

Beggar or Chooser?

42 years of waterfront development in Baltimore Inner Harbor. What did Baltimore learn?

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Beggar or Chooser: What did Baltimore learn in the Inner Harbor
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Figure 1: Baltimore Inner Harbor 1962

A rare gift of Nature

In May 1963, Theodore McKeldin left the governor's mansion in Annapolis and returned to Baltimore to serve a second term as the city's mayor. In his inaugural address, he presented the people of Baltimore with a new vision of the city in the future:

Envision with me, too, a new Inner Harbor area, where the imagination of man can take advantage of a rare gift of Nature to produce an enthralling panorama of office buildings, parks, high-rise apartments and marinas. In this we have a very special opportunity, for few other cities in the world have been blessed, as has ours, with such a potentially beautiful harbor area within the very heart of downtown. Too visionary, this? Too dream-like?¹

Naming the neglected historic sights and attractions of Baltimore, such as the frigate Constellation and the Charles Carroll mansion, he then summarizes, rhetorically: "What Boston would have made of all of this passes imagination".

He then went on to describe what to him was the most important part of this transformation, the rebuilding of the city's self-esteem.

I am for urban renewal in the sense of redemption of blighted areas. But I am still more strongly for urban renewal in the sense of a revival of that spirit which was Baltimore in the days when Charles Carroll was laying the cornerstone of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, when the famous Baltimore Clipper ships were sailing the seven seas, and when Pratt and Peabody and Hopkins were accumulating the money that, planted in the cultural life of the City, was to blossom in music and art and learning. For I am convinced that a renewal of that spirit would bring us riches far exceeding anything we can achieve with steel and glass and concrete.²

Forty-two years later, we don't have to look to Boston to imagine what could be done in the Inner Harbor. That day in May 1963, Mayor McKeldin set in motion a chain of events that would forever change the face of the city, produce more than \$2.5 billion in private investments, turn the city into a major tourist destination in America, and a showcase of urban revitalization. They worked with the best planners and architects. They made a strong plan that guided the physical development for more than thirty years. They used a prestigious Architectural Review Board to exercise design control over the new development. Through federal money and the power of eminent domain, they controlled the land, and could choose when to release it to the market, to whom and for what purpose. Baltimore, "the armpit of the east", became "the stuff of waterfront redevelopment legend".³

And, at the same time, conditions in the city went from bad to worse. The population declined, the manufacturing base eroded, and the tax base receded. Baltimore was virtually on its knees, begging for attention and investments, constantly lobbying in Washington for federal aid, and offering tax cuts and financial deals to potential developers in the city.

In this paper, I will discuss this double character of beggar and chooser from three different positions. First, in the broader context of urban planning. Starting with the Charles Center project in the late 1950s (geographically not a part of the Inner Harbor, but a vital part of the history), one can identify four distinct phases of urban planning in the Inner Harbor. Charles Center, formally a private-public partnership, can be described as a private project, implemented through the public power of eminent domain. The first phase of the Inner Harbor project was a public-private partnership, directed towards the people of

¹ Theodore McKeldin in his inaugural address, May 21, 1963

² *ibid.*

³ Marshall (2001), p. 7

Baltimore. In its second phase, following the success of the Tall Ships' visit in 1976, the project was reformulated. The new focus was the tourism industry, and the capacity to attract visitors. The original plan still guided the physical development, and the city, controlling the land and supported with federal money, could exercise a great deal of control. In the last phase, from the mid 1980s, the city was deprived of both land control and federal money. The plan, never comprehensively updated, gradually became obsolete. Individual developers made piecemeal deals for different parcels, but this market-driven development was no longer part of a long-range plan or vision. In this way, the planning attitude in Baltimore has moved between the chooser and beggar positions over time, and sometimes included both. Today, there are some signs of a stronger pro-planning attitude among city officials.

Second, I will discuss the chooser-option of design control. Design review is today common practice in the U.S., and Baltimore is an early, and interesting example.

Third, and perhaps most important, I will discuss beggars and choosers from a city perspective. What has the transformation of the Inner Harbor meant for Baltimore, and the people who live there.

Finally, I will make a comparison with the present Swedish situation, concerning urban planning and design control in general, and with a geographical focus on the redevelopment of the harbor area in Gothenburg.

Baltimore 1950: Without a plan, without a dream

Baltimore in the 1950s, like most large Frostbelt cities, was a city deep in trouble (Frieden & Sagalyn 1989, Teaford 1990). The population peaked in 1950, when they reached 949 780 people. But then began a downward slide, lasting ever since. Over the coming fifty years, the city would loose more than 30 percent of its population. White flight to the suburbs had started earlier, but was in the beginning compensated in numbers by poor blacks moving in from the south. This changed the racial composition in the city. From being a predominantly white blue-collar city, the population gradually became poorer and blacker, as the middle-class left.

Downtown was plagued by falling property values and traffic congestion. Shopkeepers along Howard Street, the city's traditional retail center, found their sales figures dropping sixteen years in a row, while crime and poverty increased. Two million square feet of loft and warehouse space were vacant. Downtown employment had not grown in twenty years, and there had not been new a major office building built in the central city since the 1920s.

In 1954, O'Neill's Department Store decided to close its downtown location. The same year, a report of the Commission on Governmental Efficiency and Economy warned of imminent disaster if no action were taken to reverse this trend.⁴ Merchants, bankers and civic groups in the central city joined forces and established the Committee for Downtown, focusing on the renewal of the central business district. Two years later, following the example of Pittsburgh's Allegheny Conference, the Greater Baltimore Committee, GBC, was formed. It was an exclusive club, consisting of the leaders of the one hundred largest companies in the city. Together with The Citizens Planning and Housing Association, CPHA, these two organizations were to be instrumental in the revitalization of Baltimore.

⁴ Jon Teaford (1990), p. 47

Fighting Blight

Early in the century, there had been concerns about the living conditions in Baltimore. In 1937, the Citizens Housing Council was created to oversee the work of the Department of Health, stressing the importance of code enforcement. In 1939, the progressive Waverly project, with rehabilitation instead of demolition as a way of treating neighborhood decay, was nationally recognized.

Soon, they realized that the complexity of the problems called for an active planning approach, and in 1941 the Citizens Housing Council merged with professionals and academics to form the Citizens Planning and Housing Association, CPHA. Part of their philosophy was bottom-up action, and they organized and assisted more than 150 neighborhood associations.

Through CPHA's efforts, Baltimore in 1947 established a special housing court, the first in the country, and one year later, a Department of Planning, headed by Arthur McVoy.

A federal urban redevelopment program was introduced in the Housing Act of 1949. In 1953, Maryland-born developer James Rouse was invited by president Eisenhower to participate in the preparation of the Housing Act of 1954, where, through his efforts, the term "urban renewal" came into more common use. Familiar with the Baltimore neighborhood planning approach, Rouse had a comprehensive understanding of the term:

I use the phrase 'Urban Renewal' only because it includes the physical rehabilitation of the neighborhood, an effective conservation program and at the same time demolishing non-salvageable structures and putting that land to its proper new use.⁵

This had, however, little effect on the outcomes in reality. The federal Urban Renewal Program became the most important source of federal funding for large-scale programs in private sector commercial redevelopment, where demolition played a much larger part than conservation and rehabilitation (Bloom 2004).

To carry out this program in an integrated way, Baltimore formed the Redevelopment Commission, with the authority to coordinate the activities of the various city departments involved. By 1956, there were public charges of corruption against the city's Housing Authority. As a result, the Housing Authority was merged with the Redevelopment Commission to form the Baltimore Urban Redevelopment and Housing Agency, BURHA, chaired by Walter Sondheim, Jr., a former department store executive.

In 1968, BURHA in turn was merged with the City Bureau of Building Inspection to form the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), a powerful agency whose first commissioner, Robert C. Embry, Jr. was a former CPHA member, just as his deputy commissioner and successor, M. J. Brodie. (Brambilla & Longo 1979, Lyall 1982, Teaford 1990).

⁵ Bloom (2004), pp 72-73. Rouse, in turn, borrowed the phrase from planner Miles Colean, and his book *Renewing our cities*.

Charles Center: moving fast, going big

The city planned for a neighborhood-oriented urban renewal project during the 1950s. But unable to find an acceptable solution to the traffic problem, the plans were never approved. GBC, not satisfied with this slow pace of public planning, formed their own in-house planning team, the Planning Council, headed by nationally-known planner David Wallace from Philadelphia, and with William Potts and George Kostritsky as staff designers. Co-financed from the Committee for Downtown, they started working on a master plan for downtown Baltimore, covering 1000 acres, but it soon became evident that the patient might die while they were discussing the diagnosis. Instead, they concentrated their efforts on a 22-acre site in the heart of downtown, what would be known as the Charles Center- large enough to make a difference, small enough to be completed within reasonable time. After eighteen months, in March 1958, they presented the result of their work to the mayor and to the city: office buildings, commercial space, hotels, a theatre, three public plazas, underground parking, and skywalks providing pedestrian access to the whole area separated from the traffic. Later, housing was included.

Mayor D'Alesandro, Jr. immediately endorsed the project. After a feasibility study by BURHA, the plan was formally adopted by the City Council in March, 1959, thereby providing \$25 million in a city bond issue and the power of eminent domain (Millspaugh 2003).

Unlike most other urban renewal projects, the plan did not propose total clearance of the site. This can partly be explained by the design philosophy of Wallace, treating the given as a basis for the new. But, being a private initiative with no federal money available from the start, there was also an economic impetus to consider alternatives to demolition. In this way, five of the most prominent existing buildings were saved and included in the new plan.

Even an outspoken critic of the Urban Renewal Program such as Jane Jacobs, expressed her delight with the plan for Charles Center. She predicted it would succeed, since the plan did not

*...attempt to stimulate a rebuilding use which is at fundamental odds with previous use or the surroundings of the project. The site is in the very heart of downtown, not on its fringes, and it is to be re-used for precisely the things that belong in the heart of downtown...*⁶

There was an impressive attention to quality throughout the project. In an architectural competition for the first office building in Charles Center, the jury found themselves finally choosing between Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer. Mies got to do the One Charles Center, completed in 1962. Another developer adapted Breuer's proposal for a site across the street, and the two buildings came up practically side-by-side.

Through the contacts of David Wallace, they established an extraordinary prestigious Architectural Review Board, consisting of the deans of three of the most prominent architectural schools in the country; Harvard, MIT and University of Pennsylvania.⁷ This board judged the plans for each parcel of land to be developed.

Part of the plan's success was a strategy for implementation. In 1959, the Charles Center Management Office was established, a non-profit quasi-private organization with the city as its only client, and the Charles Center as its only project. The city was responsible for

⁶ Jane Jacobs (June 1958), "New Heart for Baltimore" in *Architectural Forum*

⁷ The original members were Dean Pietro Belluschi of MIT, Dean G. Holmes Perkins of the University of Pennsylvania, and Dean Emeritus Joseph Hudnut from Harvard.

land acquisition and site clearance, while the private sector would find developers and tenants and raise \$90 million in private investments.

Charles H. Buck, former chairman of GBC, had nothing but praise:

*The city of Baltimore has learned something about being a real estate entrepreneur. Frequently the developer who pays top dollar for a piece of land, when left completely to his own devices without proper planning, is guilty of pinching pennies or failing to use imagination in developing that land to its truly highest and best use. Baltimore could not risk such a failure in the Charles Center Plan. Our caution paid off. We got an excellent and workable project design, and a realistic timetable of development which allowed for quality all down the line. I think we have proven that economic conservatism and highly creative planning make a good alloy. We moved fast, but not too fast. We went big, but not too big.*⁸

David W. Barton, chairman of the city's Planning Commission, asserted: "The greatest of all the benefits of Charles Center is proof of a sound planning concept".⁹

Charles Center was the first private-public renewal project in Baltimore, and came to serve as a model for future projects. It started as an initiative within the business community, and it covered just (a part of) the central business district. Unlike most urban renewal projects, it did not include the razing of blighted residential areas, and it did not interfere with the everyday life in the neighborhoods. Therefore, it was a rather consensual project. The plan was prepared and paid for by the businessmen through their organizations, GBC and the Committee for Downtown. They could afford to work with the best, and they could not afford a failure. The larger part of the project was financed through private sources (\$145 million), while public funding contributed \$35 million. It could, in this way, be described as a private project, carried out as a public-private partnership to get initial funding and the power of eminent domain.

⁸ Greater Baltimore Committee, Inc. Planning Council (1965), *The Inner Harbor & City Hall Plaza*, Baltimore, Greater Baltimore Committee : Committee for Downtown

⁹ *ibid.*

Harbor Stories

By the 1950s the Inner Harbor was obsolete, surrounded by rotting piers and decaying warehouses. But it was not all forgotten, especially not in the minds of planners, architects and developers.

In 1948, the decision was made to clear the western shore of piers to create a park. The work began in 1950, and when Mayor D'Alesandro, Jr., declared the Sam Smith Park open in 1955, he hoped that it would “restore the harbor frontage to its rightful place of prominence in the activities of our city”.¹⁰ The park was a rather harmless piece of green space, surrounded on all sides by traffic. The traffic going north on Light Street ran just along the water's edge, with only a narrow sidewalk for pedestrians.



Figure 2: David Wallace's view over the Inner Harbor in 1957

Arthur McVoy, Director of the city's Department of Planning, wanted to start the downtown renewal in Inner Harbor. In an article published in 1956, he writes:

To me, the most significant area of downtown Baltimore for potential development from the standpoint of civic design and fine architectural setting, is the inner harbor area /.../ I have been inspired by the possibilities of this area from the very time I arrived in Baltimore to become the Director of Planning eight years ago.¹¹

The removal of the Camden Market, from its location to the west of the harbor, the elimination of ocean-going vessels from the Inner Harbor, and the construction of a new highway system, relieving the area of all through traffic, would open up new possibilities:

...the entire Inner Harbor can be surrounded by beautiful buildings with a fine, direct relationship to the water itself. Properly planned, waterfront-orientated hotels, office buildings, restaurants, and clubs can produce a much higher taxable base and much

¹⁰ Sunday News American, August 30, 1970

¹¹ Arthur D. McVoy (1956), “A Prospectus for Downtown Baltimore Baltimore”, Baltimore

better use of the land than is now the case. If we can add cultural and recreational facilities, possibly some of them using the water, we can make Baltimore a city which its citizens can point to with pride as truly one of the most exciting cities in the world¹².

His article was accompanied by an illustration by Edward S. Black, dated already 1951. It shows the Inner Harbor riddled of all existing piers, with an entertainment peninsula and a marina on the northern shore, Jones Falls turned into a park, and capacity to receive larger ships in Fells Point. McVoy does not mention housing in his article, but the map and illustration show high-rise housing in Federal Hill, not unlike what was constructed in the 1980s

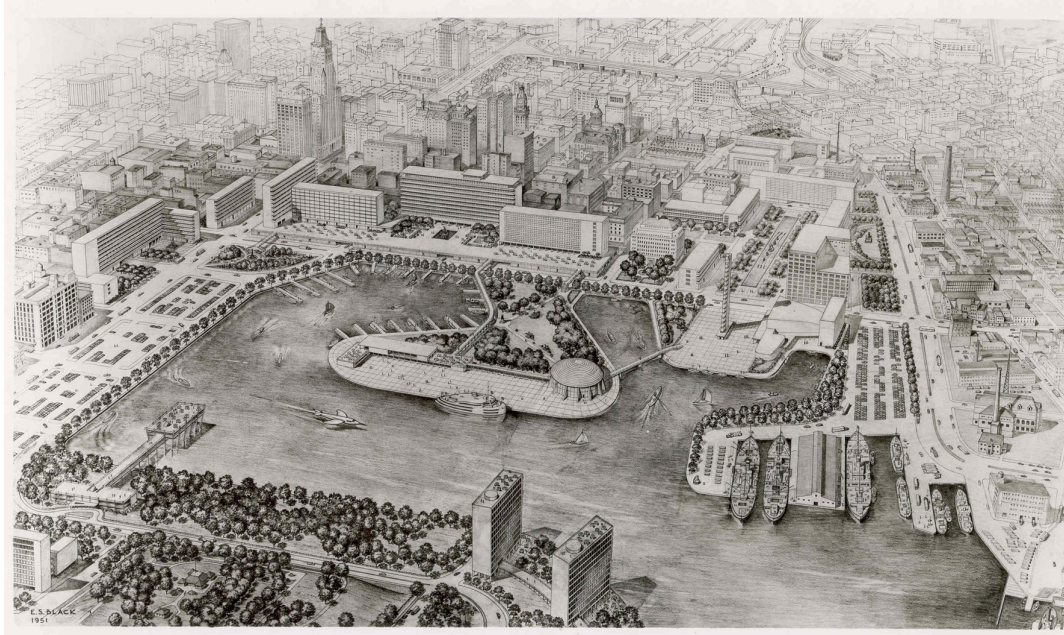


Figure 3: Edward S. Black's illustration of a transformed Inner Harbor from 1951

During the 1950s there was a long debate over where to place a new civic center, with the Inner Harbor as one possible site. Pietro Belluschi made a classic modernist proposal, showing the Inner Harbor basin cleared of piers, with a maritime museum on a new peninsula on the eastern side of the harbor, facing a large arena on the western shore. To the north, four giant housing towers surround a civic plaza along Pratt Street.

¹² Arthur D. McVoy (1956), "A Prospectus for Downtown Baltimore Baltimore", Baltimore

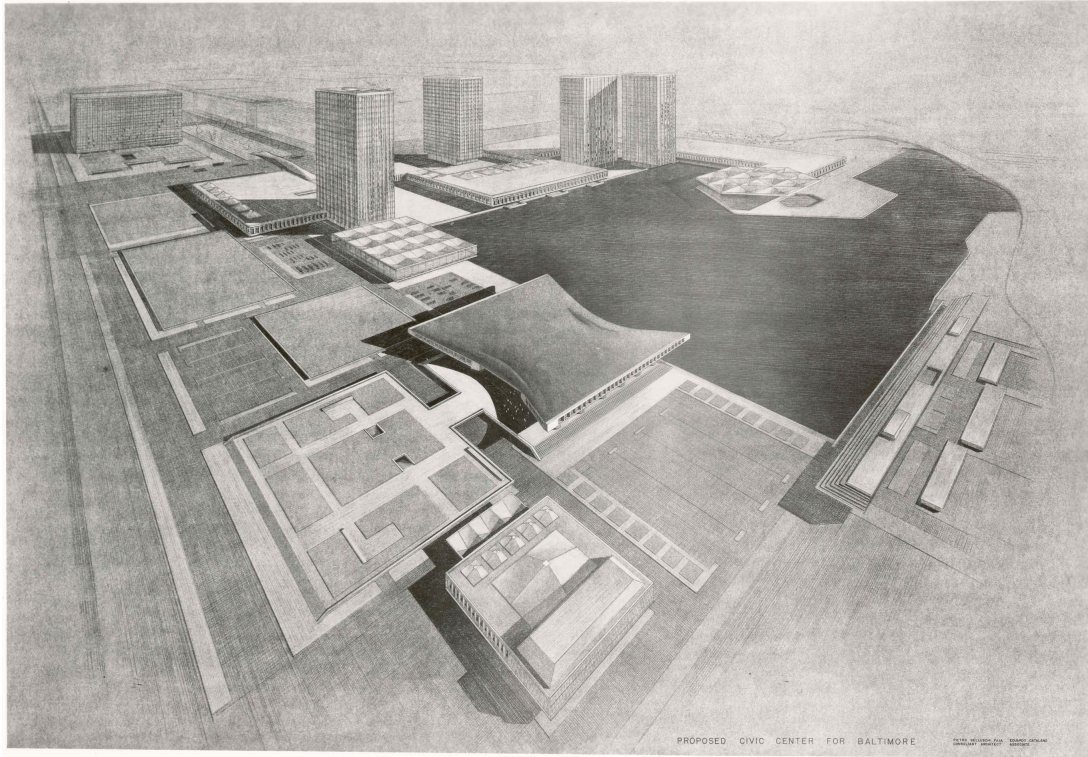


Figure 4: Petro Belluschi's design for a Civic Center in the Inner Harbor in the 1950s

In the archives of GBC there is a radical proposal by E. G. Niles, dated 1957. Drastically altering the downtown geography, he suggests extending the harbor basin to the north, with a new canal along South Street, stretching all the way up to Lexington Street, ending in a small basin in front of City Hall. To the east, between the canal and the expressway built over Jones Falls, a water park with a propeller-shaped new opera house, surrounded by municipal office buildings. To the west a hotel and an arena where today Harborplace is, and an outdoor swimming pool in the southwest corner, with an amusement park and a beer garden nearby. There is no new housing in his design.¹³

¹³ In the archive, Niles proposal is stored together with resumés submitted in the mid 1960s to qualify for the design of the World Trade Center, but it seems more likely that it is part of the Civic Center discussion from the late 1950s.

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Figure 5: E. H. Niles' proposal for the Inner Harbor in 1957

In 1962, one of the officials at BURHA was approached by a newly formed consortium, asking for the development rights to the whole Inner Harbor area, from Lombard Street to Key Highway, from Fallsway to Howard and Sharp Street. They suggested 4000 housing units, commercial space, transportation terminals, parks and community facilities, with total investments of \$150-200 million. The response was negative.¹⁴

¹⁴ Memorandum, BURHA June 8, 1962, written by Harry B. Cooper

1964-1967: Returning Baltimore to the sea

Acting upon McKeldins vision, and optimistic about the progress in Charles Center, the GBC raised money for a plan for the harbor, and they turned again to David Wallace and his office, Wallace McHarg Associates. They hired the young Tom Todd, who had recently done the plan for Philadelphia's waterfront, Penn's Landing.¹⁵

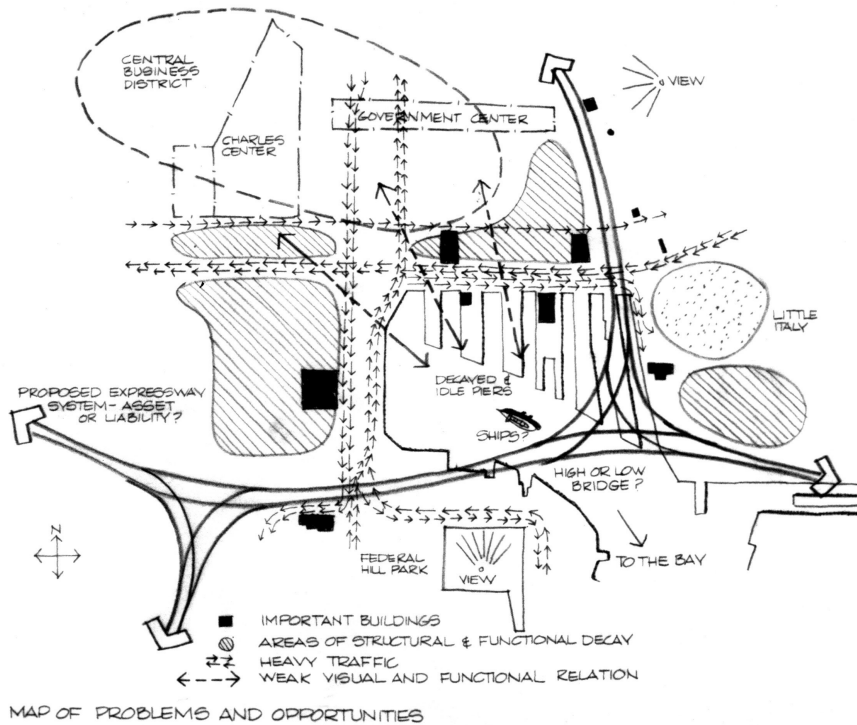


Figure 6: Tom Todd's map of problems and opportunities 1964

Tom Todd's simple analytical "map of problems and opportunities" shows the problem from a planner's point of view. There is the harbor in the middle, with its "decayed and idle piers". The central business district around Howard street, Charles Center and the government center to the north have a "weak visual and function relation" to the harbor area, separated from it by "heavy traffic" both north-south and east-west, and "areas of structural and functional decay" along Pratt and Light street. To the east, the neighborhood of Little Italy, with a history of political influence and capacity for organized civil opposition. To the south, Federal Hill Park, with its stunning view of downtown across the harbor basin. And, brutally drawn with a thicker pen over these elegant graphics, the suggested traffic solution, with an east-west highway cutting through Federal Hill, blocking the inlet from the bay with a "high or low bridge", connecting to the Jones Falls expressway going north before making its way further east towards the historic district of Fells Point. "Proposed expressway system- Asset or liability?" Todd wrote on the map, but that was not to be understood as an open question. "With the highway in place" he says, "we might as well have skipped the project" (Todd 2005).

¹⁵ When William Roberts and Tom Todd joined the office in 1963, the name was changed to Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd, WMRT. When Ian McHarg left the office in 1979, they changed the name to WRT.

In 1964 they presented their first proposal. A sketch shows the principal elements of their composition: low buildings with a unified height around the perimeter of the harbor, framing the water and creating quiet precincts, and tall buildings designed as objects in space.

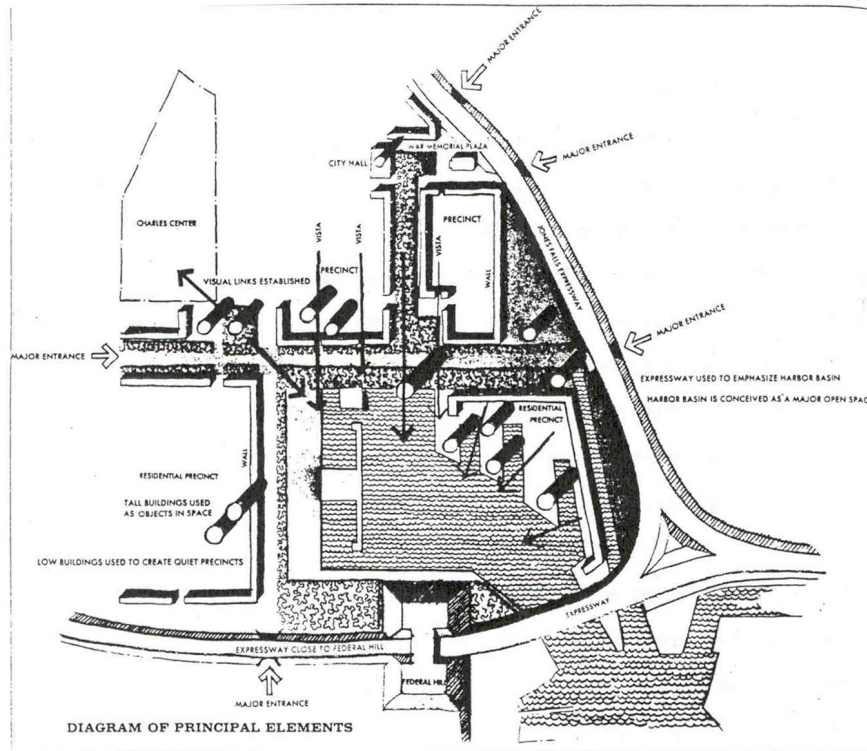


Figure 7: The concept for the new plan: Framing buildings along Light and Pratt Streets, buildings as objects-in-space on the piers

This design is heavily influenced by the highway system, which, despite intensive lobbying, was still an integral part of the project. The highway cuts through the Federal Hill Park, which is extended towards the water to the north to block the view of the highway from the city. The two parts of the park are connected by a bridge over the highway. On the western shore of the harbor is a park with recreational facilities, inspired by the Tivoli Garden in Copenhagen. A floating boatel and a large marina make use of the water, and the frigate *Constellation* has found its place on the northern shore, along the South street axis. The Science Center is on south side of Pratt Street, between Charles and Light Streets.

A consultant's report, commissioned by the GBC, stated that "the largest potential for new construction in the Inner Harbor area is housing".¹⁶ Therefore, on the piers to the east there are six freestanding high-rise apartment towers surrounded by five lower terraced buildings, with a total of 1700 housing units. The same kind of housing reoccurs north of Pratt Street, with 800 units in the two blocks between South and Light Street, and more than 1400 units south of Pratt Street between Light and Charles Street.

In the center, between South and Gay Street, stretching north all the way up to Memorial Plaza and Lexington Street, the grandest gesture of the plan, and one of Wallace's

¹⁶ Report by Morton Hoffman and Company, economic consultants to the GBC. Quoted in the "Technical Report on the Plan for Baltimore Inner Harbor and Municipal Center" prepared by WRMT, December 10, 1964, p. 31

favourite ideas: a new municipal Mall, cutting through and opening up the dense central city towards the harbor, framing City Hall to the north and a proposed World Trade Center office tower right on the quay to the south.



Figure 8: Model of the proposed Inner Harbor, 1964

The reception of this proposal was not all enthusiastic. The traffic solution still called for brutal intrusions in the neighborhoods of Federal Hill and Fells Point, and some public officials were sceptic to the proposed mall, and declared publicly that they would refuse to move there (Lyll 1982).

The mall did not survive a November 1964 referendum, but the voters did approve \$2 million for further planning. To implement the project, the Charles Center Management Office was transformed into the Charles Center-Inner Harbor Management, CC-IHM, chaired by Walter Sondheim, Jr., with Martin Millsbaugh, a former journalist from *The Baltimore Sun* who had served as assistant commissioner for Research and Development of the U.S Urban Renewal Administration, as President and Chief Executive.

In the heroic rhetoric of the time, the GBC describes the project in their annual report 1966:

In a powerful and convincing style the Inner Harbor “returns Baltimore to the sea”- the crucial source of strength in its origin and rise as one of the great American cities. /.../The Inner Harbor is being created as a living, breathing, functioning part of the city.¹⁷

¹⁷ GBC Annual Report 1966, p. 5

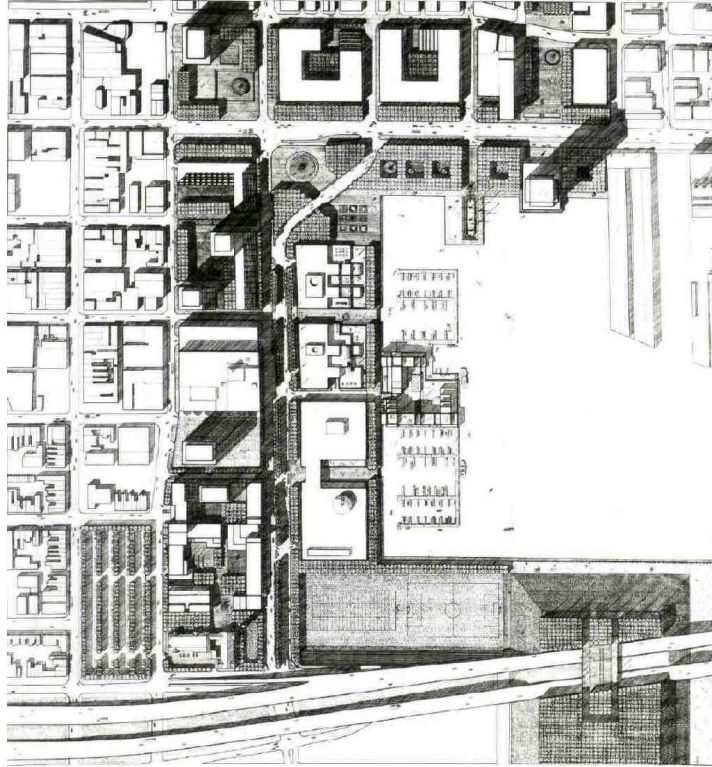


Figure 9: Inner Harbor Urban Renewal Plan I, 1967

The size of the area, 250 acres, made it necessary to plan in stages, and in 1967, WMRT presented the first phase, Inner Harbor I, including the southern and western shore, and the north shore to the proposed World Trade Center. It was approved in June, 1967. The design concept remains the same, but there have been substantial changes in the program. The mall is gone, with just a small park opening up the wall along Pratt Street. The Science Center has moved south, and found a site along the water's edge. The Tivoli Garden has turned into two commercial buildings along the western shore, with a waterfront park along Pratt Street, and the *Constellation* in a dry dock on a pier.

The most important change concerns the housing, which is mostly gone, in favour of office buildings. Lyall (1982) traces this to a change in the federal guidelines, making it impossible to construct middle-income housing with federal subsidies, but Martin Millspaugh (2005) rejects that explanation. "People simply wouldn't pay the rents we would be asking for. Federal regulation had nothing to do with it". The only housing left in the harbor area was a combined nursing home-apartment complex, to be built by the Christ Lutheran Church along Light Street. Later, the housing theme reoccurred through the initiative of Housing Commissioner Robert C. Embry. He designed a homesteading program in the Otterbein area just south-west of the harbor, where people were offered to rehabilitate dilapidated row-houses with financial aid from the city. "Perhaps the best thing we did in the whole Inner Harbor project", according to Walter Sondheim (2005).

Highway planning had been a complicated question in Baltimore since the 1930s. Between 1942 and 1957, eight different proposals were presented, by, among others, the legendary Robert Moses from New York. They were all rejected, due to public opposition. In the late 1960s there were still just one segment of limited-access freeway within the city, the Jones Falls Expressway, built above the Jones Falls river and first opened in 1961.

With Wallace's plan showing the potential for development in the Inner Harbor, an unusually resourceful "Design Concept Team" was put together, including highway, traffic

and transit engineers, architects and urban planners, and supplemented by urban land economists, sociologists, landscape designers and experts in community relations. They were charged with the task of finding a workable traffic solution that would meet the social, economic and aesthetic needs of the city. Based upon their work, in January, 1969, the Federal Highway administrator approved a new highway design, reducing the scale of the road in the inner city, eliminating the crossing over the Inner Harbor and adding a southern bypass.¹⁸ The final solution, with the highway in a tunnel under Fort McHenry, became the most expensive single part of the nations highway system, but it has been called “a triumph of rational and sensitive highway planning”.¹⁹

In this first phase, The Inner Harbor project was seen as a way to make the city centre more attractive to its citizens. It was from the start presented as a political project (though discreetly orchestrated by the GBC). It was implemented in basically the same way as the Charles Center, but this time with a major public role. It was larger in scale, with a more complex program including mixed-income housing, cultural facilities, and waterfront recreational development. Initially, the realization was expected to cost \$270 million over thirty years, with \$180 million dollar in federal funding, the city contributing \$58 million, and \$22 million in private investments (Lyll 1982).

Lyll (1982) maps the public-private partnerships in Baltimore, and gives strong credit to the institutional innovations and organizational traditions of the city, especially the CPHA. Implicit in her analysis is also, though she doesn't use the terms, a change over time from private-public to public-private, in terms of initiative and funding.

The city collected the land through the power of eminent domain, with financing from the federal Urban Renewal Program. WMRT made detailed design regulations for the different parcels. Some of these were included in the formal plan, some remained within the CC-IHM, to be used in negotiations with potential developers. In this way, the city had a strong control over the development. At the same time, they were pioneers. No other American city at the time had done a waterfront redevelopment on this scale. “We really didn't know what we were doing back then”, says Martin Millsbaugh (2005). “And we couldn't look anywhere, because it had never been done before.” Baltimore was not a very attractive place for real estate investments, with the market, except for Charles Center, at a standstill for more than forty years. They now, literally, had to create the market while they were creating the project.

¹⁸ Urban Design Concept Associates (1970), *Final Joint Development Report; Baltimore interstate highway system 3-A*, Baltimore. David Wallace's colleague, Ian McHarg, in his autobiography, claims that he stopped the expressway by using contacts in the White House (McHarg 1996, p. 182-183), something Wallace says “just didn't happen” (Wallace 2004, p. 120).

¹⁹ Joseph L. Arnold (1990), “Baltimore: Southern Culture and a Northern Economy”, in Richard M. Bernard (ed), *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest since World War II*, 1990 Indianapolis, p. 33

Baltimore in the 1980s: Cities are fun

Millspaugh (2003) describes the different stages in the Inner Harbor project. First came the acquisition and clearing of land, the coordination of the 14 different local, state and federal agencies that had jurisdiction over the land and water, and the intensive lobbying to persuade the highway commissioner to rethink the traffic solution.

Then, the CC-IHM focused on attracting prestigious office buildings to the major sites along the harbor's edge. The USF&G insurance company built their 36-story tower at one of the focal points: the intersection of Pratt and Light Streets, thereby connecting the financial district with the new waterfront. They were soon followed by IBM, the Federal Reserve Bank, the C&P Telephone Company and the Equitable Trust Bank. The architect I. M. Pei was commissioned to design the World Trade Center, a sleek 28-story octagonal office tower on the shore-line with its prow into the water.

From the beginning, attention was paid to the public image of the project. Since the project depended on initial public investments, before private capital could be attracted, it was crucial to establish the Inner Harbor project as a real, successful undertaking in the mind of the public. When Mayor Donald Schaefer took office for the first time in 1972, one of his first acts was to create the Mayor's Office of Promotion and Tourism, under the leadership of Sandra Hillman. Their task was to program space, not physically, but with events and over time, thus creating and selling the image of Baltimore as a nice place to live in and to visit, first for its citizens, and later to a growing tourism industry. The promenade along the water's edge, begun in 1971, made the harbor accessible to the public like never before, and immediately established the harbor as the most important public space in the city centre. The city fair, first held in Charles Center in 1970 as a way to reunite the city after the riots following the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, was moved to the Inner Harbor in 1973, drawing 1.5 million people over one weekend in September.

The first real turning point for the project came in 1976, with the arrival of the square-rigged Tall Ships. After celebrating the U.S Bicentennial in New York, eight of the ships continued to Baltimore, tied up in the Inner Harbor and Fells Point and opened their decks to the public. Hundreds of thousands of people came to see them, not just Baltimoreans, but visitors from all over Maryland and other states. Suddenly, the managers of the Inner Harbor saw the potential of Baltimore as a year-around tourist destination. "For the rest of the 1970s, CC-IHM's top priority was to produce tourist attractions", Millspaugh writes.²⁰

In this, they were very successful. The Science Center opened in 1976, and expanded in 1986. The Convention Center, opened in 1979, has since been expanded twice, in 1986 and in 1997. The Aquarium, modelled after its Boston predecessor, opened in 1981. Attracting millions of visitors each year, it was expanded on pier four in 1990, and with a new pavilion in front of the original one opened in 2005. But it was still, to large extent, public investments. The private sector was still reluctant to take part in the Baltimore Renaissance, despite generous incentives from the city. "Baltimore wants you so badly, we'll let you write your own terms" Mayor Schaefer pleaded.²¹

Following the success of the Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market redevelopment in Boston in 1976, Baltimore, through Robert Embry and Martin Millspaugh, approached James

²⁰ Martin Millspaugh (April 2003), "The Inner Harbor Story", *Urban Land*, p. 39

²¹ Levine (1987a, p. 107) quoted from Goodman, R. (1979). *The last entrepreneurs: America's regional wars for jobs and dollars*, Boston: South End Press, pp 4-5)

Rouse and tried to interest him to do a festival marketplace in the Inner Harbor. Millspaugh showed him the deserted old power plant on pier four, but Rouse rejected the offer.

He had three terms that had to be fulfilled, in order for him to invest in a project like this: First, he wanted the most central location. Second, the project had to make its presence known, it could not be tucked away. And third, it had to have support from the local municipality.²² The power plant was too far away, and people would never find their way inside.

“A project like this costs three times as much as an ordinary mall, and customers only spend one third. Thus, you need nine times as many people”, he explained to Millspaugh, and pointed towards the crossing of Pratt and Light Streets (Millspaugh 2005). There, he wanted to do his project, and he wanted guarantees that Mayor Schaefer supported it.

Schaefer had already turned down several proposals for the Inner Harbor, telling Embry not to come to him again with project proposals for the area.

“I told you Bob, we’re not going to build anything on the Inner Harbor. It’s open space and we’re going to keep it that way” Embry was persistent, and returned with the message that Rouse was interested. “That’s different” Schaefer responded, “because he will be a very sensitive man. He will make it such that it’s people-oriented. I have faith in him and trust him, and the answer is yes.”²³

Backed by Schaefer, Rouse went on. Ben Thompson, the Boston architect who initially came up with the idea for Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market, designed two modern market pavilions along Pratt and Light Streets, flanking Harborplace, a brick-covered plaza slightly sloping towards the water. Rouse wanted one building right at the corner, but Wallace, as the author of the plan, insisted upon keeping the corner open to create visual and physical contact towards Charles Center and the rest of downtown.

The plan had to be changed in order to accommodate Rouse’s project, and it had to have the voters’ approval. For the first time, the project faced major opposition, since the public had come to like the open spaces along the harbor. But a pro-Harborplace campaign, discreetly managed through Schaefer’s political machinery, finally managed to deliver a narrow majority in a 1978 referendum.

When Harborplace opened in June 1980, it became the catalyst pulling all the other attractions together, and it made Baltimore the showcase of waterfront redevelopment. The week of August 24, 1981 the cover of Time magazine showed a drawing of Rouse’s face juxtaposed with Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Baltimore’s new pavilions, and the motto: Cities are Fun!

When President Reagan took office 1981, the federal funds for urban development were cut. The message was clear:

State and local governments will find it is in their interests to concentrate on increasing their attractiveness to potential investors, residents and visitors. In doing so, they are most likely to succeed if they recognize their changing comparative advantages and adapt to the changes that are occurring in regional, national, and international economies rather than trying to work against them.²⁴

²² Joshua Olsen (2003), *Better Places Better Lives: A Biography of James Rouse*, Washington D.C, ULI, p.281-282

²³ Joshua Olsen (2003), *Better Places Better Lives: A Biography of James Rouse*, Washington D.C, ULI, p.283

²⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The President’s National Urban Policy Report 1982*, p.14-15

Baltimore could play this game too for a while, helped by the Schaefer administration's creative book-keeping, dubbed "the Shadow Government" by *The Baltimore Sun*. Arnold (1990) gives a somewhat prosaic explanation to the success of the Inner Harbor:

To some degree Baltimore was just plain lucky with the Inner Harbor area. The harbor itself is one of the most splendid natural settings for redevelopment anywhere in the United States, and the very tardiness of its development turned out to be a great advantage. The city's failure to do anything in the Inner Harbor area (it sat vacant for almost twenty years awaiting the construction of the ill-fated highway project) kept it out of the hands of low-investment, piecemeal developers until 1980 when Rouse's Harborplace pavilions opened. Thus, the investment community did not "discover" Baltimore until the beginning of the greatest real estate and land development decade of the century, a coincidence of timing that has allowed the city to reap maximum economic benefits.²⁵

In 1981, the Hyatt opened the first major new hotel in the Inner Harbor, soon to be followed by several others. James Rouse built a downtown mall, The Gallery, on Pratt Street. The attraction of the waterfront spread east, with new residential development in the neighborhoods of Fells Point and Canton.

The late 1980s saw continuing private investments in the Inner Harbor, often in violation of the intentions in the original master plan. The plan, by then more than twenty years old, was never comprehensively revised or updated, and gradually became obsolete. Gunts (1989) refers to this period as "the years when Baltimore redevelopment efforts most noticeably got out of kilter." When Harbor Court Hotel, a project with few friends in the design community, did not get the approval of the Architectural Review Board, Mayor Schaefer stepped in after a handshake deal with developer David Murdock, possibly over oysters at Lexington Market, and approved of the project.²⁶ In 1989, Scarlett Place opened, a 14-story condominium version of an Italian hillside village on top of a parking garage, between Pesident Street and the water, engulfing an old warehouse, saved by preservation considerations, and effectively cutting off the potential contact between Little Italy and the harbor. Gunts commented in *The Baltimore Sun*:

"It would be comforting to think completion of Scarlett Place marks the end of an era when everything just sort of slid along or got by, and the new planning effort marks the beginning of an era in which good urban design will be the rule rather than the exception. That would probably also be wishful thinking. But if the completion of Scarlett Place doesn't bring home the need to get planning back on track in Baltimore, nothing ever will."²⁷

The speculation economy of the 1980s ended with a crash. And in 1987, when Schaefer left Baltimore to become governor of Maryland, part of the magic left with him. Szanton quotes an unnamed voice, giving a pessimistic view of the future:

²⁵ Joseph L. Arnold (1990), "Baltimore: Southern Culture and a Northern Economy", in Richard M. Bernard (ed), *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest since World War II*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 35

²⁶ Tom Chalkley (November 12, 2003), "The City That Builds" in *Baltimore City Paper*
C. Fraser Smith tells a similar but somewhat different story, with Schaefer making a deal with developer Robert (sic!) Murdock over coffee at the Sheraton. C. Fraser Smith (1999), *William Donald Schaefer: A Political Biography*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 229-230.

²⁷ Ed Gunts (April 2, 1989), "Scarlett Place and the master plan", *The Baltimore Sun*

*Baltimore's success has depended on two things: federal money and Schaefer's entrepreneurship. One has already disappeared. The other is about to. I don't see what's going to take their place.*²⁸

²⁸ Peter L. Szanton (1986), *Baltimore 2000: A Choice of Futures*, Baltimore: Morris Goldseker Foundation of Maryland, p.16.

Baltimore in the 1990s: Why plan at all?

In 1987, Kurt Schmoke took Schaefer's place in City Hall, and became the city's first black mayor. During his term in office, facing national recession and a constant fiscal crunch, urban planning was not a high-priority question. Howe (2000) describes the first half of the 1990s as traumatic for big-city planning departments nationwide:

*With development in even previously hot markets at a standstill, what possible use did city governments have for regulators when there was nothing to regulate?*²⁹

It was not a complete standstill in Baltimore. In 1992, a new baseball stadium, the Oriole Park at Camden Yards, opened just west of the Inner Harbor. The retro-design, winner of an ULI Award for Excellence, made clever use of an old warehouse as a backdrop for the new arena, in a fashion soon copied all over America. Six years later, a new football stadium for the Ravens added to the downtown urban theme park.

Two new actors replaced James Rouse on the development scene in Baltimore during the 1990s: John Paterakis and David Cordish. They illustrate the changed planning climate in the city.

In 1983 architect Stan Eckstut started working on a plan for the east part of the Inner Harbor. Initially, his project covered the whole area from the power plant on pier four all the way over to Fells Point, but in the final version it comprises nine blocks south of Fleet Street and west of Central Avenue. In 1995, his work was awarded the "National Honor Award for Urban Design" by the American Institute of Architects. "This extremely well done, three-dimensional and multi-developer plan sets forth guidelines for creating an entire neighborhood, with public pieces of infra-structure setting the stage", the jurors wrote.³⁰

Eckstut's vision was a high-density, low-rise mixed-use neighborhood, including townhouses, offices and commercial space and a 350-room hotel in a block pattern similar to the surrounding neighborhoods of Little Italy and Fells Point. The buildings were to be five stories at the waterfront and stepping up to 12 stories in the back (later raised to 18), to give maximum view of the water. "Most people who came down here wanted to do skyscrapers. We knew the city didn't want that...I didn't want that either. I have to live in this town", John Paterakis, baker, developer and owner of the land explained in an interview in 1990.³¹

The plan was presented, in commercial lingua, as "Market-Driven. Master Planned". It has been tested several times since, and it is clear, that the stress should be on the former rather than the latter.

In 1995, the plan was changed, one street eliminated and two blocks joined to make room for a new corporate headquarter in need of a bigger floor-plate. Eckstut voiced moderate concerns: "The plan is one that has been set up to be market-driven. We know there will have to be changes. But I would hope that the principles of scale and views and streets would remain in the eventual build out".³²

In 1997, developer John Paterakis wanted to change the plan again, to make possible a 750-room hotel, 48 stories high. Protesters, sporting "Why Plan?"-badges, were outraged.

²⁹ Con Howe (2000), "Planning Practice in America's Largest Cities" in Lloyd Rodwin & Bishwapriya Sanyal (eds), *The profession of city planning: Changes, Images, and Challenges 1950-2000*, New Jersey: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, p. 55

³⁰ Ed Gunts, (December 8, 1994), "Inner Harbor East project wins national award", *The Baltimore Sun*

³¹ Timothy J. Mullaney (September 24, 1990), "The baker's plan", *The Baltimore Sun*

³² Ed Gunts (June 8, 1995), "Vote set for today on plan for waterfront building", *The Baltimore Sun*

“Communities are asked to be involved in setting development parameters such as the Inner Harbor East Urban Renewal Plan and then are ignored at a whim. It seems we are making decisions piecemeal rather than in an area-wide context”, said Carolyn Boitnott, member of the Waterfront Coalition, a group of neighborhood leaders monitoring shoreline development.

Eckstut thought the location could be excellent for a large hotel “as long as it’s designed in keeping with the objectives of the master plan”, which, some would argue, was exactly not the case.³³

Mayor Schموke, rejecting the recommendations of the staff of his economic development agency, the convention bureau, state legislators, the state treasurer, approved to change the plan and accommodate the project. The Waterfront Coalition filed a lawsuit, but lost “over the depth of Mr Paterakis’ pockets”, according to Boitnott (2005). The hotel tower, opened in 2001, finally reached 32 stories. It will most likely be accompanied by a twin-tower 23-story hotel next door, scheduled to open in 2007. “The problem with the Marriott is that it looks so unusual and out of scale”, says Randy Morton, the architect behind the new proposal. By adding two more towers, stepping down in height, the ambition is to create an ensemble. “I think the idea of radiating buildings and stepping down the scale is a very positive urban design gesture”, says one Design Advisory Panel member, reviewing the project. And Boitnott rests her case: “I’ve given up on this section of the city. What’s going to happen at Inner Harbor East is just going to happen, and there’s not much point debating it.”³⁴

In 1998, David Cordish took over the old power plant on pier four, which had been vacant for almost ten years after the failure as an adult urban theme park. Cordish successfully brought in the first ESPN Zone, a Disney sports-theme restaurant, Hard Rock Café and a Barnes & Noble bookstore. In 2000, he turned the failed Brokerage mall into Power Plant Live, a restaurant complex and entertainment district.

Three years later, he was allowed to build a new six-stories office building on pier four, between the Power Plant and the extension of the Aquarium. And, since offices need parking, the following year he erected a parking garage behind the Columbus Center on pier six, much to the dismay of the inhabitants at Scarlett Place, who suddenly saw their harbor view disappear, and concerned Baltimoreans, who saw public space gradually disappear. “They just keep filling in”, says Boitnott (2005). “Sometimes you feel like they will never stop. It’s just so sad.”

But maybe, after these last developments, they will soon have to stop. “We’re reaching the end”, says M. J. Brodie, and David Cordish, in 2002, predicted that “You won’t see anymore”.³⁵ In this respect, the Inner Harbor as a project by now has moved from development to management. There is one last piece of land, possible for development: the tip of pier five and six. Both Cordish and Paterakis have expressed their interest for development here.³⁶

Private initiatives for development is, as shown in the Charles Center project, nothing new. But before, they were presented through the business community organizations, GBC and the Committee for Downtown, and implemented in accordance with the plan. Since the mid 1980s, individual developers increasingly presented projects, parcel by parcel in a piecemeal fashion, and often with approval from City Hall rather than the Planning

³³ Ed Gunts (May 4, 1997), “Hotel may dim harbor vision”, *The Baltimore Sun*

³⁴ Ed Gunts (September 8, 2003), “Key advice speeds project on its way”, *The Baltimore Sun*

³⁵ Scott Calvert (September 10, 2002), “Inner Harbor reaching end of its space”, *The Baltimore Sun*

³⁶ Editorial (August 8, 1999), *The Baltimore Sun*

Department. Gunts (October 27, 1996) describe this as a change from an incremental to a spontaneous pace of growth.

Walter Sondheim, Jr., member of GBC and former chairman of the Baltimore Urban Redevelopment and Housing Agency (BURHA) and CC-IHM, deplors the current situation, and what he sees as a move from plan-led development under public control to developer-led speculation, where the public interests constantly find themselves in the back seat (Sondheim 2005). His position is well known among former and present colleagues, but not all agree.

Robert C. Embry, Jr., the city's first housing commissioner, puts it frankly: "Beggars can't be choosers" (Embry 2005). With no federal money at hand anymore, no control over the land and a weak city budget, the city has no strong position to negotiate with possible investors.

Otis Rolley, III, director of the Department of Planning since 2003, sees the situation from a somewhat different perspective: "The problem with Baltimore is the city's low self-esteem. And when you think nothing of yourself, you go to bed with the wrong people" (Rolley 2005). And if you do, you might wake up with a hang-over the size of a parking garage.

2003: The Plan that is not a Plan

In April, 2002, Cooper, Robertson & Partners were chosen to oversee the future planning of the Inner Harbor. They were asked to identify the obstacles inhibiting the Inner Harbor from achieving greater attractiveness and sustainable success, and to suggest solutions to enhance the connectivity between the Harbor and its surroundings. In December 2003, Mayor O'Malley presented their result, "the new Inner Harbor Masterplan", according to a press release.

The new plan covers the area from Pratt Street to the foot of Federal Hill, and from Camden Yards in the west over to the former Allied Signal site to the east. The authors strive to reinforce the principles of the original plan, and to "expand the concept of the Inner Harbor to a larger context and public realm".³⁷ With few vacant lots left in the area by now, the new plan is a fairly modest proposal concerning physical development. A new underground garage with a planted roof is proposed at Rash Field on the south shore, and a West Shore Park on the neglected land between the Visitor Center and the Science Center. Relocating the Concert Pavilion from Pier 6 to the former Allied Signal site would allow for new, low-rise 4-6 stories development on the pier.

The new plan introduces the concept of water districts as a way to organize the harbor waterfront. The authors identify four districts with different physical qualities: the Piers and slips on the north shore, the actual Basin, the Inlet at Inner Harbor East and the Channel. This could be a way to guide the future planning, by thinking of four different but related waterside districts within the harbor area.

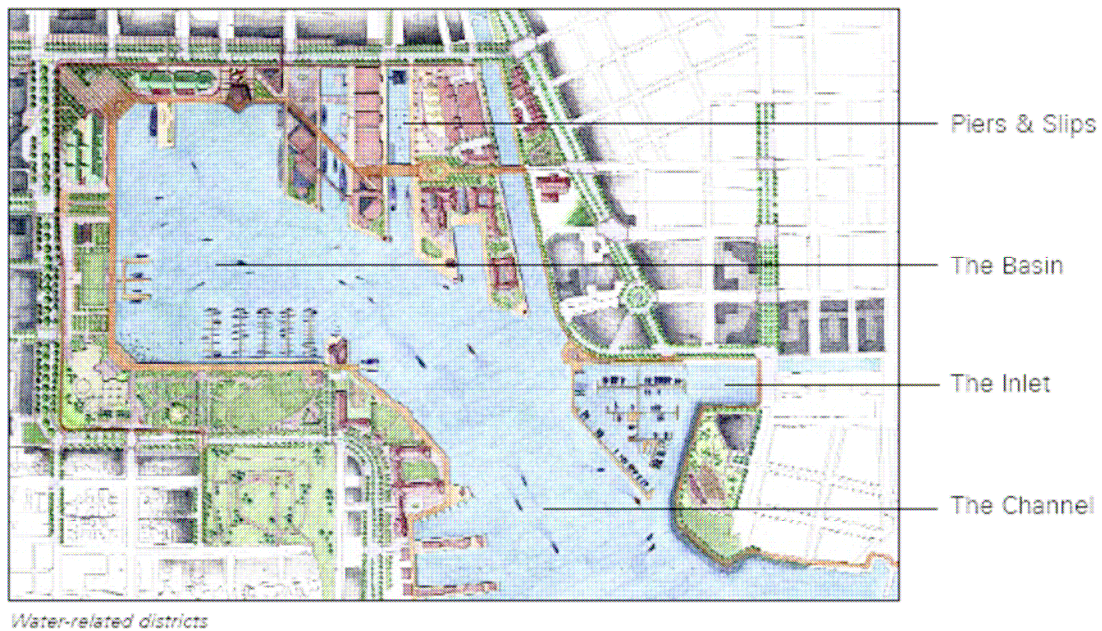


Figure 10: The Inner Harbor Master Plan 2003. Water-related districts

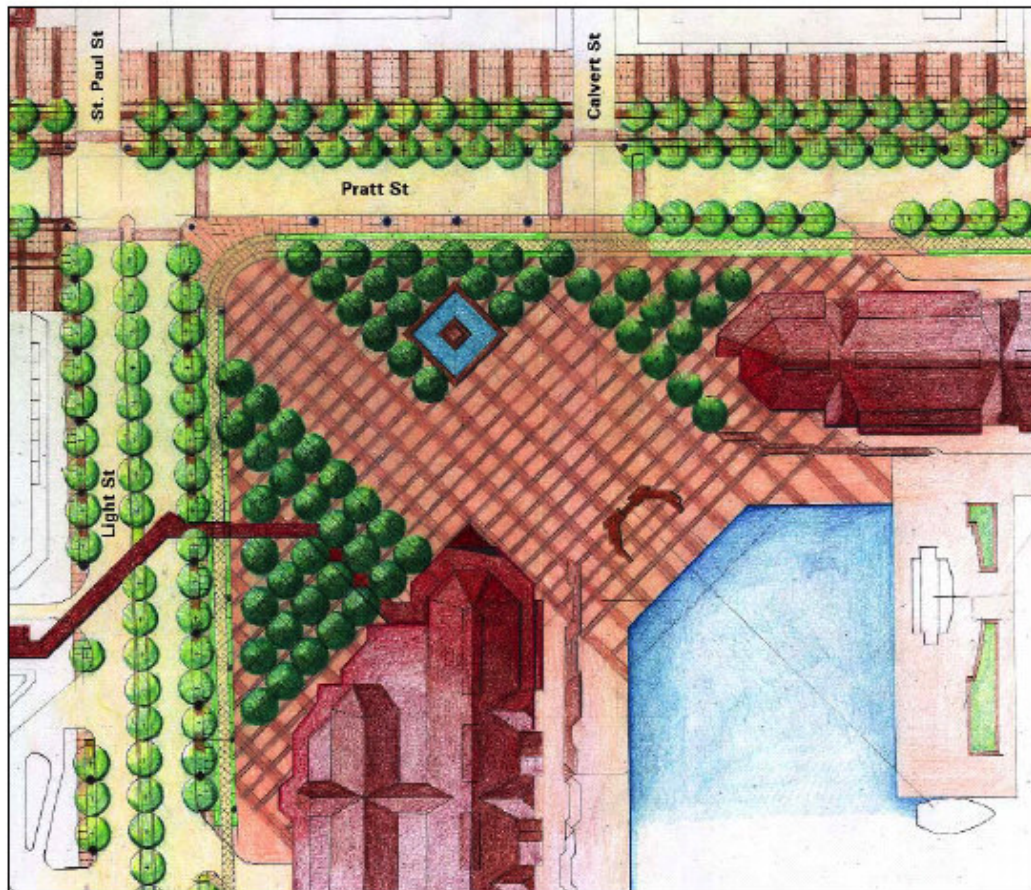
The most radical part of the new plan concerns traffic. The successful resistance to the early highway plans saved the neighborhoods of Federal Hill and Fells Point, but it never really solved the traffic problem in the city centre. Light and Pratt Streets still have to carry a substantial amount of through-traffic, thereby becoming barriers cutting off the harbor

³⁷ Cooper, Robertson & Partners (December 2003), *Baltimore Inner Harbor Master Plan*, p. 3

from the rest of downtown. The skywalks, designed to create a safe system of pedestrian movement from the harbor all the way up to Charles Center today feel like “the most outdated feature in the whole project”, according to planner Laurie Feinberg at the Planning Department. In the new plan, CR&P transform “the ring road system” of Key Highway, Light, Pratt and President Streets into a pedestrian-orientated waterfront boulevard. They also propose a multi-use trail along the harbor, connecting the Jones Falls trail to the east with the Gwynn Falls trail to the west.

The raised planted berms along Pratt Street, designed to protect pedestrians from the traffic, today reinforce the barrier effect. The new plan suggests to remove them and reconfigure the sidewalk as a paved promenade with a double row of street trees.

At the most crucial point, the former Sam Smith Park, today the McKeldin Plaza, the authors show an elegant, but utopic, solution. Today, the triangular plaza with Tom Todd’s magnificent walk-through “Water Fall”-fountain is surrounded on all sides by streets with heavy traffic. By removing the fountain and cutting off the diagonal northbound connection between Light and Calvert Streets, the new design would transform the Y-section into a T-section, and unite the plaza with Harborplace and the Inner Harbor promenade.



McKeldin Plaza — Illustrative Plan

Figure 11: The Inner Harbor Master Plan 2003. The suggested redesign of the intersection at Pratt and Light Streets.

The new plan has got a somewhat mixed reception. David Wallace (2004) was, in his own words, outraged when he saw it. In a letter to M. J. Brodie at Baltimore Development Corporation, he lists a number of complaints. The most important is the proposed change of the traffic at the Light and Pratt intersection, which would require the elimination of Todd's fountain. "In our planning of the present street alignment, we considered the alternative now proposed, and rejected it as unworkable" Wallace writes.³⁸

Tom Todd (2005) has the impression that CR&P "simply haven't done their homework". He agrees that traffic is the still unsolved problem in the harbor, but he is sceptic to the proposed solution. According to M. J. Brodie (2005) at BDC, "it's not exactly a plan, we see it more like a study". Ed Gunts (2005), the architectural critic at *The Baltimore Sun*, found the new plan rather disappointing. "When they got the commission, they talked about everything they wanted to do. But I just don't find it in there."

For the moment, the plan sits on its shelf in the planning department. It would take six months to turn it into an urban renewal plan, but it is not seen as an urgent task (Feinberg 2005). Meanwhile, the BDC is acting upon four of the recommendations from the plan. Studies are being made for a parking garage under Rash field. The Western Shore Park and the multi-use trail are under construction. The McKeldin Plaza will be redesigned, but there will not be a T-section.

³⁸ David A. Wallace (2004), *Urban Planning/My Way: from Baltimore's inner harbor to Lower Manhattan and beyond*, Chicago: Planners Press, American Planning Association, p. 144

Harbor Management

While CR&P was working on the physical plan for the harbor, the GBC addressed what is now seen as a more urgent problem: the management of the Inner Harbor. In a report to the mayor in 2003, they identify a long list of inadequacies caused by the lack of Inner Harbor management. These include both physical factors (such as poor maintenance) and organizational procedures (erosion of city control, lack of coordination between city officials, lack of established standards and regulations). Their recommendation is to create a quasi-governmental agency, similar to that of CC-IHM, to regain control of the harbor area. As a result, the mayor appointed Andrew Frank, Executive Vice president of BDC, to act as an interim “zsar” for the Inner Harbor, while the new management solution is being finalized.

When Harborplace opened, the Inner Harbor was whiter, safer and cleaner than the rest of the city. This has changed, as the area over time has become more a part of downtown. There is now a more diverse crowd filling the Promenade. Lately, safety, or rather perceived unsafety, has become an issue. Still one of the safest areas in Baltimore, panhandling along the promenade disturbs the visitors. “Many of our visitors are from the Midwest. They are not used to that, and they are not comfortable with it”, explains Frank (2005).

He agrees with the report that the major problem is the “decentralization of power” over the harbor area. “We would like to see it more like a mall”

Design Control

The Architectural Review Board, originally formed to oversee the planning of Charles Center, also served the CC-IHM through the Inner Harbor project. This proved to be an effective way to maintain quality and unity over time throughout the project, and the status of the board members made architects like I. M. Pei adhere to their advice and go with the plan.

Inspired by the usefulness of this tool, in 1964 the city established a Design Advisory Panel, with the authority to review the design of projects in urban renewal areas in the rest of the city. The DAP initially reported to BURHA, later the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). In 1997 the two panels were merged into an Urban Design and Architecture Review Panel (UDARP), and brought to the Department of Planning.

When Otis Rolley, III, took office as Director of Planning in 2003, he revised and updated the guidelines for the panel. The UDARP now consists of six members; architects, landscape architects and art historians, appointed by the director of planning to serve staggered terms of one, two or three years. The charge of the panel, according to the new guidelines, “is to ensure the highest quality of site planning, landscape design and architecture for major proposed projects in Baltimore City”.³⁹ The panel

*...is empowered to provide review and professional design assistance of signature sites, significant projects that are proposed in renewal and/or conservation areas, planned unit developments (PUD) and master plans. City sponsored projects and those in which the City is providing financial or legislative support may be required to have Panel review. Additionally, projects that require zoning changes or variances and/or Planning Commission final design approval may be reviewed by the Panel.*⁴⁰

The Director of the Planning Department, the President of the BDC and the Commissioner of the HDC can take part as *ex officio* members. The Panel meets about 18 times per year, reviewing four to six projects each time. The meetings are open to the public to observe. Each project is reviewed by the panel three times; concept, preliminary and final presentation. After each meeting, the minutes are sent to the developer and serve as the basis for the next presentation.

During the concept presentation, “the most important presentation a development team can make to the Panel”, the developer is specifically asked to show alternative site plans and massing studies. This presentation should be made “early enough in the design process to afford the possibilities of significant changes”. The panel is instructed to judge the plans according to a list of questions:

- 1. Is the development allowed by zoning and adopted urban renewal plans? If not, what variances or amendments are required? Are any other administrative or legislative approvals required?*
- 2. How does the project relate in scale (height, bulk and density) with the surrounding context? If it is substantially different, how is it justified?*
- 3. How is the pedestrian realm defined and connected with existing street and sidewalk patterns?*
- 4. Are surrounding frontage and setback patterns respected?*
- 5. Is the front entrance or major points of entry clearly defined?*
- 6. Is the site in or near a Historic District? Are there landmark properties nearby?*

³⁹ ”Urban Design and Architecture Review Panel Guidelines”, Baltimore Department of Planning, October 2004

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

7. *Where is the parking and loading located on the site? Are they effectively screened? Is the parking and circulation pattern similar to those of neighboring properties?*
8. *Is the site located within walking distance of public transit and, if so, are the front entrances or major points of entry oriented toward the transit?*
9. *Are the concept elevations well composed and proportioned? How do they relate to adjacent buildings?*
10. *Is the landscape concept appropriate for the surrounding conditions and proposed uses?*
11. *Does the design incorporate environmentally sensitive building practices such as energy efficiency, green roofs, storm water treatment, or meet LEED requirements?*
12. *Does the design add to Baltimore City's character of contrasts and interesting blend of the historic and contemporary?⁴¹*

At the preliminary presentation, the developer is asked to “indicate changes made that relate to previous Panel comments”. The panel, by now somewhat familiar with the project makes a more technical judgement:

1. *Have the comments from the previous Panel review been satisfactorily addressed?*
2. *Is the site plan acceptable for this level of design development?*
3. *Is site circulation (both pedestrian, vehicular, and access to public transit) worked out?*
4. *Are the elevations continuing to be refined?*
5. *Are the building materials and details compatible with surrounding development?*
6. *Is the landscape plan further refined and adequately addressed?*
7. *Are the mechanical systems screened from public view?⁴²*

The final presentation completes the review process. The panel makes a recommendation based upon the following guidelines:

1. *Have all previous comments from the previous Panel reviews been satisfactorily addressed?*
2. *Is the site plan and building massing completely resolved?*
3. *Are the elevations fully developed and detailed?*
4. *Do the building samples (walls, details, window and door) form a coherent color and material palette?*
5. *Is the landscape plan fully developed?*
6. *Is the accompanying landscape plant list appropriate for the project and location relative to neighborhood compatibility and survival? Are species and caliper indicated?*
7. *Is the project's external mechanical equipment completely resolved?*
8. *Is the signage package that is presented to the Panel allowed by applicable laws/ordinances? How is signage placed and scaled?*
9. *Are the exterior building and site lighting catalog cuts presented in scale with the project? Will they negatively impact surrounding properties?*

The Architectural Review Board was a novelty when it was set up in the late 1950s, but since then, design review has become a common practice in the US. Scheer & Preiser (1994) estimate that more than 85 percent of the American cities and towns exercise some sort of design review, and 60 percent of those introduced it since 1982. As part of the regulatory system, it is connected with both easy and endemic problems. The easy, and potentially solvable, problems, according to Scheer & Preiser, include design review being time-consuming and expensive, being easy to manipulate through persuasion, pretty pictures, and politics, and being performed by overworked and inexperienced staff.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

The endemic problems concern power, freedom, justice and aesthetics. Who is to judge, based upon what standards? Could design review be considered a violation of the First Amendment right to free speech?

Punter (1999) notes the American obsession with matters of style and design detail, and recommends that design review should concentrate on urbanistic criteria, regarding the relationship of buildings to other buildings and the public realm, rather than architectural criteria, relating to the buildings themselves. As an example to be avoided, he looks at Woodbridge in Irvine, California and sees nothing but “enforced conformity and claustrophobia”.⁴³

In a checklist for good design review he wishes for

- *design policies to be a direct expression of publicly surveyed or expressed goals and objectives for the community*
- *design policies to be derived from a careful analysis of character of the locality that embraces visual, social, functional and environmental aspects, all interpolated through public values*
- *design policies to consist essentially of a set of design principles that are directly linked to key design objectives, and which do not unnecessarily prescribe design solutions, leaving as much scope as possible for the skilled designer*
- *such principles to have more emphasis on urbanistic qualities than on visual architectural factors*
- *such principles to be clearly communicated to citizens and the development industry*
- *such principles to be applied in as systematic and transparent a system of review as is feasible in terms of development efficiency, with adequate public hearings and appeal procedures, including appeals against the grant of a permit on the grounds of infringement of principles or lack of due process*
- *design policies to be developed at the sub-regional scale down to the level of the site scale through a variety of plans and advice documents, but particularly to be expressed in a city-wide design strategy that can be subsequently elaborated in a series of design frameworks to guide policy, direct environmental action, and initiatives in other policy areas*
- *design policies to embrace clearly principles of environmental sustainability as an urgent necessity for growth management, large-scale suburban design, retrofitting suburbs and sub-centers, and urban regeneration*⁴⁴

The Baltimore UDARP guidelines fail to meet several of Punter’s recommendations, but they do so in an interesting way. They stress interaction between the developer and the panel, with a focus on design as a process. The message is “React” rather than simply “Obey”, and the question of contextualization versus innovation is really put as a question: If different, why? With a panel consisting of professionals, the procedure is more similar to the academic tradition of peer review than a populist beauty contest.

In Baltimore, the panel’s status is advisory, and therefore limited in two respects. First, they are advisory to the developer and architect, but it is not their work to do the design. In the words of M. J. Brodie (2005), with a long experience of the panel’s work: “We can

⁴³ John Punter (1999), *Design guidelines in American cities: a review of design policies and guidance in five West Coast cities*, Liverpool: Liverpool University press, p. 198

⁴⁴ John Punter (1999), *Design guidelines in American cities: a review of design policies and guidance in five West Coast cities*, Liverpool: Liverpool University press, p. 209-210

raise a project from B- to B+, but we can't work wonders... Sometimes, it just isn't there..."

Second, it makes its recommendations under the discretion of the Director of Planning, and, above him, the Mayor. Mayor Schaefer overruled the recommendations of the panel in the Harborcourt case, and Mayor Schmoke went against all his advisers when he approved the hotel plans in Inner Harbor East. There has been no major controversy yet, under the leadership of Rolley, and above him Mayor O'Malley, who succeeded Schmoke in 1999, and there seems to be a positive pro-planning attitude in City Hall. But there is no discussion about increasing the UDARP:s mandate, or independence. The officials do not want too sharp a knife, or it might cut their fingers. In this respect, the power of the office becomes the weakness of the system.

Baltimore: Praise and Critique

The early writings are very favourable of the development in Baltimore. Jane Jacobs (1958) was enthusiastic over Charles Center, and Brambilla and Longo (1979) paint a bright picture of the city and its future. Under the title “Learning from Baltimore”, they list ten reasons for Baltimore’s liveability. These include new physical large-scale developments like Charles Center, Inner Harbor, and the new-town-in-town of Coldspring, but also the local work done in the neighborhoods, and the city’s successful programs for housing and commercial rehabilitation. They point to the local resistance to the original highway plans, that ultimately saved the neighborhoods of Fells Point and Federal Hill and provided the background for the new Inner Harbor, the pedestrian focus in the new downtown, and the commitment to architectural quality, as seen in the work of the Architectural Review Board. Finally, they mention the focus on public events.

Brambilla and Longo tribute these qualities to successful public-private partnerships, a succession of strong mayors, an awareness that the city itself must play a leading role, and an atmosphere of cooperation between local leaders and citizens. They summarize their findings by praising a certain modesty in the way Baltimore achieved this:

*Crucial to Baltimore’s achievements has been an emphasis on moderation and doing only what is deemed feasible at a given time, while establishing a solid foundation for future development.*⁴⁵

Arnold (1990), writing about Baltimore’s dual character of frostbelt economy and sunbelt culture, shares something of the same view:

*The forty-year program of physical redevelopment in Baltimore parallels the city’s political reconstruction and share several of the same qualities: a slow pace, cautiousness, bordering on timidity, but ultimate triumph.*⁴⁶

From the mid 1980s, critics and sceptics raise their voices. Peter L. Szanton (1986) wrote a report, “Baltimore 2000: A Choice of Futures”, where he saw three positive trends: less segregation, both racial, ethnic and religious, high standards of political leadership, and the transformation of the city into a more attractive place to live. But these achievements were in his opinion overshadowed by major problems: a declining revenue base and concentration of the poor, a weakened school system, a weak tradition of civic action (unlike Lyall, he characterizes the work of CPHA and GBC not as a tradition but as an exception)⁴⁷, and a large and uninfluential black community.

If nothing is being done, he warns, Baltimore may well become a “double-doughnut city”, where a downtown, containing a business, cultural and entertainment center, and housing for the well-to-do, is surrounded by a ring of decaying poor black neighborhoods, in turn surrounded by affluent white suburbs. Much quoted are the words of an anonymous adviser in the report: “There is rot beneath the glitter.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Brambilla & Longo, p.23

⁴⁶ Joseph L. Arnold (1990), “Baltimore: Southern Culture and a Northern Economy”, in Richard M. Bernard (ed), *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest since World War II*, Indianapolis, p. 31

⁴⁷ “There is, of course, a history of civic activism and corporate statesmanship in Baltimore. The great achievements of the Citizens Planning and Housing Association and the Greater Baltimore Committee illustrate it. /.../Yet the period of the CPHA’s influence was relatively brief and clearly exceptional, and downtown redevelopment was of direct and special importance to the merchants, utility executives and developers who largely led the effort.” Peter L. Szanton (1986), *Baltimore 2000: A Choice of Futures*, Baltimore, p. 11

⁴⁸ Peter L. Szanton (1986), *Baltimore 2000: A Choice of Futures*, Baltimore, p. 12

Marc Levine (1987a) argues that Baltimore's expansive downtown revitalization fails to improve the conditions in the distressed neighborhoods of the city. Certain groups- developers, real estate speculators, young professionals- benefit disproportionately, but he finds nothing to support the urban version of the "trickle down" theory in the Baltimore case.

In practice, this has meant that virtually no genuinely strategic planning has been done by public agencies regarding what sorts of redevelopment priorities would maximize quality job creation or meet pressing social needs in city neighborhoods. No process has been established whereby systematic, public discussion can take place, for example, on whether public investment in a downtown hotel as opposed to neighborhood day-care centers would best meet Baltimore's economic development needs (i.e. providing quality jobs, expanding low-income residents employment opportunities, improving neighborhood conditions).⁴⁹

His alternative suggestion includes equity planning- development targeted to residents in greatest need, a democratized redevelopment agenda-setting process, and policies that better link downtown redevelopment to neighborhood economic needs.

Levine got a sharp reply from Bernard L. Berkowitz (1987), the head of the Baltimore Economic Development Corporation, where he pointed to the work being done in the neighborhoods under the Schaefer administration. The increasing taxbase in downtown helped to pay for services for the entire city. And the city did link part of the harbor redevelopment to employment opportunities for city residents. Finally, Berkowitz stresses,

...a most important benefit of Baltimore's successful downtown redevelopment program has been its strong, positive impact on the real and perceived quality of life in Baltimore. The large array of attractive cultural and recreational facilities, the visual excitement of the Inner Harbor and other downtown design elements, and the growth and vitality of downtown are appreciated by all segments of Baltimore's population and have helped to change the image of Baltimore. This new and dynamic downtown Baltimore has become an important asset in attracting all kinds of businesses (and their management employees) to Baltimore and, thus, represents a very significant "plus" for future economic development in Baltimore for all its people.⁵⁰

Levine is far from convinced by Berkowitz's answer:

...I find the basic tenets of my analysis still intact. Baltimore's corporate-center strategy has failed to produce balanced and equitable economic growth; Baltimore has fared worse economically than other big Frostbelt cities; and living standards in the city plummeted during the Schaefer years. Dominated by developers, pro-business policy entrepreneurs, and a mayor who subscribed to a conservative growth ideology, Baltimore's redevelopment program has created a flashy downtown "profit machine", pockets of gentrification in and around the Inner Harbor, and little else in the way of effective economic development. Perhaps in the 1990s, by discarding the policies espoused by Mr Berkowitz and implementing programs designed to produce balanced growth, Baltimore may yet experience the renaissance unrealised by the Schaefer Administration.⁵¹

In a way, they are talking beside each other. Levine's critique, due to a time-lag in the statistics, is mostly based upon figures from the 1970s, and Berkowitz's response is

⁴⁹ Marc V. Levine (1987a), "Downtown Redevelopment as an Urban Growth Strategy: A Critical Appraisal of the Baltimore Renaissance", in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, vol. 9 no 2, p. 117

⁵⁰ Bernard L. Berkowitz (1987), "Rejoinder to Downtown Redevelopment as an Urban Growth Strategy: A Critical Appraisal of the Baltimore Renaissance", in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, vol. 9 no 2, p. 130.

⁵¹ Marc V. Levine (1987b), "Response to Berkowitz: Economic Development in Baltimore: Some Additional Perspectives", in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, vol. 9 no 2, pp. 137-138

focused on the efforts during the 1980s. Wolman et al. (1994), evaluating the success of "Urban Success Stories" during the 1980s, find that Baltimore, together with Atlanta and Boston, actually "performed considerably better than the other distressed cities; they could justifiably be termed 'urban success stories'".⁵² And Robert Embry, in an interview, counters what he describes as the mythology that Baltimore did not spend any money in the neighborhoods. "Baltimore was spending more federal money in the neighborhoods than any other city. Baltimore built more public housing than any other city, per capita."⁵³

Still, Mayor Schموke, in an interview with Washington Post in 1990, summarizes the development in Baltimore during his predecessor, Mayor Schaefer, with careful elegance: "Baltimore is prettier but poorer in 1989 than it was in 1979."⁵⁴

During the 1990s, things went worse again, and a survey from the Institute for Policy Studies in 1999 concludes that there was no real "urban revival" for Baltimore. The city was surviving rather than reviving (Institute for Policy Studies, 1999).

Over time, there has evolved an increasingly negative, almost hostile, cultural and social critique of Baltimore's tourist-oriented development strategy. David Harvey describes the new urban landscape in Baltimore as "an island of affluence and power in the midst of a sea of impoverishment, disempowerment, and decay".⁵⁵ Ronald D. Utt talks about Baltimore's "Potemkin village of entertainment facilities"⁵⁶, and Donald Judd, in a critical piece on the tourist city, writes:

*Baltimore provides an excellent example of a pure tourist space carved out of urban decay. The miles of abandoned, derelict buildings that crowded its harbor as late as the 1970s have given way to the Harborplace development, with its broad marble and stone plazas, fountains, restaurants and bars, aquarium, and the two-block-long translucent pavilions developed by the Rouse Corporation. The 30 million visitors who visit Harborplace each year are conveniently protected from seeing the Baltimore beyond the tourist enclave, the other half of what has been labelled "the two Baltimores"*⁵⁷.

In his effort to depict Harborplace as an exclusive tourist enclave, strange to the decaying genuine Baltimore, he describes the "broad marble plazas". The truth may sometimes be in the eye of the beholder, but in this, he is doubly wrong. Partly, because the use of marble in Baltimore could be seen as part of a strong vernacular tradition. Rowhouses with white marble steps, once polished daily by polish housewives, still line the streets of many former Baltimore working class neighborhoods. And partly, because there simply is no marble in Harborplace, or elsewhere in the Inner Harbor. There is brick, referring to another Baltimore tradition, and there is granite, since one member of the Architectural Review Board came from Boston and felt that granite symbolized permanence.

Fainstein (2001) finds much of this cultural critique troublesome. It rests on the assumptions that the city once was more diverse, and that a desirable city would be more authentic. She finds no proof for any "golden age of diversity", and concerning authenticity, she writes

⁵² Wolman et al. (1994) p.843. They base their findings on statistics concerning unemployment rate, poverty rate, median house income, and per capita income.

⁵³ Chalkley (November 12, 2003). During the 1970s, Embry worked for the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁵⁴ Richard Tapscott (January 1, 1990)

⁵⁵ David Harvey (1991), p. 241

⁵⁶ Ronald D. Utt (October 2, 1998)

⁵⁷ Dennis R. Judd (1999), p. 36

If we are going to criticize the new urban landscape for its significations, authenticity is not the appropriate value to apply, since deconstruction of the urban environment reveals a reasonably accurate portrayal of the social forces underlying it. Indeed, form is following function.

A deeper critique must instead show that this landscape fails to satisfy important human needs. But to do so puts the critique on the thorny ground of explicating what activities afford genuine as opposed to false satisfaction.⁵⁸

Baltimore's Inner Harbor is a rather shallow experience, but more so in terms of geographical depth than cultural qualities. It is basically one block deep, between Pratt and Light Streets and the water's edge. The crowds, filling the promenade, rarely cross the streets to venture further into downtown. David Wallace was aware of this, and that is why he dreamed of the municipal mall, stretching all the way up to City Hall, tying the pieces together and opening up the city towards the water.

Fainstein also gives a realistic answer to the idealistic critique of exclusive upper-income developments in the city centres:

if we wish to prevent the upper class from invading working-class neighborhoods or wholly isolating itself in suburban enclaves, then we ought not to forbid the creation of housing and offices for the elite in central places, if this can be accomplished without causing displacement.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Fainstein (2001), p. 209

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 217

Beggar or Chooser: What did Baltimore learn in the Inner Harbor
Kaj Granath



Figure 12: The Inner Harbor, as seen from Federal Hill Park ca. 1930



Figure 13: Autumn 2004

Inner Harbor revisited

The death, and resurrection, of the American city centre has been proclaimed more times than you can count since the end of WWII. There is no reason to believe that the Inner Harbor project should be the singular model solution to the American urban problem, or even the problems of the city of Baltimore. It did not, as noted by its critics, immediately and magically solve the problems of segregation, unemployment, or the poor standard of the public school system. It did not, directly and by itself, improve the living conditions for the poor in the distressed neighborhoods in the city. But as an example of urban revitalization, it has, rather successfully, stood the test of time. The robust principal simplicity of David Wallace's original plan guided the physical development of the area for more than thirty years. The harbor was transformed, from neglected backwater into a vital part of the central city. The waterfront is now a vibrant part of the public space, much used by both Baltimoreans and visitors. And, since the millennium, statistics show signs of vital improvements in the city.

David Rusk (1996) meant that Baltimore, together with 33 other American cities, since 1980 had passed "beyond the point of no return":

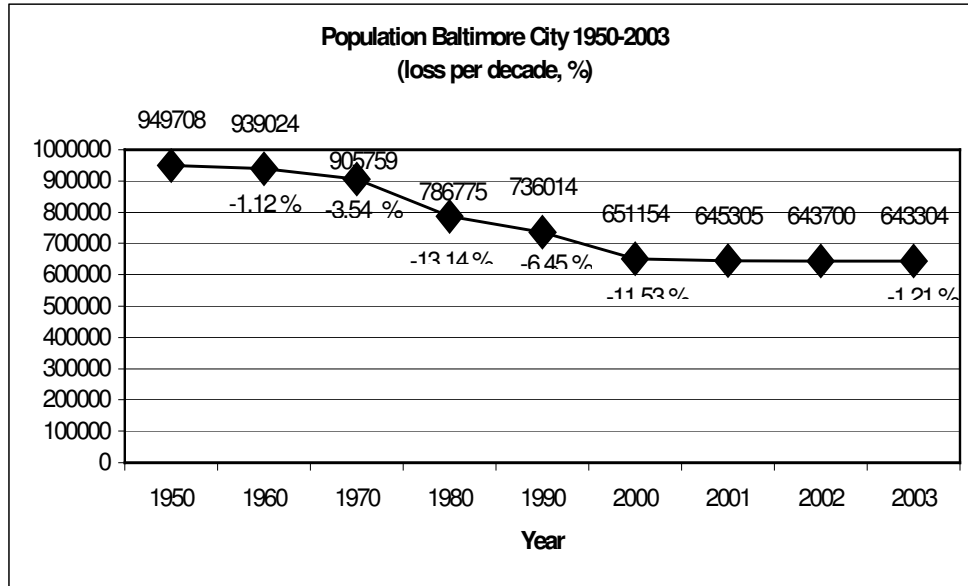
*Not one of these cities has subsequently ever closed the income gap with its suburbs by so much as one percentage point! No combination of urban renewal, downtown development, model cities programs, community development corporations and, I predict, enterprise or empowerment zones has ever reversed the downward slide of such.*⁶⁰

He defines "the point of no return" by three threshold indicators: population loss of more than 20 % from peak level, a disproportionate minority population (>30 % black or Hispanic, and at least twice the metropolitan percentage of minorities), and, most critically, a city/suburban per capita income ratio of 70 % or less.

Since then, and partly contrary to his predictions, Baltimore has actually reversed the slide of two out of three of his indicators. The city lost 11,5 % of its population during the 1990s, but between 2000 and 2003, the loss is just 7850 people, or a mere 1,2 %. The latest figures indicate a loss of less than 400 persons during 2003, compared to a monthly loss of more than 700 persons during all of the 1990s. With 643304 inhabitants in the 2003 Census, the city has still lost over 32 % of its population since it peaked in 1950, but it seems this downward curve is flattening out since the millennium, though still not climbing.

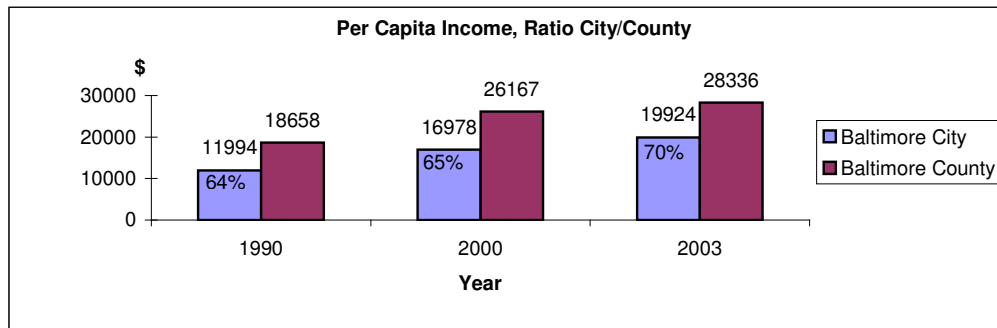
⁶⁰ David Rusk, *Baltimore Unbound: A Strategy for Regional Renewal*, Baltimore 1996, p. xiv.

Beggar or Chooser: What did Baltimore learn in the Inner Harbor
Kaj Granath

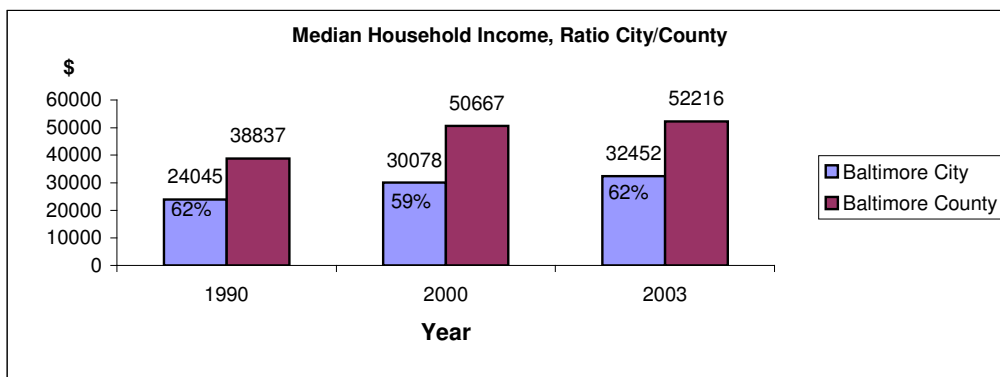


(source: U.S. Census Bureau)

And, most critically according to Rusk, the city/suburb per capita income gap has been closed by one percentage point between 1990 and 2000, and five percentage points in 2003, going up from 64 % to 70 %.



(source: U.S. Census Bureau) The median household income in the city dropped from 62 % of the suburban figures to 59 % during the 1990s, but has gained three points since then. In 2003 it is, again, 62 %.



(source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Labor statistics show a city rapidly transforming from manufacturing to a service economy. Between 1985 and 2000, all major employment sectors in Baltimore decreased, except the service sector, which almost doubled its share of the labor force.

**Sectoral Composition of Baltimore Labor Force, 1950-2000,
and Percentage of City Labor Force in Selected Sectors**

Key Sectors	1950	1960	1970	1980	1985	2000
Manufacturing	34.1	27.8	25.6	15.0	11.5	7.8
Wholesale and Retail Trade	26.0	23.3	20.6	21.2	21.2	12.6
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	6.0	6.8	7.4	8.5	9.9	6.8 ⁶¹
Services	7.7	8.2	11.6	22.3	27.3	50.6 ⁶²
Government	12.3	15.1	18.7	20.8	18.4	9.3 ⁶³
Total	86.1	81.2	83.9	87.8	88.3	87.1

(source: adapted from Levine (1987a, p.116). Figures from 2000 from the U.S. Census Bureau)

In 2000, 22.9 % of the population had incomes below the poverty line, exactly the same figure Levine gives from 1979. In 2003, this figure has dropped to 20.6%, indicating a substantial improvement since the millennium. At the same time, and partly contradictory, unemployment increased drastically, from 6 % to 14.4 %.

Unemployment in Baltimore City 1980-2003

	1980	1990	2000	2003
Unemployed	10.8%	8.3 %	6%	14.4%

(source: Figures from 2000 and 2003 from the U.S. Census Bureau)

Szanton (1986), Rusk (1996) and Orfield (1998) all call for different ways to “end Baltimore City’s role as the metro area’s poorhouse”⁶⁴, through housing programs, tax-base sharing and new metropolitan boundaries.

According to Rusk, “helping poor people leave bad neighbourhoods is the most effective antipoverty program”.⁶⁵ But you can only move that far, and you will always leave something behind. Baltimore once held close to a million people, and the city still has this physical footprint. Since then, it has lost more than 30 % of its population. From an urban perspective, the problem is not the people who stayed, but the people who left. Baltimore has a disproportionate share of the region’s poor, and the city lacks a broad middle-class. To rebuild a middle-class by supporting the very poor is a noble cause, but there is also the opportunity of attracting new middle- and upper-income residents. Diversity is part of the definition of city, and every move to diversify the social map of Baltimore would improve the urban qualities.

⁶¹ In the Census 2000 including Rental and Leasing

⁶² In the Census 2000 they separate “Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services” (10.2 %), “Educational, health and social services” (26.8%), “Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services” (8.3%), and “Other Services except Public Administration” (5.3%)

⁶³ In the Census 2000 labelled “Public Administration

⁶⁴ Rusk (1979), p. 79

⁶⁵ Rusk (1979), p. 146

Wagner (2001), looking at gentrification in the neighborhoods of Federal Hill, Fells Point and Canton, finds that the new residents have higher education and higher income than the average population, and are, to a high degree, professionals and/or managerial workers.

His conclusion is that “public redevelopment of that one amenity, the Inner Harbor, set in motion a chain of events that led to private reinvestment in the surrounding area and to the redevelopment of the three neighborhoods.”⁶⁶ Based upon the figures from the 1990s, he still sees the effect of gentrification as limited beyond the actual neighborhoods:

*Clearly, the findings in Baltimore are consonant with those studies that conclude that gentrification has not lived up to the unrealistic expectations put upon it in the 1970s. Nonetheless, gentrification has resulted in the stabilization of the population of the three neighborhoods and a significant improvement in their built environments.*⁶⁷

Since then, the population loss has flattened out, as shown above. And recent statistics show an increasing demand for downtown living. In 2004, the core of downtown had 5100 apartments and condominiums, and 7500 residents. This is a 31 % increase in housing units, and a 50 % increase in residents since 1999. Another 1250 units are under construction, 3000 in various stages of planning, and the number of residents is expected to reach 10000 by the end of 2005.⁶⁸

Brodie (2005) sees three pro-city trends, supporting a fairly bright picture of the future of Baltimore city. The first is demography. Both an aging population of empty-nesters, and the young generations of professionals, marrying later and not yet raising children, are likely to prefer central city living, close to cultural, social and medical services, rather than maintaining a house in the suburbs.

The second is the grid-lock in the suburbs. The relative advantages of suburban living are getting fewer, as many of the traditional inner-city problems of crime, drugs, traffic congestion and poor schools by now can be found in the suburbs as well.

The third is tourism. A large number of visitors support services downtown that could never survive just on the residents’ spending. And this, in turn, may create an atmosphere attractive for people who have the possibility to choose where to live.

The notion of the Inner Harbor as a primarily residential project, as shown in the early plans, is interesting, because it is almost totally forgotten, even by the people involved. “I believe you if you say it was there, but I simply can’t recall it”, says Walter Sondheim (2005). And Robert Embry (2005) today says he “was not aware of a plan proposing housing in the Inner Harbor”.

The narrative today is about the Inner Harbor as a project to attract visitors. And this narrative serves both advocates and critics. The advocates can point to what is perhaps the most successful example of waterfront redevelopment in the United States, attracting 15 million visitors annually, half of them tourists, spending more than \$1.2 billion dollar in the local economy. And the critics can concentrate on the statistics, showing continuing decline in the distressed neighborhoods of the city, and avoid the complicated question whether they think the city would have been better off today with 1800 housing units on the piers and no aquarium.

Millspaugh (2003) shows a modest optimism regarding the future:

Still, it would be irresponsible to leave the impression that waterfront revitalization alone can solve the major, underlying problems that cities face today. At best, this kind of redevelopment can create a good center city in which to live, work and relax. More

⁶⁶ George R. Wagner, *Gentrification in Baltimore*, Baltimore 2001, p. 161

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 170-171

⁶⁸ Downtown Partnership, *2004 State of Downtown Baltimore Report*, p. 7

*important perhaps, it can foster a new image and spirit that give citizens a fresh outlook, enabling them to deal with other issues and frustrations. In that sense, Baltimore is no exception.*⁶⁹

Robert Fogelsohn (2001), writing about the American downtown, shares this idealistic view (though he is not necessarily fond of waterfront redevelopment). It is his dream

*...that the future of downtown will be shaped less by how Americans respond to technological change than by how they define the good community. In my view, the decline of downtown was a result not so much of the deterioration of mass transit and the proliferation of private automobiles, of too much traffic and too little parking, as of the American vision of the "bourgeois utopia"- and of the local, state, and federal policies that helped Americans realize it. To put it another way, a nation of suburbs is not conducive to a vibrant downtown. Indeed, if the history of urban America is indicative, downtown will thrive only if Americans who have a choice prefer to live in or near the center- a preference that is taken for granted in Madrid, Paris, and other European cities. If there is reason today for optimism about the future of downtown, it can be found not in the many cities that have built downtown malls and convention centers, but in the few cities where many Americans have rejected the traditional concept of the good community and instead opted to live in apartments in or near the central business district*⁷⁰.

Like Rome, Baltimore was not built in one day. And it was not saved in a decade, or even two. But there are signs now, that people who do have a choice, actually choose to live in Baltimore city. This will benefit the beggars as well.

⁶⁹ Millspaugh (2003), p. 41

⁷⁰ Robert M. Fogelsohn, *Downtown: Its rise and fall, 1880-1950*, New Haven 2001, p. 397-398

Implications for Sweden

The case of Baltimore is relevant to Sweden in two ways. On a national level, as an example of the possibilities, and limitations, of design control. And, from a Gothenburg perspective, as an ever interesting example of waterfront redevelopment.

Since the early 1990s, governmental funding directed towards the building sector has been drastically cut in Sweden. At the same time, many of the former detailed regulations concerning the built environment were dropped, providing greater freedom for developers and architects. In 1997, the Swedish government, concerned about the low standard of contemporary design and architecture, introduced a “National Agenda on Architecture and Design”. The Planning and Building Act was revised, introducing aesthetics as a major planning concern.⁷¹ The term was never exactly defined, but in the bill it was stressed that it should not be narrowly understood as “experience of beauty”, but rather how buildings, through their design, interact with their surroundings. And this interaction should not be understood as simple obedience: “Respect does not exclude invention”.⁷²

These changes have fuelled an increasing interest in design control and architectural quality. To a limited extent, design review has always been a part of the building permit procedure, but as a process in itself, performed by special boards, it is still something of a novelty. One of the few examples is the city of Stockholm. Their “Board of Beauty” caused an animated debate in the mid 1990s, when they forced the world-famous architect Rafael Moneo to change the façade color of the new Museum of Modern Art. The neo-traditional pattern-book strong planning strategies of the new-urbanist movement are discussed, with sceptic interest, among professionals but rarely seen in practice, as of yet. But the neo-medieval new town of Jakriborg, outside of Malmö in the southern part of Sweden, has proved a remarkable success.

In this context, it is interesting to introduce the example of the Baltimore Urban Design and Advisory Panel. It is not, as seen in the city of Baltimore, a fool-proof system to ensure quality control. But, by being advisory, and consisting of professionals, the panel contributes to an informed debate about the shape of the physical development. And the discursive nature of their guidelines make them not watchdogs over prescriptive aesthetics, but possibly prepared for the positive “shock of the new”.

⁷¹ Based upon the Governments Bill 1997-1998:117, the Planning and Building Act now reads: Planning shall, while respecting natural and cultural values, promote a functional and aesthetically pleasing design of the built environment... (SFS 1987:10 2 kap 2§: translation by the author).

⁷² Regeringskansliet, Arbetsgruppen för arkitektur och formgivning (1997), *Framtidsformer: Förslag till handlingsprogram för arkitektur och formgivning: från arbetsgruppen för arkitektur och formgivning*, Stockholm: Regeringskansliet, p. 61 (translation by the author)



Figure 14: Gothenburg from north-west, with the historical city center along the river. The southern shore is now to be redeveloped.

Gothenburg, founded in 1621, rapidly grew to become the second biggest city in Sweden. Situated at the mouth of the river Göta Älv on the west coast, it was the most important port in the country, building its prosperity on shipping and trading. From the mid 19th century big industries and shipyards dominated the city's economy. The population tenfolded from 13 000 inhabitants the year 1800 to 130 000 inhabitants at the end of the century, and reached 467 029 by the end of year 2000. During the 20th century, the growing car industry became increasingly important. An international crisis in the shipping industry in the 1970s brought an end to the shipyard era, and the harbor moved westwards to accommodate larger ocean-going vessels.

In a Gothenburg version of an "Outer Harbor Project", the former shipyards, owned by the government, were sold to the city for the symbolic price of 1 SEK. This land has since then, over a period of more than twenty years, been transformed into residential areas, and attractive water front locations for high schools, the university, and the expanding telecom sector. Unlike Baltimore, Gothenburg started working from the outside in, and by now, the most central part of the former harbor, on the north shore of the river, is ready for redevelopment.



Figure 15: The new tunnel under the city will give access to the water

Since the millennium, the major infrastructure project in the city has been “the Big Dig”: the construction of a 1-mile long tunnel, to get rid of the highway separating the city centre from the southern river waterfront. The tunnel is scheduled to be completed in 2006, and work is progressing on time. But there is still no plan for this new urban waterfront. It does not have the same natural beauty as the Inner Harbor in Baltimore, but it is a rare opportunity, from a planning perspective, to redesign the city’s face towards the water. The Planning Department has recently formed a special organization to stimulate and encourage a broad debate of the future of this area. It seems, they are so busy doing process and outreach, there is no time to produce a vision. Conspiracy theorists think this might be a strategy: Not yet- not yet- not yet- too late.

It is, as of yet, an open question what will come out of this process. But one lesson from Baltimore could be the power of a strong vision, to guide the development for years to come.

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