

Minutes

Meeting name Stakeholder Meeting #2	Time 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM
Meeting Date October 30, 2019	Project name Shepherd Parkway (Reservation #421) Development Concept Plan
Location NPS National Capital Parks East Headquarters	Prepared by AECOM

National Park Service: Tammy Stidham (NPS NCA); Ann Honious, Mike Commisso, Alex Tremble (NPS NACE)

District Agencies: Keisha Mims, Gabrielle Johnson (DC Executive Office of the Mayor-East of the River Services Office (ERO))

Attendees: Art Slater (Anacostia Coordinating Council); Nathan Harrington (Ward 8 Woods); Ari Eisenstadt (Audubon Naturalist Society); Monica Ray (Congress Heights Community Association)

Project Team: Alan Harwood, Claire Sale, Manqing Tao, Lauren Tuttle (AECOM)

1. Welcome + Introductions

Mike Commisso (NPS NACE) welcomed the group and provided a brief introduction to the Shepherd Parkway Concept Plan project. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Background Information

Claire Sale (AECOM) presented the Concept Plan goals, project timeline, and overall context of Shepherd Parkway.

3. Review of Concepts

Claire summarized comments received during the first public comment period. Commenters described where they would like to see new connections to and within the open spaces of Shepherd Parkway, if they are comfortable walking in the wooded areas, how to prevent dumping and litter, what should be done with Fort Carroll and Fort Greble, and how they would like to use the park in the future.

4. Review of Concepts

Claire presented the concepts for Shepherd Parkway. Below summarizes the group's discussion on the concepts.

Northern boundary to Malcolm X Avenue

- Nathan Harrington (Ward 8 Woods) noted that a sidewalk and trail are not the same. He expressed concern about a sidewalk along the street edge because it would require the removal of woods and a sidewalk is already located on the opposite side of the street.
- Keisha Mims (ERO) stated that a sidewalk trail along the street edge may be more inviting than a trail through the woods to people who want to get close to the woods, but do not currently hike or want to go into the woods.

- Mike noted that the goal of creating connections along Shepherd Parkway should be balanced with minimizing tree removal. Accessibility also needs to be considered. Nathan stated that a well-design hiking trail does not require tree removal. Alan Harwood (AECOM) stated that different sections of Shepherd Parkway are treated differently, and some members of the public noted that they would not feel safe walking in the woods during the first public comment period.
- Ari Eisenstadt (Audubon Naturalist Society) stated that providing Shepherd Parkway's topography would be helpful in understanding the concepts. Steep slopes would act as a deterrent to entering the woods. Nathan noted that Rock Creek Park has trails along steep slopes.
- A natural trail option with a trail through the wooded areas is not presented for this section of Shepherd Parkway because the Fort Circle Parks Final Management Plan (2004) states that natural areas, including topographically challenging areas, should remain free of new trails. Steep slopes are an important resource where disturbance, such as trail construction, should be avoided. Trails are appropriate through cultural resource zones, such as through the forts.
- A trail is not located along the northern border of Shepherd Parkway because of the presence of seeps and springs and potential security concerns of the adjacent U.S. Department of Homeland Security facility.

Parkland

- The determination of whether use of the family oriented outdoor space would require a permit or operate on a first-come first-serve basis is to be determined.
- Nathan noted the current compacted condition of the soil in Parkland and lack of grass. He recommended paved areas bordered by low fences to direct foot traffic and protect future vegetation.
- Art stated that he is undecided between Options 1 and 2. Option 1 contains less structures and looks more natural. However, people may not know how to activate the space in Option 1. Built structures serve as natural gathering areas, but people may be unclear on whether they need to a permit to use the structures.
- Keisha stated that she prefers Option 1 because the concept is more intergenerational.
- Nathan recommended including interpretive signage that explains the historical significance of Shepherd Parkway because Parkland receives a high volume of foot traffic. Ari recommended including directional signage to other features in Shepherd Parkway.
- Monica Ray (Congress Heights Community Association) asked if there are any plans for the Christmas tree and electrical access. Nathan stated that several Christmas trees have been planted in Parkland over the years. These trees would be more likely to survive if they were fenced off and surrounded by vegetation.

Malcolm X Avenue to South Capitol Street

- Several attendees recommended combining Options 1 and 2 by adding the Option 2 trail from Malcolm X Avenue to Highview Place to Option 1. The combined option could include both a city trail and natural trail experience. The location of these trails should consider topography and tree coverage. A continuous trail through the wooded areas could have outlets to the street to provide people a break from walking through the woods.

South Capitol Street to the southern boundary

- Nathan stated that he likes Option 1. He recommended adding a trail west of the Fort Greble Recreation Center to connect Chesapeake Street with the proposed trail north of Fort Greble

to improve connectivity. He also recommended trail spurs connecting the wooded trails to the street to provide more access points to these trails. Trail spurs would also provide a feeling of safety to people walking on the wooded trails if they need to return to the street quickly.

- A large amount of Wisteria is located south of Fort Greble. Removing the Wisteria would result in a large open area. Nathan recommended developing a plan for removal and ensuring the Wisteria does not return.

Overall

- Ari recommended edge trails and interior trails in narrower and wider areas, respectively, of Shepherd Parkway.
- Specific trail materials and design are to be determined.
- Financial and resource cost implications of the concepts are also to be determined. The project is currently at the conceptual stage.
- Ari suggested that concept implementation would provide an opportunity for workforce development and to hire small, local businesses. NPS noted that this project is not yet at the contracting stage, but the NPS contracting process includes reaching out to small businesses.
- Art noted that the community should support and advocate for the Concept Plan when it is released.
- Keisha recommended that the Concept Plan be explicit in stating that the Plan will not be implemented right away. NPS noted that they already have some funding for this project and some Plan features could be implemented sooner rather than later.

5. Comment Submissions

Claire shared how attendees can submit comments and reminded the group about the November 7th public meeting.