

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

MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 19, 2008

Meeting No: 83

Project: Port Covington PUD – Revised Master Plan

Phase: Introduction

Location: Port Covington/Middle Branch

PRESENTATION:

Tim Pula of SBER Development introduced the design team and described the proposed mixed use project. The ultimate PUD, as described, would include three current landowners: SBER, Tidewater Yacht Service Center and Fenmark Management (the Wal-Mart site) but does not include the larger Sunpapers site. Matt D’Amico, lead project architect from Design Collective, described the major design principles guiding the proposed 17acre SBER/Tidewater site as follows:

- The redefinition of the main circulator road - Cromwell Street;
- Entry roads aligned with open water view corridors;
- Public green spaces along the water’s edge;
- Shorten or reframe the two existing piers into a single land mass to create a more attractive development parcel;
- Accommodate future mass transit within the Cromwell Street right of way;
- Create reasonably scaled urban block sizes.

The components of the project included over 2 million square feet of development possibly containing the following components:

1. Ground level retail development at all buildings facing public ways – 80,000 sq.ft;
2. All parking structures flanked by “wrappers” uses – approximately 3000 spaces;
3. Commercial office development – 64,000 sq.ft;
4. Residential development including 3 strategically placed high-rise towers (ranging up to 38 stories high) – 1.9 million sq.ft./2000+ units;
5. Marina development – approximately 400 slips;
6. Public green space.

The project described above was one of two scenarios presented. Variations in the two plans were described as flexible as to the amount of office versus residential space and dependent on future market conditions. Variations on the development of the Pier 6 portion of the site included new townhouse development as well as the possible continuance of the current lease of the pier for two large military cargo ships.

COMMENTS OF THE PANEL:

Overall, the Panel agreed on the importance of the redevelopment of this portion of Port Covington. It also complimented the development team on its inclusion of mass transit in a newly conceived Cromwell Street. Numerous comments related to the difficulty of establishing the proper relationship of this 17 acre proposal to a more comprehensive vision for the entire Port Covington area. Other comments/recommendations/concerns included:

- A. Proposed Mass/Density – Several members challenged the feasibility of the proposed density and requested comparisons with other similar projects in the area. Alternate physical and economic development plans of lower density were suggested. A model which includes the adjacent BG&E power plant with its tall smokestack, the large cargo ships and the I-95 elevated roadways would be helpful in discussing the height implications of the proposed project.
- B. The Tall Buildings – generally, notwithstanding the above comments, the promise of tall slender towers along the waterfront was well received. However the actual heights, number of towers and location of such elements would benefit from further study. It was strongly suggested that if towers are pursued that ways be studied to assure that they extend visually to the ground plane.
- C. Effect of development on sites across Cromwell – Concern was voiced about the effect of this proposed development on future development across Cromwell Street, particularly regarding the relationship to the water and open views.
- D. Public Space – It was requested that major open space be introduced into the proposed development and that even rooftops be explored as possible public green spaces.
- E. Marinas – There was some concern that any proposed new marinas should be studied to find ways that they can complement the long public water view corridors rather than becoming barriers to that relationship. Further, it was suggested that ways be explored to combine and promote public amenity as well as private security to these elements.
- F. Phasing Consideration – Although it was suggested that the blocks were designed to be individually self sufficient, that some indication of possible phasing plans should be presented.

PANEL ACTION:

Introduction and discussion only. No action required.

Attending: Tim Pula – SBER Development
Ryan Potter - Gallagher Evelius & Jones
Bob Brandon, - Tidewater Yacht Service Center

Matt D'Amico, Will Story – Design Collective

Susan Williams - STV

Phil Lee - Moffat + Nichol

Al Barry, Alex Hoffman - AB Associates

Molly Buckheit - GBC

Ralph Kurtz - Analytica

Hanah Cho - The Sun

Dan Sernovitz - Baltimore Business Journal

Jay Brodie – BDC

Messrs. Bowden, Britt, Ramberg and Schack – Panel

Doug McCoach, Gary Cole, Duncan Stuart, Jill Lemke, Carmen Morosan,

Bob Quilter - Planning