

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

Date: June 18, 2026

Meeting #78

Project: Mount Clare Square

Phase: Schematic / Master Plan

Location: 1205 W Pratt St, Baltimore MD 21223

CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:

Existing West Baltimore Grocery anchored center adjacent to the Commercial Business District, with close proximity to the University of Maryland, Pigtown and a dense residential population neighborhood

Redevelopment of a Grocery-anchored, mostly single level retail center into a Mixed Use Community, with ground level activated storefronts of approximately 140,000 SF, with a little over 800 Residential units in a configuration of mostly 5 level buildings, comprising a variety of residential options, potentially; market, attainable, workforce, senior and student options TBD.

Master Plan review: By extending the street grid into the site and having a series of smaller blocks which promote a effectively scaled neighborhood of buildings, green space, pedestrian connections and "Building Community".

Existing PUD has been repealed, and will be replaced, and base C3 zoning.

General information from the Presentation:

Mount Clare Square – (aka Mount Clare Junction)

- Developer – Carlyle Development Group
- Architecture - BCT design – Bob Northfield, Jonathan Cartwright, Ryan James
- Landscape - Kimley Horn – Kirsten Eaton, Carla Ryon
- Representation - Silverman Thompson, Joe Woolman

Located between Pratt Street and Pigtown, next to B&O Museum, close to downtown. Surrounded by historic neighborhoods and the location of origination of the B&O railroad (built 1851). Shopping center built in 1987. Bounded by Pratt, Carey, the B&O Railroad Museum/Arlington Ave, and rail corridor. Historic brick buildings and homes on Pratt St side. West side Carey St properties rear facing garages. To the East, Arlington Ave is the back-of-house and loading zones for grocery and other tenants, facing the B&O parking. Question: How to build and honor the legacy of the history of this site?

Currently interior-oriented and car-oriented; significantly over-parked.

Project Goals –

- Build community through mixed-use, residential over retail.

- Increase visibility to Pratt St
- Prioritize pedestrians over cars.
- Increase residential opportunities (attainable, workforce, student, etc)
- Retain grocery and activate street level retail.
- Setting street grid and maintain strong connection to neighborhoods and B&O.
- Phaseability of project.

Program

- 800 multi family units
- 145,000 retail / commercial
- 500 parking spaces provided
- Town Green and Community Centric Plaza

Some site design constraints: Street grid connectivity, Utility easement diagonal across site. Continuing E-W streets (McHenry, Ramsay) create irregular blocks.

Proposing to use the existing mid-block Carey St entrance, while extending Carrollton south – this would become the “main street” within the property. Current layout celebrates the main Carrollton Ave corridor and creates a series of smaller blocks. “Town Center” – active programming, tabled crosswalks. All parking is on the surface, smaller building design a function of current market conditions. Grocery store and adjacent retail to remain as well as the offices at the corner of Pratt/Carey. Considered for future phase development.

Attempting to improve access and connectivity to neighborhoods. New primary entry on Pratt. Arlington ave to Pigtown – Retail building extends out towards Arlington - open up to Pigtown.

Landscape Architecture – Two types of green spaces: public spaces (town center, plaza, along B&O edge). Private green space above first floor for residents use.

Goals:

- Improving pedestrian experience, enhanced streetscape and planting
- Differentiate btwn private and public green spaces.
- Develop a sense of place and amenities – focal points
- Lighting
- Diverse, primarily native plants

Activate Town Green, pocket parks, plaza – play areas, outdoor kitchen, dog park, gathering areas. Tie into neighborhood vibrancy through art/murals.

Recommending modern materials palette: wood benches, modern light fixtures, light bollards, decorative iron to delineate spaces, specialty paving bands, tabletop crossings with specialty paving.

Primarily native plant species – American sycamore, blackgum, dogwood – utilizing vibrant color palettes in planting diversity. Heavy tree plantings in main parking area.

Multifamily on Carey – ground floor units have direct access – mimicking classic Baltimore stoops. Curb extensions on Pratt and Carey to provide space for tree plantings.

DISCUSSION:

Questions from the Panel:

1. How do the existing buildings work in future phasing?
 - Initially keeping the grocery and offices and building around those structures. Longer timeline for Grocery, mid-term grocery for office.
2. What are the goals with connection to Pigtown? This is not clear.

Pigtown Community Garden is no longer located on the Ostend lot.

3. Is there an opportunity to modulate the heights of buildings? Everything appears the same height.
 - Current massings are demonstrating yield potential, not building design.
4. What types of retail are proposed?
 - Merchandising plan not yet in place, but mix of shops, restaurants, etc. Will also be encouraging responding to community needs (e.g. day care, medical).
5. Bike Routes – How do people get here if not by car? What trails are in the area? What is the connection to public transit?
 - Identify bus stops, rider counts, routes, but also how will usage change with 800+ units?

The bike routes identified are not real bike lanes (i.e. Ramsay, Carrollton have no infrastructure). Please continue existing conditions investigations into bike and ped infrastructure in surrounding blocks. Please discuss future Pratt Street modifications with DOT.

6. Is the Utility Easement a non-negotiable? Have you considered a less-conventional grid to design around/adapt to utility easement?
 - Changing the underground utilities presents economic and liability hardship that is unlikely to be resolved with ownership.
7. Why is the street grid not connected to McHenry and Ramsay?
8. Please show paradigm/precedent projects – similar projects with high unit counts, leasing, parking. Precedent projects that incorporate less parking.
 - Retail tenants are becoming more open to lower parking rates.
9. What is the connection to Ostend St? Is the goal to formalize ped connection across the tracks?
 - Need better communication with stakeholders about pedestrian or vehicular connection through B&O parking lot on other side of tracks.
 - Private easement for vehicles from parking lot to Mount Clare Junction.

COMMENTS:

The land has been disconnected from surroundings for a very long time (100+ years), so it is significant and critical that reconnecting be done right.

Appreciates that the current status is simple blocks with wedding cake massings rather than completed designs with finished renderings. This represents openness to adapt/change based on feedback from various points of view.

This is the time to engage stakeholders and communities to get that input and revise accordingly.

Recent activity in area has added to vibrancy of the neighborhood, even at smaller scale. Need to get down to the granular neighborhood level – pull feedback from small projects, businesses, activities and programming – to better integrate more into existing conditions. Feels like it still has its back to the neighborhoods.

Ground level entries are great. But what else will add design value to the streetscape and connect to the surrounding conditions? **Need to reach beyond murals and talk to people about true nature of activity and urban environment.**

Define the project - Is it like Canton Crossing? Northwood? Something else?

- Provide precedent projects and be critical about examples. What worked, and what was less successful? How do those concepts apply here?
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Landscape plan – **need to start diagramming the landscape programming** – where does the dog park go? How does it work with retail and streetscape? Landscape needs to impact the project early, this is an opportunity to grow the project holistically. Interpret the green space typologies diagrammatically.

- Town Green – this is central to the project but is lacking definition.
- Make sure the green spaces are intentional about where people want to be, rather than just the leftover corners after building masses are determined.
- Tree boxes are the bare minimum 4' dimension. Larger tree pits will support healthier trees that will provide better shade for the parking lots.
- Define where are the pedestrian zones - distinct from cars/parking.
- More ideation for use and programming of public spaces will help inform the design. Building legs may shift/push based on public realm design. Be more intentional about active and passive green space. Let these spaces inform the design, massings, layout of buildings.
- There really isn't a lot of outdoor space for residents or other users – need creative ideas for how the space works. Get specific about how the open space is used and who it is for.

The shape of site, orientation of street grid, railroad corridor, and infrastructure are rational limitations on design – but these all provide an opportunity to bring community into the site. Is this plan the most effective implementation within those parameters?

- Space along edge of RR needs better consideration. Right now buildings and parking lots touch the edge without engaging the space. If this is to be usable it needs some room informed by landscape design.

The southern edge is all back of house – **can this really be coordinated as a connection to Pigtown and Carroll Park? Please engage the appropriate stakeholders now, before design advances.** Railroad is an important edge to the site – need better consideration for how people interact with this space and how green space reinforces the goals of the project, specifically access?

- The same is true for the eastern connection to the B&O. Engage the museum. Design the plaza for direction interaction with the museum, the existing brick buildings on either side of Arlington at Pratt. Design the space to work with museum programming.
- Arlington needs a lot more work. **How retail interfaces with Arlington seems to be the key to unlocking a comprehensive site design** (both medium term with existing grocery, and long term with redeveloped grocery site)
- How to make Arlington more urbane, pedestrian friendly, even if planned for a much-later phase.

Carrollton Ave is the central spine – This makes some sense but not at the expense of outer edges, Arlington and Carey. **It is still mostly inward-facing, with backs turned to communities on West and South (Mount Clare and Pigtown).** Site is divided into two halves along Carrollton – mostly housing to the west, long-term tenants to the east.

- N-S connections are dominant and clear. The E-W connections are just leftover/repurposed. This is a disservice to Mount Clare neighborhood.
- It is not clear what is the hierarchy of corridors as proposed. Some of the leftover spaces cloud where the front/back or public/private parts of each building should be. Appreciates the balance between retail and residential. Start working through retail tenant typologies and predict what types would go where (without specific tenants in place).
- Carrollton Avenue and Pratt St are one-way streets. How does this work with approach and exit from the site?

The proposed residential over grocery needs to be tied to a construction type that supports those uses. All buildings should start having a construction typology assigned.

The Solution to this project is all about easing connectivity to communities.

Pedestrian connection across Carey St at McHenry. The current mid-block crossings at Ramsay and McHenry are not safe. The mid-block signal is not logical. Please consider all options for Carey Street.

- This means integrating multimodal transportation. Bring the bike lanes in and through. Create a bike share station.
- Actually go and look at what infrastructure exists *and* what is planned. There were many assumptions made about where bike lanes are in the area.

Internal parking lots – the cars go right up to the building (barely a 5' planting strip) – start with designing space that is for people. If you don't design it for people now, it will absolutely be given to cars later when it gets value engineered.

Look at the broader context. **Southwest Partnership Vision Plan identifies connections from W Baltimore Street to Hollins Market to Mount Clare Junction to Pigtown Main Street as linked commercial zones.**

- This design does not reinforce those links because Arlington/Ostend connections are afterthoughts.
- The Main Street is not the 1 block inside the shopping center, it extends North and South to other commercial zones in the area.

Make the stated goals relevant to the project –

- Building community through mixed use / retail. Retail is not needed to building community, but can add value to community. What is the vision for the community? Need better engagement to understand the vision.
- Variety of housing types – only seeing one housing type. Double loaded corridor. Start visualizing stoop units, balcony/patio units, two-story units, etc – in addition to affordability and user types (senior/student)

Next Steps:

- Engage the community. Correct the missing, outdated, or inaccurate community context info (i.e. community gardens, bike lanes, etc). Deeper engagement would get better information to inform the design. Engagement with stakeholders (B&O) necessary to understand how the site works with regard to Arlington, Ostend, southern edge.
- Look into broader context of commercial connectivity.
- Further investigation needed into access points, safety implications of street design, site edges.
- Be real about landscape planning and allow the open space inform the use, utility, and design of the buildings.
- Need clarity on phasing and construction types.
- Edges of the property need a clear idea based on the environment and impact.

Reach out to Department of Planning Staff to discuss next UDAAP presentation for a revised master plan.

Kevin Storm, Anthony Osbourne, Sharon Bradley and Pavlina Ilieva* - UDAAP Panel

Nick Chupein**, Caitlin Audette, Brandon Kanoy - Planning

* UDAAP Chairperson

** Assigned Planning Staff