

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the disposition of the 25-acre Filtration Plant site address the results of the various feasibility studies, findings of the public workshops, and the framework for future implementation. At a minimum the recent update of available information should be used to address the questions posed at the beginning of the process and those that have arisen as part of the public workshops:

- How much open space and park area is appropriate for the site given its inherent constraints & opportunities, and the need for public open space in the study area?
- Is permitting some selective private development on portions of the site the best way to offset the formidable financial liability of stabilizing the underground filter cell infrastructure?
- What types of uses are appropriate for the site given the adjacent neighborhood, nearby developing properties, the existing supply of facilities, and the demand for new development in the area?
- How can the historic significance of the site be best integrated into any future improvements, and what guidance can be given to any prospective design effort about the appropriate level of preservation for historic site features?
- What areas of the site are most suitable for historic preservation?
- Is the transportation network adequate to support selective private development and if not, what improvements would be needed to support new development at the site?
- What is the most feasible plan for the future of the site that makes it most likely to be returned to a productive part of the neighborhood?
- What is the best process for future implementation of a public-private partnership to develop and maintain new improvements at the site?

Since the primary emphasis of this study is to evaluate the feasibility for future disposition of the site, recommendations included in this section will focus on the suitability of land uses considered and analyzed during the consultant process. Implementation strategies and the logistics of future steps are considered in more detail in Section 7.0.

Other general recommendations that evolved from the public workshop sessions are also identified here for consideration. For example, the community clearly asked for implementation of an interim maintenance and upkeep strategy to improve the appearance of the site until a long term plan for improvements is determined. The Office of Planning has requested the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Office of Property Management (OPM) to develop such a strategy. Additional general recommendations for further study and activities that would foster ongoing progress for improvements to the site are as follows:

- Provide immediate cleaning, removal of brush, and minor improvements to the site so that the surrounding community will not perceive it as an eyesore.
- Provide a strategy for continued interim maintenance of the site until new long-term improvements are implemented.
- Provide an additional study to evaluate the feasibility of restoration for the above ground historic features and to estimate the cost of preservation.
- Provide an additional study to inventory the historic landscape features of the site and to identify any remaining plants from the Olmsted Plan.
- Postpone any final offer of the site for private development to the extent possible until the funding potential for preservation and park development can be explored.
- Consider conducting a design competition to further define creative ways to design future improvements to the site. The District agency or other entity to organize the design competition and implement ongoing site revitalization would need to be determined.
- Continue public involvement in the planning process for disposition of the site to maintain community support and to explore all possibilities for the future of this valuable public resource.

During the consultant analysis and workshop process many land use solutions and project types were considered in an attempt to provide a resolution to the inherent constraints and opportunities of the site. However, no one type of use, mix of uses, nor any one specific plan seemed to resolve all of the stated criteria with an overwhelming degree of certainty. Therefore, the land use recommendations included here will not be illustrated as a preferred alternative or an example concept plan. Rather, with the intent of providing flexibility for future input, site specific recommendations will concentrate on identifying more general criteria such as:

- Suitable land use types;
- Appropriate land use intensities and scale;
- Preferable locations for new improvements; and
- Guidelines for historic preservation emphasis.

Land use recommendations are based on the constraints of the site, the context of the area, and the assumption that some selective private development can be successfully incorporated into the open space and historic preservation opportunities of the property. It is clear that 100% preservation of the Filtration Plant as a park would be a significant amenity for the area, but it will also be an expensive initial investment and a substantial long-term maintenance commitment. However, the site is such a large property it may be possible to successfully permit other uses. At 25 acres, the site area seems large enough to support a mix of uses while a substantial portion could be retained in open space and preservation. The historic character of the site features, such as the sand towers and regulator buildings would make a unique setting for a variety of land uses that emphasize pedestrian

plazas. And the open space, preserved as a park, represents an unparalleled opportunity for any people-oriented type of development. By careful attention to appropriate scale, location, materials, massing, and design, a combination of private development and preservation seems to offer the most realistic future for this significant historic resource. In the final analysis, renovation of the property that would draw people to the site for a variety of reasons has the most potential for a successful revitalization project. Additionally, the dynamics of a public-private partnership often have more vitality and long term feasibility than a single use approach.

The range of uses that have been considered for the site face a series of constraints that will ultimately make some uses more feasible than others, despite any inherent desirability they may have. For instance, historic preservation would be better served with low intensity uses that are appropriately scaled; however, site stabilization costs favor uses with higher intensity that would make development parcels more valuable. In many such cases of competing criteria, traffic generation considerations will be the critical factor. The traffic impact associated with some uses will make large-scale commercial development difficult in this location.

The adjacent residential neighborhood is already perceived as being impacted by commuter traffic. Although not failing currently, intersections around the McMillan site are nearing capacity with no significant improvements on the horizon to relieve congestion. New development, planned and already proposed in the area, will add more traffic. Additionally, there are limited options for physical improvements at critical intersections without potentially costly public or private investment in complex infrastructure projects. Any large-scale retail or office development, either at the site or in the area, would best be accomplished by a coordinated transportation plan and agreement that would include cost sharing for traffic mitigation. However, it is not at all clear that large-scale road improvements, such as grade-separated intersections, are desirable given their likely visual and neighborhood impact.

Historic preservation requirements will also impact the suitability of potential site uses. Although the District Comprehensive Plan (August 1999) specifically states that the site should be developed with “mixed uses,” historic preservation regulations will limit what can be developed at the site. Due to the logistics of the review process associated with approval, those limits cannot be determined absent an actual development proposal. In general however, small scale low intensity (and low building height) uses will be more likely to succeed at being compatible with the necessary open space and site feature preservation appropriate for the property.

Site stabilization cost, the other significant and unique aspect of the filtration plant site, will also influence the ability to attract adaptive re-use (or renovation) to the site. The most expensive approach to stabilization, preserving all the more stable cells (12) and filling the remainder (8) has been estimated by the CCJ&M study at \$28 million (12 x \$2.20M + 8 x \$440K). A less costly approach would be to preserve fewer filter cells for public access and interpretation, since they are all essentially identical. For instance, if only two filter cells are preserved and the rest are stabilized by the sand fill method, the cost is estimated at approximately \$12 million (2 x \$2.02M + 18 x \$440K). Once stabilized, if the site were to be used as park and open space exclusively, an additional \$6-12 million would likely be needed to pay for park facilities and preservation of the other site features. (For a summary of the public investment required under various alternatives, see Section 5.)

If selective private development is incorporated into a portion of the revitalization for the site, the financial liability of site stabilization can be mitigated to some extent. Income from property value can be used to offset stabilization and preservation expenses, and the demolition of unstable cells would be possible where new development is programmed. In general, stabilization will be the liability of the owner if selective re-development is permitted at the site. Either the District (or some combination of agencies and foundations) would have to fund the stabilization, or the cost of site-work would have to be deducted from the value of the property to make it competitive with more development-ready sites in the area.

However, demolition costs of the filter cells (\$480,000 each), may be less expensive if the new user plans to include a basement as a part of the construction. Typical basement excavation would be approximately half of the cell demolition cost and could reduce the stabilization costs of filter cells to be demolished for new construction (+-\$240K). Pursuing this scenario, demolition of 8 filter cells for new construction, preservation of two, and stabilization of the balance yields the lowest cost of all at \$10.4 million (8 x \$240K + 2 x \$2.02M + 10 x 440K). This would have to be adjusted somewhat to offset the additional expense of any new construction at the least stable Type-III cells where special footings will be required on poor soils.

If selective development is permitted at McMillan, residential land uses appear to be the most suited to the constraints and opportunities of the site. Small amounts of neighborhood-serving retail (and other uses), combined with a predominantly residential scheme, clearly has a favorable traffic impact compared to other uses considered. Residences would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, and they would take advantage of the open space qualities of preservation areas. Additionally, development of owner occupied dwelling units has less investment risk than other uses since it does not depend upon annual operating income to amortize the purchase of property. Residential units can be sold soon after construction. Therefore, residential development, although it does not bring the highest price, is more of a secure investment.

Conversely, the recent survey of workshop participants revealed little support for residential development at the site. It is presumed that local residents feel that new residential development would introduce gentrification into the neighborhood while providing few additional community facilities. There is also the concern that existing housing should be renovated before new housing is brought into the area. Therefore, rather than identify a particular mix of site-specific uses as a recommendation (or prescription) to address the above often conflicting issues, a list of uses recommended as suitable or non-suitable is provided. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive; it attempts only to offer examples of use types:

<u>USES – SUITABLE</u>	<u>USES – NOT SUITABLE</u>
Park / Open Space	Big-box Retail
Historic Preservation	High Rise Office
Recreation Facilities	High Rise Hotel
Federal / Nat'l Monuments	High Rise Residential
Public Facilities	Fast Food Restaurants
Residential Condominiums	Hospital / Medical Facilities

Apartments	Vehicle Service Facilities
Townhouses	Liquor Stores
Low Rise Office	Department Stores
Restaurants	Warehouses
Neighborhood Retail	Uses that require large amounts of parking
Church	
Cultural Facilities	
Conference Center	

Some locations on the site are more appropriate for selective private development than others. The existing site is already divided into several logical parcels based on the location of the two service courts that span the site in an east-west direction. These features create a northern parcel along Michigan Avenue, a large central portion, and a southern parcel adjacent to Channing Street. Maintaining this structure has the benefit of focusing any new development on the primary historic features of the service courts, and encourages preservation of these important site elements. Assuming this approach, neighborhood compatibility begins to identify where more intense uses are appropriate and where they are not.

# SELECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

## Land Use Suitability

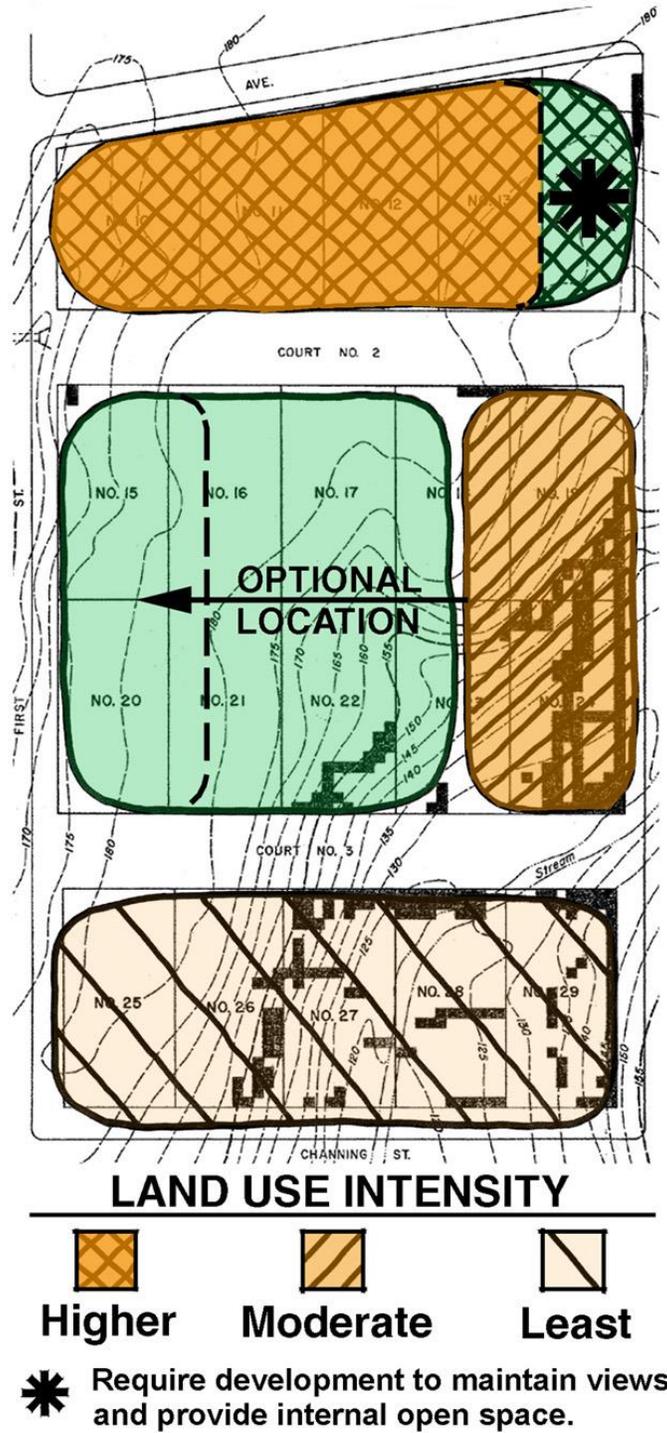


Figure 6.1 Land Use Intensity Recommendations

# SELECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

## Land Use Suitability

\* Require development to retain views and provide an internal open space amenity here.

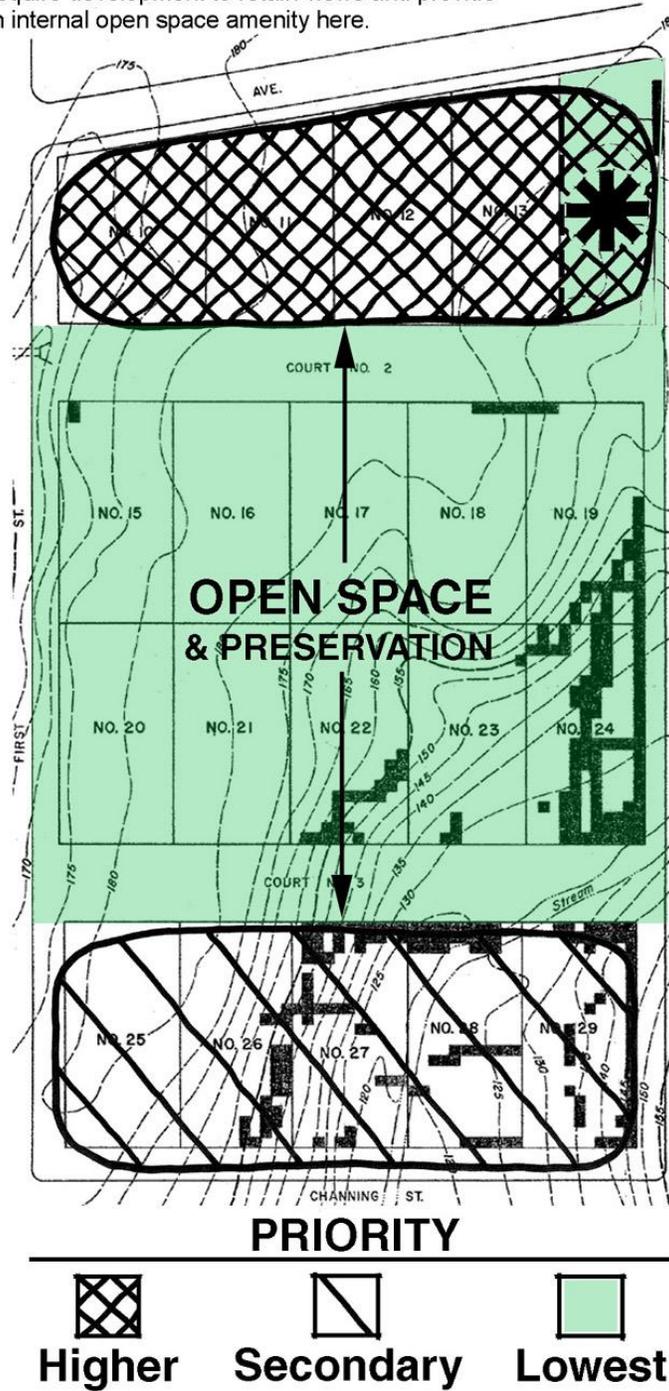


Figure 6.2 – Land Use Priority and Location Recommendations

The northern parcel of approximately 5.4 +- acres is the most suitable area for the more intense uses being considered for selective private development. Traffic considerations, access, and the adjacent uses--hospital and public utility--along Michigan Avenue, make this the most likely location for any office, apartments, or large-scale cultural uses. Lower intensity uses such as townhouses, and/or any of the park uses, would be more appropriate located in the southern portion (6.4+- acres) of the site adjacent to the existing townhouses along Channing Street. The 10-11 acre central portion of the site best functions as a transitional element between the above land use intensities, and is also a good location for primary open space preservation due to its size. The North Capitol Street frontage of this central parcel would be desirable for some moderate intensity development since this location has some of the worst filter cell deterioration. Uses such as restaurants and small-scale retail here would benefit from the visibility of this location. An optional location, the First Street frontage of the central parcel, is not as well suited for non-residential transitional development because of traffic concerns and the good filter cell conditions in this area. However, low to moderate intensity residential uses along First Street would be compatible with the neighborhood.

Depending on the program of uses for any particular proposal, some of the above parcels also have a higher priority for selective development than others. This is true particularly when considering the need to identify an appropriate level of historic preservation for the site. In general, the northern quadrant has the highest priority for new development, the southern parcel ranks second in priority, and the central portion should be given the lowest priority. Open space preservation is the most significant variable in making this recommendation. Neighborhood compatibility, traffic, and access also impact the issue of priority as well. Open space preservation will need to maintain as many of its existing site characteristics as possible to satisfy historic considerations: the filter plane elevations, location, configuration, and amounts. In appearance, the existing open space is historically a simple, flat, contiguous, rectangular area. The more open space that is preserved in this configuration, the more historically correct it will appear. Therefore, open space preservation at the site should maintain the existing 170' elevation wherever possible, and be placed in a large consolidated area. The retention of several scattered open space areas would not do much to maintain the historic site character, and this approach should be avoided. The central portion of the site has the most potential for meeting these open space goals; therefore development in this area has the lowest priority.

Views and open space connections should also influence decisions about open space preservation locations. The relationship between the McMillan Reservoir open space and the filtration plant open space is a historic one and it should be maintained to the extent possible. This connection is most dramatic from an aerial view when one sees that the service courts on both sites are in alignment and the open space makes direct connections across First Street. Therefore, locating a large area of open space in the central portion of the site adjacent to First Street is desirable from a historic preservation perspective. Some of the most stable filter cells are located in this area as well.

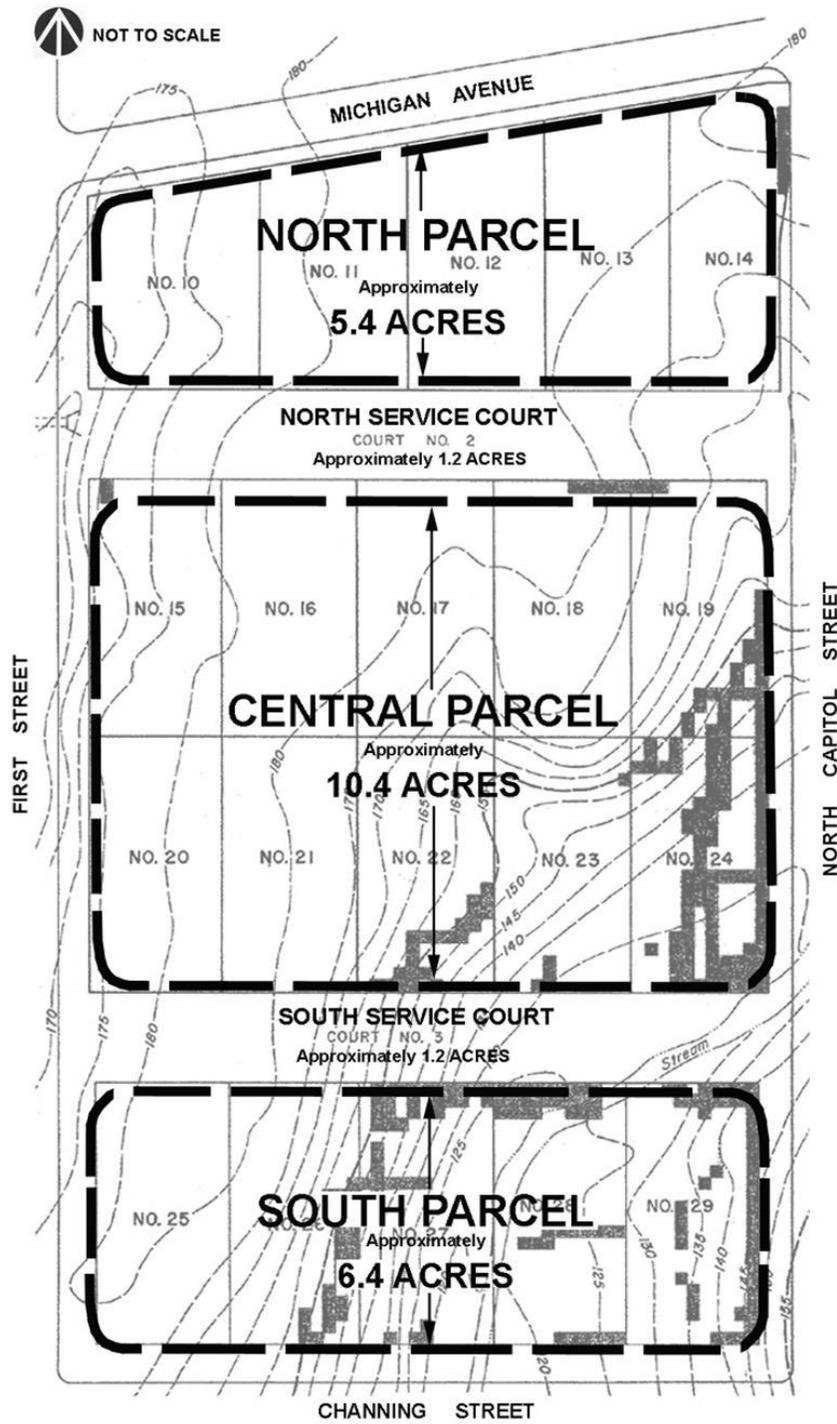
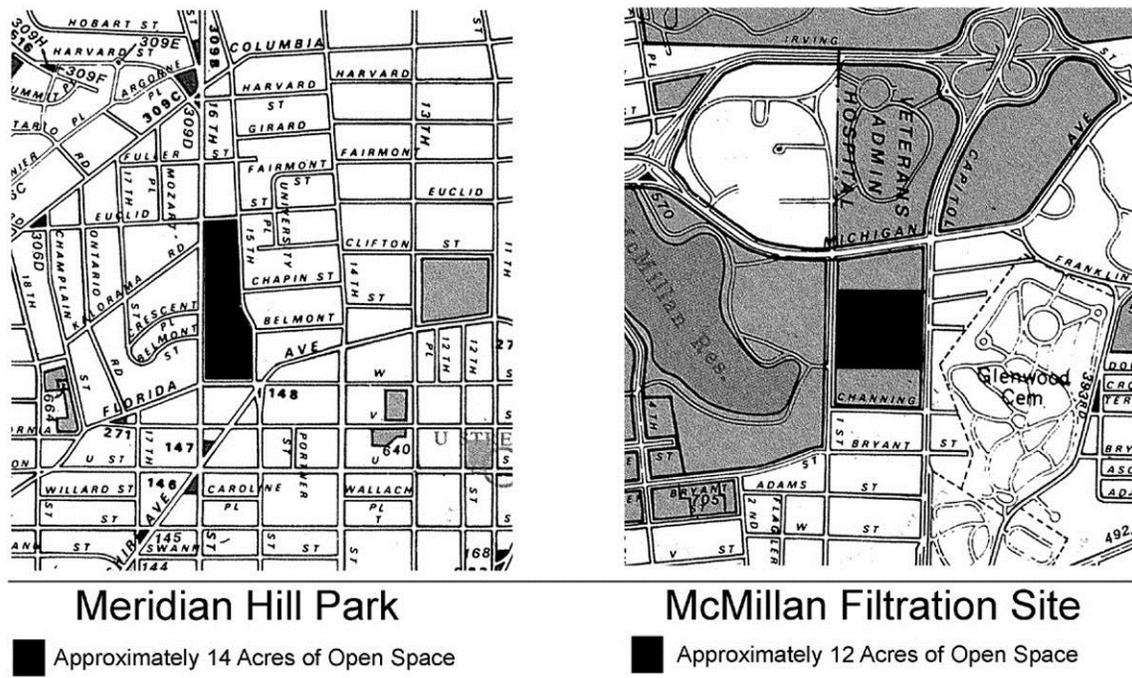


Figure 6.3 Existing parcel structure based on the preservation of historic features.



**Figure 6.4 – Comparison between the proposed open space and surrounding population at the McMillan Filtration Plant Site to nearby Meridian Hill Park. Municipal parks are typically developed in densely populated areas of residential or office/retail uses in order to meet unmet recreational needs, to increase use, and to increase surrounding real estate values. Meridian Hill Park meets these criteria. However, note that the residential population is greater around Meridian Hill Park than the residential neighborhood surrounding the McMillan site.**

One approach would be to limit private development to the north and south quadrants leaving the central portion as open space and preservation. This would result in approximately 12 acres for selective development and a similar amount for open space. There would be a generous area for a public park, similar in size to nearby Meridian Hill Park, and much of the fabric of the filtration plant would be left intact for preservation. Another approach that would accomplish similar results is illustrated by the CUA concept plan that locates residential along First Street rather than along the Channing Street frontage. Based on such scenarios, the following recommendations are made to address the historic preservation issues of the site:

- Consolidate a significant portion of open space preservation in one contiguous area.
- Maintain open space at the filter plane elevation.
- Keep the open space connection of the site with McMillan Reservoir.
- Preserve approximately 50% of the site in open space.
- Preserve 100% of the service court areas if possible.
- Preserve 2-4 filter cells for interpretive purposes and maintain others for adaptive re-use.

In order to link the above recommendations more clearly to the Goals and Objectives produced at the public workshops, the following chart has been provided as a comparison of the more general recommendations with those for selective development. The rationale for such a comparison is to highlight the priority of specific recommendations and to summarize the results of this section. Implementation strategies and the logistics of future steps are considered in more detail in the following Section 7.0.

<b>TABLE 6.1, CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY</b>	
<b>COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION GOALS &amp; OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<b><i>PROVIDE OPEN SPACE</i></b>	
Develop publicly accessible recreation/open space on the Site. Provide for both active and passive recreation uses.	<i>Maintain a minimum of 50% of the Site in Open Space; add recreation facilities; create park around re-located McMillan Fountain.</i>
Create imaginatively developed open space in critical locations that preserve significant existing views into the Site.	<i>Require development at the North Capitol and Michigan Ave. Intersection to maintain views.</i>
Ensure that high standards are adhered to for open space maintenance, landscape design, accessibility and security. Incorporate thoughtfully considered signage and lighting in the landscape design plan.	<i>Adopt design guidelines for any parcels subject to selective development.</i>
<b><i>PRESERVE AND ADAPTIVELY REUSE THE SITE FEATURES</i></b>	
Restore key above ground elements of the Site in a way that is compatible with the original plan.	<i>Preserve as many of the sand towers, regulator buildings, and service court historic features as possible.</i>
Maintain the alleys or courtyards as a prominent connection to the McMillan Reservoir Site.	<i>Preserve 100% of the Service Courts</i>
Use currently stable cells as a historic record of the site.	<i>Preserve a minimum of 2 underground filter cells for public access. (Most Stable) Type I cells located central(west) to the site.</i>
Revitalize the site through adaptive reuse with a mix of uses.	<i>Permit selective development on a portion of the site with a mix of uses such as residential &amp; retail to support creation of park uses.</i>
Retain, restore, and incorporate the historic McMillan Fountain as a part of the improved site design.	<i>Dedicate a portion of the preserved open space to passive park uses.</i>
In areas where the cell structure may be completely or partially removed, attempt to incorporate references to the removed elements. Understand the cultural significance of the site and others that were part of the McMillan Plan so that proposed development is sensitive and respondent. Understand the historic landscape so that it can be accurately interpreted, preserved, and/or recreated as appropriate.	<i>Adopt design guidelines for both historic preservation and for any parcels subject to selective development  Update the 1990 architectural and archaeological study to include information about Olmsted. Document the condition of historic elements and develop a maintenance/ management strategy for preservation of those elements which might be incorporated into overall site revitalization plans as</i>

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	<i>feasible.</i>
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<b>BE CREATIVE</b>	
<p>Think "outside the box" to make elements of the revitalized site more of an amenity--"a jewel"--to the residents and others.</p> <p>Seek new, historically sensitive and creative uses to occupy key elements of the Site.</p> <p>Consider incorporating a well designed and appropriate monument, memorial, and/or museum into the Site.</p>	<p><i>Consider sponsoring a design competition for the Site. Adopt design guidelines for any parcels subject to selective development. Develop a comprehensive master plan and a realistic long-term funding strategy that will guide the revitalization and preservation of the site.</i></p>
<p>Explore the significance of technology as a tool for redevelopment and reuse of the Site.</p>	<p><i>As an ongoing theme and revitalization tool, consider the historical significance of this site as an advancement in technology at the beginning of the last century and its possibilities at the beginning of this century when enormous technological advancements are being made.</i></p>
<b>MITIGATE NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS</b>	
<p>Coordinate area-wide planning and development efforts.</p>	<p><i>OP should structure a cluster or small area planning process which focuses on proposed or planned development sites within a one-mile radius of the site, particularly along the Michigan Avenue corridor. Incorporate community input..</i></p>
<p>Make new development architecturally compatible with the surrounding communities.</p> <p>Integrate new development on the Site architecturally and structurally with the historic structures.</p>	<p><i>Adopt design guidelines for any parcels subject to selective development.</i></p>
<p>Encourage redevelopment or rehabilitation of existing vacant or unoccupied housing sites within the neighborhood simultaneous with new development on the Site.</p>	<p><i>Commission a survey of vacant or underutilized properties within a one-mile radius of the site. Based on the results of this survey, target comprehensive investments within the neighborhoods surrounding the site in conjunction with site revitalization.</i></p>
<p>Reduce the impacts and/or visibility of parking, traffic, and noise.</p> <p>Improve transportation options for the neighborhood in conjunction with any improvements to the site, where feasible.</p>	<p><i>DPW-DOT should commission a comprehensive transportation/traffic study for all proposed and planned area development.</i></p>

<b><i>MAKE IT FEASIBLE</i></b>	
Maximize, to the extent possible, revenue-producing opportunities on both the private and non-profit components of the Site development.	<i>Offset site stabilization, historic preservation and open space development costs by permitting selective development on a portion of the site with a mix of uses.</i>
Partner with private, not-for-profit, and other public sector investors to obtain resources to achieve community goals for the Site.	<i>Evaluate the establishment of a quasi-public revitalization entity that can plan, manage, and raise funds for the significant amount of work needed to develop the site.</i>
Develop a mix of preferred uses including open space, housing, and neighborhood serving retail.	<i>Permit selective development on a portion of the site with a mix of uses.</i>
<b><i>BE RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS AND CONCERNS</i></b>	
Develop amenities or a site program that would be attractive to and accessible by a diverse population of residents and others.	<i>Adopt design guidelines for historic preservation and for any parcels subject to selective development.</i>

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