

Council of the District of Columbia Committee on Business and Economic Development
Chaired by Ward 5 Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie
Report and Recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget
May 3, 2018

Cobb Park: During the agency's budget oversight hearing, several witnesses expressed concern about the development of Cobb Park. Cobb Park is a city-owned parcel located in Ward 6 bounded by Massachusetts Avenue NW to the south, H Street NW to the north, 2nd Street NW to the east, and 3rd Street NW to the west. The site was formerly used as a park and green space and is currently being used as a construction staging area for the Capitol Crossing Project. During the agency's budget oversight hearing, Deputy Mayor Kenner indicated that DMPED put out a Request for Proposals to develop on the parking structure located one block north of Cobb Park, and at least one respondent proposed a project that included building a development on Cobb Park associated with their plans for the parking structure. The impacted Advisory Neighborhood Commission, ANC 6E, has taken official action through a formal resolution urging Mayor Bowser and the Council to preserve Cobb Park as a community park. While DMPED has slowed down the development process, the Committee urges DMPED to engage ANC 6E, Mount Vernon CID, and the community in decision making for the future of Cobb Park and to follow the recommendations of the community to preserve this parcel of land as community-serving green and park space for the benefit of the surrounding neighborhood.

Council of the District of Columbia Committee on Transportation & the Environment
Chaired by Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh
Report and Recommendations on the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget
May 4, 2018

Rename (QN753C) Downtown Playground Improvements to "Cobb Park Improvements"

Cobb Park in the heart of the Mount Vernon Triangle neighborhood provides valuable public park space for the surrounding community. The DPR 2015 "Play DC" Master Plan noted that, while Mount Vernon Triangle is the 9th-most populated area in the District, it has the fourth lowest amount of open space, with three times the number of residents per playground than the District average. The park is currently being used as a staging area for construction, and many area residents have asked that the park space be revitalized and turned into public green space once the construction is completed. However, the Committee has learned that the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) is considering proposals by several developers to build condominiums and a hotel on the park space, with alternative recreation space being built on the roof of a proposed parking deck adjacent to the park.

The Committee believes that building condominiums and a hotel on Cobb Park would not be in the best interest of the surrounding community. The proposed rooftop recreation space would be a poor replacement for traditional park space, given that it would not be visible to passersby and would take considerable effort to reach. Further, the several proposed buildings would increase density in the already dense Mount Vernon Triangle, and reduce green space in the already underserved area. DPR currently has already allocated \$500,000 to activate Cobb Park once the construction project using the park as a staging area is complete. While those funds were allocated to (QN753C) Downtown Playground Improvements, the name of the capital project obscures the funds' intended use. Given that these are the only funds in this capital project, the Committee recommends renaming (QN753C) Downtown Playground Improvements to "Cobb Park Improvements" and encourages DPR to begin the design work for the park to make clear to DMPED and other city officials that the agency intends to maintain Cobb Park as a green space for the community.