

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

**Date:** June 8, 2017

**Meeting #241**

**Project:** Metro West Parking Structure

**Phase:** Continued Schematic

**Location:** 300 North Greene Street, West Saratoga Street, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and West Mulberry Street with Route 40 inbound from the west immediately north

**PRESENTATION:**

Arsh Miriman with Caves Valley Partners began the presentation with a review of the background for the project, including the need to make the Metro West Office Building viable through the provision of adequate parking, as well as the broader vision to extend the activity of downtown Baltimore to the west side of the city.

Architect Matthew Herbert and Landscape Architect Brian Reetz with The Design Collective lead the presentation of the revised design, with the following highlights:

- Additional context has been provided in the drawings to clarify the relationship between the garage and the surrounding context.
- The separation of the retail and office garage parking remain as previously designed, with two curb cuts and automobile entries along West Saratoga Street.
- The southeast stair tower has been pushed back to allow smoother pedestrian access to the retail arcade.
- The façade design has been further articulated to break down the scale of the building mass and provide greater visual interest.
- Additional detail has been provided to the landscape treatment along West Saratoga Street.

**Comments from the Panel:**

The panel felt that progress has been made on the building massing and exterior facades since the initial presentation; however they expressed continued concern with the two garage entrances and the interruption of the West Saratoga ground floor retail arcade by the retail garage entrance, and had the following comments:

**Building/Site Design:**

- Additional sections must be provided to clarify the site grades and their impact on the garage entries and layout.
- If the separate retail garage entry is an absolute requirement, reducing the depth of the retail arcade so that it is not articulated as a discrete pedestrian space, and pushing the

storefronts forward to address West Saratoga Street more directly would help to reduce the current conflict between pedestrian and automobile circulation.

- The space of the arcade is under-scaled and lacks in character. The retailers currently suggested are unlikely to use outside seating, providing additional reasons to reduce the arcade to a ground floor setback. Please revisit the design here.
- Despite the shortcomings of the retail parking, the project is better with the retail than without it. The panel does not recommend eliminating the retail because of its parking requirements and impact on the ground floor.
- The transition between the sidewalk/arcade at the garage and the office building is currently awkward. More attention should be paid to the pedestrian experience and link between the two.

#### Comments on the facades:

- The panel voiced general support of the updated façade design with some concern over the current number of facade motifs, and recommended further editing and refinement.
- The large graphic on the West Saratoga Street façade was generally supported, with the following suggestions:
  - The vertical banners in the Alternate Concept are more effective in breaking down the long, horizontal mass of the garage but should be investigated holistically within the overall design simplification. Details showing how headlights will be screened must be included in revised designs.
  - The panel questioned the literal use of the Maryland flag in the large graphic, suggesting it might be too iconic an image for a garage. An alternate image that is not so state-oriented, potentially more abstract and whose coloration is not a literal interpretation of the original, would be more effective
- The West Mulberry Street façade should be treated the same as West Saratoga Street. It is a prominent view, and has an additional garage entry. Replicating the West Saratoga façade would also help edit the number of façade motifs.
- Opportunities should be explored to connect vertical façade elements to the ground plane to more effectively counteract the current impression of the building “floating” above the site.

#### **Panel Action:**

Recommend approval of schematics addressing the specific comments above.

#### **Attending:**

Arsh Mirmiran – CVP/ Greene St. Ventures

Matt Herbert, Brian Reetz, Ryan Kautz, Dean Brown – Design Collective

Mike Albers – Walker Parking

Ryan Potter - GEJ

Messrs. Bowden, Haresign, Ms. O’Neill\* and Ms. Ilieva - UDARP Panel

Anthony Cataldo, Tom Stosur, Christina Hartsfield - Planning