

**Economic & Community Development Testimony Against Bill #23-0448 2/13/24**  
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When planning major projects for the public good, the great cities of the world undergo a well-known, time tested process. The process starts with appointing a panel of urban planners and ordinary citizens to solicit input from the public to understand what the citizens want and their priorities. This panel is then given the resources to solicit ideas from around the world on ways in which those wants and priorities might be provided. These ideas are presented back to the public for input and comment. The panel and city planners weigh the public input against costs, benefits and risks of the various ideas and either select one or combine the best ideas into a template that synthesizes an implementable project addressing the public desires. Only then are developers brought into the process through a full and open competitive request for proposals. The citizens of Baltimore deserve this kind of process from their city leadership. Instead, the deeply flawed process that has resulted in the current MCB proposal can be summarized by the mayor asking a developer to provide a proposal for the redevelopment of a revered public space and then attempting to push the result onto his constituents. The citizens of the City of Baltimore deserve better. They deserve more respect. And, believing that the result of such a deeply flawed process will be good for the city is at best denial.

The mayor has been critical of the people who oppose the MCB proposal. He asks why we didn't do something about the failing harbor place before he took his action. By his criticism, he is suggesting that a group of Baltimore citizens, who are guilty of loving their city, and most of whom volunteer in various capacities in their neighborhoods, should in addition to paying their taxes, raise the money necessary to implement the process that every other great city of the world employs. The implication is, we deserve his implementation of a deeply flawed acquisition process for having not acted on our own. His criticisms are an admission of his own lack of professional leadership.