



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Item #

02/28/2019

**MEMORANDUM**

February 21, 2019

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks  
Mitra Pedoeem, Deputy Director of Administration   
Jai Cole, Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) 

**FROM:** Cristina Sasaki, Planner Coordinator, Lead Park Planner, Park & Trail Planning Section, PPSD   
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Patricia McManus, Supervisor, PDD  
Paul Mortensen, Planning Department, Director's Office

**SUBJECT:** Planning Board Work Session #2 on the Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines

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**Description**

**BACKGROUND**

In 2018, in conjunction with the approval and adoption of the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS Plan)*, staff began conducting monthly meetings with the Urban Parks Advisory Group and Parks and Planning Departments staff to discuss a companion document to the EPS Plan - the *Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Design Guidelines* – previously briefed to the Board as *Urban Parks and Public Spaces (UPPS) Design Guidelines*.

As Montgomery County and our region continues to grow, the biggest challenge is to provide adequate parks and public spaces where land is already scarce and expensive: our higher density centers. With increase in competition for land, our urban parks and public spaces should accommodate multiple and complementary functions within a network of smaller central spaces. By integrating efforts and preventive measures from different stakeholders, we can effectively utilize scarce and expensive resources and reduce the strain on existing failing infrastructure. This document will be used to give overall guidance to stakeholders including planners, designers, decision-makers, developers, land owners, and the public on how to design the network of privately and publicly owned, publicly accessible parks and public spaces within the adopted EPS Plan Study Area.

**VISION**

“Stronger, healthier and happier communities in the County. In the places where we have the most people, everyone can walk to a public space to enjoy the outdoors” - from the EPS Plan’s Vision.

## **PURPOSE**

This document provides design guidance for the urban park typology described in the *2017 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan*, and focuses on the design quality of existing and proposed parks and public spaces in the *EPS Plan Study Area*. The *EPS Design Guidelines* will provide overall direction for the urban park typologies design including the function, type of experiences, key features, size, context, and site access and connectivity. The expected outcome is to create inviting, easily accessible, attractive, comfortable, and safe urban parks and public spaces.

On June 28, 2018, staff provided the Board an overview of the scope of the project and collected input and direction in order to develop the working draft for public comment prior to Planning Board work session(s). See a summary of comments and how the document incorporated them under the **DISCUSSION – Comments and Staff Responses/Planning Board Comments**.

## **SESSION SUMMARY**

This work session will focus on how Planning Board (PB) feedback from the January 31<sup>st</sup> Planning Board Work Session has been incorporated into the working draft of the *Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Design Guidelines*. Staff seeks approval from the PB of the *EPS Design Guidelines* to be published with approved revisions from PB work sessions on January 31, 2019 and February 28, 2019.

## **SCHEDULE**

After the January 31, 2019 Planning Board Work Session, staff met with Advisory Group and Designers Team to respond to the comments received from the Planning Board. The Planning Board will hold a second work session on February 28<sup>th</sup> where revisions to the draft will be presented, any outstanding issues will be discussed, and it is anticipated that the Board will vote on the Guidelines document.

- **June 2018 through January 2019:** Continued Stakeholder Input through Advisory Group, Core Team and Designers Group
- **January 08, 2019:** Release of the Working Draft for public input
- **January 31, 2019:** Planning Board Work Session #1
- **February 28, 2019:** Planning Board Work Session #2 and Board Vote

After approval by the Planning Board, Staff will incorporate approved revisions and adopt the *Energized Public Spaces Design Guidelines* as part of planning process for public spaces in the County.

## **DISCUSSION – Comments and Staff Responses**

Topics that were within the scope of the *EPS Design Guidelines* will be addressed by Staff in the work session.

## **Planning Board Comments**

During the January 31 Planning Work Session, the Planning Board provided comments and direction for the development of the Working Draft.

<b>Comments</b>	<b>Working Draft January 2019</b>
<p><b>#1 – 2.2 Design Guidelines/B.PLACE/B.3.COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROCESS (p.20)</b></p> <p>Does the term “temporary places” mean events such as the one with developed with the Randolph Hills Civic Association?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p><b>See 3.1.8 Temporary and/or Interim Park</b></p> <p>A Temporary park is a type of park created for a certain period of time in a location that is not currently planned as future public space. There is generally a beginning and an end time established. (e.g. White Flint Placemaking Festival at Randolph Hills Shopping Center).</p> <p>An Interim park is a type of park created to bridge the time gap between design, funding and construction of a permanent public space and can accommodate temporary uses until resources for permanent uses become available. (e.g. turf area of Veterans Plaza at Silver Spring prior to the Civic Center and Ice Rink being built)</p>
<p><b>#2 – EPS Study Area – Design Guidelines Application.</b> The Study Area includes high density areas in the County. However, not all areas have the same density. How these guidelines will be applied within the different density areas?</p>	<p>The decision on what type of public spaces are best to serve certain neighborhoods based on their density is not part of the scope of the Guidelines document. This decision is made during the Sector Plan process. The EPS plan however does take into account density in its recommendations for open space needs.</p> <p>These Guidelines offers a “reference document” that will inform the different stakeholders about the key design guidelines (context, place, variety, comfort, connections) that drive the delivery of great public spaces. It also helps inform the reader of the similarities and differences among the different types of urban parks (function, main program, key features, site placement, size) so there is an early common alignment of expectations on the type of public spaces to be delivered when proposed through EPS or Master/Sector Plans.</p>

<b>Comments</b>	<b>Working Draft January 2019</b>
<p><b>#3 – Walkshed</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> EPS Plan and the 10-min walkshed origin. How did the Plan come up with the 10-min walkshed?</p> <p><b>B.</b> How does the 10-min walkshed is applied on aging population areas?</p>	<p><b>A.</b> The 10-min walking time comes from a common national industry average standard of converting ½-mile walking distance to time (more user-friendly measurement). The EPS Plan goes above and beyond this standard by measuring access to points of entry to parks and not simply to ‘green’ on a map. A resident may be within a 10-minute walk of the park but may have to circumnavigate it to get to the entrance making the true distance significantly longer. The plan also measures access to things to do and not just the acreage of parkland.</p> <p><b>B.</b> The 10-min is a Vision and average number of residents from age 8 to 80. Some people might be faster other slower to walk the standard distance of ½ mile.</p> <p>The Planning Department is currently developing a pedestrian network and upon completion will be used by the Parks Department to consider improvements on the walkable network and conduct more detailed analysis.</p>
<p><b>#4 – How do you believe this Plan addresses Social Equity in the County?</b></p>	<p><b>Functional Plan</b></p> <p>The EPS Plan focus on growing areas of the County with higher percentage of lower income population, multi-family dwellers and usage of public transit.</p> <p>EPS Pop = 40% of the County.</p> <p><b>Guidelines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage the participation of the community in the design process – sense of community</li> <li>● Promotes social interaction and walkability of a diverse demographic by offering flexible spaces that can accommodate different uses and users</li> <li>● Promotes the integration of multiple transit options in an area where residents are more dependent on public transit</li> </ul>

<p><b>Comments</b></p>	<p><b>A. Working Draft January 2019</b></p>
<p><b>#5</b> – A lot of the case studies shown in the online library illustrates urban parks in cities with highly manicured landscape and high number of events. A lot of these public spaces are owned by the public sector but operated by a non-profit or BID.</p> <p><b>A.</b> In the EPS Study Area, what are the expectations on who has the call on the use of the public space? The land owner? The space manager? Who decides what events will be programmed?</p> <p><b>B.</b> In the EPS Study Area, who is going to maintain these spaces? Parks Department? Non-profits? BIDs?</p>	<p><b>B.</b> The property owner has the call on the use of the space and can work agreements with other organizations to establish events and programming of the space if they choose.</p> <p><b>C.</b> The property owner leads the effort to maintain and operate these spaces and can make agreements with other organizations to share partial or full responsibility of these operations.</p>
<p><b>#6</b> – How were the principles of “8-80 Cities” incorporated in these Guidelines?</p>	<p>Very much aligned. The EPS Plan and Guidelines consider that not all parks are equal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 80 Cities Goals are <b>1) Improve Existing Parks</b> – aligned with strategies of “<i>activate, renovate/repurpose</i> and <i>develop</i>” of the EPS Functional Plan and Guidelines “<i>Context/Variety/Comfort</i>”; <b>2) Connect People to Parks</b> – aligned with strategy of “<i>connect/connection</i>” on both functional plan and guidelines; <b>3) Create New Parks</b> – aligned with strategy of “<i>create</i>” of the functional plan and guidelines “<i>Place/temporary/interim park</i>”.</li> </ul>

<b>Comments</b>	<b>Working Draft January 2019</b>
<p>7 - How can we make sure development applicant consider the use of Public Art in their development to cover blank walls from parking garages and tall buildings? Can these Guidelines help remind of the importance of the use of Public Art on proposed development?</p>	<p>Public Art related to blank walls in new developments is addressed during the development review process. Sector Plan Design Guidelines can also recommend such interventions in existing and proposed buildings. The EPS Design Guidelines can encourage this approach in the following guidelines:</p> <p><b>A. CONTEXT:</b> Incorporate Site Context in the Design of Public Spaces</p> <p><b>1. ADJACENCIES:</b> Ensure public spaces relate to adjacent streets, open spaces, architecture, and landscape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>b. Architecture/Landscape:</b> Respond to adjacent buildings entrances, unique building forms and/or landscape masses. Buildings facing and near parks should be inviting to pedestrians with entrances, windows, and active uses at the ground floor. Where elevations lack these features, such as at blank walls and at garages, consider incorporating public art features such as colorful and/or moving screens or murals to provide pedestrian interest.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. PLACE:</b> Celebrate and Incorporate Community Identity</p> <p><b>2. FEATURES:</b> Design features that will attract people to the public space and make it a destination, or community focal point. Make special features visible to invite people to use the space and when appropriate, tell a story....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>b. Public Art:</b> Integrate public art into the designs of parks or public spaces and its surroundings. Art can be a featured piece, or part of the architectural elements of the spaces such as paving or a paving feature, the light poles, an interactive water feature, furnishings, signage and/or an element of the adjacent or surrounding landscape or architecture.</li> </ul>

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