

Testimony of
David F. Tufaro
Before the Economic and Community Development
Committee of the Baltimore City Council
February 13,2024
Harborplace Bills
23-0444, 23-0446, and 23-0448

I oppose the City Council bills that would allow MCB's plans to be implemented in the Inner Harbor public park. Our City Charter was amended in the 1960's to create a new Inner Harbor Park to replace the decaying warehouses of the old harbor.

Inner Harbor Park.

There is hereby dedicated to public park uses for the benefit of this and future generations of the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland the portion of the city that lies along the north, west, and south shores of the Inner Harbor...

The Charter was amended by public referendum in 1978 to allow the Harborplace pavilions to be constructed:

“in order to provide eating places and other commercial uses, areas totaling not more than 3.2 acres...”.

My Background. My background is as an urban planner. I received a joint degree in Law and City Planning from University of Pennsylvania. David Wallace, who was part of the team that prepared the Master Plan of 1964 that has guided the Inner Harbor's redevelopment since then, was my planning professor. I settled in Baltimore City in 1973 following graduate school.

My projects in Baltimore reflect my urban planning training. They include: Waterloo Place in historic Mt. Vernon, Montgomery Park, and Mt. Vernon Mill and Whitehall Mill, rehabilitated historic cotton mills located along the Jones Falls in Hampden. All of these projects have been recipients of National or local design awards.

My activities have included leadership roles with the Neighborhood Design Center, Baltimore Housing Partnership, Patterson Park CDC, and Baltimore Heritage, among others.

The City has long abandoned the public planning process. The Master Plan adopted by the City 60 years ago embraced the planning principle that an energetic and active urban environment required a concentrated core, represented by the Inner Harbor and the Central Business District. For the past 30 years, the City has done just the opposite by subsidizing development outside the CBD:

- John Paterakis with Inner Harbor East
- Michael Beatty with Harbor Point, and
- Kevin Plank with Port Covington

all well connected large developers who received hundreds of millions of dollars in tax breaks and direct public subsidies.

You may think these projects are great, but have they been for our City? The fact is that they have not:

- The CBD has been cannibalized and hallowed out
 - Constellation Energy moved from Pratt Street to Harbor Point
 - T. Rowe Price, the financial behemoth, is moving its headquarters from Pratt to Harbor Point
 - Morgan Stanley could have been situated in the CBD instead of Harbor Point
 - Large law firms moved to Harbor East and Harbor Point
 - All the retail in Harbor East could have been in the CBD
- Notwithstanding all of these public subsidies, the net number of jobs along with the population of the City has declined

The MCB development plans would simply be the latest of the City's failed planning efforts funded by huge amounts of public monies. But once again, it will not do what City officials would have you believe it will do.

In addition to decimating our Inner Harbor Park, the 350 foot high apartment towers allowed by this proposed legislation and proposed by this developer, will not activate the Inner Harbor. Apartments do not do that. Public attractions – like the National Aquarium – and public amenities - like waterfront oriented eating places and shops do. Urban planners understand this.

Nobody familiar with MCB's plans and the history of Harborplace supports what this legislation will allow as proposed by MCB, other than some City officials and those in some way connected to MCB.

Here's a partial list of names:

Former Council members Rikki Spector, George Della, Carl Stokes, and Jody Landers

Former Housing Commissioners

Bob Embry, Jay Brodie, and Paul Graziano

Architects and planners David Benn, Steve Ziger, Leon Bridges, Adam Gross, Scott Rykiel, Janet Marie Smith, and Lehr Jackson

Rebeca Hoffberger, founder and director of American Visionary Art Museum

Economists Anirban Basu and Stephen Walters

Jimmy and Ted Rouse, sons of Jim Rouse, founder of Harborplace and Columbia

Mayoral candidates Bob Wallace and Thiru Vignarajah

Tony Hawkins, former manager of Harborplace

Former Harborplace vendors Donna Beth Joy Shapiro, Teporah Bilezikian, Wayne Brocci and Georgia Martin

John Murphy, historic and community preservation attorney

Developers Bill Struever, and Marty Azola

City Counsel members need to listen to the wisdom of so many experienced and knowledgeable voices who have contributed to Baltimore.

Thank you for listening.

David F. Tufaro
Terra Nova Venture, LLC
dtufaro@terranovaventures.com
410-440-1103