



## **25<sup>th</sup> STREET STATION PUD DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Department of Planning**  
Thomas J. Stosur, Director  
417 E. Fayette Street  
8th Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Dear Mr. Stosur,

On Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 1:00pm the 25<sup>th</sup> Street Station PUD Design Review Committee met. In attendance were Bruce Willen, designee for the Old Goucher Community Organization and John Viles, designee for the Remington Neighborhood Alliance and twelve residents from the community. Regrettably, representatives for Greater Remington Improvement Association, Charles Village Civic Association did not attend. In the absence of a quorum, the following is a report of the members present.

The meeting was brought to order at 1:00pm and members of the committee introduced themselves, (a recess of fifteen minutes was allowed for other representatives to arrive and the meeting was again started at 1:17). The first order of business was to establish an agenda for the meeting, each member made suggestions and the following agenda was agreed upon, (Bruce Willen took minutes for the committee).

### Agenda

#### **Proposed Site Plan Revisions**

- Topography
- Urban vs. Suburban
- Ingress/Egress
- Parking
- Truck Loading Areas and Truck Access
- Pedestrian/Vehicular Traffic
- ADA Accessibility
- Royer's Chapel
- Greening/Environmental Issues

#### **Proposed Architectural Features**

- Facade and Features
- Remington Historical Characteristics

#### **Major vs. Minor Amendment**

- Definition and Terms
- PUD Requirements

#### **Public Comments**

## **Report**

The 25<sup>th</sup> Street Station PUD Design Review Committee has reviewed the UDARP presentation from 9/26/13 and 10/10/13 and is familiar with site and proposed project. The committee has compiled a list of key concerns and recommendations. It is the position of the committee that the proposed revisions not be approved by the Planning Department until certain revisions have adequately been resolved. The committee recommends reclassifying the revisions as a Major Amendment to the PUD and that the project is brought before the Baltimore City Council in the form of a Major Amendment. The Major Amendment would allow the developer to address and remedy the concerns noted below.

### **Key Concerns and Findings**

Pedestrian and ADA accessibility is still inadequate for a neighborhood where 50% of residents do not drive.

Greater health and noise impact of the new loading dock location that places refrigerated trucks in close proximity to residences.

Traffic impact from the proposed relocation of the main vehicular entrance west on 24<sup>th</sup> street and its close proximity to Historic Fawcett residences. 500 cars and trucks per hour could be entering this site, only steps from homes on 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

Proposed new site plan is a suburban layout that does not belong in the heart of Baltimore. It does not mesh with or enhance the urban grid of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Proposed changes represent a significant departure from the approved 2010 PUD. Key community concerns with the design have not yet been addressed within the minor amendment process.

Major safety and pedestrian access issues caused by the proposed stairs and elevator access from both 25<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Destruction of historic Royer's Chapel to make way for a Walmart truck loading dock is shortsighted and exemplifies regressive urban development.

Concern whether the project meets basic environmental standards, and complies with current Maryland storm water regulations.

The most recent rounds of design revisions make some steps in the right direction, but they are mainly cosmetic improvements that do not address the larger underlying flaws in the proposed redesign that are noted above.

### **Key Recommendations**

The architects and engineers should strongly consider revisiting the site plan to improve pedestrian access and urban integration:

Creating an entrance to Walmart that faces 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Huntingdon at street level is critical. Most pedestrians will be entering the site on foot from the northeast.

Consider moving the Walmart building so that it isn't surrounded on three sides by parking lots. At least one side of the building could integrate with the streets and setbacks on 24<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> Streets.

A two-story Walmart or a single story structure with parking below would be a better use of the site's topography and allow for an entrance at 25<sup>th</sup> Street level. The Walmart entrance must be easier to access for pedestrians and those with mobility issues.

As noted above, reconfiguring the site so that the entrance is at 25<sup>th</sup> Street level would solve most pedestrian and ADA access problems. The main access points from both 25<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Street entrances must be replaced by or augmented with ADA accessible ramps if the building remains at 24<sup>th</sup> Street level.

There is not currently an adequate alternative to the outdoor elevator proposed at the east corner of the store should the elevator fail.

Most recent design changes are an improvement, but still do not fully address the underlying issues.

The proposed elevator should take riders directly into the Walmart lobby to improve safety and create a more welcoming environment.

Move the main 24<sup>th</sup> Street vehicular entrance back to its original location near Huntingdon Avenue.

Create an additional vehicular entrance from Sisson Street, north of Royer's Chapel, to divert traffic from I-83 and Hampden away from residences on 24<sup>th</sup> Street.

Truck loading area should be moved away from residences on 24<sup>th</sup> Street. At minimum, the loading area should be moved behind the Walmart (between the building and the railroad tracks) or restored to its original location at the north corner of the building.

Repositioning the Walmart building on the site would allow for even better locations with improved truck access, such as the easternmost portion of the site next to the self-storage building.

Historic Royer's Chapel should be preserved for adaptive reuse

The Planning Department should classify these proposed changes as a Major Amendment to the PUD. According to city law, a Minor Amendment to a PUD is "limited to design features and interior planning; and does not include any change in the applicable density." The proposed changes to this project include eliminating an entire parking structure, reducing the size of the building by more than 55%, and changing vehicle and

pedestrian access, a major subdivision, (among many others). Key design flaws and concerns have yet to be addressed within the Minor Amendment process.

This project is billed as a “green” development. It should meet or exceed current Maryland storm water standards.

### **Additional Recommendations and Considerations**

DOT should consider widening and improving 24<sup>th</sup> Street to reduce traffic congestion.

General considerations need to be made for walk-ability and urbanism. Any design changes should improve, not worsen, how the project integrates into the urban grid.

Consider ways to improve the street edge and pedestrian experience along 25<sup>th</sup> and Huntingdon.

The committee suggests redeveloping the former Royer’s Chapel into space for offices, restaurants, or the Walmart garden center.

Walmart and the landscape architect should develop a comprehensive tree and landscape maintenance plan to ensure that all trees on the property thrive. New trees should be large enough that they will more easily survive the inhospitable environment of parking lots.

### **Community Comments and Questions**

Community comments are reflected in the remarks and recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm. The next meeting of the 25<sup>th</sup> Street Station PUD Design Review Committee will be posted on [baltimorecity@alerts.baltimorecity.gov](mailto:baltimorecity@alerts.baltimorecity.gov) and the committee’s website [pudreview25.blogspot.com](http://pudreview25.blogspot.com).

This report is respectfully submitted to the Planning Department by the two members present at the 25<sup>th</sup> Station PUD Design Review Committee.

Sincerely,

Bruce Willen, Designee  
Old Goucher Community Association

John Viles, Designee  
Remington Neighborhood Alliance