

## **Stakeholder Meeting #3**

**September 12, 2016 10 – 11:30am**

**Montgomery County Planning Department Main Regional Office, Room 303**

**Meeting Results** - This meeting listened to and gathered feedback on the four distinct topics:

### **1 -Preliminary Program of Requirements - Notes:**

1. At Westwood II side near River Road and re-aligned Westbard Avenue gateway to greenway with grass benches and trees
2. Water Feature to take advantage of streamlet coming from River Road by Westwood II building
3. Waterfall and other water features where stream can't be completely natural
4. On interim basis, pathway around American Plant and Roof Center for connectivity
5. In considering all questions, it is important to keep in mind that improvements to Willett Branch must allow redevelopment to proceed
6. Amenities
  - Trail
  - Areas to sit and enjoy nature
  - Habitat restoration
  - Animals
  - Plants and trees
  - Water born fish, crustaceans, bugs
  - Natural looking streams
  - Make sure that use adjacent to stream face onto stream for safety reasons
  - Historic and nature information kiosks/signs
  - Running weir areas and also pooling areas, ponds
  - Creation of pools by using weirs
  - Try to remove as much of concrete channel as possible
  - Sligo Creek as an example
7. Welcoming Gateway to the park from Westbard and River Road behind McDonalds and HOC building wide area
8. Mural art on big existing retaining wall behind McDonalds
9. Memorial site for cemetery
10. Seating area - maybe small playground splash pool? Behind HOC and McDonalds
11. No new structures in buffer – especially parking garage
12. Bridges in American Plant and HOC sites at least
13. Educational areas including Rosenwald School and wildlife info

14. Should be terraced walkways along stream where banks are high
15. Trail with seating periodically for gathering
16. Lots of trees along path makes walking in hot weather possible. occasional benches
17. Connectivity to trail and Westwood shopping Ctr where one can get beverages
18. Steep slopes need protection
19. Bowlmor site path to creek from site to take advantage of hill and views maybe nice terracing!!
20. Parking lots turned into forest
21. Cross sections of creek so can see how it would look
22. The central Unifying Vision of the Sector Plan is the Willett Branch Greenway, accessible to the public. The parking garage Wholly contradicts this vision, as do other buildings that so greatly infringe on the buffer
23. Stream Valley Buffer –
  - Identified by natural Resources Inventory
  - PROS Plan (Wooded area and connectivity and hierarchy)
  - Environmental guidelines
  - Critical to vision of Sector Plan
  - State laws – stream and bay cleanup
  - No Buildings in the Buffer!
24. The Sector Plan sets out criteria that must all be met. For exemptions to be permitted that would allow building within buffer
25. The NRI approved buffer should be used as the buffer from which any existing buildings might be exempted. New buildings should be set back from the buffer to reduce visible impacts. Any encroachments into buffer should be limited to existing buildings and meet all sector plan requirements

## **2- Stream Naturalization – Notes:**

1. Waterfall where site conditions prevent waterfall
2. Prevent soil erosion from construction
3. In considering potential flooding, the current potential should also be considered, including existing choke points (i.e. American Plant Food and CCT)
4. There are portions of the stream where stream channel will need to be much lower than potential pathway and development adjacent
5. Remove as much concrete as possible; use weirs, rocks logs. Etc. to help dissipated energy of fast flowing water; use fields grassy areas as outflow areas for storm events.; Provide lots of large trees; Provide planting that promotes and supports habitat;
  - Butterfly attracting shrubs
  - Trees for bird nests

- Bird houses Bat houses
  - Pools for tadpoles, etc.
  - Allow any retaining walls to have plantings grow on them
6. Naturalized stream – flows uncovered, treed, vegetated heavily
  7. Naturalized stream should be the centerpiece of development. Should be a gathering place not only for people living in buildings around it, but for community as a whole.
  8. Remove invasive plants
  9. Try to remove tunnels and daylight – sensitive bridges instead
  10. Bring back aquatic and other wildlife. Improve ecological health
  11. Pools and twists in stream – not just straight channel
  12. Can naturalization of stream include methods that will decrease pollution within the water?
  13. Interesting rock formations, use stream sough of Massachusetts Avenue as needed
  14. Picnic areas along creek would be lovely
  15. The channel should include meanders and pools even if not fully natural
  16. Naturalized stream should be sufficiently that it does not look like a deep drainage ditch (as it now does near the auto repair) and is readily accessible from the sides.
  17. Removing or modifying existing choke points at American Plant and CCT to avoid flooding should be considered
  18. Maintain developable parcels to underwrite land dedication
  19. Need rocks and erosion control e.g. plantings; meander, angles rather than a straight line etc.
  20. Stream naturalization amenities:
    - No invasive species
    - Sitting areas
    - Bike/walk path to CCT and Westbard
    - Cemetery memorial
    - Historical markers
    - Education wildlife

### **3 - Stewarding Cultural Resources / Potential Archaeological Site**

1. Historical resources should focus on the natural resources that existed historically as well as human ones.
2. Provide historic signage and kiosks along park trail; provide benches and grassy seating areas where signage could be near it for education; Are there old industrial structures that could be repurposed as art or as something to climb on; Maybe save a small piece of the channel side (with Graffiti) to show what used to

- be there and educate about the naturalization process; Use Blue Granite in some of the designs
3. Natural resources, including cemetery site should be surveyed before new construction begins, (including delineation)
  4. Cemetery must be delineated
  5. Use public art to commemorate area history, including:
    - Cemetery
    - Tavern
    - Tobacco plantation
    - Quarry African American history
  6. It would be nice to have more historical info about African American community considering Macedonia Baptist Church that's still on River Road
  7. For Cemetery – contemplative memorial space; signs on history like:
    - Rosenwald school
    - Quarry rock demonstrated
    - Info signs on mill and tavern
    - African American community
  8. Public Art – murals etc. on existing retaining walls – could show history
  9. In the larger planned park could you a sitting area with signage/pictures and drawings celebrating major historical development?
  10. Highlight Rosenwald school and impact that segregation had on area
  11. Make clear that area was home to freed slave families
  12. Area is rich with cemeteries on both sides of River Road important to recognize them.
  13. Important to have signs or structures that provide some stream and wildlife education
  14. If these are specific spaces with historic significance, provide an area to view it, sit and discuss/Think – allow school groups to learn in area

#### **4 - Building Form / How Buildings Relate to the Greenway**

1. Public access should be walking and biking – between or even through some of the buildings that will be built. Welcoming paths well-delineated and well lighted – no dark areas
2. Redevelopment sites should not intrude within buffer, should be setback where possible, and must be attractive and appropriate for facing park
3. County guidelines and Sector Plan emphasize need for no stress, traffic noise in stream valley areas - should have no traffic next to stream

4. Developer should be able to have cafes, party areas near buildings overlooking stream and building fronts should be attractive and functional for building resident and customers
5. Building fronts should include setbacks and should be attractive when viewed from stream valley
6. No ugly blank walls like line the banks of the Little Falls Branch along Willard Avenue
7. Buildings must be oriented to Westbard Avenue
8. Redeveloped sites should incorporate public access to greenway and provide compatible landscaping
9. Need public path by HOC building to provide access between CCT and Westwood Shopping Center
10. Be aware of shadows from buildings onto park. Make sure to preserve natural sunlight onto and into park.
  - Avoid massive shadows long term
  - Allow some units to open onto pathway at edge of Park
  - Provide pedestrian scale lighting within park along pathways
  - Lower scale mass of Buildings along park that can step up away from park
  - Buildings should all face onto park
  - Balconies and terraces should face onto park
  - Remove all parking lots adjacent to park
  - Incorporate art in buildings and extending park
11. HOC area is center of stream valley and should be restful, stress-free place, especially with cemetery site – needs inviting site entrance with public path
12. Buildings should respect the buffer and provide aesthetic elements should blend with nature
13. Individual circumstances of a site need to be evaluated. Issues such as grade, available area, timing of construction, economics, road access, etc. will determine feasibility
14. Hedonic analysis of real estate shows that properties near greenway are more valuable in rent and sales. Properties should take advantage of their views with cafes and commercial activity, ice cream stores!
15. Any new buildings should not extend inside NRI buffer and should possible be setback from buffer to protect views from within park
16. A welcoming entryway inviting and directing the public into the park. Public access to Park
17. Buildings will embrace the stream and should front it with accessible connections to residences – keeps paths noise and stress free (but buildings can also front Westbard Avenue)
18. Buildings should not extend into buffer and parking lots should become forest with plants

19. Trail better south of stream between Westwood II and HOC and north after HOC