



MEETING NOTES

STAKEHOLDER'S CHARRETTE MEETING*

WEDNESDAY APRIL 7, 2004

1:30 PM to 6:30 PM

- ◆ **ATTENDANCE** ⇒ See Attachment 1
- ◆ **Purpose** ⇒ Review recent studies completed by the RK&K/WRT joint venture addressing plan elements, typical sections, landscaping, lighting, historical, and tree inventory, along with other studies. Critical design issues include pedestrian safety, typical section, east-side service drive, landscaping/median widths, transitions along Charles Street at 29th Street consistent with the Mayor's goal for two-way traffic on Charles Street, and bicycle lanes.
- ◆ **Goal** ⇒ Finalize a concept for a "Preferred Alternate" to be presented by the City at a public meeting to be held at the BMA's Meyerhoff Auditorium on May 5, 2004.

1. Status update on recent developments adjacent to Charles Street, including reports from Stakeholders

- **City ⇒ Source of Funds** ⇒ In response to questions, City representatives stated that the current project budget anticipates \$2 million in the City's apportionment of state funds and \$10 million in the City's apportionment of federal funds. Source of state funds will be the City's motor vehicle revenue (MVR) apportionment.
- **City ⇒ Two-Way Charles Street Study** ⇒ In response to the Mayor's request, City DOT is initiating a signing and pavement marking plan to provide two-way traffic on Charles Street generally north of Penn Station. Work is being accomplished by Whitman Requardt & Associates, LLP, and is anticipated to begin this year. Guidance from the Charles Street reconstruction project between 25th Street and University Parkway will help inform the signing/stripping modifications to be implemented. This is especially key at the 29th Street intersection.
- **Expansion of Stakeholder Team** ⇒ On behalf of the City, Tamara Woods will contact representatives from SS Philip & James Catholic Church, the Doctor's Hospital, the Afro-American Newspaper, Friends Meeting, Poverty Solutions, and other business representatives and invite them to the May 5th Public Meeting.

* See page 7 of 7 for notes from meeting with Director Al Foxx held April 13, 2004.

- **Friends of Wyman Park** ⇒ Reported that they are beginning preparation of a Master Plan for the continued revitalization of Wyman Park.
- **Greenway Community Association** ⇒ No Update.
- **Baltimore Museum of Art** ⇒ Continuing to explore opportunities for cooperative activities with Johns Hopkins University. Will be celebrating 90th anniversary of founding and 75th anniversary of Pope building this summer. Currently undertaking landscaping as a part of these preparations.
- **Charles Village** ⇒ Strongly supports two-way traffic on Charles Street, requested additional information from the City. Requested additional efforts to enhance communication with stakeholders (cited address problems, etc. with original letters).
- **Charles Village PUD** ⇒ Boundaries were recently expanded. Currently working with Johns Hopkins University and SBER regarding bookstore, apartments, 700-car underground garage and other developments. Understands that some of these improvements will be funded with a TIF. Recently established a Transportation Task Force, supports bicycle initiatives.
- **Johns Hopkins University** ⇒ Recently had a student injured along Charles Street. Safety continues to be their number one priority. Summarized proposed South Quad development and need to enhance Howard Street entrance. Also discussed Charles Village Development, 33rd Street median, and other work anticipated to start late summer 2004. Referenced SBER's development in 3200 block of St. Paul Street.

2. **RK&K/WRT Team's analyses of previous two concepts as presented in the January 7, 2003 Concept Report**

Historical Perspective ⇒

- Stephanie Foell (ADM) summarized preliminary research on historical issues associated with Charles Street. This research included discussion from the early 1900's regarding the selected Wyatt & Nolting (symmetrical plan ... that which was constructed) versus the Olmsted Brothers plan (asymmetrical ... with east side focused on residential/commercial and west side focused on institutional/park). She also discussed the Federal Section 106 process, noting that while this section of Charles Street is both important and unique for Baltimore, it does not have a level of national significance.
- Joe Rexing questioned how many other multi-lane boulevards with flanking travel lanes exist in Baltimore, and suggested that **The Boulevard Book** by Jacobs, MacDonald & Rofé would seem to indicate that Charles Street is a unique and important multi-lane boulevard.

Tree Survey ⇒

- Eric Almquist (ADM) presented his comprehensive tree survey of all trees greater than 15-inches in diameter (dbh) as well as an assessment of their health. With few exceptions, the specimen trees are outside of the right-of-way (i.e., behind the sidewalk) and would not be affected by reconstruction.

- Stakeholders inquired about the inclusion of the trees recently planted in the median in this survey; what were the original canopy of trees which were referred to as "lush canopy of trees"; and what is the budget anticipated for landscaping?

Engineering Review of January 7, 2003 Concepts ⇒

- Joe Romanowski (RK&K) presented recent work completed by RK&K for Charles Street south of 29th Street, the Median Only option north of 29th Street, and the Median with East Service Drive option north of 29th Street. Wall displays included updated color roll plans and typical sections.
- **25th Street to 29th Street ⇒** For the portion of Charles Street between 26th Street and 29th Street, Joe suggested the following elements within the existing 60-foot curb-to-curb width:
 - 1 southbound parking lane at 8-feet
 - 1 southbound driving lane at 11-feet
 - 1 median at 11-feet
 - 2 northbound driving lanes at 11-feet each
 - 1 northbound parking lane at 8-feet
- **Median Only Option ⇒** Would include two permanent northbound and southbound travel lanes separated by a 24-foot width landscaped median. A third northbound lane would be provided between Art Museum Drive and 33rd Street. Northbound left turns would be provided at Art Museum Drive and University Parkway. Protected "pocket parking" would be provided along the majority of the east and west sides of the boulevard (although parking was not shown adjacent to Wyman Park Dell).
- **Median With East Service Drive Option ⇒** With generally the same number of lanes as shown for the median only option, this option includes the provision of a 16-foot wide east-side service drive permitting parking, bicycles, and service traffic. Both the median and east-side separator would be approximately 20 to 22-feet in width. Under this option, the southbound lanes would consist of two peak period lanes and one travel lane/one parking lane in the off-peak period (see page 7 of 7 for notes from 4.13.2004 meeting with Director Al Foxx).

City's Request For Two Permanent Northbound Travel Lanes ⇒

- Considerable discussion ensued concerning the City's request for two permanent northbound travel lanes between 29th Street and Art Museum Drive and north of 33rd Street. Frank Murphy spoke strongly in favor of the need to maintain a minimum of two through travel lanes and that parking could not be accommodated during off-peak periods in the second travel lane. Consequently, the drawings presented by RK&K included pocket-parking along northbound Charles Street for both options (see subsequent discussion on the number of lanes and lane widths) (see page 7 of 7 for notes from 4.13.2004 meeting with Director Al Foxx).

Landscape Review of January 7, 2003 Concepts ⇒

- Mami Hara (WRT) presented an overview of WRT's analysis of the January 7, 2003 concepts, paying particular attention to pedestrian safety, landscaping and lighting. She also discussed provision of stormwater management/bioretenention in the median, tree plantings, and lighting options.
- Lane widths and design speeds were discussed.
- Stakeholders noted that the portion of Charles Street between 29th Street and Art Museum Drive was originally constructed on debris from the Baltimore 1904 fire ... hence soil cover is modest and growing trees is difficult.
- WRT also suggested an alternative cross-section for the median with east service drive option wherein no parking would be provided along the travel lanes and the 8-feet of pocket-parking would be shifted to the service drive, resulting in a 24-foot wide service drive with parking on both sides. This suggested modification to the cross-section was for the goal of safer parking. During discussion, this suggestion was not endorsed by any of the stakeholders.

3. Open discussion of Stakeholder's comments on the January 7, 2003 concepts

4. Development of consensus concept for Preferred Alternate

"Straw Vote" Results

- **The Greenway Association** ⇒ Supports Median with East Service Drive option; supports parking on one side only of this service drive.
- **Friends of Wyman Park** (revised position) ⇒ Requested inclusion of additional stakeholders in process, concerned that those around the table do not represent all of the interested parties. Prefers not to state a preference for one option, but strongly supports a wide and "lush" median. Would suggest narrowing the separator median in order to achieve a wider center median. May be willing to accept parking along the Dell except opposite the 30th Street intersection. Concerned about intersection geometry at Art Museum Drive. Strongly opposed to the City's request for 2 permanent NB lanes.
- **Charles Village** ⇒ Strongly prefers median with East Service Drive option. Not in favor of two parking lanes along service drive, prefers a wider separator median. Believes that the east service drive is consistent with the historic character of Charles Street and supports the asymmetrical appearance. Suggested PM parking along the Wyman Park Dell (i.e., 6:00 PM to 7:00 AM), may be beneficial ... as long as an open vista can be maintained. Supports separation between sidewalks and moving traffic, believes this will enhance sidewalk cafes. Some stakeholders expressed concern about any option that offered "permanent" parking in parking-pockets ... this will lead to students parking their vehicles for weeks on end and no turnover for the community or businesses. Also supported bicycle lanes along Charles Street, supporting 4-foot width. Strongly opposed to the City's request for 2 permanent NB lanes.

- **Baltimore Museum of Art** ⇒ Requested a larger scale so that the typical sections can be more easily compared; also, suggested using acetate overlays to show change from existing. The entire portion of Charles Street from 29th Street to University Parkway must be developed as a unique space. Further visualizations would help. Must also fully address pedestrian issues. Appreciates the benefits offered by a wide east side buffer offered with the median only option, although does not wish to state a preference at present. Strongly opposed to the City's request for 2 permanent NB lanes.
- **Johns Hopkins University** ⇒ Supports Median with East Service Drive, but not a full length service drive. Strongly objected to 11-foot wide lanes and traffic sweeps at 29th Street; reiterated concerns about pedestrian safety. Strongly opposed to the City's request for 2 permanent NB lanes.

Baltimore City Bicycle Plan

- Beth Strommen presented the City's on-going development of a comprehensive bicycle plan. She noted that with strong support from the Mayor and funding from Congestion Management Air Quality (CMAC) federal funds, considerable progress has been made. Objectives include linking Loyola to Hopkins to Druid Hill to Penn Station to Lake Montebello. This area has one of the highest percent of residents who already use bicycles for commuting and Charles Street is seen as a hub in this network. A consultant is being retained for development of a bicycle master plan. For southbound Charles Street, the 4-foot width shown for bicycles permits pavement striping but not stamping of the bicycle emblem; AASHTO requires a 5-foot width for provision of the bicycle symbol. Consequently, as discussed under the lane width discussion, perhaps the 15-foot wide curb lane could be striped as 10-foot lane with 5-foot bike path as opposed to 11-foot lane with 4-foot bike path. For northbound bicycle continuity, Beth reviewed her previous concerns about use of the existing east service drive, and noted that elimination of openings in the separator median and traffic control at cross streets may address her concerns. She also cited a recent example approved by Maryland SHA in Tacoma Park where a bicycle path has been placed along a service drive.

5. Open Issues requiring follow-up by City/consultant staff

- **Lane width** ⇒ Lengthy discussion of lane width, with the majority of the stakeholders strongly supporting 10-foot wide lanes (wider lanes equal higher travel speeds). City responded that federal funding constraints require 11-foot wide lanes. During a discussion of bicycle accommodation, it was noted that perhaps the 15-foot wide curb lane could be striped to accommodate a 10-foot travel lane and a 5-foot bicycle lane (pavement striping and stamped bicycle symbol) in lieu of an 11-foot lane and a 4-foot bike lane (pavement striping only). Ralph Wheeler/Baltimore City agreed to follow-up with FHWA and enquire about their flexibility on the 11-foot requirement, especially in view of the fact that the existing lanes are 10-feet in width (see page 7 of 7 for notes from 4.13.2004 meeting with Director Al Foxx).
- **Design Speed** ⇒ Consistent with their position on lane widths, stakeholders requested a low design speed (30 MPH) and extensive use of traffic calming measures.

- **Permanent northbound lanes** ⇒ Frank Murphy (and Fred Marc)/Baltimore City agreed to reassess their requirement for two permanent northbound lanes between 29th Street and Art Museum Drive and between 33rd Street and University Parkway. Most (but not all) of the stakeholders supported off-peak period parking in the curb lane and one through northbound travel lane. This would permit elimination of the pocket-parking (and the abuse of permanent parking) as well as providing more green space (see page 7 of 7 for notes from 4.13.2004 meeting with Director Al Foxx).
- **Art Museum Drive Intersection** ⇒ RK&K will assess traffic operations between Art Museum Drive and 33rd Street in terms of turning radii for vehicles and intersection layout. This work will be generic in that it would work for either the Median Only option or Median with East Service Drive option.
- **Termination of East Service Drive between 33rd and 34th Street** ⇒ WRT will evaluate options for improving the current design concepts between 33rd Street and 34th Street. This effort will include elimination of the East Service Drive, access from 33rd Street to northbound Charles Street, improvements for the Greenway connection to Charles Street, and continuity of both pedestrians and bicyclists.

6. Preparations for May 5, 2004 Public Meeting No. 1 to present Preferred Alternate

- Over the next three weeks, the City and their consultant (RK&K/WRT) will address issues raised during this meeting and complete the follow-up items.
- **April 28, 2004** ⇒ The revised plans for the Median Only option and the Median with East Service Drive option will be posted on the web site.
- **May 5, 2004** ⇒ 7:00 PM Public Meeting No. 1 @ BMA Auditorium ⇒ Baltimore City DOT will present both concepts, stating which one is "preferred".

Tamara Woods will work to get the public notice out regarding this meeting.

- **May 15, 2004** ⇒ End of public comment period.
- **May 19, 2004** ⇒ 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM @ BMA's Board Room ⇒ Follow-up meeting with stakeholders to discuss concepts distributed April 28, 2004, public comments during May 5th meeting, and written comments received by May 15, 2004.
- **June 17 or 24, 2004** ⇒ 7:00 PM Public Meeting No. 2 (only @ BMA Auditorium if 6.24) ⇒ Baltimore City DOT will present the selected concept. It is anticipated that design would begin shortly thereafter.

FOLLOW-UP NOTES FROM 4.13.2004 MEETING
Held With City Staff, David Wallace, and City DOT Director Al Foxx

In response to the critical issues discussed during the April 7th Stakeholder's Charrette, City DOT Director Al Foxx reviewed the discussion and analyses, and offered the following directions to City/Consultant staff in preparation for the May 5, 2004 Public Meeting:

- The Median with East Service Drive will be presented as the City's preferred option at the May 5th public meeting.
- The City's proposed project limits includes all of Charles Street between 25th Street and University Parkway.
- Pedestrian safety is an integral component of the City's design plans.
- Travel lanes will consist of 2 NB and 2 SB peak period lanes, each 26' in width, with off-peak parking permitted.
- Between Art Museum Drive and 33rd Street, a third NB peak period lane will be provided, with off-peak period parking under consideration.
- For all two-lane sections, the left lane width will be 10' with a 1' gutter (11' total) and the right lane width will be 10' with a 5' bike lane (15' total) for a curb-to-curb width of 26'. This dimension allows emergency vehicles to pass stalled/illegally double-parked vehicles during off-peak periods when curb parking is permitted.
- Both NB and SB bike lanes must be accommodated in the travel lanes (i.e., not the East Service Drive), primarily because of the need to pass stalled vehicle as noted above.
- Because traffic operations are dynamic, the City must fully reserve the right to alter the extent and time periods for off-peak parking in the future, especially if congestion occurs during these off-peak periods.

DWW/sms

Attachments: 1. Attendees List
2. Revised Project Flowchart
3. Public Notice

cc: All present

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