

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

**Date:** April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Meeting #32**

**Project:** Perkins Somerset Oldtown

**Phase:** Master Plan

**Location:** East Baltimore

---

**CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

Tim Pula (Beatty Design) gave an update on the general timeline and process for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative grant and the overall plan for replacement housing with additional housing to create a mixed income redevelopment at the site of Perkins Homes. The buildings will each have a UDAAP review, as will the park planned for the development. Changes to the Master Plan include moving the park and adding additional 530 units - to increase the number of lower market rate income units.

Matt Fitzsimmons with Hord Coplan Macht gave an overview of the focus of the master plan for today, which is the redevelopment of Perkins Homes, located between Little Italy and Upper Fells Point. There is an opportunity in in this new community to implement the complete streets principles (especially on Caroline). Boiler located in the community center is driving the phasing strategy - starting in the northwest corner of the site and working counter-clockwise around the site.

A new street will be added within the site, making the center blocks smaller. City Springs school shifted to the north center block with green space as the northeast corner, allowing for a pedestrian connection though the site to City Springs Park. There is also an opportunity to create a southern gateway into the community with new multi-family buildings.

**Key Changes:**

- Park moved south and framed on all sides by multi-family
- Shifted smaller scale multi-family along Bethel and Eden Streets
- Predominantly 4 story, with some 3- and 5- story buildings
- Direct access to street - walkout condition to keep with the traditional Baltimore stoop

**Project Goals:**

- Walkable and connected with complete streets
- Incorporated stormwater management plan and strategic greening
- Reuse the existing underground infrastructure where possible
- Overlapping tree varieties - London Plane, Oak and American Elm - to diversify and ensure longevity

**DISCUSSION:**

The panel thanked the team for the presentation and continued with clarifying questions related to the selection of trees, number of units, street layout and crossing points.

- Is the selection of trees distinct from the neighborhood, or is it continued from the surrounding context? There are not a lot of street trees in the near vicinity, so this plan introduces new greening rather than extending or continuing the fabric of street trees.
- Setbacks on the Bethel Street side will be 16' to allow for improved pedestrian zone.
- Gross numbers of rowhouses, and the driving factor of the numbers is in part due to the 19 or so 4- and 6- BR units, as well as a large number of 3-BR units, which are generally housed in the townhouses. 1,345 overall (rental) units between Perkins and Somerset footprint as stipulated by the CNI grant. To this number, 500 additional units have been added to the Perkins site. For-sale might be a future step.
- Strategy for unit distribution - team would ideally locate some of the larger units on the ground floor so they can have stoop condition. All buildings are mixed income - not segregated by unit. Market rate and affordable are next door to each other.
- Park is relatively flat but drops to the south - stormwater to be collected in southeast corner.
- Bike lane configuration is not yet fully defined- ROW remains at 48' from curb to curb, but Option A with parking on both sides compresses the buffer zone, while Option B loses one lane of parking, but gives more room for bollards and buffer zone.
- 

#### **Master Plan/ Perkins Site:**

- The pedestrian path through the school site may pose a security challenge; design team has not finalized the design of this parcel and should be mindful of the challenge in the proposed condition. Midblock crossing will be a challenge.
- No right or wrong way to locate the park, but when the park was located on Pratt and Caroline it allowed the neighborhoods to connect to each other (city park); now the neighborhood is nested within the neighborhood (neighborhood park). Important to consider how pedestrians move through the neighborhood - most pedestrians move along busier streets because they are signaled.
- Concern that there are too many eyes on the park - need to provide spaces for respite and address the community immediately around it.
- Question the premise of sprinkling the rowhouses along the edge; these face the backs of commercial buildings and garages. Important that the stoops reinforce the way people will use the space rather than use them for optics only.
- Parking lots in the rear need to address the outdoor shared spaces that residents will use. These are similar to how residents are currently using them - parking, trash pick-up, kids playing all collide in these spaces without clear definition. Especially problematic in blocks G and F.
- Parking on Option A is problematic - cars crossing over the bike lane is not an ideal condition. Option B could incorporate another raised bicycle lane
- Strong green-space system throughout the neighborhood but is not carried through in the central courtyards. These need to be considered in more detail or the project stands to lose what it gained through improved pedestrian experience.
- Rowhouses and multi-family feel fragmented - look for a way to continuously align and connect the groups of townhouses to give them stronger presence on the street. There is an opportunity to improve the neighborhood fabric by allowing multi-family and the townhouses to be continuous. Try to include units that turn the corner.
- Continuity of perimeter is important - need to minimize gaps to achieve an urban condition. Alignment of alleys undermines the character of the cross streets. Look for

places to eliminate entrances - if there is a need for a gap due to the location of the steam pipe, consider placing the alley opening at these locations. Additionally, consider a C-shaped alley instead of a straight-through alley.

- Deflection in blocks D and H undermine the park and objectifies the buildings, when they really should read as part of the surrounding urban fabric, and H should not have an alley opening on to the park. The slight rotation of the pieces of these buildings on Caroline Street allow leakage of the space - the park should be the most important volume defined by the surrounding buildings.
- Gap between G and F at the new street is not necessary - this doesn't really lead anywhere. If G and F were continuous, it would allow an opportunity for a nice multifamily building and works better with the adjacent streets.

**Next Steps:**

Continue the project addressing comments above, especially as each phase develops for the building plan.

**Attending:**

Dana Henson - The Henson Group

Tim Pula -Beatty Development

Matthew Fitzsimmons, Keval Thakkar - HCM

Danielle Brock, Matthew Thomasson - RK&K

Sasha Gaye Angus - McCormick Barron

Kevin Gallaher, Jaye Matthews, Lembit Jogi - HABC

Melody Simmons - BBJ

Jaye Matthews, Santosh Chandane, David Ferguson, Precious Washington, Trace Shaughnessy, Matt Flement, Arlisa Anderson, John Smith, Cynthia Newman-Lynch, Steven Stern - Attendees

Messrs. Anthony, O'Neill, Bradley and Ilieva - UDAAP Panel

Laurie Feinberg\*, Ren Southard, Marshella Wallace, Tamara Woods, Amy Gilder-Busatti, Cheryl Casciani - Planning