

CWH Commuter Center Topic Meeting

Friday, September 09, 2011

9:17 AM

Rick Hall opened with discussion of walkable design philosophy

- Five key strategies
 - Context based approach
 - Multimodal design (walkability) - transit success requires great walkability
 - Charrette synergy
 - Schedule efficiency
 - Minimum learning curve
- Talked about Matt Ward's experience; he's our user; uses Pan Tran to MARC at Harpers Ferry into DC; Matt has trouble connecting and getting tickets; need to get attention of choice riders and protect captive riders

Sean Garrigan (SGA) - wants to discuss opportunities and challenges with working within the framework of a historic meeting

- exciting that transit can be driver of reconnection of this building with the center of the City; meeting with focus group later - transit is not only program for building; will have Visitor's Center
- can have connection to Harpers Ferry for tourism/John Brown in addition to daily commute to DC
- Have to deal with architectural realities of building and meeting its function as a transit center; have to deal with logistics of where/how bus should circulate; how to make it easy for users

Terry (SGA) - history of building and its architecture

- There are certain details that if changed or unprotected would change the character and history of building
- Additions
- Upper floor is a 20' building from Civil War Era
- Upper space has reinforcements to keep front wall from falling in; original color scheme from 1874
- Time as a theater
- Basement is 1/3 of building; slanted walls
- Section 106 review or an equivalent process (when federal funds are involved) - process is to allow the public local history community to get involved and be informed about preservation and agree on what should be kept
 - Involves looking at building for defining features and assessment of projects for their effect on the building and plans to resolve that
 - Defining character-defining features/"sacred cows"
 - Our project will result in rehabilitating and restoring (not preservation which would be mothballing)
 - Restoring takes it back to original function
 - Rehabilitation adapts it to another function
 - We have a combination of the two

Q/A

- Tonya
 - what would happen to restaurant?; Joe - we'd try to relocate it
 - What will be in that space then?; Sean - that's the program we are working on

- May combine transit facility with other uses throughout the day; manned transit operations on main floor; then find other things that would work in building compatible with transit and character of Four Corners; make lively
 - RH - opera house on upper floor is common
- Strider Brother - Who owns building? City of Charles Town
- Rex -
 - What are parking facilities in vicinity?; RH - on-street and bank owned parking behind building; described potential of increased service using that back lot as a parking deck and circulation (requires sensitive negotiations with current owners preserving their functions and needs)
 - Sean - issue of how buses will circulate; short and long term; thinking as we program the building that we don't do something that prevents later growth
 - Rick - we are responsible for construction ready docs, so it is likely that we will do Phase 1 with one or two buses a day and will present conceptual plans for greater intensity of usage in future
- Strider
 - What is ridership?; TH and RH - one bus in AM with three to four passengers; but many are commuting into DC/Baltimore area everyday; two trains in AM from Harpers Ferry
 - Sean - want to increase tourism and economic opps with bus service to Harpers Ferry activities
 - Rick - good use of buses throughout non-commuting times of day
- Gail - What about mobility around two towns?; RH - that's a good third potential use of Center; we'll study that opportunity
 - Mix of uses on floors - ok, in this location
- Improve walkability between Charles Town center and north towards Ranson
- Resident - many people walk to Wal-Mart; can we improve service
- Gail - don't want to mix two classes of riders and services; don't want to inconvenience any single group with the other service
- Planning Comm - what about planning for taxi service?/ hub for mobility options?; RH - economic question; we do all this planning assuming \$10/gallon