



MCPB Item # _____

Date: 01/31/2019

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 24, 2019

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks 
Mitra Pedoeem, Deputy Director of Administration 
Jai Cole, Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD)  

FROM: Cristina Sasaki, Planner Coordinator, Lead Park Planner, Park & Trail Planning Section, PPSD
Hyojung Garland, Master Planner/Supervisor, Park & Trail Planning Section, PP
Patricia McManus, Supervisor, PDD 
Paul Mortensen, Planning Department, Director's Office

SUBJECT: Planning Board Work Session on the Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines

Description

BACKGROUND

In 2018, in conjunction with the approval and adoption of the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS Plan)*, staff began conducting monthly meetings with the Urban Parks Advisory Group and Parks and Planning Departments staff to discuss a companion document to the EPS Plan - the *Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Design Guidelines* – previously briefed to the Board as *Urban Parks and Public Spaces (UPPS) Design Guidelines*.

As Montgomery County and our region continues to grow, the biggest challenge is to provide adequate parks and public spaces where land is already scarce and expensive: our higher density centers. With increase in competition for land, our urban parks and public spaces should accommodate multiple and complementary functions within a network of smaller central spaces. By integrating efforts and preventive measures from different stakeholders, we can effectively utilize scarce and expensive resources and reduce the strain on existing failing infrastructure. This document will be used to give overall guidance to stakeholders including planners, designers, decision-makers, developers, land owners, and the public on how to design the network of privately and publicly owned, publicly accessible parks and public spaces within the adopted EPS Plan Study Area.

Vision: “Stronger, healthier and happier communities in the County. In the places where we have the most people, everyone can walk to a public space to enjoy the outdoors”- from the EPS Plan’s Vision.

Purpose: This document provides design guidance for the urban park typology described in the *2017 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan*, and focuses on the design quality of existing and proposed parks and public spaces in the *EPS Plan Study Area*. The *EPS Design Guidelines* will provide overall direction for the urban park typologies design including the function, type of experiences, key features, size, context, and site access and connectivity. The expected outcome is to create inviting, easily accessible, attractive, comfortable, and safe urban parks and public spaces.

On June 28, 2018, staff provided the Board an overview of the scope of the project and collected input and direction in order to develop the working draft for public comment prior to Planning Board work session(s). See a summary of comments and how the document incorporated them under the **DISCUSSION – Comments and Staff Responses/Planning Board Comments.**

SESSION SUMMARY

This work session will focus on how Planning Board and stakeholder (Advisory Group, Core Team, and Designers) feedback has been incorporated into the working draft of the *Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines*.

In addition, the working draft was posted for overall public comment since early January. Staff is currently receiving public comments and will continue to do so until this work session. These comments will be summarized and presented to the Board during the work session.

SCHEDULE

After the June 28, 2018 Planning Board briefing, staff continued advisory group and core team meetings. Input from both groups along with direction from the Planning Board was incorporated into the working draft. The Planning Board will hold a second work session on February 28th where revisions to the draft will be presented, any outstanding issues will be discussed, and it is anticipated that the Board will vote on the Guidelines document.

- **June 2018 through January 2019:** Continued Stakeholder Input through Advisory Group, Core Team and Designers Group
- **January 08, 2019:** Release of the Working Draft for public input
- **January 31, 2019:** Planning Board Work Session #1
- **February 28, 2019:** Planning Board Work Session #2 and Board Vote

After approval by the Planning Board, Staff will make approved revisions and adopt the Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines as part of planning process for public spaces in the County.

DISCUSSION – Comments and Staff Responses

Staff received comments via Advisory Group, Core Team, and Designers Group. Topics that were within the scope of the *EPS Design Guidelines* will be addressed by Staff in the work session.

Planning Board Comments

During the June 28 briefing, the Planning Board provided direction for the development of the Working Draft.

Comments	Working Draft January 2019
#1 - Clarify the intent and purpose of the Design Guidelines regarding its influence on the site-specific recommendations developed during a sector plan process and its application during development review. Concern on not giving up the ability of the applicant to negotiate site-specific recommendations during development review.	See Section 1.1 Vision and Purpose – How to Use these Guidelines – A. Master and Sector Plans, Associated Design Guidelines and Streetscape Standards and B. Development Review, and Guidelines Flexibility, both in page 7.

Comments	Working Draft January 2019
#2 - The Guidelines will help reset expectations for developers and neighbors on what urban parks' activities and functions should be – it will reconceptualize what are urban parks on the first place for everybody. It is important to emphasize the need to offer a variety of activities within the same space to maximize opportunities for recreation and community gathering, especially where land is scarce and expensive.	See Introduction: Delivering Energized Public Spaces, Sections 1.2 Goals, 1.4 Outcomes, 2.1 Design Principles and 2.2 Design Guidelines.
#3 - Make sure to include differences and common elements while comparing the different park types within the urban park's category.	See Section 3.1 Urban Park Types – especially Table 3.1 – Urban Parks Types Matrix: Comparison on Key Design Elements

Stakeholders Comments: Advisory Group, Core Team, and Designers

The following outlines the major issues that emerged from discussion with stakeholders' groups and how these issues were addressed in the Design Guidelines Working Draft:

Comments	Working Draft January 2019
#1 - The overall education message of these guidelines should be the ability to communicate the community values expressed in the public space design.	See Sections 2.1 Design Principles and 2.2 Design Guidelines – B. PLACE – B.3.COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROCESS
#2 - Provide clarification on the design intent of each proposed design guideline. Define guidelines based on answers to the questions: What we have? What we want? How to access and navigate?	See Section 2.2 Design Guidelines – Table 2.1 Matrix illustrating Design Guidelines, their Design Intent, and Topics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What we have: Context • What we want: Place, Comfort, Variety • How to access and navigate: Connections
#3 - Consider the aging population when studying mobility within and to/from a public space.	See Section 2.1 Design Principles – Access and Connectivity, and Section 2.2.E. CONNECTIONS.
#4 - Consider the journey and destination to public spaces.	See Section 2.1 Design Principles – Access and Connectivity, and Section 2.2.E. CONNECTIONS.
#5 - Consider community safer routes to parks and public spaces. Encourage other ways of mobility to be more convenient and safer.	See Section 2.1 Design Principles – Access and Connectivity, and Section 2.2.E. CONNECTIONS.
#6 - Consider strategies to provide public spaces in short-, mid- and long-term.	See Section 3.1.8 Temporary/Interim Park – those parks can be implemented faster and at a lower cost as temporary commitment to respond to the community's current needs.

Comments	Working Draft January 2019
#7 - Consider making the case studies available for a variety of projects.	We are currently working on creating an online case study library –programmed to be shared with Planning Board at the First Planning Board Work Session.
#8 - Consider making this document as a reference for other areas beyond the EPS Study Area.	See 1.1 Vision and Purpose – How to Use these Guidelines – A. Master and Sector Plans, Associated Design Guidelines and Streetscape Standards: “For Plan areas not covered within the EPS Study Area, these guidelines will serve as an available resource...”
#9 - Consider access to parking and public safety.	See Section 2.2.E.2 CONNECTIONS/Multiple Choices and Section 2.2.C.3 COMFORT/Safety.
#10 - Provide public input period for Working Draft document before it goes to PB Work Session.	The document was released to the public for comments early January allowing approximately 4 weeks for review/comments at the Open Town Hall webpage.
#11 – Clarify the role/application of these Guidelines for areas within and outside the EPS Study Area regarding its weight during the Sector Plans and Development Review processes.	See Section 1.1 Vision and Purpose – How to Use these Guidelines – A. Master and Sector Plans, Associated Design Guidelines and Streetscape Standards and B. Development Review, and Guidelines Flexibility, both in page 7.

ATTACHMENT

A. Designing Public Spaces: Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines Working Draft

pc:

- Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD)
- Jeffrey A. Bourne, Chief, Facilities & Capital Programs Division, MCRD
- John Nissel, Deputy Director of Park Operations, Department of Parks
- Jim Poore, Chief, Facilities Management Division, Department of Parks
- Doug Ludwig, Chief, Northern Parks, Department of Parks
- Bill Tyler, Chief, Southern Parks, Department of Parks
- David Vismara, Chief, Horticulture Forestry and Environmental Education Division, Department of Parks
- Christy Turnbull, Chief, Enterprise Division, Department of Parks
- Tony Devaul, Chief, Park Police Division, Department of Parks
- Shuchi Vera, Chief, Management Services Division, Department of Parks
- Michael Ma, Chief, Park Development Division
- Kristi Williams, Chief, Public Affairs & Community Partnerships Division, Department of Parks
- Gwen Wright, Director, Planning Department
- Pamela Zorich, Planner Coordinator, Research and Special Projects, Planning Department