

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

Date: August 8, 2011

Meeting No.: 133

Project: Canton Crossing Retail – New PUD Master Plan

Phase: Introduction

Location: Boston and Conkling Streets

PRESENTATION:

Doug Schmidt, of the Chesapeake Retail Group, gave a brief overview of the projects and the changes in the retail mix that are facilitating a new master plan. Mike Rollison, of Brown Craig Turner, reviewed the evolution of the master plan and their response to the Planning Department's Urban Design Goals for the site. The project is 31 acres of mixed retail, including large anchors, junior anchors, a grocery store, and smaller restaurants, retailers. In addition to surface parking as required, the project team is proposing a lower level parking structure that takes advantage of the site slope. This would be located on the south end of the site with retail and parking above and on grade with the remainder of the site. The site is also adjacent to a proposed light rail station that will be part of the Red Line.

The design team has located main entrances off Boston Street and in alignment with Conkling and Eaton Streets (the latter would be extended from the north). The entrance at Eaton would serve as a gateway to the project and would include a public space with retail forming a "Main Street" that extended to Cardiff Avenue and turned east, terminating in a Town Center. A small park space would be located on Boston Street across from the light rail station.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:

The Panel agreed that the project was moving in the right direction and addressed several of the Urban Design Goals set by the Planning Department. In particular, the Panel applauded the creation of a lower level of parking to diminish the amount of surface parking as well as the attempt to create a street network that connected the site within as well as to surrounding neighborhoods and developments. However, the Panel also had the following comments:

Create an urban, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use project.

The Panel recognized that a strength of the scheme was the two cross streets of Eaton and Cardiff. However, while Cardiff Street was described as a boulevard and is a prime connector between the large office tower and waterfront and the project's town center, the portion of Cardiff Avenue west of Eaton is weak and uninviting for the pedestrian. The design team and developer should look at ways to create a better pedestrian realm and give edge definition between the public realm and the parking lots. This could be achieved through some combination

of regular street trees, low walls and landscaping, or even building frontage. Additionally, the other streets and walkways that connect through the site and beyond need additional study so as to create a hierarchy of streets and sidewalks (as is common in urban areas) that would help to break down the size of the surface parking lots and diminish the “suburban” strip mall feel.

Enhance the Boston Street frontage to promote a welcoming image and encourages safe pedestrian connections.

The public space and treatment at Eaton and Boston Street, and the creation of a Main street feel, was welcomed, as well as the location of smaller retailers near the transit station. The entrance at Conkling Street, however, needs further study, given that the northwest corner of the site is the first thing that people traveling east will see. Also, it is encouraged to create more of a public street edge as the roadway extends to the proposed grocery store, rather than simply turn into a parking lot drive aisle. Finally, additional study is needed for the open space along Boston Street in order to create a welcoming pedestrian environment.

Create an open space framework that enlivens the project and connects with the Canton Crossing PUD.

The extension of Cardiff Avenue, with a terminus in the proposed town center, was a good opportunity to connect not only with the Canton Crossing PUD but also to the waterfront. As noted earlier, however, Cardiff Avenue needs to be a better pedestrian realm. Also, Panel members were concerned with the treatment of Bayliss Street, as shown is functions as a rear to the development and needs additional thought as to how it will “face” Canton Crossing.

Include transit-oriented features.

The inclusion of an open space adjacent to light rail station, the bike sharing facility, restaurants near the station, and the beginning of the “Main Street” at Eaton, are all positive.

John Murphy, rep of Maryland OverPak, also spoke and expressed concern about the extension of Danville Avenue, which currently does not exist on the site. His issue is that the railroad located on the southern edge of the site is important and that the developer needs to consider how this will continue to function.

PANEL ACTION:

Introduction only – no decision needed.

Attending:

Scot Foster, Mike Rollison, Bob Gehrman – BCT Architects

Stanley Fine, Caroline Hecker – RMG

Susan Williams – STV

Doug Schmidt - CRBG

Dan Sernovitz – BBJ

John Enny – Red Line PMC

John Murphy – Maryland OverPak

Jay Brodie, Terrance Hancock – BDC
Jamie Kendrick – DOT
Mark Sapperstein – Sapperstein Dev.

Ms. Eig; Messrs. Britt, Cameron and Ramberg – Panel
Tom Stosur, Gary Cole, Anthony Cataldo, Wolde Ararsa, Natasha Becker - Planning