected to building a permanent structure over their main due to weight and access concerns.
  - b. D/B team relocated the water feature to Parcel 1 and changed it to a splash pad. DPR noted that the advantage of a splash pad was that it was a year-round space.
  - c. EMMPAT agreed with this change.
- XIII. General Discussion. Following the business of the EMMPAT discussion the floor was opened to those in attendance to ask questions. Below comments are from both attendees and EMMPAT members.
  - a. It was noted that there was a typo with regard to the community meeting location. DGS clarified it will be Feb 6 at 7 p.m. at Eastern Market North Hall.
  - b. It was noted that there are currently large numbers of people who use the park to live in or engage in illegal activities. What are the plans around addressing that?
    - i. DPR noted that there's a Florida Ave park where the playground has an 8-10-foot steel fence. It had similar activity. DPR closed the park for 6–9 months, and when they reopened it was a nonissue. The park was designed with seating and sightlines that made it unattractive for those types of uses.
    - ii. Community members mentioned that EMMPAT clarified that Community Connections is not methadone. It's mental health and addiction counseling. Community Connections is very responsive, and they patrol. Undesirable activities in the park aren't necessarily because of Community Connections clients.
    - iii. It was suggested that closing D Street may assist Community Connections with client foot traffic and space for a smoking area.
  - c. EMMPAT suggested NPS's principal concern with the medians will be funding for maintenance. If you look at the blocks: 600 is commercial; 900 has a different character. This means the medians should be changed because the character on the north and south side will be an attractive park. You want to give it a park-like feel. It may even calm traffic.
  - d. It noted a fence doesn't have to be large. It can be small and attractive. Raised beds like there are on Connecticut Ave are also deterrents to jaywalking.
  - e. It was stressed that D Street is the residential street that will be most impacted. Those residents should have a dedicated consultation. It's in everyone's interest to get their insights.
  - f. It was noted it would be important to be transparent about the change of direction of D Street. The rationales should be well developed and communicated.
  - g. It suggested consultation on an outdoor public space in the middle of winter might not have been effective.
  - h. DGS noted that consultation will be ongoing through the spring and asked what DGS could do better.
  - i. It asked DGS to expand the membership to ANC commissioners and resident representatives. Community members and some EMMPAT recommended that residents on D Street be specifically consulted about Parcel 1. D Street residents were consulted during the development of the 2015 Master Plan, and things are changing. Building consensus means that everyone has a seat at the table. DGS noted that the present project management team is not authorized to change membership but that it would be discussed by DGS leadership.

- j. EMMPAT members reiterated this is a very positive project for what is currently a problematic space. Everyone is eager to see it happen.