

Crystal City Open Space Framework: Workshop Two

Workshop Notes – 7/22/2020

Location:

Virtual Community Workshop Via Zoom

Hosted By National Landing BID

MEETING NOTES:

SUMMARY

The National Landing BID hosted the second of three workshops, which was conducted via Zoom. Hoerr Schaudt presented the programming framework and potential park programming for the JBG Smith proffered park areas, including Crystal Park, 23rd Street plaza, Center Park, Metro Market Square, and Gateway Park. Community Members had the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the programming framework and potential park programming during small group virtual breakout sessions.

The primary purpose of the workshop was to gain an understanding for the community's programming preferences around each park and how that relates to the surrounding Crystal City park areas. Hoerr Schaudt will synthesize the community feedback, along with feedback provided via the Crystal Parks CoUrbanize website, and present a refined Crystal City Open Space Framework plan during the third community workshop this fall.

OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK WORKSHOP TWO

Facilitators:

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Attendees:

Barbara Hoffheins

Bob Panfil

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Jeffrey Williams
Judy Freshman
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Susan English
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BREAKOUT GROUP NOTES

Group 1:

- There is a large amount of unmet demand for dog parks.
- Provide for a diversity of greenery, shrubs, and old/grand trees.
- Do not need additional event and gaming spaces as there are plenty of these types of spaces available (e.g. Long Bridge Park, Water Park).
- Discouraged the band shell and long picnic table programming elements.
- Would like to recreate elsewhere in Crystal City the serene, elevated park environment which was removed for the Central District Retail project.
- Avoid over programming the parks, particularly at Metro Market Square where there will be heavy transit use and pedestrian movement.
- It is important to plan the connection between Greenway Park and Crystal Park.

Group 2:

- Most preferred Park programs (by park)
 - Provide places to sit and watch people; passive use is most important, specifically Gateway Park.
 - Provide striking new buildings and parks that take advantage of architectural vistas.
 - Provide active recreation at Crystal Park – Gym Stations and Volleyball courts have been important and makes for a great opportunity to add more (additional sanitation and trash cans would be useful).
 - Opportunities for people watching is important; sometimes more active things.
 - Always go to Crystal City for the farmers market.

- Opportunities for spaces to be better incorporated into the design of a park (better place for community gathering in conjunction with programming like farmers market); opportunities to connect with others in the community.
- The whole community is so built with hardscape that there is a need for softer gardens, lawns, greenery and passive uses. The exception is Crystal Park, where many athletic activities are available and useful and are not in conflict with residential uses.
- Multi-use metro market area would be a great spot for the farmers market.
- Seasonal opportunities to experience a park (pollinators, blooming flowers, etc.).
- SUMMARY
 - Gateway Park should be passive
 - Crystal Park would be a great spot for active recreation
 - Consensus around passive spaces with a lot of opportunities for people watching and interesting and unique plantings that provide interest and variety in each season
 - Farmers Market at Metro Market Square
 - Art and programming in the parks to highlight local talent
- Least preferred park programs (bad in some places/ok in others?)
 - All programs are legitimate, but less interest in the active uses, yet recognize that others will find them useful. Crystal Park would be a great way to achieve active rec programming; no strong dislikes or objections.
 - 23rd Street is hidden today, wish it was more active and had more people; Bell Street, wish it had more people and activity, probably because the buildings are vacant; Farmers market or event space; bring art to showcase local talent
 - Not applicable would be large-scale active recreation, like field sports
 - Arlington County allows developers to have dogs, but does not require them to build dog facilities on their sites. Objection to using precious open space for too much dog park use. Maybe a small one to serve existing buildings.
 - SUMMARY
 - All potential programming is appropriate except for large-scale field sports like soccer, flag football, etc.
 - Less interest in active uses, particularly at Gateway Park
 - Recognize need for dog parks, but concern about devoting too much space to them
 - Other than these elements, no strong dislikes.
- What program opportunities are missing?
 - Like the way the programs are broken out; Gateway Park, extremely concerned about an active park that would be noisy; the proposed potential program would likely be well received. Passive!
 - Center park space: art and sculptural elements would be good and a flexible lawn space, but like the added possibilities for what could be in it, nothing that does not belong (on current list); agree on the dog issue.

- Lots of good things on the list. Continue the art and educational elements. Proper signage and informational signs on what is within the parks and what should be highlighted from the community; stimulate thought at the parks; hint at other parks within existing parks (greenprint). Distinguishable and curious to see out the Center and Metro Market square parks.
- Confused about Center Park. Great location, but it is completely dead. Since it is going to be connected to Crystal Drive, there is potential for a theater environment and events. Lots of potential as an event space; Metro Market Square likes what is shown; Wayfinding between the parks; good flow
- Farmers Market at Metro Market Square.
- SUMMARY
 - Incorporate Public Art
 - Opportunities for wayfinding and linking all parks into a network via design and/or signage
 - Large scale event space
 - Farmers Market at Metro Market Square
- Overall Highlights –
 - General agreement that the potential parks program outlined was very good
 - Positive reception for passive open space
 - Flexible lawns & greenery to balance the concrete and hardscape
 - Farmers market at the Metro Market Square
 - Gateway Park as a passive program, specifically no active uses.
 - Crystal park is a great place for active uses
 - Center Park as an event space
 - Concerned about over programming for dog parks
 - Need to add wayfinding and design elements that link the parks together

Group 3:

- General agreement on the program elements and typologies
- 23rd Street Park
 - This was the park where folks had the most concern and frankly confusion
 - Program and typology should ultimately depend on how the buildings are positioned around the park and what the building uses are
 - Concern that it will be difficult for this park to function as a gateway park as it may not be visible from Route 1
- Crystal Park
 - Existing park gets lots of use for working out and active recreation; keeping these program elements seems wise
- Gateway Park
 - Indifferent to the band shell itself. It should be studied further in coordination with event organizers and bands who have played in Crystal City before and see what their specific needs/suggestions are (e.g. bands play at Gateway park currently 1-2 times per year and it is very popular but maybe they just need some simple improvements like better electric or sound connections).

- If we will be encouraging performances, should be mindful of nearby residents.
- Metro Market Square
 - Prefer to treat as 2 spaces as opposed to 3 so it is more contiguous
 - Design for farmers market program
 - Use park as a way to handle heavy pedestrian traffic from Metro to Crystal Drive; this will make Farmers market and other events in this space more successful
- Overall comments
 - Flexibility in parks is desirable; Long Bridge and Gateway Park have been popular during pandemic as a place for people to gather with each other and bring their own tents, blankets, games, etc.
 - Desire for more plantings and less hardscape
 - Concern that we may be trying to over program Crystal City parks; flexibility and simplicity are preferred
 - Shade elements are currently lacking in parks
 - Dog park needed somewhere; may want to be careful not to play directly adjacent to residential units so they don't hear barking early morning or late at night
 - Ensure universal design principles included
 - Need to make sure parks are safe (several parks currently lack sufficient lighting)

Group 4:

- Optionality is good
- A nice diversity of programming options proposed
- Do not over program; focus on the core of what each park is about
- Some spaces are too open and exposed so pavilions are needed for shade
- Need more seating niches, currently not enough seating options
- The Sector Plan is an important planning guide, but it is important to respond and design the parks for the current conditions today. The parks should reflect the community's current program needs.
- Long Bridge Park lacks food service. Potential for Gateway Park to support Long Bridge Park programming.
- Metro Market Square does not make sense as a market but maybe the farmer's market could be accommodated on the upper portion. Given the transit uses, perhaps it should not be too green (out of concern for pedestrian traffic trampling the landscape).
- Center Park – may not be appropriate as a civic space if the size and area do not reflect what is shown in the Sector Plan
- Screen on the Green at Center Park – movies in the park.
- Active recreation does not make sense at Gateway Park given proximity to recreational amenities at Long Bridge Park.

Group 5:

- All parks need to be more interesting for walking.
- All parks should be welcoming and publicly accessible.
- Concern about the overall loss of green space in Crystal City due to development.
- One can live, work and play in Crystal City very well; however, need to strengthen the connection to nature with mature trees. No container parks.

- Gateway Park – no need to add active recreation or playground. Lawn and nature elements are important. Provide more seating. Potential of band shell viewed favorably.
- Gateway Park – Nature path is important. Needs more seating. The band shell program could go in Water Park.
- Gateway and Center Parks are meant as spaces to walk through. The parks need something to make people want to linger, use and experience the park.
- Gateway Park is an important open space: preserve mature trees and provide more useable green space. Nature typology classification limited by railroad ROW.
- Crystal Park – provide playground program.
- Crystal Park – needs to be more green, whether for recreation or just to hang out in. The existing volleyball and walking path needs to be relocated in the neighborhood if it cannot be retained or replaced on site.
- Metro Market square – splitting into three separate spaces viewed favorably. The group acknowledged that this park is a difficult space to plan due to the topographic change on site.
- Metro Market Square today is a harsh “non-human” environment, like standing on top a fortress. Need to provide a mix of uses and green space.
- Need more than one dog park in Crystal City.
- Provide areas for petanque.
- We do not have room for large gateway elements as illustrated in the Gateway typology. Potential for public art at a smaller scale.

Group 6:

- Generally positive impression of having a great diversity of program available.
- Active recreation should stay at Crystal Park.
- Gateway Park – keep quiet and passive; no to band shell, which would be better suited to Water Park.
- Great ideas around Center Park and the differentiated program and experience at Metro Market Square.
- Children’s programming— provide programming beyond playgrounds. What other spaces enable play?
- Provide farmers market programming.
- Provide flexible spaces that are resilient in light of COVID-19 and social distancing requirements.
- Provide programming that reflects the changing community demographic.

This is a summary of notes taken for the Crystal City Open Space Framework: Workshop 2. If there are any corrections or clarifications requested, please feel free to contact us.

Best regards,

Stan Szwalek
Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects