MEETING REPORT

MEETING DATE: June 27, 2017

STAFF ATTENDING:
- Michael Ma, M-NCPPC Park Development Division Chief
- Patricia McManus, M-NCPPC Park Development Design Section Supervisor
- Ching-Fang Chen, M-NCPPC Park Development Project Manager and Landscape Architect
- Bob Green, M-NCPPC Park Development ADA Project Manager
- Mark Wallis, M-NCPPC Park Planner
- Zachary Schley, M-NCPPC Park Police
- Philip Lake, M-NCPPC Playground Safety Inspector
- Alex Girr-Borrayo, M-NCPPC Public Affairs and Community Outreach Coordinator

PROJECT: Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park Renovation

SUBJECT: Community Meeting #2

Staff reviewed the public input received from the first community meeting and three preliminary concept alternatives for the renovation of Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park. Images of relevant examples were shared at the presentation to convey the ideas. Approximately 14 people attended the meeting. Participants introduced themselves at the beginning of the meeting and participated in discussion after the staff presentation.

Concept Alternatives:
The preliminary program recommends an open area for small gatherings and picnicking; accessible paths; play opportunities for all ages; stormwater management and landscape improvements; and site furniture to accommodate flexible uses. The preliminary concepts were developed to respond to the community’s preferences from the first public meeting and provide initial ideas for discussion.

The concepts envision terraced program spaces in a garden setting to complement the neighborhood environment. The components include multi-purpose terrace/open space near the front of Hampden Street, playgrounds for 2 to 5 year-old and 5-12 year-old children, a nature play area incorporating stormwater mitigation at the low area along the northern border, accessible paths and ramps in the park, a boardwalk through the forest edge to connect to Mertford Street, seating opportunities, retaining seat walls, signage, enclosure, garden opportunities and landscape improvements. While accommodating the program needs, these initial concepts explore spatial efficiency and flexibility.
• Concept A, proposes a playground for younger children near the community open space for easy supervision and features a multi-age swing/seating at the front of the park to activate the park frontage.
• Concept B, is similar to Concept A but includes a gazebo and terrace in place of a multi-age swing/seating.
• Concept C, proposes a picnic terrace at the front, playground for younger children in the rear to be away from Hampden Street and a playground for older children near the community open space in the middle.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

• Most participants were pleased and supportive of the concepts.
• The park’s current use focuses on the playground for kids. While this is an important component, neighbors would like to see uses for all age groups.
• With respect to Concept C, there was a request to keep the younger children’s play area closer to the community space in the middle or front of the park for safety and supervision.
• There was a suggestion to provide a paved area for children on scooters.
• The idea of consolidating and expanding usable program spaces was well received. Strategies include leveling grades of the steep slopes along the eastern property with use of retaining walls, reclaiming the currently excluded area along the western property and making use of the northern quadrant near the forest.
• Neighbors are in favor of the multi-purpose community open space towards the front of the park and considered this component of the plan important. Possible activities and user groups were discussed.
• There should be ergonomic benches, nice landscaped areas and space for adults to enjoy.
• A neighbor brought up concerns with use of lawn for a community green and expressed that lawn may not be suitable due to ticks from the deer population, shade from trees, mosquitos, and maintenance requirements. There was a comment that the current schedule/rotation for mowing the lawn is not adequate.
• Neighbors expressed interest in exploring alternative surfaces for the park. Permeable paving was suggested for activity spaces and walkways, and synthetic turf was also mentioned as a possibility.
• Neighbors expressed interest in providing shade but stated that a gazebo would not be a good idea, because it serves a single purpose, limits flexibility, and could invite people to loiter in the park at night.
• There was a request for furniture that is not moveable.
• Natural shade by tree canopy is preferred. Neighbors are open to the idea of incorporating other seasonal shade structures to provide shade for the summer.
• A boardwalk connection along the forest edge in M-NCPPC property was proposed. Neighbors would like to see if it will be possible to provide access through the RAD 6 Development Corporation lot (which is a HOC property) for a more direct connection.
from Mertford Street to the park. Staff will investigate whether this connection can be made accessible.

- There was a request to explore connections to the natural surface trail system in Rock Creek stream valley.
- The renovation shall look at overall potential needs for an aging community.
- Adequate lighting for safe passage through the park is desired, and most community participants felt the current lighting is not adequate. Park Police emphasized the need to keep the lighting limited in order not to encourage nighttime use of the park. The street lighting on Hampden Street is adequate for the front of the park, but there was a request to improve the existing lighting at the back of the park along the connector path.
- Community members discussed their love of the cherry trees within the neighborhood and requested that removed cherry trees should be replenished with new ones. The neighborhood is a mini-Kenwood in the springtime.
- The nature play theme was supported and there was a suggestion to provide integration of play with the woods in a welcoming way.
- The park sign should be in proportion to the narrow park frontage. A smaller sign either mounting on a fence or off the side to the edge would be preferred.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- M-NCPPC will participate in the Ken-Gar 125th Anniversary Celebration to share the concepts and gather additional input from the community.
- Develop schematic design based on community input.