

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES
(Amended 10-9-07)

Date: September 27, 2007

Meeting No: 68

Project: Pratt Street Master Plan

Phase: Continued Working Session

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

PRESENTATION:

Matt Poe and Betsy Boykin of ASG Architects, assisted by Sophie Robitaille of the Olin Partnership, updated the Panel on the continued concept design studies that included a detailed traffic comparison analysis. The presentation emphasized the “Infill” on the north side of Pratt Street to create an urban edge, the “Greenway” on the south; changes to McKeldin Plaza; the issue of “Gateways”; and the traffic analysis relative to one or two way vehicular circulation. The former favors the automobile, the latter favors the pedestrian.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel concentrated its comments on the three major issues, Infill, Transportation, and Gateways, as follows:

I. INFILL

Above all, the infill proposals for the north side of Pratt Street require flexibility. Height limits may be desirable and the concept of increased height from west to east has merit, but further study is required. The Convention Center side requires a degree of enhancement. With the development of the McCormick site, Conway Street should also be considered for infill opportunities.

The Panel also recognizes the importance of maintaining the ten-story "frame" of building facades around the Pratt and Light Street sides of the Harbor, with advice that the infill additions should not compete with it, or otherwise jeopardize its effectiveness -- including the future development on the former McCormick and News-American sites.

II. TRANSPORTATION

- The concept of two way traffic is heavily favored as a means to reduce vehicular traffic and favor pedestrian movement on Pratt Street.
- The pedestrian zone on the south side may require additional width and a separation from the bike path.
- Lombard and Conway Street both require new visions. The former to change the character of a service street and the latter to acknowledge its role as a strong pedestrian link between the sports venues and the Inner Harbor. Conway Street would greatly benefit from a reduction in vehicular traffic.

III. GATEWAYS

- Gateways should be considered both in their role as CITY Gateways and entries to Pratt Street.
- The proposal for MLK may be too grand a gesture. The proposal for Pratt and President Street was not identified. Other gateways exist, some require more enhancement than others.
- The McKeldin diagonal, at the Inner Harbor, may be too wide. Additional detail studies are required.

In summation, the Panel is encouraged by the progress shown and particularly pleased with the potential decision to favor two-way traffic.

PANEL ACTION:

No formal action – continued working session.

Attending:

Matt Poe, Betsy Boykin, Chi Yan – ASG Architects
Sophie Robitaille – Olin Partnership
Kirby Fowler, Nan Rohrer, Bob Dengler – DPOB
Marty Millspaugh
Jay Brodie, Paul Dombrowski, Shubroto Bose – BDC

Messrs. Bowden, Cameron, Ramberg, Britt and Schack – Panel
Doug McCoach, Peter Conrad, Melvin Hicks, Theo Ngongang, Bob Quilter- Planning
Department