

July 9, 2009 Exterior Building Design meeting

What has happened since our last Charrette

- Met with WSSC about relocating water line across the site
- Met with Pyramid Atlantic to discuss space requirements and services that would be provided by the County and by Pyramid as part of the Memo of Understanding
- Began discussion with DOT about relocating storm water lines thru site
- County Council public hearing was held on June 30 to obtain comments on amending the Silver Spring Urban Renewal Plan to allow a bridge across Wayne Ave. The library bridge would be the only one allowed in the amended plan; this is not a blanket change to the renewal plan.

Bridge

One of the reasons for the proposed bridge from the Wayne Street Garage to the Library entrance floor is the length of travel from the HC parking spaces on the first floor of the garage to the front door of the library.

- From HC parking level 1 on grade to door of library, the distance is about 600 feet.
- From HC parking on 4th floor to door of library via a bridge, the distance is about 200 ft. The distance from the furthest spot on the fourth floor to the elevator is 216 feet and the worst case from the furthest parking spot over the bridge to the interior door of the library is 233 feet.
- The Motor Vehicle Administration criteria for issuing a HC parking pass is the inability to walk more than 200 feet unassisted

Other options that were studied:

1. Raise the building one story and put parking underneath – can accommodate 5 cars on site and 2 at the drop off. This design would eliminate all the activity at street level and will cost about \$5 million.
2. Build underground parking with tunnel access from the residential portion of the site. This complicates the design and the development opportunities for the residential site and will cost approximately \$xx million
3. Provide temporary parking on the housing site. This would cost what the bridge will cost but will be asphalt with a large storm water retention feature, and, as soon as construction started on the residential building, all the work would be demolished and there would be no ADA surface parking at all on the site.
4. A mid-block crossing was reviewed by DOT and Park and Planning. Both agencies agreed it was not feasible as the site does not have the distances necessary for a mid-block crossing.
5. Providing drop off along Fenton Street will be explored with DOT but this would be outside the normal requirements for ADA parking and drop off due to the natural elevations of the road and sidewalk.

The County Council's PHED committee meeting on July 21 will discuss this further and make a recommendation.

A final public charrette on the design will be scheduled the latter part of September. A date for a presentation to the County Executive and the County Council has not been scheduled and would occur in the fall after the final public charrette.

Questions and comments on parking

- What is the distance from the HC spaces on the 2nd floor, using the elevator, to the library entrance via the street? Response: Will measure but will be more than 200 feet.
- How many HC spaces are required? Response: 7
- What is the height requirement for a HC van? Response: Used to be about 13' clear height, but now the clear height for a van is about 8'6".
- What is the ceiling height in the garage for van clearance? Response: Can accommodate vans no taller than 8'6" on first floor, but no vans on upper floors of garage.
- When will Council vote? Response: Maybe after Council's vacation break in August.
- Will there be Bicycle parking on site? Response: Yes but its location has not yet been determined.
- If we put in a drop off or parking on site, wouldn't everyone use it for Purple Line? Response: There is that possibility.
- Why can't there be a pedestrian crossing at the Crescent Building from the garage just like there is for the Discovery Center? Response: See statement 4 under Bridge above.
- In that cost model what are you including? What is grade differential between Wayne and Bonifant? Response: About 10 feet but under the library the grading was for the Purple Line.

Questions and comments on parking

- The ramp would take up too much space. In order to put parking on grade, it would exceed 120' and the County would have to get legislation to exceed the height of the building to do that.
- Is there a way to create street parking closer to the library on the side of Fenton? **Response:** Handicapped spaces can not be placed on the street. The grade on Fenton is greater than 5%. The architects are studying putting a pull-off or drop off just for the library but this hasn't been approved by the Department of Transportation. Plans call for adding more green on the streetscape to discourage j-walking.
- If you don't provide a drop-off, people will do it anyway.
- What do the green lines signify? **Response:** These are the tracks for the Purple Line. The green space under the "tunnel" is not a green that people will use. Out of necessity and design, the small wall helps define the public space. (again, referring to a slide)

Design Presentation

Building

The Architects started by reviewing the options presented at the last meeting and restating the comments that were heard at that time. They then presented three options. All options located the uses the same way; Art gallery and art classrooms on levels 1 and 2, Library on levels 3 (entry and circulation desk, DRC, Young Adult), 4 (Adult) and 5 (Children), County offices for the HHS on level 6 and the public meeting rooms on level 7.

Option 1

Has an orthogonal grid for the structure which results in a better plan for the interior of the library;
Escalator located on Fenton Street (to serve Fenton Village population) with a coffee bar or newspaper stand incorporated at the bottom;
Stair adjacent to escalator with skylight;
Two green roof areas at the children's floor – to the NW and the SW of the floor, and
Exterior is a combination of solid and glass with the 4th floor cantilevering out.

Option 2

Has a rotated diagonal grid to align with Purple Line tracks but creates awkward spaces internally;
Escalator located on Fenton Street (to serve Fenton Village population) with adjacent stair;
Double height space for Adult floor to Children's floor;
Some smaller amount of green roof at the Children's floor, and
Exterior is a combination of solid and glass.

Option 3

Design is based on Option 1 but has an elevator and a stair instead of an escalator on Fenton Street.

Option 3A

Design is similar to Option 3 but with an exposed stair creating more space at the ground level for open space or a coffee bar. This idea of an elevator could work for either Option 1 or 2

Bridge

Option 1

The bridge is covered, but open on the sides and the walkway is flanked with planting adjacent to the walkway on each side with the handrail outside the planting.

Option 2

The bridge is covered, but open on the sides and the walkway is flanked with planting outside of the handrails on each side.

Option 3

This is similar to Option 2 but with a varied bridge width which provides seating areas and different widths of walkways and plantings.

In all three options, the pedestrian path is covered by a glass roof and the plants are covered by an open mesh material to allow sun and rain to reach the plants.

Open Space:

Two ideas were presented for the open space design. Both schemes have an ADA accessible route adjacent to travel from Bonifant Street to the Library entrance, green space with trees and planting at the south end of the site, and hardscape areas at the northern portion of the site.

Idea A

More rectangular design;

More of a civic gesture;

Creates a plinth on which the building entrance can sit;

Creates a platform for tables and chairs to be pulled out from the coffee bar, and

Stairs can be used as seating for a theater like space.

Idea B

More curvilinear and informal design;

Stairs and level changes to create seating, and

The curves are a contrast to the angular geometry of the building

Comments included (grouped by topic)

Building massing and elevations

- Option 1 exterior is too chaotic; find it totally unattractive and not workable – why are you continuing to study it? Option 2 is more resolved and superior with an elevator core that works for the library use.
- Option 2 is bland and it has some awkward spaces in the plan. The Option 1 orthogonal plan looks more efficient.
- We said at earlier meetings we did not like the glass, but we still have a lot of glass.
- You can't have too much glass. These designs are a good attempt at creating an iconic building, especially with the glass.
- I visited libraries in Seattle and Vancouver, where there is a lot of glass and they were very nice. No objection to glass. Can see outside and feel part of the area and the neighborhood.
- See a better balance between glass and solid than was shown previously.
- Using glass in a much better way.
- Don't like floor to ceiling glass for floors 3, 4 and 5 from the user point of view.
- Like the three-story glass atrium internally – will be dramatic.
- Option #2 has a more prominent entrance at Wayne Avenue – the canopy is a good feature.
- Would like to see views with the context shown; those views should include the Marriott and the Crescent.
- Don't like exterior staircase option.
- Option 1 – building looks like an appendage. Option 2 the escalator is more of a feature and the whole treatment is much better.
- Add the words *Silver Spring Library* on the wall as an identifier.

Escalator entrance vs. elevator

- Importance of the Fenton Street entrance should be retained and the escalator does that better.
- Can we explore not having escalators, but use two elevators instead? It would help the ground plane to not have to go so far south on the site.
- Struggle with the idea of two entrances to library.
- The multiple entrances are ok because it will be used by a different host of users. Do not cut entrance options.
- Agree with keeping all entrances
- Prefers Option 2 and maybe you can turn the escalators (a switchback) to reduce the impact on ground plane.
- Like how the escalator is treated best in Option 2 – is more of a feature.
- Did not like the external stairs in Option 3a.
- Space below the escalator is not nice and seems like wasted space; would not be a pleasant space to occupy; need more to activate the street.
- Convert the escalator to stairwells instead; would add a sculptural element.

Bridge

- Integrate the bridge more; it feels as if it has just been tacked on.
- The planting concept is very interesting. It provides some memory of former green space.
- Comment: Like plants on either side with space to walk the middle. Option 2 is dramatic but not as usable.

Open Space

- Why are we showing green in between the tracks? Response: This is an effort to provide more permeable surfaces since this is not over structure and it adds to the perception of having more green in the overall public area. Many cities in Europe have successfully installed green panels in between the tracks.
- Likes Idea A. Is there a way to open up the space so the trees don't direct attention to the center of the building?
- Great space for poets!
- Likes Idea B. Do the trees redirect vision?
- How big are the green spaces? Response: Lawn area for A is 2,786 sf and for B it is 3,530 sf.
- Will the Purple Line be loud? Response: No, will be quieter than the buses due to skirting around base of trains and reduction in speed through site.
- How long is the platform for the Purple Line? Response: Platform is 200 feet; the maximum length of a train is 180 feet.
- Is the train at street level? Response: Yes
- The trees in both A & B close off the site from Fenton Village. Response: The street is completely open; you get a gorgeous deciduous canopy. Additional sketches will be done.

Other comments

- Disappointed that library is on the third floor.
- Need to keep perspective that this is the library and that it should read as such.
- Study moving the Purple Line to another location – what is the cost of the Purple Line alternates vs. the cost of the bridge?
- This site is a library site. It needs a proper entrance to the library.
- We need to satisfy interior design requirements first.
- What will the expense be for maintaining the options as presented? Is there a cost tradeoff to what it will cost to maintain the building once constructed versus getting rid of the Purple Line and building on the entire site?
- Likes the proximity to the park in the existing facility. Is there an opportunity to have a space for kids? Response: Green open space on residential site would be the area that would provide that opportunity.
- Can we have more programmable space at the ground level on Fenton? Response: Art gallery/shop will face the tracks.
- Please post the revised POR on website; need information to determine interior footprint; concerned about some allocations of space in the document. When will the POR be made public? Response: POR will be posted on library website. Comment: POR was posted on 7/14.
- Project is very much about transportation and movement.
- Celebratory elements should come out of the circulation/sculptural elements.
- How will the meeting room be accessed? Response: Via the public elevators from the 1st floor.
- Put the arts nonprofit space in the basement.
- Buy more electronic information delivery devices (like Kindles) to get more exposure; provide links on website for Silver Spring to transportation sources.
- Why did the arts and entertainment nonprofit go on floors 1 and 2 instead of the library? Response: Floor plans for the library require a minimum floor print of 20,000 square feet; the space on floors 1 and 2 is less than 10,000 square feet each.