IX. Summary of Public Comments

Community Participation Activities

Date	Activity	Purpose
January 23, 2002	Project Commencement Meeting	Present an overview of the Draft Master Plan Project and to solicit the community's comments on the Plan.
February 5, 2002	Local Neighborhood Meeting	Requested by citizens, a small group meeting to review the Draft Master Plan project.
February 20, 2002	Existing Conditions and Background Info Mtg.	Provide details on the progress of the draft master plan and to prepare the community for the upcoming Workshop.
February 21,2002	Located Notebooks at Eastern High School, MLK. Library and Office of Planning	Provide public with hard copy information on Reservation 13 planning process
February 25, 2002	Launched website	Provide web based vehicle for informing and educating public about Reservation 13 at www.publicspace.justicesustainability.com
March 1-3, 2002	Community Planning Workshop	Site Tour and to have community members work side-by-side with the architects and city planners to create a working draft of the vision for the site – what its purpose should be; and to establish a set of guiding principles for the development of the site.
March 16, 2002	Open House	Provide the latest draft and solicit the community's feedback.
March 20, 2002	Final Public Presentation	Present the Draft Master Plan that will be given to the City Council.

Figure 24 - Public Workshop, March 2, 2002

Final Report – Summary of Public Comment

This section outlines the general themes of comments provided by residents, stakeholders, and participants. Input was gathered not only at the organized public meetings, but also via telephone calls, letters, emails, and on Internet discussion groups. A wealth of information, comments, and perspectives was submitted during this process. The level of community comment was more detailed and extensive than what is provided here. This section captures the general themes of discussion and does not represent the full public record, a concensus opinion or prioritization of opinions expressed at the community meetings. Moreover, the following opinions are not representative of a thorough or scientific sampling of community opinion, but rather represent only the opinions of those who attended the workshop and meetings. This section is not intended to provide a rebuttal to the many diverse concerns or opinions that are recorded here.

Common Community Concerns

Over the 10-week planning process, three primary concerns emerged time and again for various participant groups in the planning process.

1. Provision of a full-service, state of the art, public hospital
   Many participants expressed support for a full-service public hospital on the site. Participants stated that the site had a long history of providing for the public health and welfare and that this tradition should continue. Participants varied in their opinions as to whether public health needs could best be served through the construction of a new facility or by restoring the existing hospital buildings. The majority of participants indicated that the eastern half of the District was generally underserved by hospitals.

2. St. Coletta School Siting Process
   Some participants questioned the process whereby a portion of the site was set aside for St. Coletta School and felt that the agreement with St. Coletta was made without public input. While many participants are not opposed to the school, its clients, or the commitment to accommodate the school on the site, they were concerned about the process by which this commitment was made.

3. Improvement of the Adjacent Neighborhood
   In many respects, the planning process responded to fears from neighborhood residents that without a plan the site would be utilized for a number of less desirable uses. Local residents wanted some measure of security and predictability that less desirable uses would not be concentrated on the site. At the same time, residents voiced a desire to utilize the site in a way that would provide better amenities for their community including recreational opportunities, retail venues, enhanced safety, more residential development, and access to the waterfront.

January 23, 2002 – 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Project Commencement Meeting
(Location: DC Armory)

227 participants attended the first public meeting. Participants included roughly equal proportions of health care advocates, local neighborhood residents, and other District stakeholders. Primary comments focused on the short and/or limited notice of the public meeting, concerns over the closing of DC General hospital, and skepticism about the commitment to true community engagement in the process.

The meeting began with a brief overview of the Draft Master Plan Process, its purpose, components, and the proposed timeline for completing the planning process. Open public comment followed. Several main themes emerged including recommended uses, ideas to maximize citizen engagement, and comments regarding DC General and correctional facilities on the site.

Theme 1: Community Engagement Process
Citizens wanted to ensure that this process was as open and participatory as possible and that the time and commitment of the citizens was valued. Specific, actionable suggestions were to 1) have Channel 16 present at all meetings, 2) announce meeting dates/times well in advance, and 3) plan workshops on different days/times – some weeknights, some weekends.

Citizens commented that it was important not only to have the community involved, but to have many diverse views at these meetings. Some people expressed skepticism about the process and wanted assurances that the plan was not already "a done deal" and that community concerns would be heard. Specific comments included:

Theme 2: Ideas for the Site
Several participants volunteered recommendations for utilizing the site for the benefit of the neighborhood and the District. This list included:

* community college campus for DC
* an emergency clinic
* job training programs
* Massachusetts Ave. extension
* more parkland
* mixed-income housing
* recreational facilities

Theme 3: Current uses - DC General and Correctional Facilities
Some speakers stated that they were concerned about the closure of DC General Hospital and its impact on health care and were interested in a full-service, state-of-the-art hospital with a trauma one center. Additionally, the community had questions on the status and expansion of the correctional facilities on the site.

Other individuals had questions relating to land use and the full planning process – both in this Draft Master Planning effort and beyond – to plan implementation, zoning, legal interpretations, and development. Residents were concerned about zoning and the protections it might offer to the community. The presentation stated that the transfer of jurisdiction was conditioned on the site being used for "any municipal purpose." This phrase was ambiguous to many participants and did not indicate which uses might be permitted or prohibited under this condition.

Regarding the process, participants wanted planners to provide an opportunity to have a working tour of the site to become familiar with it before planning workshops. Other participants requested that information on the site, including past plans, studies, and resources be made available to the public at a central location.

February 20, 2002 – 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Existing Conditions and Background Information Meeting
(Location: DC Armory)

81 participants attended the second public meeting – 20 were new to the process having not attended the first meeting. The meeting began with an open house-type small group session. Maps were provided depicting the site in its regional context, the site surrounded by diverse bordering uses, existing conditions on the site (both maps and photos), and scale comparisons of the site to other familiar areas in the region (i.e. the main campus of Howard University, GW Hospital, Old Town Alexandria, etc.) Public comment was received in the small group discussions.

A presentation followed that provided baseline background information on the site, existing conditions and size comparisons for planning consideration. In addition, the consultant team indicated that some uses were to be considered "givens" during the planning process. These included:

- Accommodation of existing health care uses on the site in any new plans for the site;
- Preservation and containment of correctional uses on the site south of Massachusetts Avenue;
- Interim accommodation of CSOSA (Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency) on the site in a location to be determined through the planning process, and;
- Location of St. Coletta School on 4-acres on the site at the corner of Independence Avenue and 19th Street, SE.

Andrew Altman, Director of Planning, provided an overview of agenda and format for the intensive 3-day community planning charrette planned for the following weekend. He then closed the meeting.

Some participants expressed frustration that they were not able to provide comments in a large group setting at this meeting and felt the small group sessions at the beginning were inadequate forums in which to articulate

their concerns. Following the meeting, other participants submitted comments to the Office of Planning indicating some skepticism about the level of community input in the planning process.

Following this meeting, the www.publicspace.justicesustainability.com website was launched to provide better public access to information and dialogue about the Reservation 13 site and its planning process. Hard copies of materials were also provided in binders at two locations – downtown and in the site neighborhood at Eastern High School.

March 1-3, 2002
Community Planning Workshop
(Location: Eastern Senior High School)

An intensive three-day planning workshop was held with residents and stakeholders over the weekend of Friday, March 1 to Sunday, March 3. More than 100 people participated over the three days.

The workshop began with a tour of the study site on Friday afternoon. Approximately 35 participants attended the tour. For many, this was the first time they had actually been on the site. Many participants commented that they had not realized how large the site was, nor its proximity to the river. Participants also noted the lack of sidewalks and normal streets and how it was relatively difficult to walk around the site safely. There were no "cut-throughs" to shorten the nearly one-mile tour loop as many of the buildings and fences blocked passage across the site and to the Metro station.

Participants spent nearly the whole day, from 9am to 4pm, on Saturday, March 2nd sitting together with city agency staff, urban designers, and Department of Health representatives in small groups and exploring specific topics of interest relating to the master planning of Reservation 13.

Residents were broken into seven groups to explore different issues. Summaries of those sessions are detailed below. The issues were:

1. *Site Edges* – How can the site be a good neighbor to the neighborhood, waterfront, cemetery, and stadium?
2. *Site Character* - What should this place look like? How is it organized?
3. *Parks, Recreation and Open Space* – What does the environment and public space look like? What is there to do at Reservation 13?
4. *Traffic, Circulation and Transit* - How do I get from here to there? How do I move around the site safely?
5. *The Public Resource* - What are the Essential, Complementary and Competing Uses that must be accommodated?
6. *Massachusetts and Independence Aves*. – What are the major boulevards? How does the site connect to the Waterfront and the River?
7. *Health and Wellness in DC and the Neighborhood* - What is the health presence on the site?

The Public Resource
Overall, participants felt that the site could and should host a diversity of uses. Some of the more specific recommendations were for a Performing Arts Center, small scale office uses, a Nature Center, a full service hospital, or a UDC satellite campus or community college. Participants commented that they would like to see the St. Coletta School better integrated to the site and be accessible to the public in the evenings.

Many agreed that there should be shared structured parking (no vast lots) and parking should be underground, when possible, or built into the landscape. Participants commented that the Park Road should primarily provide access to the waterfront and not divide the community from the water with a stream of commuter traffic. Some recommendations were for the terminus of Massachusetts Ave. to have a boathouse with restaurants that are compatible with the natural environment, and for the 50-foot set-back on 19th Street to be a community garden.

Participants felt the connection to the Anacostia River was needed for the site to be a public resource. Some suggestions were for rowing on the Anacostia River, shallow hulled boat taxis to the Arboretum and Aquatics Park, and a canoe tie-up. Some citizens recommended a college-type development that to soften the transition between development and riverscape.

Many citizens agreed that a street grid would organize the site for its various uses.

Site Character
Participants identified a number of general uses for the site:

* Civic: gov't buildings, office space
* Recreation: park, skating rink, swimming pool, riverwalk, playground
* Residential/Retail: along 19th Street, community retail
* Jail/Health Care: rehab
* Education: library, UDC annex
* Historic Resources on site: archeological sites, potters field

Participants recommended a type of site organization that would create different characters for different areas of the site. Some recommendations were for Civic and/or Institutional uses in front of the jail, a large medical facility near the Metro, indoor recreational facilities nearer the stadium side of the site with outdoor recreational facilities near the waterfront, and open spaces in the middle of the site.

Participants discussed how character is defined by building heights and parking. One recommendation was to divide the site into 3 sections from low heights at 19th to higher heights along the waterfront. Because of the slope of the land, group participants felt the higher buildings at the waterfront would not be perceived as very high. Participants recommended all parking structures should be underground.

Massachusetts and Independence Avenues
Participants suggested that Massachusetts Avenue should have civic offices built on it while Independence Avenue should serve civic, health care and educational needs. Community members said that they would like to see the CSOSA building, office buildings and retail near the jail.

There was general consensus that there should be trees along Massachusetts Ave., Independence Ave. and 19th St. with a significant park at the end of Massachusetts Ave. Additionally, many citizens wanted to see a mix of residential and retail along Massachusetts Avenue. Some also recommended a pedestrian bridge to connect Massachusetts Ave. to the east side of the river and another bridge from the site to Kingman Island.

Several citizens commented that there should be no "super block" size buildings along Massachusetts or Independence Avenues – like there is in Southwest and other areas downtown. Also, they would like to see buildings along 19th St. be "townhouse" looking and that any commercial development should not be a "strip mall" but more like a neighborhood center

Several participants felt it was important that the site have mixed-uses to attract people in the evening. They recommended things like a grocery store, library, community college, retail and some mix-income residential. Some stated that the center of the site, C Street, should be a mix of residential and retail.

Traffic, Circulation, and Transit
Citizens expressed a lot of concern over the fact that 19th and Potomac Streets are currently commuter speedways. They recommended changing 19th St. into a two-way street.

Participants felt Massachusetts Avenue should be the main entrance to the site. Proposals varied from it being mostly a pedestrian access to the water, allowing for the visual connection to Massachusetts Avenue, across the river, to it being a vehicle connection to a park drive. Also, citizens expressed they would like to see the neighborhood grid extended onto the site.

Some participants felt there should be a pedestrian bridge to connect to Kingman Island. Many expressed that the proposed park drive should not be a commuter street and should be set back from the water's edge.

Citizens recommended improvements to the Stadium/Armory Metro exit so that it would be safer to cross 19th Street. Also, many envisioned the exit areas lined with trees.

Participants recommended that parking structures along Independence Ave. should terrace into the slope with a low rise above ground to not obstruct the view to the river.

Health and Wellness in DC and the Neighborhood
Many participants in this group stated they wanted to see a state-of-the-art, fully serviced, and fully funded public hospital on the site. Participants had a variety of ideas and recommendations. Some wanted to integrate a hospital with a health and wellness campus, similar to National Institute of Health, as a hub for the community, including an in-patient hospital, out-patient clinics, research, education, partnerships (JHU & UDC), rehabilitation, occupational and physical therapy. Other group participants emphasized that the site plan should improve overall wellness for the community by including parks, gardens, walkways, meditation areas, health and parenting education, multipurpose facilities (auditorium), and passive recreation (pool). Other visions included a hospital complex that would include DOH Administration, educational facilities for nursing, medical, midwifery, paramedic training, and a high school for medical arts.

Some participants recommended that the hospital be integrated with the community as a gateway to the river on Massachusetts Avenue, with ground floor retail and 24-hour facilities (i.e. gym) to avoid inactive spaces at night. Citizens advocated for green landscaping, sustainable rooftop gardens, and picnic areas. Some recommended facilities for assisted living for seniors and a hospice.

Some participants supported housing on the site, but did not want high-end luxury housing. One recommendation was to create an attractive boundary for the jail to make the site more inviting. Other participants pointed out that traffic solutions must consider the needs of ambulances, staff, and visitors.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space
Group participants generally felt that quality open space and tree-lined streets were important on the site. Some participants preferred a "wild and natural" area while other supported a more active landscape for recreation. Most wanted measures taken to reduce pollution, attract wildlife back to area, and contribute to the habitat restoration scheduled for Kingman Island. Participants favored the idea of a meandering river walk. Some suggested including interpretative plaques along route, a footbridge connection to the island, exercise stations (like Rock Creek Park), bike and skater paths. Some wanted to see the site open up river access as an economic and recreation resource that could include a water trolley or taxi system and canoe put-ins. Some participants proposed that the park drive should not form a barrier between the site and the Anacostia River, be no closer than 200 feet to the river's edge and should provide access to the waterfront.

Regarding Massachusetts Avenue, citizens liked the idea of it as a "Grand Boulevard"— a tree lined street that would end in a circle/square at the river's edge with a statue/fountain in center. Other ideas included capitalizing on current parking lots at RFK Stadium by linking them to the proposed light rail system and imparting traffic calming measures such as cobblestone roadways and traffic lights. Residents also wanted several parks within the street grid that would incorporate fountains or other water themes.

Participants recommended uses on the site ranging from a recreation complex to a "children's garden" that would form an interactive and educational perimeter to 19th Street and around St. Coletta School. Safety was a concern and citizens wanted to see activities and structures on the site that will attract people throughout the day.

As planning principles, participants recommended that green building and low impact design be required on the site, the reuse of building materials be emphasized, water efficiency be maximized, indigenous and wildlife supportive landscaping be incorporated, and that no more than 70% of the area be covered by buildings.

March 3rd – Draft Guiding Principles
During the evening of March 2nd and the morning of March 3rd, the consultant team and planners worked to identify themes in the many comments from the working groups and develop these into a set of guiding principles that would inform future development on the site. Fifteen broad principles emerged:

1. Create a mixed use urban waterfront neighborhood, not a campus separate and isolated from the neighborhood or a barrier to the waterfront.

2. The neighborhood will be human in scale, pedestrian-oriented and a safe, pleasurable place to access needed services, work, live and play.
3. The neighborhood will connect Hill East to the Anacostia River and provide easy, tree-lined public access to the waterfront.
4. The neighborhood will consist of distinct "places" each of unique and complementary character, scale and uses centered on four districts: Massachusetts Avenue, 19th Street; Independence Avenue and C Street
5. There will be ample open spaces throughout the site and a great waterfront park - The Meadow - anchored at Massachusetts Avenue with a riverwalk and bicycle trail extending along the Anacostia River.
6. The primary uses for the site should meet the diversity of human needs including health care, education, civic, government, recreation and residential.
7. Neighborhood-friendly transportation should be enhanced to reduce the impact of traffic on the site and in adjacent neighborhoods.
8. On-site parking should not dominate views or sites. Shared parking should be encouraged, large parking lots discouraged.
9. Metro access should be enhanced by locating complementary uses and attractive, inviting and safe public spaces nearby.
10. A vital new neighborhood center should be promoted along 19th Street to complement and serve the unmet needs of the residential neighborhoods.
11. Local streets should be extended to, and through, the site consistent with the existing pattern of neighborhood streets to overcome the isolation of the site and ensure regular city blocks and appropriately-scaled development.
12. A park drive should be designed at sufficient distance from the river to provide for the waterfront park and allow access to the site for residents and not commuters.
13. Massachusetts Avenue should be a grand Washington boulevard in the tradition of L'Enfant's plan.
14. Building heights should increase toward the water following the slope of the site.
15. Development should reflect environmental stewardship and improve environmental quality on and off the site.

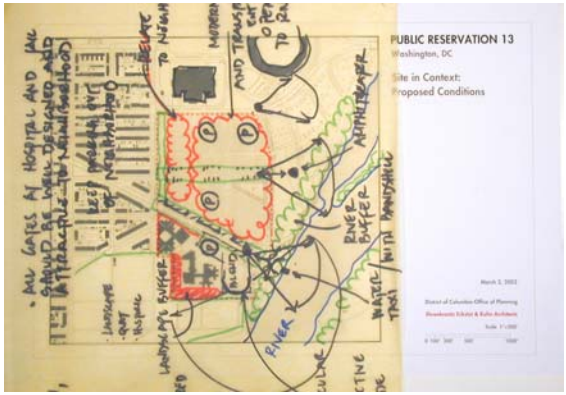
Overall, participants applauded the workshop and felt that it gave them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the planning process.

March 16, 2002 – 10am –12pm
Open House
(Location: DC Armory)

Approximately 35 people attended the Open House. This meeting gave neighbors and interested stakeholders an opportunity to provide final comments and feedback on the Draft Master Plan before the March 20th Final Public Presentation. After a brief discussion of the Draft Master Plan by the planners, participants broke up into three small groups to contribute their observations.

Overall, public comments focused on land use issues: 1) participants felt that the land use terminology needed to be clarified and more specific; 2) participants wanted to see a greater integration of uses between districts, specifically the inclusion of residential units facing the waterfront on the Massachusetts Avenue District; and 3) participants sought information on the percentage of the site allocated for each land use (how much space for health care, parks, residential).

As a result of the input received at the Open House meeting, the land use categories were refined and the district edges were modified on the Draft Master Plan to better illustrate the intermingling of uses on the site.



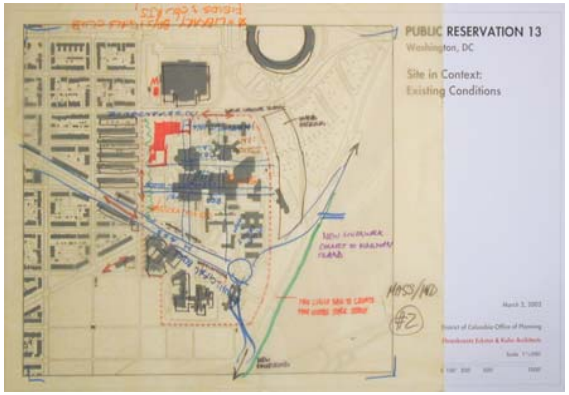


Figure 25 - Two sketches from the Public Workshop, March 2, 2002

Community Ideas
January – March 2002

Many ideas emerged both at public meetings and outside of them that helped to inform the planning process. These ideas are captured below.

Ideas from the Community on Land Uses

- Bike and Walking Paths
- Canoe Tie-ups
- Community-oriented Retail (i.e. drugstore, grocery store)
- Residential (including Assisted-Living housing)
- Private development for "revenue-productive use"
- Crafts and Vocational Center
- Full Service Hospital
- High School for the Medical Arts
- Historical Center
- "Torpedo Factory" type art center
- Hospice
- Classrooms for adult education
- Outdoor Track and Field
- Library
- Meditation Areas
- Multipurpose Center (i.e. auditorium)
- Nature Center
- Graduate University or Center for Higher Education
- Performing Arts Center
- Playground
- Recreation Center (i.e. Boys and Girls Club)
- Skating Rink
- Swimming Pool
- UDC Satellite Campus
- Baseball Stadium
- Baseball or Soccer Fields
- Tennis Facility
- Health Research and Holistic Medicine Center
- Charter Schools