

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

Date: March 27, 2008

Meeting No: 78

Project: Charles North Physical Development Plan

Phase: Continued Discussion

Location: Charles North (Centered on Charles Street and North Avenue)

PRESENTATION:

Philip Loheed of BTA+, team leader, provided the project's background and described the current project vision incorporating changes since the prior January presentation. Loheed also reported on progress meetings with interested parties and stakeholders from within the project area. New elements since the previous presentation include the "north lawn" at the southeast corner of Charles and Lafayette; the "Backstage south" area and the "New Asiatown" section of live-work shop-houses north of North Avenue. Lehr Jackson of Jackson-Ewing presented preliminary phased retail development concepts.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

Overall, the Panel felt that the proposed concepts presented a well-considered and compelling vision for this important transportation hub and its potential for creating a dynamic node in Baltimore's future development. Three separate comments by representatives from the community generally indicated support for the project. Additionally, the following panel comments were offered:

- A. Focus of Density – it was suggested that the residential density of the project might be more successfully concentrated nearer the train station with possibly transitional decreases of density extending northward, returning ultimately to the current scale of the southern portion of Charles Village.
- B. Phasing and Future – The panel requested diagrammatic phasing studies at a future meeting which illustrate the interdependence of parking structures, residential, retail, and cultural components and their effect on the potential feasibility of the current vision. Particular attention should be placed on the critical placement of residential density (high-rise) and parking along with strategies that could respond to a potentially sluggish future real estate development market.
- C. Retail Continuity – Although, the retail phasing strategy presented by Lehr Jackson was considered very logical, some concern was voiced about the strength of the linkages between the proposed development nodes. The entire length of Charles Street within the project area should be re-examined to assure continuity of the retail experience. In addition, concerns were voiced that insufficient emphasis was placed on "anchoring" the proposed Phase I Penn Station retail in the area of Lafayette and St. Paul streets.
- D. Parking and Technology – Some concern was voiced about the dependence on untested (in Baltimore) mechanized robotic parking solutions as well the optimistic view that they will result in conveniently diminished development footprints. Alternative strategies should be studied.
- E. Street and Landscape – the panel looks forward to further development of landscape and streetscape concepts for the overall project area.

One Panel member added the following observation: The development of Union Station in Washington did not change the orientation towards the Capitol. Penn Station in Baltimore is

oriented towards downtown Baltimore. The current parking lot development requires an orientation to the rear of the station. Although the existing concourse makes this possible, the side entry from Charles Street might offer a better pedestrian linkage to the parking lot development and connection to Charles North.

PANEL ACTION:

No action required, discussions continue.

Attending:

Phillip Loheed – BTA+
Craig Purcell - Matrix Settles
Eric Evans – Eric Evans & Company
Lehr Jackson – Lehr Jackson Associates
Michael Deets, Don Donahue - Charles North
Joseph McNeely - Central Baltimore Partnership
Joanna Lazarus
Elaine Garven - Mayors Office
Bill Cunningham
Ed Gunts - Sunpapers
Jay Brodie, Paul Dombrowski, Terrance Hancock – BDC

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Bowden and Schack – Panel
Gary Cole, Carmen Morosan, Bob Quilter - Planning