

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

Date:	March 16, 2017	Meeting No.: 238
Project:	Revised Master Plan: PEMCO P.U.D.	Phase: Master Plan
Location:	5601 Eastern Avenue Baltimore, MD	

PRESENTATION:

Mr. Robert Northfield, Architect with BCT Architects, identified four proposed changes to the approved master plan for the PEMCO P.U.D. Those changes include:

1. Shifting Center Street to the south, approximately seventy feet; to accommodate additional surface parking needs for two perspective anchor retail tenants;
2. Activating the intersection of Center Street and the North/South entry boulevard, including incorporating a “parking/events” plaza on the north east corner of the intersection;
3. Decreasing the width of the North/South entry drive adjacent to the anchor retail tenant and south of Center Street; and
4. Adding a retail pad building on the north east corner of the site along Eastern Avenue

Ms. Nicole Reedy, Landscape Architect with Morris & Ritchie Associates, described the design elements for the proposed “parking/events” plaza. Those elements include special paving, a screen wall along the western edge, overhead string lights and landscape. As designed, the plaza is to accommodate +/- 15 parking spaces directly in front of the perspective corner anchor tenant. The availability of the plaza to accommodate special events would be determined by the operating hours/needs of the anchor tenants.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

The Panel expressed continued support for the mixed use project. With respect to the four proposed changes to the Master Plan, the Panel offered the following comments for careful consideration:

1. Shifting Center Street to the South:

The Panel noted that shifting Center Street to the south increases the length of the North/South entry boulevard and potentially creates additional traffic and congestion at the Center Street intersection. Motorists must now travel a longer distance to access

the large field of surface parking. To alleviate traffic congestion, the Panel suggested adding a second left hand turn into the parking area at mid-point between Eastern Avenue and Center Street. If this suggestion proves problematic, perhaps just a “right out” turn from the parking area onto the North/South boulevard would alleviate some traffic at the Center Street intersection. This more should be considered along with the ‘via’ divisions between the retail blocks.

2. Activate the Intersection:

The Panel reacted favorably to creating separate retail buildings along the eastern edge of the North/South entry boulevard. The Panel suggested that one of the Vias should set up a strong pedestrian axis and connection thru the surface parking field and across the North/South entry boulevard, connecting to the retail and hotel on the west side of the project in development Parcel A. The location of the Via and pedestrian path thru the parking field could be on axis with the proposed hotel lobby.

The Panel expressed mixed reaction to the proposed “parking/events” plaza. Several Panel members felt strongly that an active retail building is needed to anchor the north east corner of the intersection and not a glorified parking lot whose function as an event space seemed questionable. Several Panel members were willing to consider a viable open space plaza with no parking and clearly defined edges.

3. Decreasing the width of the North/South entry boulevard adjacent to the retail anchor:

The Panel did not take issue with the proposed change.

4. Adding a retail pad building along Eastern Avenue:

The Panel did not take issue with this proposed change assuming that strict requirements would be in place dictating where entrances, service, utilities, and blank walls would be or not be permitted within that building.

Overall, the Panel felt that the master plan vision must acknowledge the site’s industrial heritage in an authentic way and that more attention needs to be paid to the pedestrian experience and connectivity.

PANEL ACTION:

Recommend continued development, addressing the above Panel comments and developing a clear relationship between the industrial heritage of the site and the physical design components as discussed.

Attending:

Aaron Moore – Greater Baltimore Committee
Adam Bednar – The Daily Record
Al Barry – AB Associates
Nicole Reedy – Morris + Richie Assoc. Inc.
Robert Northfield, Sydney Wallace – BCT Architects

Russ Robertson – Cap Ex Management Group
Natalie Sherman – Baltimore Sun

Mr. Bowden, Burns*, Haresign, and Ms. Illeva - UDARP Panel
Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield – Planning Department