

Rosslyn Process Panel (RPP) Subcommittee on Parks + Open Space Meeting Summary

October 30, 2014; 7:00-9:30 pm

2100 Clarendon Blvd., Room 109/110 (C & D)

Subcommittee Members in Attendance: P. Holland (Chair), S. Campbell, K. Elmore, E. Gearin, P. Hage, A. McIntyre, K. K. Morris, M. Novotny, L. Sarli

Staff in Attendance: A. Fusarelli, M. Ladd, E. Kays, E. Beach, L. Aljabar (B. Carlson, E. Rhodeside)

1. Welcome

2. Follow-Up from 9/22 Meeting

Corridor of Light

- Public Art Committee is well aware of the project;
- RAFOM is opposed to the project, or at least to various aspects of it;

Ground Floor Land Use:

- Why call for a park at Oak and 17th Streets? It's not convincing, it's difficult to see it as a successful park; Today it seems to work pretty well as it is;
- What type of street design is envisioned for residential areas?
- Extent of secondary active frontages along the corridor creates worry that 18th St will be less active;
- Freedom Park retail will depend on ability to create more access points, so it seems odd that we'd eliminate the Starbucks at Oak/17th today since that is already pretty active;
- Have there been thought to add elevators to Freedom Park like the High Line has for better access;
- Property owner of parcel w/ Starbucks Park will share redevelopment concepts for site with staff;
- Have we mapped the full range of other existing, private but publicly accessible spaces? These add value to the overall network and should be recognized; Would also be helpful to show these maps for better understanding of context.

3. Small On-Site Public Spaces

- Topography makes it tougher for some sites; separates people on the sidewalk from space; would prefer to see contributions made towards major, prioritized parks;
- Studies show parks are more well-used when located at grade; leery of in-lieu contributions, unless there is a clear path to getting it. Do developers prefer to pay in lieu of or provide something on site?
- Generally prefer to keep spaces at grade; like to have open spaces with simple incline and amazing overlooks; we should want small spaces to be part of process, but considered on a site by site basis;
- Where community benefit credits provided, credit needs to be commensurate with level of benefit of the space, and a high bar should be set; in lieu of payments can be beneficial when we know what we're getting. Small spaces like at Turnberry Tower are additive, maybe we should encourage them;
- We should think about locations where slope is a problem, maybe that will help narrow down the conversation;
- Small spaces can be valuable in providing an overall spectrum of things; such spaces are a win-win when we have them next to activating retail; must have eyes on the street; need to be at grade along at least part of the site; private development has demonstrated wants to provide them;
- Concerned about diluting the ability to complete planned public spaces. If we believe we've identified the best parks system, small additional spaces throughout the area can dilute the entire system;

- Lack of maintenance of Gateway Park is an ongoing challenge; need to find a way to take care of the easy stuff.

4. Rosslyn Plaza Park

- The applicant had made changes to the plans since the last SPRC meeting in 2013, would like to briefly share tonight for broader context;
- The angled space approach seems like it has a lot of potential for opening up to the river along 18th St and views out;
- It's important to know what you would see from 18th/Kent, and what is the space opening up to. Concerned that the some portions of the park will be dead at night. Where do we want to put what we are aiming for? Breaking a larger space down into smaller elements seems like a great opportunity; these new schemes seem to have enough light and air; likes the configuration of space, as it allows for a constant sense of discovery;
- Need to be realistic about what we can and cannot see (cannot see river from ground plane);
- With the applicant scheme, likes how the esplanade fits in, but with the Goody Clancy scheme likes the idea of the space serving as a fulcrum between Esplanade, 18th Street;
- Appreciates wonderful analysis, range of scenarios, showing us that the proposed elements of PDSP were valuable elements, but just that there are other ways to lay them out;
- The intersection of 18th Street/Esp/Bridge is key;
- Programmatically, there needs to be town square in this end of Rosslyn;
- Goody Clancy options fall short on ARR coming up and going back down; this is not a good solution for the street; to raise up/lower the street just to create a grid is pushing it too far;
- With applicant's scheme, concerned with the hopscotch approach to site, really depends on critical mass; nervous about individual spaces being not well-activated enough;
- Not sure if there is a real need to be concerned about the "Wall effect";
- Freedom Park edge is a challenge, need to really explore whether there are ways to address (retail liner, public art; etc.)
- Regardless of whether Arlington Ridge Road stays low or comes up and down, it's just important that the pedestrian/bicycle connections really strong;
- In applicant's scheme, concerned that Great Lawn could be isolated;
- Likes idea of integrating a destination point as in the GC concept;
- Should consider whether lateral water features along Esplanade could help drown out highway noise;
- Agree that GC proposal is something that opens up angularly which is important; if applicant were willing to rethink building form, we could get the best of both;
- Retail supports retail; integrating concept of river into Esplanade; could move forward with come combination of the features discussed; strong bicycle connections are important;
- Active recreation on the site is important; great to have fulcrum point on-site; focus on 18th Street.

5. Prioritizations of Park Improvements

- Candidates for prioritization include Gateway Park updates; the boathouse (though that may be longer term); perhaps Rosslyn Plaza and the Esplanade might be viewed as second tier;
- Improving connectivity to Freedom Park, especially from Wilson Blvd, should be a priority;
- Should consider potential ways to break up programming of Gateway Park to get certain improvements done sooner;
- Prioritize edge improvements along Dark Star Park in near term, in conjunction with improvements to Meade Street Bride; Also, start the Gateway Park re-design process soon;
- Relatively strong support for getting things going on Gateway Park as soon as possible, as it would be great to use Gateway Park more fully;

- We shouldn't give up on boathouse – we should still look at that, but recognize the importance of remaining flexible for future needs, as they change over seasons and time;
- Shouldn't forget that some of the real opportunities are for the connections outside of the study area;
- Small urban spaces are very critical, but they are typically helpful only when designed well;
- For Rosslyn Plaza ideas, the concept for multi-use surfaces is really terrific, but should be careful with building design and potential implications for wind and shadow effects;
- More attention is needed on how Freedom Park is going to transition into 18th Street, especially if it will continue on to 19th Street with a reconfigured Kent north of 18th Street;
- Can't imagine what kind of character we'll have if Arlington Ridge Road ramps up and how that will relate to the esplanade;
- Corridor of Light; some opinion among neighborhood that design is stale, and inappropriate for the southern gateway location (Meade St bridge); bridge seems to have been designed with primary purpose of accommodating the planned luminous bodies;
- Need to protect the one really great view from Freedom Park bridge over Wilson Blvd, to preserve views from Freedom Park to DC;
- Meade St bridge was seen as a place-maker and a major gateway in four directions; UDC had believed that strong vertical elements/columns could work well to help mark the gateway – this approach is bookending what's happening on the other gateway; the linkages to federal property are paramount;
- There is a dire need today to add children facilities in Rosslyn in the near-term; could we do a Rocky Run-like playground in part of Gateway Park?

6. Next Steps

- This completes second of two Parks subcommittee meetings;
- First draft of Sector Plan Update targeted for release by the end of the year, with schedule anticipating County Board adoption in April 2015.