

June 1, 2004

Dear David,

Thank you for guiding us through another productive meeting of Charles Street stakeholders on May 19. You truly have a gift for building consensus.

As president of Friends of Wyman Park Dell, I am writing as a follow-up both to Michael Vergason's conceptual proposal that Mark Demshak of JHU offered to the group and to the subsequent discussion regarding its various elements.

Michael Vergason's concept plan resolves all of the concerns raised in the FWPD's response to the May 5th public meeting. The accommodations of pedestrians at the intersections at 29th Street and Art Museum Drive are improved dramatically. The parking will allow for physical and visual gateways into the Dell. The landscape and street treatments are elegant. Its parallel pedestrian enhancements on both the east and west sides are both visually and functionally well-crafted. There is finally a pedestrian-friendly environment on the west side as well as the east side—a bedrock guiding principle of this redesign process.

FWPD wishes to bring attention to this last point—the pedestrian environment. I left our meeting feeling that the concept Mark Demshak presented was regrettably being eroded as the meeting progressed. Page 5 of your “NOTES: STAKEHOLDER'S MEETING WEDNESDAY MAY 19, 2004” under “Decision hierarchy for typical section widths, point 2” states that “City will review the possibility of providing 4 to 6-foot side landscaped buffers with trees along eastern and westernmost sidewalks with the understanding that the added widths might come from the median widths.”

Should the City require more than the 23 foot street width that Michael Vergason is proposing, FWPD asks for a serious reconsideration of where the additional footage might come from. The solution should not depend on a reduction of the west side pedestrian space including its green edge shown in this concept.

We believe an appreciation of the west side is a critical visual and functional element of any successful plan. In earlier comments forwarded to you on May 14 (see attached) FWPD expressed the desire of a majority of its board that the west side edge of Charles Street—that adjacent to the Dell—be in its own right an attractive and comfortable pedestrian environment. Treating the west side accordingly is certainly a priority of the FWPD. However, the west side in our May 19th discussion was treated largely as an afterthought or as an expendable reservoir of space that can be readily sacrificed for other priorities. *Subsequently, on May 27, 2004, the full FWPD board at its monthly meeting strongly endorsed the need for the full “6 feet from face of existing curb” for the landscaped buffer.*

At that same board meeting I was asked to make clear our position on two other important aspects of the redesign, both related to the pedestrian environment on the west side. First is the intersection at 29th Street. Page 5 of your document under “Decision tree for intersection treatments” point B notes that although most Stakeholders supported the right turn/smaller dimension at that intersection, the City decision is to provide a 105-foot radius right turn. We remain strong in our opposition to *any* sweep and equally strong in our desire for a 90 degree turn with “no right turn on red”, for both pedestrian safety and improvement of visual accessibility. In addition, we ask that you consider the flow of traffic westbound on 29th Street. An important aspect of improving overall pedestrian safety and accessibility to the Dell is moving

the traffic signal presently mid-block heading west on 29th Street to the intersection of 29th Street and Maryland Avenue.

At Art Museum Drive we oppose *any* sweep for cars turning south onto Charles Street and are strong in our desire for a “T-intersection.” We would not oppose the removal of the large tree presently at that intersection if in doing so we gain a safer pedestrian crossing. The shift of the pedestrian crossing from 31st Street to south of Art Museum Drive is a wonderful change, and we ask that, in order for the crossing to be truly safe and functional, there be “no right turn on red.”

Should you have any questions about the above comments please feel free to call me. FWPD looks forward to next meeting with you on June 24th.

Sincerely,
Marcia Holden, President
Friends of Wyman Park Dell

Cc: Frank Wheeler, Dept. of Transportation Project Manager
FWPD Board Members
Stakeholders listed on Attachment No. 1 (May 19, 2004 document)