

Crystal City Open Space Framework: Workshop One

Workshop Notes – 6/24/2020

Location:

Virtual Community Workshop Via Zoom

Hosted By National Landing BID

MEETING NOTES:

SUMMARY

The National Landing BID hosted the first of three workshops, which was conducted via zoom. Hoerr Schaudt presented the vision and goals for an Open Space Framework for Crystal City. Community Members had an opportunity to voice their thoughts, considerations and concerns about the visioning and goals.

The primary purpose of this workshop was to listen to the concerns and ideas of the community members relating to the Crystal City Open Space Framework. Hoerr Schaudt will use feedback to inform program recommendations for the first five proffered parks. A follow-up presentation focused on park programming will be posted online on July 10th and the second community workshop to discuss park programming is scheduled for July 22nd.

OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK WORKSHOP ONE

The group broke out into a series of subgroups to discuss the presentation and gather input on the visioning for the Crystal City Open Space Framework and specifically the first five JBG Smith Proffered parks. A total of eight groups were led by Stan, Aaron and Sally from Hoerr Schaudt, Tracy and Jasmine from the National Landing BID, and Andy, Eric and Sachin from JBG Smith.

BREAKOUT GROUP NOTES

Group 1:

- Appreciated the holistic programming approach including the greenway
- Agreed with the concept of distributed park programming and site amenities throughout the neighborhood
- Don't need to do too much (over program) in a given park space when thinking holistically about the neighborhood
- Encourage more youth activities and family-oriented programming; take into account the views of the youth
- County SPRC review process is site-by-site, hopefully this would provide criteria by which to evaluate the individual site reviews
- Connectivity is important

- Parks should soften the “hardness” of Crystal City
- It is important to balance passive and active recreation needs. Younger families need more active recreation and play areas. This should be viewed holistically

Group 2:

- Variety goal is important
- Goal for catalyzing development should not be a goal. There is already enough going on; parks should provide much-needed opportunity for breath of fresh air
- Activation and “design for tomorrow” also supported; group agreed that these elements did not detract from the goal of “Fresh air” and “relaxation” at parks
- Character of parks should incorporate biophilia; desire for spaces that “are not too manicured” and that should speak to the close proximity to the Potomac (either through direct views, incorporation of water features, etc.). The river is the most stunning and valuable natural element for the neighborhood
- Make sure there is room for children to play (formally in playgrounds and just open space to play catch)
- Folks mentioned they mostly just go to Long Bridge Park (proximate to condos), so better connections to other parks would be nice. All agreed existing connection near Water Park to VRE/MV Trail is too narrow and causes collisions with bikers and pedestrians. Would be great to have more comfortable access

Group 3:

- Parks should be planned to include the young and old residents
- Emphasized wayfinding and signage with added confusion to CC (from new development)
- Naturally occurring culture (performances like in other urban parks)
- Enhancing the already existing artwork within Crystal City
- Historical native American tribe- would love to see history interwoven with these new parks
- Accounting for fitness and activity areas and emphasized importance with COVID

Group 4:

- Quiet, restful places – gardens and water access
- Park on Fern Street caddy corner
- Improved access to Roaches Run
- Adding vibrancy to parks – like restaurant row in Shirlington
- Residents at northern end of Crystal City wish for the park at 101 12th Street to remain
- County art process underway and integration of public art into parks is planned and desired

Group 5:

- We need to understand that it is only going to get more crowded over time
- Active spaces with planned active program such as courts, games and fields
- Fewer flexible open fields and more places planned for active recreation
- Spaces to focus on sustainability

- Happy with the diversity of users at existing northern parks. Should capitalize on the diversity of spaces that already exist and further that with our work
- Spaces should have a flow and connection
- More connectivity to mt Vernon trail and connections that are conducive to a running route
- Diversity of spaces, some smaller to sit and relax, others for exercising and walking around
- A connection to Roaches Run and connections to nature parks with bird watching, etc.
- Crystal City used to be a sterile and corporate neighborhood and has transformed to be a place with more families and young people living there. Would like to see this trend continue.
- More natural soft spaces, with water features

Group 6:

- This group consisted of 3 senior residents who have lived in the area for a long time and one younger resident who has lived in the area for 10 years. The residents would like to enjoy imaginative, passive parks that create a sense of serenity.
- They value connectivity, accessibility, variety, and multigenerational enjoyment.
- They hope that there is a variety of scale in the parks such that some are lower activity than others.
- They want to see more parks even after the parks in the current scope are realized.

Group 7:

- Achieve a variety of different types of spaces and different activities/programming - active and passive spaces
- Desire for accessible design - multigenerational considerations with seating, safe environments
- Parks for All: Plan for parks that serve all populations including kids
- Do not privatize public space - keep the feel and design welcoming and clearly publicly accessible
- Landscape considerations - more naturalistic and sustainable with native plants, community gardens
- Concerns that development will outpace parks - need to keep parks as an escape
- Walkable: Keep parks desirable for walking through
- Places to linger: appreciate parks that invite people to stay and find respite ("love to be able to sit and drink coffee")
- Appreciate connections to nature

Group 8:

- Parks get you outside, would like to get to all neighborhood amenities without walking too far.
- Water Park: Great Space, a little awkward
- There is something about Long Bridge Park that feels safe. Lighting and open sight lines help make people feel safe in the evenings. And it is connected to well-lit streets
- What draws people to open space: other people. What draws me? Pop up coffee, leaning into the artistic scene, pop up food options

- When we think about equity and inclusion, Public Wifi and library access, places to go to do homework, public bathrooms, drinking fountains, places to play casual space, public grills and shelters
- Stage of life is important. Right now I'm into playgrounds
- We need better connection between parks. Crystal Drive is an impediment.... Because it is a drop-off zone
- We need blocks where bikes don't hit streets
- The main thing I look for is places to gather
- Park near Pentagon City where ball fences went down: Open casual space has been more effective
- If you don't have porches, and you don't see people on the sidewalk, parks can be a place to meet people
- Would like to see dog parks

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

Best regards,

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