

# **Spring Street – Free Street Streetscape Plan Public Advisory Committee Meeting 3 Summary**

October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – 4:00-6:00  
Cumberland County Civic Center  
Lobby Conference Room

## **Proposed Schedule**

Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup> – Public Meeting  
Date ? - Meeting 5 – Final PAC Meeting

## **Summary**

The meeting began with a presentation of the revised goals and principles. Minor alterations were requested by committee members and will be reflected in the following draft. Streetscape plans prepared by Tom Farmer of TJD&A Architects were then presented to the committee. Cross sections as well as aerial perspectives were provided to prompt discussion of specific design ideas. Michael Lewis's graphic renderings of the terraced access to South Street were well received by the committee. The existing structure and function was discussed as was the potential configurations (specific comments on pages 1 and 2)

Streetscape elements were presented and discussed. The committee informally agreed that for all except the lollipop bike racks, the amenities and colors should be the same as that of the Arts District for Free Street and of the Old Port for Spring Street. The committee suggested *better* bike racks (suggestion on page 3) and noted that the Spring Street area is a prime location for bicycle parking on a larger than typical scale. Bicycle rack design will require further review. The tree planters that were most desirable were the elongated granite planters that had a rounded finish (bottom left of tree planter slide from Tom's presentation). These planters were chosen because of the increased functionality that the elongated bed provided the roots of the tree. The rounded edges provide a less abrupt obstacle to pedestrians and were considered less likely to be damaged by snow plows than the cornered edges.

## **Comments and Concerns: Intentions for Spring – Free Streetscapes**

- A. Make Center Street and Cross Street intersections more pedestrian friendly – textured surface.
- B. Note curb extensions for stormwater and traffic flow
- C. Bike lane – climbing lane 6 feet wide. Not necessary on other side of street because bicycles will be able to keep up with descending traffic.
- D. Shared pathway issues: bicycles + pedestrians -> not desired, bicycles + vehicles -> more appropriate.
- E. Space given to bicycles in many of the designs was too generous. Space could be used more appropriately. We don't want to remove an abbreviated and underused vehicular traffic arterial only to replace it with an abbreviated and underused bicycle arterial.

- F. Plans for bicycle lane design should be congruent with city wide concept.
- G. Additional space is optimal for (temporary or permanent) designated bicycle parking.
- H. Space is something urban street designers are almost never afforded, let's not forget we are in an urban setting and that space needs to be optimally used with a focus on facilitating economic growth and increasing land value. The dangers of arbitrarily allocating "green space" include creating a large area void of on sight attractions. Space doesn't make an area, what fills the space does. Suburban spatial design is inappropriate for such a centrally located urban setting. Ideas to affectively develop this empty area:
  - a. Make this area attractive for private infill opportunities – sidewalks a desirable width for restaurants or bars, incentivize type of development with land ownership negotiations etc.
  - b. Determine the amount of space **required to fulfill** vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian **traffic needs**, then allocate additional space to ideas such as public space or selling it to private holders. Meanwhile, fill unused space with malleable and temporary materials/functions (public art, bicycle parking, hard streetscape).
  - c. Green public space is still a desired option, but perhaps less extensive
- I. Designate south side of Spring Street for traffic – adding space to north side.
- J. Leave space flexible for future uses such as a Public Transportation stop – in front of Civic Center?
- K. Still need to keep in mind that if attractions to this area develop – a (slightly) greater need for parking arises. Bottom line – don't diminish available parking.
- L. Creating underground parking to replace open parking spaces and then build on top to reclaim the space for development. – Easily done with existing conditions of parking lot areas.
- M. Improve Portland Museum of Art Park. It is considered a temporary installment – should this be considered in overall project.
- N. Note that the PM of Art practice of backing trucks into loading/unloading dock using the street is something that needs to be changed in the redevelopment process. The loading/unloading dock must design for such access.
- O. When considering space required for traffic, don't forget about the 5% of the time the street will be congested.
- P. Nuanced design along Spring Street is desired, possibly in the form of three distinct segments. Street meandering also adds to a visual designation of space along the arterial and decreases scale. High to Oak, Oak to Center and Center to Cross. A way to do this is to specify the uses of each portion. Examples:
  - a. High to Oak – *give* more space to Holiday Inn, open Oak St passage, and redefine PMofArt Park.
  - b. Oak to Center – acknowledge Civic Center and Maine Health as attractions and design for easy access and desirable streetscape qualities for lingering. Get legal status of Oak St confirmed.
  - c. Center to Cross – dense parking and private building space by making land available and maintain Exchange St character through to the Center Street intersection. Create a more prominent entrance (ADA accessible) to the park by TD Bank.
- Q. Acknowledge that successful streetscapes develop over time, and often when designed in one fell swoop it is unsuccessful (ex: Spring Street Arterial)

**Amenities Selected by PAC at Meeting 3**

