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## NEWS

### Green strip proposals get first public review

By Robin Kaminski

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Four separate groups of artists shared their visions for the overgrown and unsightly area known as the Lincoln Street green strip, during a meeting at the Honan library branch Monday night.

A partnership of the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), the National Park Service, and Natural Endowment for the Arts, the project is also in collaboration with the Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation (ABCDC). The goal is to transform the strip of land into a more usable piece of property for residents and visitors of the area to enjoy.

The artist presentations detailed ideas for the unruly space. The community will have the opportunity to decide between the competing visions in January.

Program Manager for NEFA, Liesel Fenner, said the presentation was designed to garner input and suggestions from residents in the neighborhood.

"This is basically conceptual at this point, and we are just looking for feedback," Fenner said. "The designs will be on display for the rest of the month for residents to stop by and take a look. There will also be comment books available for people to utilize."

The first group of artists from the greater Boston area -- Gary Duehr, Kathleen Driscoll, and Gina Foglia -- presented a vision of a "three dimensional moving painting."

"Our idea is to open up the green strip, clean it and transform it into a welcoming strip, and reinforce it as a gateway to the community," Foglia said. "It is quite a remarkable site and a remarkable canvas -- it's really an amazing pinnacle point of activity in the Boston area."

The team proposed adding a "wagon wheel" brick pattern crosswalk, welcome mats cast in bronze and sculptural chairs draped with clothing that will each be lit at night.

Fragments of poetry collected from members of the community, will be etched onto the chairs, creating a "friendly, welcome home kind of feeling."

"We hope to have the community be involved in the process to be in the poetry workshops and to have their clothing modeled for the chairs," Foglia said. "We hope to make the area not just a strip, but a space and a highlight of the neighborhood."

Architect Murray Legge represented the second group of artists from Austin, Texas, and New York City.

Legge said his group could offer a wide range of skills and different practical ideas for the strip of land.

"There is a certain amount of movement and pedestrian activity involved in the green strip, and it is physically somewhat difficult to occupy the area because of its slope," Legge said.

A proposal to have a meandering passage along Cambridge Street with natural vegetation weaved in-between was something Legge said could allow for a range of things.

"The idea is to not just have people passing through the area, but more about passing in between," Legge said. "The basic framework could actually become the art work."

Legge also said that the installation of lighting was very important to the project, and would draw attention to the site.

The third group, Andrea Wasserman and Elizabeth Billings from Vermont, said they would like to create something that "catches the eye and causes reflection."

The proposal to include a labyrinth for meditation and relaxation, along with portraits and profiles of familiar faces in the community were suggested.

"An entryway and passage that would serve as a cultural intersection would be created, that would have poetry from five different languages in the Allston and Brighton communities etched upon them," Billings said. The 1-foot-high granite gateways would lead to a poetry garden for residents to enjoy.

An array of flowers and plants would line the heavily-used stairway.

"We would like to see a large community outreach to plant, and then to have a community planting day every year," Wasserman said. Three different seating areas were also suggested, along with a wooden guard wall, rosebushes, and cherry and dogwood trees to "bring life to the area."

The last group of artists, who reside in the Allston and Brighton area, Ross Miller, and Nancy Selvage, proposed a public art theme for the area.

"We would like to create an experience for you to reflect back on your experiences and to celebrate pedestrians," Miller said.

Crosswalks with bold patterns to alert oncoming traffic of pedestrians were proposed, including a "Lincoln Street green foot" design of a half-foot, half-foliage image.

"The design would be like a superhero flying foot image that could act as a pointer or indicator or a reflecting pattern to alert drivers," Selvage said.

A new bus shelter was also proposed as was a stone path and a terrace of different plants with accessibility for local gardeners to plant.

Cross lighting with theatrical spotlights and a temporary sculpture garden for artists in the community to showcase their work, rounded out the idea.

Ava Chan, community organizer for the ABCDC, said she hopes residents and members of the community will take the opportunity to visit the library and observe all of the ideas.

"Tell your friends to come on by – this is a great opportunity to work on art that we don't get a lot of in the community," Chan said.

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