

## Community Meeting Notes: Future Park in Lyttonsville

October 25, 2022 – Virtual Community Meeting, 7-8:30pm

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Project Web site: [Montgomery Parks Lyttonsville](#)

Open Town Hall Links:

[Town Hall Lyttonsville Park Survey](#)

Meeting Video: [Lyttonsville Park Presentation Video](#)

Project Manager: Ching-Fang Chen, [Email Ching Fang Chen](#)

Parks Staff in Attendance:

- Ching-Fang Chen, Project Manager, Park Development Division (PDD)
- Patricia McManus, Design Section Manager, PDD
- Brian Lewandowski, Project Engineer, PDD
- Charles Kines, Planner Coordinator, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD)
- Hyojung Garland, Master Planner/Supervisor, Park Planning Section (PPSD)
- Carl Heeralal, Park Manager, Southern Parks
- Melissa Chotiner, Community Outreach and Engagement Manager, Public Affairs and Community Partnerships (PACP)
- Michelle Ramirez, Public Outreach Specialist, PACP
- Susan Stafford, Communications Director, PACP
- Trevin Sherard, Park Police Officer

### Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of this community meeting was to present preliminary concepts based on public feedback and gather input from the community for the park facility plan.

### Meeting Summary

The meeting began with overview of the project background and feedback from the initial public meeting and Open Town Hall survey. Staff presented preliminary concepts A and B with 3D studies that were developed based on the preferred program priorities. Visual references of the design features, site amenities and landscape approaches were shared to convey the ideas. An overview of the process and schedule was also discussed. Approximately 30 people participated in the meeting. District 18 State Delegate Jared Solomon was on the call to participate in the meeting.

Staff encouraged participants to ask questions throughout the meeting in the Q&A box and contribute to the Open Town Hall survey after the meeting. A link to the survey was posted in the chat. Following the presentation, a discussion and Q&A period allowed for community feedback.

## Comments and Discussion

### Concept Plan

- A participant commented that “Heritage Terrace” is a great name for the terrace intended for community gathering and interpretation. Another person asked how the name was decided.

RESPONSE: The term “Heritage Terrace” was for identifying the program area on the plan. It was not a formal name. Staff welcomes the community’s input for this. Perhaps the space can be dedicated to a specific term once the plan is more developed.

- There was a question about accessibility in Concept B - would there be a ramp or a way for a wheelchair or stroller to get from amphitheater to the open area.

RESPONSE: Yes. There is an accessible ramp for people to access from the amphitheater to the open area. Both concepts are fully accessible among the program areas.

- A participant expressed interest in including a pollinator garden in the park.
- There was a question about the material for the multi-purpose lawn.

RESPONSE: Natural turf is intended for the multi-purpose lawn. The area will be designed and built in a way to sustain its use.

- There was a question about whether the park will have lighting.

RESPONSE: This park is intended to be used during daylight. It would be a passive park without athletic facilities that require night lighting. The Capital Crescent Trail (which will be operated by DOT) along the park edge will be lit. Sargent Sherard explained the hours of lighting are determined by the type of facility and the purpose. A commuter trail remains lit for safe access. Staff will reach out to DOT to get more information regarding the trail lighting.

- There was a question about whether the park sign will be installed on the Michigan Avenue frontage or would a second sign be installed on Kansas or elsewhere.

RESPONSE: Park signs will be installed at each entrance on both Michigan and Kansas Avenues.

- There was a comment about the concepts have done a good job using the grade to separate the various areas and would like to keep this approach.
- A participant expressed a preference for the idea of the small natural play area in Concept A. It would be nice to have an element in the park that attracts families with young children from both sides of the new Talbot Avenue Bridge. Something unique that is not in nearby play areas.

RESPONSE: The nature play area was intended for families with young children. The multi-purpose lawn is for families as well. The plan was careful not to pack the space with too many elements but allow flexibility for free play so the park can accommodate people of different age groups.

### **Interpretation**

- A participant expressed a preference for the idea of historic interpretation signage in addition to the bridge element.
- There was a question about how content for the signage will be developed.

RESPONSE: The interpretation part of this project will be developed during the detailed design phase of the project and will be led by the Cultural Resources team of the Park Planning and Stewardship Division. A separate meeting will be held to obtain input for the content then. The current concept studies intend to focus on the physical layout and program integration.

- The idea of using an interpretive fence to screen the park from the houses was well-received. A participant suggested perhaps the residents to the south of the park could be polled to see if they want to screen or would rather look into the park. Their opinions should be given special weight.

### **Safety and Access**

- A question was brought up about pedestrian access into the park from Kansas Avenue.

RESPONSE: Concepts A and B provide pedestrian access from both Kansas Avenue and Michigan Avenue.

- There was a concern about safety. With the trail on one side and the barrier for housing on the other, how does the design address the safety of those using this space.

RESPONSE: Safety and visibility are key criteria for park design. The concepts purposely locate amenities around the central open space to ensure direct physical and visual connections among the program areas. Everyone can see each other while engaging in their own activities. Transparent tree buffers along the trail and a tall canopy are envisioned to allow surveillance within and around the park. The concept plan will be evaluated by park police for CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) to make sure safety and crime prevention strategies are integrated into the design. Park Police Corporal Derrick Williams, the parks CPTED professional, will guide the development during the design process.

- Concern was brought up about children's safety and crime prevention given how close it is to the elementary school. Another participant commented that there will be no direct link between the park and Rosemary Hill Elementary School. Only the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) goes near the school. Safety for children should be paramount in park design and MCDOT's trail design. The new Talbot Avenue Bridge and ramp down to Lanier and Talbot

junction are crucial spaces for safety. More details are needed from Parks and MCDOT to evaluate safety.

### **Graphics and presentation**

- A participant commented that photos of large and expansive green park spaces are not very relevant to this much smaller and narrower future Park in Lyttonsville with Capital Crescent Trail passing through it.
- There were comments about the human models in the presentation should reflect the historic and current demographic composition of the community. Come up with small and appropriate comparisons. Look into Trimble Sketchup People to find more diverse avatars.
- A participant expressed appreciation for the rendering of the two concepts and making use of separate areas or rooms for different types of activities.

### **Integration of bridge components**

- A participant expressed interest in making the bridge elements look like a bridge with the two girders facing each other. Perhaps the bridge could be incorporated into the stormwater facility or bridged over the stormwater. Prefer the bridge elements installed in a way that visitors could travel over the bridge.
- A participant commented that neither of the two concepts presented incorporates a rebuilding of the historic Talbot Avenue Bridge in the park — the two girders placed parallel with wooden planks in between — something that many community members are in favor of. There was a question about whether any of the other study concepts included this idea. If so, can these concepts be shared with the community?
- A participant expressed disfavor for the bridge elements set low in the grass. It would disappear into the landscape. In concept B, could the bridge connect the lawn to the trail or be more bridge-like in nature?
- A participant commented that if the bridge elements faced each other, they might make a good conversational area. Several participants agreed that the bridge doesn't have to actually span a space or bear weight. A faux bridge that gives the sense of crossing over the old bridge would be the best way to incorporate the girders.
- A participant expressed a preference for a low-ground bridge element. This would allow youth to better and more safely interact with.
- A participant commented that the bridge components or replica of the components must be curated by a professional cultural historian before anything is done to transfer portions of it to the future park. Lyttonsville residents should be involved. The results of curated findings can be applied to the interpretive signage, fence, and other devices and in the future Lyttonsville Museum.

- There was a concern about cutting the bridge girder in half. Incorporation of the bridge components should protect the entirety of a historical piece that has great meaning to the local community.

RESPONSE: The bridge deteriorated. It will require major restoration to safely reinstall the bridge. The Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan recommends incorporating “components” of the bridge in the park. The preliminary concepts took a more conservative approach and proposed incorporating some components but not the bridge as a whole. The size of the girder (approximately 60’ long) and the significant grade change of the site also pose challenges for integration. More research will need to be done to determine whether the components could bear weight or should be installed as artifacts for display. Staff will look into the idea and bring a conservator with the expertise on board to assist with design development.

The other reason why the bridge components were suggested at the ground level in the concepts was for safety and liability reasons. Though unintended in the design, children might climb on the bridge structure. Per code, any vertical structure with a grade change more than 30 inches requires a guardrail. Guardrails or other elements near the bridge components would detract from the appearance and take away the historic character.

Both concepts could incorporate the idea of making the bridge elements look like a bridge. Concept A could easily incorporate the bridge girders on either side of the Heritage Terrace. The components will need to be carefully restored to be safe for touch. More testing and research will need to be conducted in depth to further the study.

### **General**

- There was a question about how the timing of the construction/opening of the park will be influenced by the timing of when the Purple Line partners and MTA open the Capital Crescent Trail.

RESPONSE: This project intends to develop the plan to the adequate level with cost estimates to be included in the next 6-year CIP program for final design and construction. Based on the update by the Purple Line Community Advisory Team on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Purple Line expects to begin passenger services in the fall of 2026. That would be when the property is made available to the Parks. Our intent is to be ready to start construction as soon as the property is transferred to Montgomery Parks. The design and construction of the park will be contingent upon funding approval by the Montgomery County Council.

- A request was brought up to provide more information on the ecology of the future park in a future presentation.

RESPONSE: Staff has been working closely internally to ensure the design is integrated with maintenance and operations for long-term sustainability while maximizing environmental benefits. Site ecology will be studied further after ownership is formally transferred and access to the site becomes available. The concepts explore different types of vegetation

and landscape management approaches to promote ecological services such as no-mow lawn or meadow vegetation to reduce mowing for passive program areas. The park could possibly be a pilot project to implement these practices. Operating budget for this park will also be coordinated during facility planning to ensure long-term sustainability.

- There was a request to provide more information on the bridge restoration in the next public meeting.
- A question was brought up about where people directly affected by this project could provide their feedback.

RESPONSE: Residents can provide comments on the Open Town Hall or contact the project manager directly by email or phone. Contact info is posted on the project web page and the chat.

- The Talbot Avenue Bridge Committee invited all community meeting panelists and attendees to the 5th Annual Talbot Avenue Bridge Lantern Walk on Saturday, November 12. Maybe one day, when the Lyttonsville Neighborhood Park is completed, the Lantern Walk will start and end in the park.

**Next Steps:** Staff will work on incorporating the comments from the public meeting and Open Town Hall survey to advance the design and will share the revised concept alternatives for feedback in the next community meeting. The Open Town Hall survey will be open until January 25, 2022. Comments in the Q&A of this meeting will be downloaded and posted on the project website for information.