



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

Royal Street Bus Garage Ad hoc Advisory Committee

Design Principles for the Redevelopment of the Royal Street Bus Garage

Overview

In anticipation of the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the Royal Street Bus Garage site, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) agreed to participate in a community outreach process to establish design principles for the site. The City Manager, Rashad Young, appointed the Royal Street Bus Garage Ad hoc Advisory Committee to provide guidance to the City and WMATA on the redevelopment of the site, specifically through the creation of design principles. The Committee included appointed officials, adjacent residents, major property owners and representatives from civic, community and business organizations with an interest in the site.

The Committee held four meetings, between February and April, and discussed topics including existing Small Area Plan, zoning, land use, neighborhood character, open space, building scale and transitions and desired public benefits. Through these discussions, the Committee developed ten design principles to define the expectations of the community.

Committee Outreach

The Committee members will present these design principles to their respective organizations to gain feedback and identify additional issues to be considered through the future development review process. Each Committee member will present these design principles to their respective organizations to determine if the organization agrees with the principles, has concerns with the principles or has additional principles. Ultimately, each Committee member will prepare a letter from their organization which expresses the collective opinions on the design principles. Each of the letters will be posted to the project website and a link to the letters will be sent to the Committee members for review.

Design Principles – Next Steps

The adopted design principles will be sent to the City Manager for review and transmission to WMATA for incorporation into the RFP. Following the release of the RFP and the selection of a developer, the selected developer will be required to comply with the design principles. In addition, the redevelopment will require review and approval by the City as part of the City's normal development review process. There will be additional opportunity for community involvement when a developer is selected and submits a formal development application for this site.

Design Principles

1. Any development proposals shall be compatible with the goals recommended in the Old Town North Small Area Plan as well as the Urban Design Guidelines, as amended, except as set forth below. *The Committee unanimously agreed to this principle.*
2. A potential rezoning to a CRMU-zone and a maximum of 2.5 FAR will be considered. *Two Committee members opposed this principle.*
3. Development shall be predominantly residential and may include a limited amount of ground floor accessory retail, personal service or community-serving use. *The Committee unanimously agreed to this principle.*
4. The proposed project shall have the appearance of a collection of compatible building components and avoid the appearance of a single large building. *The Committee unanimously agreed to this principle.*
5. Heights may transition from higher on the northern portion of the site to lower along the southern portion of the site. Heights adjacent to townhomes shall be no more than 50 feet. Opportunity for additional height, up to 70 feet, is possible on the northeast corner of the site or within the central portion of the site if adequate transitions and building step-backs are provided to maintain a pedestrian-oriented streetscape. In addition, rooftop mechanical equipment shall be located and screened in such a manner as to minimize visual impact and abate noise. *Two Committee members opposed the 70-foot height.*
6. All parking shall be located either below-grade or in rear load garages and accessed from an internal alley. *Two Committee members opposed this principle.*
7. All existing and proposed utilities shall be located underground. *The Committee unanimously agreed to this principle.*
8. At the pedestrian streetscape level, any proposed development shall provide for a variety of architectural elevations, quality architectural details and materials, and articulation of the wall plane. The proposed public streetscape on all street frontages shall be designed to encourage pedestrian activity by providing for accessibility, adequate space for sidewalks, canopy trees and groundcover plantings. Wythe Street shall be designed as a special streetscape, emphasizing a linkage to the Potomac River. *The Committee unanimously agreed to this principle.*
9. As part of the rezoning and development special use permit process, off-site open space improvements shall be provided to enhance connections to the Potomac River and Oronoco Bay Park. *The Committee unanimously agreed to this principle.*
10. As part of the rezoning and development special use permit process, and review by the Urban Design Advisory Committee, the following exhibits will be required.

- a. A concept land use, circulation, building height and open space diagram indicating how the vehicular circulation to this site will be configured and indicating how the streetscape and open space characteristics of this site will be coordinated with the neighborhood streetscape, open space and park elements;
- b. A proposed site plan showing specific building location layout, vehicular and pedestrian circulation/parking, ground level open space, and streetscape layout and characteristics;
- c. A minimum of two sections through the site depicting proposed building locations and massing, adjacent street rights of way and adjacent existing buildings and heights;
- d. Architectural elevations of each proposed building;
- e. Sections of each proposed pedestrian streetscape; and
- f. A generalized concept landscape plan for the project indicating how public and private open spaces on the site are to be addressed. *One Committee member opposed this principle.*