



Students Solicit Community Input for Barracks Row Proposal:

Neighborhood Meeting Being Held to Discuss 8th Street Area South of the Freeway

October 13--- On Wednesday, October 29th, community members will gather on Capitol Hill to discuss the future of 8th Street south of the Southeast Freeway with Urban Planning Master's students from the University of Maryland. Since the construction of the highway, the 8th street corridor has seen development languish, followed by the presence of several vacant or abandoned lots on what was historically a flourishing commercial corridor in the District. Increasing development pressures along M Street, including areas around the new Nationals Stadium have also resulted in new development interest in the corridor south of Barracks Row, which is strategically located between Capitol Hill and the Navy Yard.

Each semester, about a dozen University of Maryland Students in the Community Planning program get hands-on planning experience examining a particular challenge or opportunity in the DC metro area or abroad. This Fall, students are working with Barracks Row Main Street organization and the DC Office of Planning, Ward 6 on recommendations about how the several blocks of 8th street between M Street and the Southeast Freeway could be developed to best benefit and connect the surrounding communities. The project is focused mainly on the urban design of the corridor, including its buildings' height and facade, the aesthetics and appearance of the corridor, and the street itself. The students are also examining opportunities to make the freeway less of a barrier on the street. As a part of this project, the Planning students are conducting extensive interviews with business owners, residents, and community leaders, as well as research on the demographics, planned development, land use regulations, and market potential of the area.

'Our Studio class is looking at ways we can transform this section of 8th street into a vibrant destination for people in the community,' said Rina Brule, leader of the University of Maryland student team, 'We want residents to voice their hopes and concerns for the future of this area.' The community meeting will take place at 7pm at Friendship House, 619 D Street SE. The students are accepting comments about the 8th street corridor through a survey posted at: <http://connectbarracksrow.wordpress.com/>.

"Barracks Row Main Street welcomes the opportunity to work with the graduate students to get another prospective to discuss the possibilities on the 8th Street business corridor," said Louis Wassel, the Interim Executive Director of Barracks Row Main Street.

The project will conclude with a presentation in early December of several scenarios for the corridor, including a physical model and computer-generated sketches of the area, presenting alternative development strategies and street designs.

For more information about the Connect Barracks Row project, visit:
<http://connectbarracksrow.wordpress.com/> or connectbarracksrow@gmail.com

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