

Re: City of Baltimore, Baltimore City Council
Economic and Community Development Hearing Tuesday 13, 2024
23-044 Urban Renewal – Inner Harbor Project 1, Amendment 21

Testimony: In Opposition to the amendments

HarborPlace is designated as a public park with limited low commercial uses that serve the public visiting the harbor. The proposed amendments are tailored to allow a design that has been proposed by a specific developer. This design has not been vetted for practicality, for cost benefits, and for fitting in the overall context of downtown Baltimore or the MasterPlan Inner Harbor 2.0. Nor have these incentives (easing regulations and pre development money) been offered to any other potentially interested developers who may have wanted to buy the pavilions if this option would have been available. No reports in support of the proposed design configuration are provided by any agency. There is no good rationale to allow 2-4 million square feet of for-profit office and residential development of unlimited height within the space designated as public space. The suggested amendments violate the original masterplan concept in which the outer frame of buildings on the far side of Pratt and Light Street define the spatial impression (for example when looking down from Federal Hill Park). A line of tall buildings will move the frame effectively by 200' or so closer towards the waters edge, effectively reducing the area perceived as HarborPlace, even if the overall footprint of the buildings does not increase compared to what is there now. The 2-4 million square feet are arbitrary and capricious and not based on good planning. No justification has been provided for these figures.

For the above reasons I am specifically opposed to:

Section 1 (2), V-B: Size of facilities no less than 2 million sf and no more than 4,000 sf and allowing parking NO MORE THAN 4,000 SF ????

Development Area 13: Opposed to adding residential use, changing maximum allowable height from 50' to underlying zoning, allowing vehicular traffic, allowing parking of any kind

Development Area 14: Opposed to relaxing building construction of any kind

Development Area 15A: Opposed to allowing residential use, changing maximum allowable height from 50' to underlying zoning, allowing vehicular access, allowing parking,