

# OLD CONVENTION CENTER SITE REDEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library  
November 8, 2005

## Summary of Comment Forms

### 1. How do we introduce streets? (Stations #2 and #3)

- Any medians at NY and 10<sup>th</sup> Street should be designed to allow pedestrians and cyclists to get through.
- No streets, just plazas, seating and terraces.
- Better put, “re-introduce Streets.” AOI, the association of the oldest inhabitants of DC, the city’s oldest civic organization seeks the re-opening of both 10<sup>th</sup> and I Streets to vehicular traffic. Other “alleyways”/ “pedestrian walks” should be included and be vehicular free. We have learned from the closing of “G” street years ago and the disaster that represented....
- Please don’t open 10<sup>th</sup> street to traffic. This should remain a quiet street and not just another route out of town for commuters. Ford Theater is only a few blocks down, open it for pedestrians only.
- I strongly suggest 10<sup>th</sup> street does not reopen to thru traffic.
- Streets should be introduced in context with an inner village concept; use more pedestrian walkways. Municipal parking.
- I really like the idea of streets and squares through the site. This would draw on people and introduce a community identity.
- As a grid. Re-introduce the proposed street grid with closer networked proportions.
- Definitely bring in / extend 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> streets. Do not extend I street into the project, this is unnecessary. I street would be better as a promenade.
- Prefer not to make 10<sup>th</sup> street a thru street for vehicles. I live in a residential building next to 10<sup>th</sup> street and like the quiet location to G Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Streets should be re-introduced as a gateway to the neighborhood. They should be narrower in scope than the surrounding street scape. The principle of scaling down is a good one.
- Will streets be opened for traffic? Very concerned.
- Build them pedestrian friendly.
- Re-introduce pre-convention center street grid; introduce 9 1/2 streets as pedestrian only.
- East / west, north/ south grid consistent with L’enfant Plan. The 2 proposed streets, 9 ½ and between H and I are a good idea. Please use that open space (the streets) as fulfilling the mandate for 1 acre open space. We don’t need a plaza.
- Wide sidewalks as we have control by having sidewalks widen at intersections.
- First and foremost 10<sup>th</sup> street and I streets must be re-established to re-capture that piece of the L’enfant plan. 10<sup>th</sup> could be re-opened to traffic while I street would be open for pedestrians. Most likely too late, but this site would have made an amazing park.
- Option B, provide maximum permeability while re-introducing the circulatory character of the city.
- Thank you for re-establishing the street grid. Pedestrian friendly spaces (and public spaces along vibrant streets – retail etc.) is vital, as you’ve expressed. Specific landscaping and street presence for the area is a great idea.
- Narrow fluid mix of people, cars, bikes, transit with cars never dominating. Wide sidewalks with outdoor cafes.
- I like the grid idea of opening the streets, but I also like the idea of making them limited access to cars.

- Restore original L'enfant Plan is a good start.
- Only open 10<sup>th</sup> and I streets to vehicles and make 10 street one way going downtown. It is ok to have pedestrian only "alleys."
- Re-establish L'enfant plan streets.
- What does this question mean? Drivers should understand the area is not a speedway – paving that says it should be shared with pedestrians. Sub streets or walk able alleys are great.

## 2. What are the site options for the library? (Stations #1 and 2)

- 9<sup>th</sup> street facing old Carnegie library (option 3)
- Revenue should support rehab and/or expansion of the MLK memorial library.
- Keep the library where it is. Build something else on the new site.
- If the library must be moved, keep it on 9<sup>th</sup> street. Prefer 9<sup>th</sup> and NY Ave.; the only minus is the distance from the metro stations, will there be metro rail access?
- The library should be by-passed for the existing site. The MLK library should be restored and the proposed site should be used for alternative options.
- I proposed an enclosed market in a plaza area, see comments. The location would be more central, the library should be centrally located.
- If you have a library, it should be on a smaller scale or make ½ the designated space for university or local school art programs, music programs etc. This should be incubator space for schooling and local businesses. Library should be placed with entrances on 9<sup>th</sup> and I street, but keeping the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and I street open.
- Prefer to renovate the existing MLK library or the idea to convert it to a music school/ museum is nice too.
- I would absolutely, positively support a new public library. Its best location is the NE corner where it could represent a friendly welcoming place for DC residents in this neighborhood. Provide street level signage with its own branding to attract people to the library.
- MLK should be central for the city; it needs badly to be refurbished.
- Renovate MLK.
- Leave it at MLK.
- MLK should remain the city's central library. The city and developers should take advantage of other development options that will build on the synergy of having MLK library 2 blocks away from old convention center site.
- Decision for current MLK future needs to be made ASAP!
- Build a new library – inviting and inspiring for all ages. Relocate Washingtonian in Carnegie building.
- Renovate existing library, it's a modern masterpiece.
- Pending corner treatment, option C avails the library, site and city to one another in an exciting way while propelling the library as a prominent city destination.
- Option #1 is best. Please consider what a library will be 10 years from now. The internet could dramatically change the purpose of library. Many books will be viewed online.
- The important thing about this site is that it be large enough to house a library with room for collections that grow. The proposals look as though they provide for a smaller library than we have now which would be a disservice to the city.
- I like the option you show with Grande Arcade along NY Ave., NW. I originally leaned towards corner and 9<sup>th</sup> towards Mt Vernon Square, but appreciate the prominence and access of the mid-block site. I think a new library is an excellent idea.
- Option 1, prominent, visible, and accessible.
- I don't really like the idea of moving the library from its current location. I think it should remain where it is and be renovated. Use the convention center space for more retail.

- Option 1 and 2 along NY Ave. on 11<sup>th</sup> street.
- Do not build a new library at all but upgrade the current central library.
- Renovate MLK.
- I don't think abandoning the existing library site is a good idea because: 1) reuse of old building will be constrained by hist. pres. Issues; 2) the city overestimates the value of the old site given #7 of this answer; 3) the city overestimates the drawing power of a library in Washington DC – look at lib. Circulation plus visitor numbers; 4) the new library proposal seems like a vanity project without merit or mandate.

### 3. What is the best public plaza solution? (Station #2)

- Bookstores, coffee shops, art galleries, flower shops, farmers market.
- Use walkways and pedestrian areas to permeate use of open space.
- Centrally located.
- Public plaza near the middle of a parcel between 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> streets. Have public plaza along I street promenade and connect to retail on corners.
- Would be nice to have some green space as part of development including a doggie park.
- Small in scale unless there is a dedicated performance space or some other type of central point that is public in nature. Large open plazas intimidate people and often turn into hollow space. Boston's city hall plaza comes to mind.
- Have one.
- None.
- Similar to Pentagon Row's plaza on a large scale
- No plaza, just streets.
- Doggie park, there are already many residents in this immediate neighborhood who have dogs with scarce green space. Given the plans for increased residential development on the site, there will be more dogs that need space to run. Also this increase community and neighborly interaction and deter crime.
- Strong connections, lights, banners, architectural elements.
- The site would make an amazing park that would serve as DC's own central park. The lungs of DC. Not the best solution for economic, development but how about economic development for the surrounding buildings.
- A combination of options A and C. Provide opportunities for desirable urban space while acting as a catalyst for total site cohesion.
- The space running north - south parallel to 9<sup>th</sup> but a bit further west – the 9 ½ street option.
- Study public plazas that work and those that don't
- I like the idea of positioning the public plaza somewhere in the center closer to the 11<sup>th</sup> street side.
- Public plazas on or near the middle/ center of parcel complex.
- I support the all working together option, but street closings should be kept to a minimum. Events on PA Ave. make it next to impossible to leave DC via 395 or Constitution Ave., don't repeat that mistake.
- Rockefeller Center.
- Shade is good, Freedom Plaza is bad. Green, green, green, simple. Flexible – think about Bryant Park not sculpture park. Paving should be cobblestone or something warm not granite or large slabs CF anything, water features should be simple.

### 4. What type of public events does the District need? (Station #2)

- Jazz combo, farmer's market and children's recreation equipment.
- Public event space, do not create something that is a wasteland when not being used for events.
- Donate some public space to a children's museum

- The city needs to have smaller intimate public event that need addressing. An example could be more multipurpose studios.
- Indoor and outdoor markets, arcades, outdoor gardens surrounded by public spaces, places to eat in plazas, fountains.
- Small performance space, transitional public market comfortable for pedestrians which means away from vehicular traffic.
- Street performers, local performers, small venues for local music etc.
- Public Community Theater, community forums in the open air, non-profit exposure events. Also the space should on rare occasions allow private parties.
- Street dances, concerts, art exhibits, flea markets, farmers markets.
- An event promoting DC (taste of DC), public concerts and artistic performances.
- Have a nice band shell.
- Outdoor performance space, open space, programmed outdoor vending, outdoor film festival.
- A combination of configuration and uses proposed would me most effective in creating a new city center as public events vary temporally and seasonally.
- Public concerts, public ballet, civic arts.
- Outdoor street space for artists to exhibit.
- Music, concerts, outdoor art exhibits.
- Anything cultural.
- I'm not sure we need another public plaza there, I think we need more and greener green ie. Landscaping that brings a little of the wildlife park in NYC.
- Not sure. I think public events are better suited to the mall and freedom plaza – more space and better metro access.
- Pritzker plaza fountains (Chicago).
- Something that appeals to residents as much or more than visitors like a farmers market.

#### **5. What type of retail would you like to see in the project? (Station #4)**

- Gift shops – Museum kiosks, food court, condos.
- Small mom and pop plus named stores and space for vendors and artesian.
- We need a grocery store, another whole food. Encourage another smaller varied local retail establishment; we don't need another shopping mall like Crystal City.
- China/ Asian cultural trade center - see Boston, MA. Grocery store, downtown has lost amenities and services – cleaners, shoe repairs, bakeries and deli, definitely housing.
- Lower end retail shops, catering more to the community. Baker/ boutiques rather than high end flagship department stores.
- Clothing retail, home wares, furniture, art galleries.
- Strong emphasis on local retailers, Chinatown has way too many chain stores. Make this a neighborhood that can only be found in DC and include local retail services for residents.
- Grocery store.
- A very mixed use set of retail. Too often urban re-development projects take on too many large chains, provide a mix of retail.
- Definitely a mix, including local and small businesses serving residents and visitors, cafes.
- Locally owned businesses, we don't need another 3 Starbucks downtown.
- At least 2 major retail (Bloomingdales/ Nordstrom) DC needs more than Hecht's.
- Grocery store, no more Starbucks. Independent coffee house.
- Book stores, record store, fountain, tree shaded strolling.
- If 10<sup>th</sup> street is re-established, the block formed by 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, NY Ave.\_ H street could house a 13 floor office building/ retail in the bottom 2 floors.
- Grocery store.

- Serve the local community first. Groceries, laundry, clothing – a living neighborhood. Serves the greater community of visitors second.
- Locally owned, distinct, small mixed.
- Restaurants like PF Changs, unique little boutique shops, smaller restaurants to bring unique feel. It would be a shame for it to become another mall.
- No chain restaurants. Some upscale shops like those in Friendship Heights/ Georgetown would be nice.
- Businesses that would serve the established neighborhoods.

**Any other Comments:**

The library should reflect the historic past, be inviting and have a presence that resident and visitors would admire.

Where is the Environment Impact statement?

The existing library is the only Miss Van Der Rohe designed building in the city and should be preserved (nationally). The new site can be used as an enclosed market similar to the Covent Garden in London England. I think that by introducing a building that can be adaptable to weather and sustainable such as Norman Foster's canopy roof proposal it can both function as an outdoor market and close to function as an arcade. A new library is not necessary.

The project should be a model for low environment impact/ design and green building features. Need to incorporate nature to make this novel and something community members can be proud of. Look at ways to generate thru design vs. expending it. How cool would it be to have a green design oasis directly in the heart of DC? Bring life and nature into every part of the design. Through good design, you can also include a public educational program for students and local community members on environmental sustainability. Please make a concerted effort to use this opportunity to engage the community in the positive environmental – equitable- economic outcomes of this project and use good design as a means to address all these concerns.

Transportation - While the transportation infrastructure is adequate down there, some kind of pedestrian related transit might be an option, perhaps a small bus version of the circulator.

Open space – I think this kind of space should intermingle greenery with development rather than segregate any parcel as preserved. It should be as dense as possible.

Housing – there needs to be a consideration for very low income families.

Build it fast!

Turn the existing library into a music museum, something different than the Smithsonian to attract tourist.

How about a park?

You are absolutely on the right track. The idea of creating a downtown space that incorporates the things that work in DC's neighborhoods is essential. Dupont, Adams Morgan, Georgetown, U Streets, don't lose sight of that.

Exciting plans, your Copenhagen photos set the right tone, stick with that scale and charm for the street scape.

Keep getting the input of the community.

Related to Q3, a successful public space seems to be the fountain area on the mall (part of the national gallery of art). Locals and visitors use the site year round – there are lots of places to sit, relax, enjoy the views, and have a snack. Something like that downtown would be great for the workforce and the neighborhoods to come to an outdoor space.

These blocks should help solidify Downtown as a place to live – not just another place for daytime employees or visitors. Think how great Dupont is because employment areas link with but give way to calmer green streets – places where you see kids and people walking dogs, etc.

Active open space is vital. Downtown DC has plenty of passive open spaces but almost no active open space. Activities like farmer's market, art fairs, and outdoor concerts need a location. Currently such activities require street closings that can only happen in out of the way spaces in Downtown. Where they can be located in an active center their success can be double or triple.

Housing is also vital. Recent Downtown housing has meant people walking their dogs and other after work activities.

Retail should be large enough to be a draw but not a dominant use.

A new library would be great.