

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

Date: March 19, 2015

Meeting No.:

Project: McKeldin Plaza

Phase: Discussion

Location: Inner Harbor

PRESENTATION:

Kirby Fowler with the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore introduced the redevelopment project at McKeldin Plaza and spoke briefly about the recent streetscape improvements along Pratt Street, including removal of berms and skywalks, facilitation of bump-out additions, and development of the Pratt Street Design Guidelines. He then introduced the design team for the McKeldin Plaza redevelopment, which included Steve Ziger of Ziger/Snead, Johnathan Ceci of Ayer Saint Gross Architects, and Richard Jones of Mahan Riekel.

The site includes the existing McKeldin Plaza and fountain, a portion of the streetscape along Pratt Street and Light Street around the plaza, the diagonal street separating the plaza from the Inner Harbor and a portion of the Inner Harbor plaza. The proposed design includes a new tilted lawn with space for storage or retail beneath, new anchor lawn spaces, regularization of the Light and Pratt Street intersection, a water channel and water curtain, and refined streetscape treatment.

DISCUSSION OF THE PANEL:

- Panel members debated whether the decoration of the plaza limits its historic use as a place for civic assemblage. Further consideration should be given to the historic use of the space and how the new design would accommodate civic gatherings.
- Questions were asked, “Is the space directional (as a road) or static (as a place)? And “When is a pathway a plaza?” Certain panel members felt that the diagonal pathways are more directional than static, and serve to lead people through the site more than have people gather at the site.
- The emphasis of the diagonal axis from the Pratt and Light Street corner seems too strong. Furthermore, the triangular forms created as a result of the diagonal path may be counterproductive to creating a functional space for year-round programming. Reconsider the strong emphasis on the diagonal axis and triangular lawns. Investigate “rooms” that may be more functional.
- Panel members informed that the primary connection to the Inner Harbor is at Calvert Street, not Light Street as expressed in the design. Reconsider the strong emphasis placed on the Light Street and Pratt Street intersection and whether it is the most appropriate point of access to the site.
- Consider the cueing of buses on Pratt Street. How would this condition affect the enjoyment of the space and design intent at that edge? Also, does the space have a role in addressing mass transit?

- Reconsider the phased development of the water channel.

PANEL RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation given for discussions

Attending:

Richard Jones - Mahan Riekel

Lauren Moloney and Laurie Schwartz – Waterfront Partnership

Dan Taylor and Gaylord Dutton – BDC

Kirby Fowler and Nan Rohrer - DPoB

Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Tom Stosur, Alex Hoffman – Planning