

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

**Date:** September 26, 2013

**Meeting No.:** 172

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**Project:** 25<sup>th</sup> Street Station PUD  
**Phase:** Revised Master Plan  
Revised Final Review – Walmart Building

**Location:** Sisson, West 24<sup>th</sup> and Howard Streets, and Huntington Avenue

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**PRESENTATION:**

Caroline Paff, Project Manager from Developer WV Urban, Dan Contadore, Walmart's architect from MMA, and Dan Heile from Walmart's Civil Engineer, Bowman, presented the revised master plan and design for the proposed Walmart store and parking garage. The east parcel (Parcel II,) approximately 3 acres, remains as designed in the original PUD. The west parcel, (Parcel I) approximately 11.5 acres, has undergone programmatic and design revisions. The Parcel I approved plans included:

1. C-1 Retail building at the northwest corner of Huntington and West 25<sup>th</sup> Street
2. Two story retail component that included a Lowe's at the lower level with a Walmart, with entry on the same level as the C-1 building and West 25<sup>th</sup> Street above
3. Two story garage with Walmart loading between the C-1 Retail building and the two story retail building
4. Single story structured (South) garage between the two story retail building and West 25<sup>th</sup> Street with the top level of the garage approximately level with the floor of the Walmart
5. Lowes' loading and a garden center face Sisson. Per approval, trucks movements are restricted, and they must turn left on West 24<sup>th</sup> Street to avoid the neighborhood
6. Phase I included approximately 225,000 square feet of retail, and 720 parking spaces
7. The Walmart facades were based on the new, contemporary suburban prototype

The proposed modifications include the following adjustments:

1. An integrated stair tower on the C-1 Retail building is removed; otherwise, the building is unchanged
2. The Lowes retail component and the South garage are eliminated
3. The Walmart floor drops a level to replace Lowes, and has its main pedestrian entrance at the West 24<sup>th</sup> Street level
4. A new free-standing masonry tower provides elevator and stair access from the West 25<sup>th</sup> Street sidewalk to the Walmart below
5. Single story structured garage becomes a surface parking lot, approximately level with the floor of the Walmart with increased planting areas
6. Walmart's loading and a garden center face Sisson; this is a similar condition to the previously approved Lowe's configuration
7. The modified Phase I includes approximately 114,000 square feet of retail, and 403 parking spaces

8. The Walmart facades are revised to reflect a more traditional industrial appearance of punched and blind openings in a masonry wall
9. General landscape features remain as approved

### **PANEL COMMENTS:**

The panel offered the following comments:

1. There is no longer a retail presence of the Walmart building at the same level as 25<sup>th</sup> Street. The panel believes that the revised grade separation significantly reduces street presence, retail connectivity, and integration over the previous version. Walmart, a true retail anchor, is now connected through a vertical circulation tower to street front retail in Phase 2 and beyond to existing neighborhood retail and services along 25<sup>th</sup> Street. The panel suggested that if a two story urban concept for the store was not feasible to restore connectivity to the West 25<sup>th</sup> Street elevation, that the pedestrian path and circulation 'tower' along with the upper wall of the Walmart building would need to provide that visual connection.
2. The circulation tower should be reconsidered:
  - a. Reposition the tower centering it on the diagonal road spur from 25<sup>th</sup> Street, making it a major focal point and hinge
  - b. The masonry expression is heavy; redesign with something like a festive, lighter expressed metal structure
3. The solid masonry screen wall between the upper level of the parking structure hides a green roof on the Walmart store.
  - a. Consider creating framed openings with some greenscreen infill to make the green roof visible, and to soften the large solid wall.
  - b. Adjust screen wall or parking lot location to provide a planting buffer between the parking and the wall.
4. Improve pedestrian circulation to the stair tower
  - a. Pilasters on the western wall are heavy; consider alternative designs
  - b. Provide planters at the western edge of the sidewalk
  - c. Consider adding an allee' of trees in the planter boxes
5. Improve the pedestrian connection between the vertical circulation tower and the Walmart entrance
  - a. Consider street trees in grates or slightly raised planters
  - b. Consider greenscreens and limited planter beds in front of the blind openings
6. Surface parking lot
  - a. Consider adding another parking lot entrance to the southeastern corner of the surface parking lot to spread vehicular circulation and pull some back from the neighborhood; confirm w/ traffic engineer
  - b. Provide defined access through the parking lot from West 24<sup>th</sup> Street, using paving and trees to define walkway, to help eliminate the ped/vehicular conflict at the main entrance
  - c. Provide low wall and low screen planting between surface lot and adjacent public roads
7. Building architecture
  - a. Blank walls should be revisited- provide architectural detailing or a layering of vegetation to create a dynamic pedestrian 'streetscape'

**COMMUNITY COMMENTS:**

1. Megan Hamilton, representing the Historic Fawcett Neighborhood Association, expressed concerns about truck traffic on Sisson, and loading bays adjacent to a working class neighborhood.

Planning staff indicated that turning movements agreed to in the approved PUD required a left turn only from the site, thereby eliminating truck traffic in the neighborhood. The Loading dock for Lowe's was previously approved in the same location as the one proposed for Walmart.

2. Joan Floyd, representing the Remington Neighborhood Association, stated that Sisson would be a preferable access route for truck traffic, with a direct connection to the loading dock.

Planning staff indicated that the truck egress plans were approved in prior submissions, and that the revisions were consistent with these previously approved drawings.

3. John Viles, representing the Remington Neighborhood Association, suggested that the loading area should be reconfigured to allow Walmart loading to occur in its prior location, and suggested consideration of a two story urban model Walmart.

The applicant noted the grade differential, requirement for a receiving building, and impact on parking if implemented.

4. Bruce Willen, representing the Old Goucher Community Association, discussed the neighborhood resurgence with new homes and families. Mr. Willen believes that the revised design is anti-urban and hostile to the pedestrian experience, and inconsistent with the neighborhood renewal plan. Mr. Willen suggested reversing the Walmart building location with the surface parking lot.
5. Judith Kuntz, representing the Greater Remington Improvement District, indicated that their association had not received an update showing the proposed revisions, was seeing them for the first time at this meeting, and could not yet offer informed comments.
6. Anthony Thompson, long-time neighborhood resident, likes the current design including the way that the building looks. Mr. Thompson, who depends on his children to drive him to another Walmart, is looking forward to having a store within walking distance, and believes that this will be a boon to the neighborhood.
7. Eloise Thompson, long-time neighborhood resident, praised the convenience for the neighborhood once the store is built.

**PANEL ACTION:**

The panel requested that the Revised Master Plan and Design Revisions continue development and returned to the UDARP for review.

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**Attending:**

Megan Hamilton – Historic Faucet Community Organization  
Kelley Cross, Cathy Yates, Dan Shub, Kris Northrup, Bruce Willen, Sarah Templin – Old  
Goucher Community Association  
Larry Perl – Baltimore Messenger  
Judith Kunst - GRIA  
Elouise M. Thompson, Anthony Thompson – GRIA Residents  
John Viles, Joan Floyd – RNA  
Robert Gehrman – BCT Architects  
Branden Brooks – Morgan State University  
David Lynch – Law Offices of G. Macy Nelson, LLC  
Sharon Guida – CVCA  
Carla Ryon – Colbert Matz Rosenfelt  
Dan Heil – Bowman  
Dan Condatore – MMA Architects

UDARP Panel Members- Ms. Diane Jones Allen, Messrs. Gary Bowden and David Haresign\*

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Wolde Aarasa, Eric Tiso, Laurie  
Feinberg – Department of Planning