

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**  
**URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** July 5, 2007

**Meeting No.:** 63

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**Project:** Pratt Street Working Session

**Phase:** Working Session

**Location:** Pratt Street from MLK, Jr. Boulevard to President Street

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**PRESENTATION:**

After an extensive walking tour of Pratt Street led by Matt Poe and Adam Gross of ASG, Betsy Boykin of ASG and Sophie Robitaille of the Olin Partnership presented a brief recap of the competition entry focusing on three areas – streetscape and open space, traffic, and infill development. Existing street conditions were reviewed and alternative plans / phasing for changing Pratt Street from one-way to two-way with a central median were presented, as well as a discussion of key public spaces near the Inner Harbor. Brian Biddle of STV and Jody Lewis of MAB discussed the various issues regarding changing Pratt from one-way to two-way as well as the issues regarding the elimination of the diagonal linking Light Street to Calvert Street. Finally, the design team discussed their progress of meeting with various property owners and key players along Pratt Street and initial thoughts about possible infill development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:**

The Panel appreciates the complexity and challenge of the project and commends the team on their vision, creativity, and thoroughness. The following is a collection of comments / recommendations made by the Panel:

1. The Panel questioned whether some of the precedents that were being used were appropriate and that the team should be looking at examples of streets that fronted harbors and/or parks. Some of the Panel members cautioned the team about the transferability of European precedents - what were the good American examples that balanced unity with diversity? It was recognized by the Panel that the north and south sides of Pratt Street were different and possibly warranted a recognition of this in the urban design treatment – that the north edge would benefit from more infill development while the south edge would stay more porous.
2. Continued thought should be given to creating a retail strategy – possibly adding retail consultants to the team. As discussed, there are opportunities to create larger retail anchors and these need to be studied in relation to a larger retail context and to parking and access. The team was also asked to look at the City Charter regarding any changes that were being pursued for Harborplace and other areas along the waterfront. However, the Panel agrees with the design team that there is an opportunity to revisit the retail mix at Harborplace and how this relates to the current location and configuration of the pavilions.

3. The Panel encourages the team to continue looking at the various “zones” along Pratt Street (MLK to Paca / Paca to Light / Inner Harbor to President) and how these relate to the creation of gateways and connections to adjacent neighborhoods and districts (like UMAB, the ballpark, Inner Harbor East, etc.). Also, the gateway treatments need more study – they catch the eye for a competition but seem one-dimensional.
4. The Panel would like to see more study done on possible street sections, especially regarding the width of the median (20’ width might be needed, especially with turning lanes), the use of single trees to define space, and the width of the sidewalk adjacent to the infill development (an 18’ sidewalk feels different next to landscaping rather than a 3 story infill building). Some Panel members questioned whether the median was needed or if the edges of the street could be planted instead with a double row of trees.
5. The Panel would like to know more from the traffic study – as the team indicated, making directional changes to Pratt Street and eliminating the diagonal connection from Light Street to Calvert Street has ramification for many of the other one-way streets surrounding and connecting with Pratt Street. Also, it would be helpful to have a plan that shows better the possible trolley / transit connections and bike lane connections to see how this fits into the street section and creates an interconnected circulation pattern to the Charles Street trolley, the Gwynns Falls trail, and Fells Point/Inner Harbor East areas.
6. The views from the Legg Mason plaza, and from the intersection of Light and Pratt Street, were very important. The elimination of the diagonal roadway, to be replaced with a park, is encouraged. The Panel suggests looking for continued ways to open this vista to the water and activate this public place, as well as other public parks / plazas / sidewalks, with appropriate uses that frame and serve these outdoor places.
7. Like a retail strategy, an open space strategy is needed that relates to the broader context and connects with the harbor promenade.
8. The use of water as a theme is good but needs to expand beyond the physical nature of water – connecting with the cultural / ethnic / industrial meanings for water and Pratt Street that make it particular to Baltimore.
9. Finally, the Panel feels that, “while Pratt Street has problems, it ain’t broke”. Don’t lose the good, unique, and Baltimore qualities of Pratt Street in its redesign.

**PANEL ACTION:**

No action needed

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**Attending:**

Adam Gross, Matthew Poe, Betsy Boykin, Chi Yan – Ayers Saint Gross  
Sophie Robitaille – Olin Partnership  
Jody Lewis – Martin/Alexiou/Bryson  
Brian Biddle - STV  
Kirby Fowler, Nan Rohrer – Downtown Partnership

Ron Kreitner – WestSide Renaissance, Inc.

Ed Gunts – Sunpapers

Jay Brodie, Paul Dombrowski, Shubroto Bose – BDC

Messrs. Bowden, Schack, Britt and Cameron – Panel

Gary Cole, Duncan Stuart, Fred Shoken, Thor Nelson, Natasha Poole, Brent Flickinger, Bob  
Quilter - Planning