

Friends of Wyman Park Dell

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

February 10, 2001

Frank J. Murphy
Engineering Supervisor
Department of Public Works
Bureau of Transportation
417 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Since our last meeting re: Charles Street Reconstruction held on February 5th, I have met with the Friends of Wyman Park Dell (FWPD) Officers and Board to review the status of the Charles Street reconstruction project. I have been asked to write to you with our understanding of the results of the 2/5 meeting and the assumed next steps. In addition, we would like the City to consider some additional recommendations.

Our current assumption is we are collectively working on a single design which (moving Eastward from the Dell) includes: sidewalk, service lane with full time parking, landscaped median, two southbound lanes, landscaped median that becomes a left/right turn lane at various points, two northbound lanes, landscaped median, service lane with full-time parking, sidewalk. We recommend that both cross-sectional plans and longitudinal plans from University Parkway to 26th Street for Option 5 be prepared so that we may further study this design. We ask that drawings (even rough sketches) be provided to the stakeholders in advance of the next working meeting.

Some specific recommendations include:

- No more than 10' widths for all active drive lanes be stated so that speed limits can be maintained to 35mph.
- No more than 16' widths be given to the service lanes be stated so that moving traffic is significantly constrained to slower speeds.
- Maximum consideration of green space for the two flanking medians be stated so that a double row of trees may be planted in each median.
- A center landscaped median be stated which will provide for left turn movements as needed.
- Stop signs and traffic signals (spanning active lanes and service lanes) at all key intersections be stated.
- Pedestrian crosswalks at all key intersections be stated.
- Breaks in the flanking medians, with crosswalks, to align with major portals to Wyman Park Dell be stated.

During our meeting two statements were made that we think the City should address:

a) The City should further investigate "expanded grid entry and exits" for its traffic capacity needs. The City's intent to route high volumes of traffic on Charles Street as the major artery for the digital harbor is not prudent and in conflict with the safety needs of the neighborhood. Opening traffic arteries and roadways along the Northeast corridor may better serve those in the Canton area and the recent development on the East side of the City. We do not think it is wise for the City to route such traffic along the Dell's green space and through 4 major campuses that straddle this corridor.

b) The City should conduct a pedestrian study between University Parkway and 26th street. This will help further define the key intersections to be planned. Learning pedestrian behavior throughout the day and evening, during the week and on weekends, and their adherence to traffic signals and traffic flow would be helpful for the design. Without these facts the City may be designing on false assumptions and end up not improving the safety standards as intended.

Charles Street redesign is a complex issue and one that requires thoughtful consideration. It should not be rushed in haste. The FWPD continues to support this process and we are committed to not only a success design but also thoughtful implementation of a 'showcase' project. We look forward to our next planning meeting on Monday, March 5th at the BMA Hess Conference Room at 7pm.

Thank you for considering our efforts in making this a City-wide success.

Sincerely,

Suzanne REXING
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CC: Deputy Mayor David Scott
CC: Bernard 'Jack' Young, City Councilman
CC: Laurie Feinberg BCDPW – Planning Office
CC: Kristin Smith BCDPW – Planning Office
CC: Steve Campbell, JHU
CC: Alan Dirican, BMA
CC: John Spurrier, CVCA
CC: Father William Au, St. Phillips and James
CC: Clyde Abell, University Baptist Church
CC: Sandy Sparks, Charles Village Planned Unit Development
CC: Matthew Moscas, Friends of MD Olmstead Parks and Landscapes
CC: FWPD Record/Officers