

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

Date: April 14, 2016

Meeting #224

Project: Rash Field Redevelopment

Phase: Discussion

Location: 201 Key Highway, Baltimore MD 21230

PRESENTATION:

Laurie Schwartz, President of Waterfront Partnership, presented the project background and referenced previous proposals for the redevelopment of Rash Field – a 7-acre urban waterfront park along the south Inner Harbor Promenade.

Isaac Hametz, Research Director of Mahan Rykiel Associates, provided an overview of the purpose, scope and needs of the project based on community input gathered from Summer 2015 Baltimore City Resident Survey and other preliminary research. He outlined a design strategy guided by a public engagement process and provided results from a comprehensive community input study that was used to generate programmatic elements for the various activities, amenities and experiences at the waterfront park.

Richard Jones, Landscape Architect and President of Mahan Rykiel, reviewed the site history, urban context and existing conditions highlighting physical barriers and limited access, vegetation and activity zones. In response to these site challenges, the design team presented concepts plans that seek to address the following:

- Varied activities to diversify the waterfront experience
- Improved connections within the site as well as to the surrounding area
- Stronger relationship to the waterfront and Federal Hill Park across key highway
- Clear points of arrival

The proposal includes programmatic interventions that offer passive and active recreation organized in a few distinct zones. Proposed environmental improvements include increased tree canopy and reduction of impervious surfaces throughout the site. Other key interventions include relocation of the existing Pride Memorial within the site and existing carousel to West Shore Park as well as consolidation of the existing volleyball courts for more efficient use of space.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel applauded the outreach effort, design process and quality of the presentation but was critical of the limited scope and coordination with respect to related elements surrounding the site and encouraged further study in the following areas:

- **Movement and Connectivity** – the panel encouraged further development of the implied diagrammatic connections and gateways between the waterfront promenade and the neighborhood across Key Highway. Particularly problematic are the southeast entry next to the parking garage and the north-south connection along the west edge of the park. Further coordination is needed on the east and south edges to ensure adequate connections and transitions to the park.

- **Pride Memorial Location** – the panel expressed concern with the new location of the Pride Memorial and suggested that a more contemplative environment would be appropriate, possibly in greater proximity to the water.
- **Programmed Recreation** – the panel applauded the variety of programming ‘built’ in the design and encouraged the design team to include basketball court(s) while revisiting the location, size and configuration of the Skatepark, Playlab & Café as well as the Reading Room zones.
- **Feasibility and Overall Vision** – the panel expressed concern over the feasibility of the proposed design considering its limited budget and its ability to contribute to the broader vision of the Inner Harbor as outlined in previous Master Plans. The panel encouraged developing the proposed design further in consideration with a broader vision for that area.

Panel Action:

No action needed.

Attending: Laurie Schwartz, Lauren Moloney- Waterfront Partnership
 Isaac Hametz, Richard Jones, Jason Castillo - Mahan Rykiel Associates
 T.G. Webster – Baltimore Beach
 Klaus Philipsen – ArchPlan
 Dan Taylor - BDC

Messrs. Bowden, Haresign, Burns and Ms. Ilieva* - UDARP Panel

Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Hartsfield, Wolde Ararsa, Matthew DeSantis - Planning