

# NOMA PARKS FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



## Greetings from Charles (Sandy) Wilkes and Robin-Eve Jasper



In its first year of operation, the NoMa Parks Foundation laid the groundwork needed to create parks and public spaces that will serve NoMa residents and workers for generations to come. Over the past year, the Foundation appointed a distinguished board of directors, launched a robust website ensuring full transparency in all Foundation matters, and developed close working relationships with the local community and our key partner, the District of Columbia government. We also moved forward with initial land acquisition efforts and conducted an international design competition for NoMa's four underpasses. That competition garnered 248 submissions from design teams in 14 countries. The Foundation engaged world-class landscape architects to develop concept designs for the NoMa Meander and other important public spaces in NoMa. In addition, schematic designs were developed for the planned L Street Plaza.

The Foundation is deeply grateful to the District of Columbia government not only for its financial support, but also for its participation in formulating the vision for NoMa. We also want to thank our partners in the development community, especially those who (i) embraced the remarkable opportunities presented by L Street Plaza and the NoMa Meander and (ii) graciously adjusted their development plans, contributing valuable space at street level for public access and community use.

The Foundation's achievements in 2014 were also made possible by the unwavering support of the NoMa Business Improvement District. The NoMa BID's funding of our parks development activities in the early stage, pending finalization of the Foundation's formal arrangements with the District, was critically important. We are equally grateful for the energy and encouragement provided by the entire NoMa community – a continuing source of inspiration.

Finally, while there are many challenges and much hard work still ahead, we look forward to this time next year when all of us will begin to experience the fruits of this remarkable, collaborative effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles Wilkes".

**Charles (Sandy) Wilkes, Chairman of the Board**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin-Eve Jasper".

**Robin-Eve Jasper, President**



## Establishing the NoMa Parks Foundation



### MISSION:

Establish welcoming, sustainable, beautiful spaces where people can play, refresh and connect in NoMa, now and for generations to come.

The NoMa Parks Foundation is fortunate to have an experienced and talented **Board of Directors**, representing the numerous disciplines essential to our mission of creating great urban parks in our rapidly growing NoMa neighborhood. Foundation directors were selected for their expertise in urban planning, landscape design, real estate law, non-profit management, and accounting. Foundation Directors include: **Charles (Sandy) Wilkes** (The Wilkes Company), **Steven Chad** (Deloitte), **Uwe Brandes** (Executive Director of the Urban and Regional Planning Graduate Program at Georgetown University), **Sunny Alsup** (Landscape Architect), **Stephen Marcus** (The Marcus Firm, PLLC), and **Michael Smith** (The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars).

To ensure transparency and encourage broad community participation, the Foundation established a robust website at **www.NoMaParks.org** that includes project information, opportunities for ongoing public engagement, governance materials, and grant documentation. The website is one component of the **brand identity** for NoMa Parks created by Pentagram, the design firm responsible for the branding and signage for New York City's High Line.

## Grant Execution



# OCTOBER 15, 2014

Date the agreement providing a \$50 million capital grant to the NoMa Parks Foundation was approved by the DC Council.

Finalizing the terms and conditions of the **District's \$50 million capital grant to the NoMa Parks Foundation** involved the Mayor's Capital Budget Office, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Department of General Services as grant administrator, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. The 2012 NoMa Public Realm Design Plan serves as the shared vision of what parks and open space might look like in the NoMa neighborhood, and it established specific guidelines for the grant. **The final terms of the grant for NoMa Parks were approved by the DC Council on October 15, 2014.**

The NoMa Parks projects which are essential to the civic, cultural, and recreational needs of this growing neighborhood are identified in the 2012 NoMa Public Realm Design Plan and codified further in the District grant. Parks projects include:

- > A substantial civic plaza on L Street, NE
- > A large space for active recreation on Harry Thomas Way, NE
- > The NoMa Meander, a multi-block pedestrian corridor between North Capitol and First Streets, NE
- > A series of pocket parks
- > Linear parks and pedestrian connections, **including 4 underpass art parks.**

## Planning and Outreach



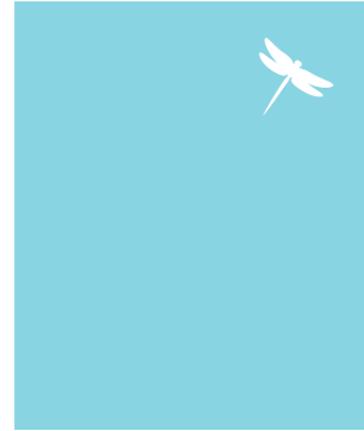
The story of the NoMa Parks Foundation actually began in 2007 when the NoMa Business Improvement District (NoMa BID) was established in order to make the NoMa neighborhood more beautiful, friendly, and vibrant. For the next several years, the NoMa BID worked to identify ways to overcome the omission of parks in the original planning for NoMa. Building on the DC Office of Planning's Small Area Plan for NoMa, entitled the NoMa Vision and Development Plan of 2006, the NoMa BID engaged the community and stakeholders to develop the visionary parks plan for NoMa known as the **2012 NoMa Public Realm Design Plan**. That same year, the NoMa BID established a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the NoMa Parks Foundation, in order to further advance the parks initiative.

**Community engagement** has been, and will continue to be, a hallmark of the Foundation's approach to establishing parks in NoMa. Our community engagement process includes broad outreach through regular meetings facilitated by Public Engagement Associates, attendance at community meetings (including ANC and civic association meetings), and digital platforms such as our website, social media outlets, and our monthly Foundation newsletter. Additionally, project-specific community outreach is contractually required of each NoMa Parks design team. This project-specific outreach is in-person and digital.

Another key component of our outreach effort is our ongoing collaboration with our project partners at DDOT, DGS, DPR, DCCA, and other District agencies, as well as Amtrak and WMATA.

During the past year, the NoMa Parks Foundation hosted a community meeting for the Underpass Design Competition, presented updates on NoMa Parks projects at seven ANC meetings, and gathered more than 370 survey responses providing invaluable feedback on the NoMa Underpass Design Competition final submissions. Simply stated, the Foundation is committed to substantive, ongoing community outreach.

## Public-Private Partnership



With high land values and no publicly-owned parcels available in NoMa for parks, it was essential to find creative ways to move the NoMa parks plan forward. We are grateful that our principal partner, the District of Columbia government, saw the value in this approach and trusted the Foundation to engage other private and public stakeholders to make the vision of the NoMa Public Realm Design Plan a reality. That vision requires **extraordinary cooperation** to make privately owned land publicly accessible and to support unique approaches to public space and use.

The public-private partnerships strategy is **already delivering results**. From the partnership among the NoMa BID, the Foundation, and the District government to the partnerships for the L Street Plaza and NoMa Meander, opportunities have been created far beyond the capacity of any of the individual entities. To date, the estimated value of foregone development, design, and construction for privately owned but publicly accessible spaces is **more than \$15 million**. More important than the dollar value is the leadership, vision, collaboration and commitment among all of the public and private partners.

## The L Street Plaza

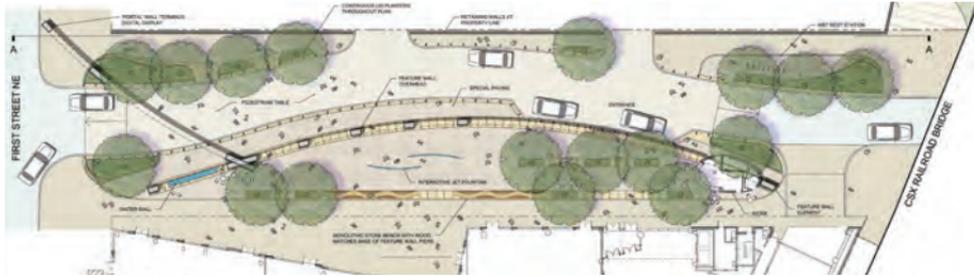


1,000

People will be able to gather at the Plaza.

*Left: Farmers market.*

*Right: Site plan for The L Street Plaza.*



**Envisioned as NoMa's "town square,"** the L Street Plaza will be the main space for community events and other gatherings. Schematic designs include an open plaza, seating, horizontal and vertical green spaces, water features, and art. The Plaza is being planned to accommodate public gatherings of more than 1,000 people. The schematic drawings for the Plaza have been completed.

The site of the L Street Plaza is in the public right-of-way along L Street, NE, adjacent to the Storey Park development site. It encompasses land between First Street, NE and the L Street

underpass. The planned development of Storey Park includes a monumental stairway that connects the Plaza and 65,000 square feet of retail, thereby enlarging and further enlivening the gathering space.

The development of the L Street Plaza was aided by the developer of Storey Park agreeing to set back its building 15 feet to provide additional space for the Plaza.

## Underpasses



248

Submissions from 14 countries for the Underpass Design Competition.



[NOMAUNDERPASSES.ORG](http://NOMAUNDERPASSES.ORG)

*Top Left: Rendering of Future Cities Lab proposal for the Underpass Design Competition.  
Bottom Left: Existing underpass conditions.  
Right: Thurlow Small Architecture + NIO architects submission for the M Street underpass.*

In April 2014, the NoMa Parks Foundation launched an **international design competition** to transform NoMa's underpasses at L, M, and K Streets and Florida Avenue into safe, comfortable, inviting spaces. After receiving 248 submissions from 14 countries, a distinguished jury selected 10 teams as finalists. The jury included: **Elizabeth Broun**, Director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum; **Roger Lewis**, FAIA, Architect, University of Maryland Professor Emeritus of Architecture, Washington Post Columnist; **Robin Rose**, Washington artist; **George Hemphill**, local art curator/gallery owner; representatives of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; and **Charles "Sandy" Wilkes**, Chair of the NoMa Parks Foundation. A community outreach process then gathered valuable feedback on the 10 finalists. More than 370

survey responses were collected online and during a community meeting in October 2014.

In April 2015, the Foundation announced that the concept design "Rain," submitted by **Thurlow Small Architecture + NIO architects** was selected for the M Street underpass. "Rain" will be created using hundreds of slender polycarbonate tubes filled with LED lights. M.C. Dean will serve as contractor and construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2015. Selection of a team for the L Street underpass is expected to be announced soon. Michael Vergason Landscape Architects is under contract to provide landscape architecture services for all four underpasses.

## NoMa Meander

### 3-4

Block promenade with green spaces, seating, water elements, and active retail.



*Left: Rendering of the 3-4-block NoMa Meander.  
Right: Rendering of retail-oriented N Street,  
adjacent to NoMa Meander.*

JBG, Skanska, and AvalonBay, working together, have agreed to incorporate the **NoMa Meander**, a multi-block pedestrian corridor with retail, water features, and pocket parks, into their developments. The Meander will run north/south from Pierce Street to New York Avenue between North Capitol and First Streets, NE, and will provide a unique urban experience for NoMa residents, office workers, and visitors.

The goal of this project is to enhance neighborhood livability by breaking up the “super-blocks” between North Capitol and First Streets, NE, and to provide delightful, attractive spaces in which

to spend time. As nearly all of the property included in the NoMa Meander is privately-owned, its conceptualization and development is one of the Foundation’s most ambitious public-private partnerships.

The Foundation is helping to coordinate the overall design concept and will execute certain ancillary improvements on adjoining District-owned land. **Wallace Roberts Todd (WRT)**, well known in DC for its design of the Georgetown Waterfront Park, has been selected to provide the initial design and help assure a unique user experience throughout the Meander.

Set forth below is selected 2014 financial information of the NoMa Parks Foundation. For financial statement reporting purposes, the NoMa BID and the NoMa Parks Foundation are presented in the consolidated financial statements of the NoMa Improvement Association. The amounts shown below are the amounts of the NoMa Parks Foundation activities derived from the audited consolidated financial statements of the NoMa Improvement Association for the fiscal year ending on September 30, 2014. Those consolidated financial statements are available in the NoMa BID 2014 Annual Report.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

| <b>ASSETS</b>         | September 30, 2014 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Cash/Cash Equivalents | \$503,580          |
| Accounts Receivable   | \$294,658          |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>   | <b>\$798,238</b>   |

| <b>LIABILITIES</b>       |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Accounts Payable         | \$569,684        |
| Deferred Revenue         | \$131,466        |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b> | <b>\$701,150</b> |

| <b>NET ASSETS</b>                    |          |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Reserves and Unrestricted Net Assets | \$97,088 |

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS: \$798,238**

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

| <b>REVENUE</b>      | September 30, 2014 |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Grant Income        | \$988,437          |
| Other Income        | \$1,043            |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b> | <b>\$989,480</b>   |

| <b>EXPENSES</b>       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> | <b>\$892,392</b> |

**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS: \$97,088\***

*\*Note: Net income is available only to be used by the NoMa Parks Foundation on parks activities.*



To promote efficiency and reduce costs, staffing and supporting services for the NoMa Parks Foundation are provided by the NoMa Business Improvement District on a reimbursable basis, the neighborhood economic development organization that has facilitated the growth of NoMa since 2007.

*As of April 2015*

**Principal Staffing for  
NoMa Parks Activities**

**Title**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Robin-Eve Jasper | President                                   |
| Stacie West      | Director of Parks Projects                  |
| Galin Brooks     | Director of Planning & Economic Development |

**Additional NoMa  
BID Staff Engaged in  
NoMa Parks Activities**

**Title**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Rachel Davis       | Director of Marketing & Events           |
| Thomas Taylor      | Director of Public Space Operations      |
| Sheryl Augustine   | Business Manager                         |
| Otavio Thompson    | Hospitality & Technology Program Manager |
| Alissa Perine      | Events Manager                           |
| Ali Newman         | Marketing & Events Coordinator           |
| Benjamin Rickelman | Economic Research Associate              |
| Cory Luster        | Block by Block Clean Team Supervisor     |

**Board of Directors**

**Company Name**

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Charles (Sandy) Wilkes, Chairman | The Wilkes Company  |
| Sunny Alsup                      | Landscape Architecture Consultant                                   |
| Uwe Brandes, Secretary           | Urban and Regional Planning Graduate Program, Georgetown University |
| Steven Chad, Treasurer           | Deloitte & Touche, LLP  |
| Douglas Firstenberg              | StonebridgeCarras   |
| Stephen Marcus                   | The Marcus Firm, PLLC   |
| Michael Smith                    | The Washington Center   |



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