

Dear Parks Advisory Commission Member,

I am writing on behalf of the Library Green Conservancy (LGC) to share with you an updated version of our ***Citizens Report***. We distributed an earlier version of this report in January - when City Council received a report from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) on *Connecting William Street*. As you know, City Council did not vote to accept the DDA's recommendations. Instead, the Council sought input from the Parks Advisory Commission (PAC) on the question of public parks in downtown Ann Arbor.

The PAC has now begun to study the questions surrounding downtown open space of all kinds – parks, plazas pedestrian thoroughfares, and the LGC wants to support the PAC and its subcommittee on downtown parks. The enclosed report is an effort by the LGC to provide an alternative vision for the Library Lot – one of the five publicly owned sites that were the subject of the *Connecting William Street* project.

While the Library Lot has been and continues to be the focus for our group, we recognize that there is a need for a variety of types of public open space throughout our downtown. We feel that this site has particular strengths as the location for a *town square*. Our community lost a central, public open space when the old County Courthouse was torn down over half century ago – its generous lawn paved over and filled by a new building. We're glad that the PAC is looking at *all* the potential sites and thinking broadly about the needs of *all* the constituencies for downtown open space.

We are encouraged by the expressed goal of the PAC subcommittee not to repeat the missteps of the DDA when gathering public input. The PAC subcommittee - like the PAC itself - has been open to public comments – a willingness to directly engage the community that the DDA subcommittees do not allow.

Our understanding is that the PAC subcommittee plans to gather input in three ways:

- 1) Review of documents and written materials.
- 2) An online public opinion survey.
- 3) Public presentations and hearings.

The LGC has opinions about each of these sources of input. In particular I would like to offer some cautions about online surveys. If you use Survey Monkey, you'll want to "upgrade" and pay the fee associated with being able to download the raw data, versus just having summary data (with the free version). The upgrade will also allow you to limit the responses (e.g., only allow one response per IP address). Presumably you will not be sending the survey to a pre-selected sample group so the survey will have some vulnerability to multiple responses and other forms of "gaming" the results (e.g. multiple entries). We hope that the PAC survey design and questions will not presuppose the outcome as the DDA *Connecting William Street* survey did.

The LGC will make a presentation to the PAC subcommittee to share our ideas in more detail. We look forward to engaging in the PAC public process and have confidence

that your work will result in recommendations to City Council that are a more accurate reflection of the Ann Arbor community as a whole.