


FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #24-0478 / REZONING 1214-1224 HOLLINS STREET		

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: April 4, 2024

At its regular meeting of February 8, 2024, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #23-0478, for the purpose of changing the zoning for the properties known as 1214-1224 Hollins Street (Block 0216, Lots 053-058), 21-23 South Carey Street (Block 0216, Lots 047-048), and 14 South Stockton Street (Block 0216, Lot 074), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the R-8 Zoning District to the C-1 Zoning District; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report which recommended amendment and approval of City Council Bill #23-0478 and adopted the following resolution, with seven members being present (seven in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, adopts the findings and equity analysis outlined in the staff report, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #23-0478 be **amended and approved** by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC
Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
Mr. Liam Davis, DOT
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair



Chris Ryer
Director

STAFF REPORT

February 8, 2024

REQUEST: City Council Bill #24-0478/ Rezoning – 1214-1224 Hollins Street, 21-23 South Carey Street, and 14 South Stockton Street:

For the purpose of changing the zoning for the properties known as 1214-1224 Hollins Street (Block 0216, Lots 053-058), 21-23 South Carey Street (Block 0216, Lots 047-048), and 14 South Stockton Street (Block 0216, Lot 074), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the R-8 Zoning District to the C-1 Zoning District; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt findings and Approve with the following Amendment:

- That 1226 Hollins Street (Block 0216, Lot 052) is added to the proposed rezoning.

STAFF: Nick Chupein

PETITIONER: Metropolitan Investment Trust Aequo Baltimore, LLC, c/o Caroline L. Hecker, Esq.

OWNER: Metropolitan Investment Trust

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: These properties are located on the north side of the 1200-block of Hollins Street between Stockton Street and South Carey Street. They are zoned for R-8 residential.

General Area: These properties are located near the western edge of the Hollins Market neighborhood, which is predominantly residential in character, with a majority of the housing stock represented by rowhomes, with scattered institutional uses throughout. They sit half a block west from the historic Hollins Market and other small-scale neighborhood retail businesses on Hollins Street and South Carrollton Avenue, and half a block south of a main commercial corridor on West Baltimore Street. The subject properties were/are traditional rowhomes in character, some with storefronts on the ground level. One property on this block, the corner lot at 1228 Sout Hollins Street is already zoned C-1.

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

These sites are located within the Poppleton Urban Renewal Plan (1975), which designates this and surrounding blocks as B-2-3 “Community Business”, which the plan indicates follows the uses permitted under the former zoning district B-2, meant for public-facing commercial areas serving local residents for daily and occasional shopping, and including residential uses. The proposed rezoning is supported by this designation.

These sites are also located within the Southwest Impact Investment Area. Stated goals in the SWIIA action plan that support a rezoning and redevelopment of this site include:

- *Commercial retail improvement, with the intention of attracting new residents and customers.*
- *More investment in housing.*
- *Key streetscapes are improved, especially West Baltimore Street, Washington Boulevard, Carey Street, and Pratt Street.*

These sites also fall under the Southwest Partnership Vision Plan (2015) and is located within one of the focus geographies, the “Hollins Market District,” for which the primary goal is to “re-establish the market and its surrounding streets as a social and economic hub of the southwest community.” Hollins Street is identified in this plan as a community commercial connection. The proposed rezoning fully aligns with this goal and its related strategies.

ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS

Below are the approval standards under §5-508(b) of Article 32 – *Zoning* for proposed zoning map amendments:

- (b) *Map amendments.*
 - (1) *Required findings.*

As required by the State Land Use Article, the City Council may approve the legislative authorization based on a finding that there was either:

 - (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; or
 - (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification.
 - (2) *Required findings of fact.*

In making the determination required by subsection (b)(1) of this section, the City Council must also make findings of fact that address:

 - (i) population changes;
 - (ii) the availability of public facilities;
 - (iii) present and future transportation patterns;
 - (iv) compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area;
 - (v) the recommendations of the City agencies and officials; and
 - (vi) the proposed amendment’s consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan.
 - (3) *Additional standards – General*

Additional standards that must be considered for map amendments are:

 - (i) existing uses of property within the general area of the property in question;
 - (ii) the zoning classification of other property within the general area of the property in question;
 - (iii) the suitability of the property in question for the uses permitted under its existing zoning classification; and
 - (iv) the trend of development, if any, in the general area of the property in question, including changes, if any, that have taken place since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification.

ANALYSIS

This rezoning, introduced by Councilman John Bullock on behalf of the owner of the properties, restores zoning to a commercial use and creates consistent zoning across the block. Before the Citywide comprehensive rezoning known as “Transform Baltimore,” this block was zoned B-2-3 for a Community Business District. It was rezoned as R-8 under Transform, however the former and current uses on both sides of Hollins Street were a mix of residential and ground-floor commercial, which are non-conforming under R-8.

The subject properties were not redeveloped or rehabilitated since Transform. This block previously contained a mix of 3-story structures and vacant lots, in addition to the one commercial property at 1228 Hollins Street. 1214-1222 Hollins Street were demolished in 2018 due to emergency conditions and 1226 Hollins Street was demolished in 2020. All of the subject properties except 21-23 South Carey Street are now vacant lots. At present, the adjacent 1228 Hollins Street, a former auto mechanic garage at the corner of Hollins and South Carey Street, is zoned C-1 and is under redevelopment for commercial use. The property owner has requested this rezoning to align the vacant lots with this commercial property and to re-establish commercial/mixed-use to the area.

Amendment to Expand Scope of Rezoning:

Planning staff is recommending favorably on the rezoning of the subject properties, and is further recommending that one additional adjacent property also be rezoned similarly to be consistent with the changes to the entire block. **1226 Hollins Street** is not included in the original bill, however it is a vacant lot sitting between the existing C-1 property and the subject properties and meets the same standards and requirements for rezoning. Staff recommends amending the bill to include this property, and notes that this address was included on the site posting sign for the Planning Commission’s meeting.

Required Findings:

Per §5-508(b)(1) of Article 32 – *Zoning*, and as required by the State Land Use Article, the City Council may approve the legislative authorization based on a finding that there was either: (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; or (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification.

Staff believes that substantial changes have happened on this block and in the general area since it was rezoned under Transform. The deterioration and demolition of the Hollins Street facing properties (1214-1226 Hollins Street) leaves a gap in this street that faces challenges to redevelopment at the original scale of the traditional rowhomes. The redevelopment of the long-vacant 1228 Hollins Street as well as the nearly-renovated Hollins Market one half block away foretell revitalization in this area, as do several large scale mixed-use projects one block away on West Baltimore Street, including multi-family residential, retail, and institutional uses. This is an area forecasting economic growth, and staff recommends approving this change to support and enhance those advances.

Additionally, it is argued that the rezoning to R-8 with Transform was a mistake, in that it left several non-conforming retail establishments along both sides of Hollins Street and did not conform with the Southwest Partnership Vision Plan.

Maryland Land Use Code – Requirements for Rezoning:

The Land Use Article of the Maryland Code requires the Planning Commission and the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) to study the proposed changes in relation to: 1. The plan; 2. The needs of Baltimore City; and 3. The needs of the particular neighborhood in the vicinity of the proposed changes (*cf.* MD Code, Land Use § 10-305 (2023)). In reviewing this request, the staff finds that:

1. **The Plan:** The Southwest Partnership Vision Plan and Southwest Impact Investment Area strategy both promote enhanced commercial activity, increased housing opportunities, revitalization of the local economy, and improved streetscapes. The rezoning of the subject properties supports these plans and provides expanded opportunities to continue to develop this long-neglected block.
2. **The needs of Baltimore City:** The goal of DHCD’s Framework for Community Development through its Impact Investment Areas is to encourage economic growth, create opportunities for new housing and commercial development, and support healthy thriving communities, in areas that have suffered from racial segregation and disinvestment for decades. This is one such area, and the proposed zoning change will support those goals.
3. **The needs of the particular neighborhood:** Redevelopment of vacant properties and improvement upon vacant lots is a priority for the Hollins Roundhouse community, to expand housing options and generate interest a local commercial/retail economy. This zoning supports both goals, as C-1 allows for both retail and residential development and removes elements of blight and disinvestment from this block.

Similarly, the Land Use article, also adopted by Article 32 – *Zoning* §5-508(b)(2), requires the City Council to make findings of fact (MD Code, Land Use § 10-304 (2023)). The findings of fact include:

1. **Population changes;** the Hollins Market neighborhood has seen a population decline of 212 residents between the 2010 and 2020 census. This loss comes primarily from non-white households relocating, as the racial demographics have shifted from majority African-American to a near-even split between white and Black residents. The data also suggests that families with young children and seniors are leaving this area. The number of vacant building notices, however, has significantly decreased from a peak in 2015 over 90 to approximately 60 in 2019. This indicates that the number of households is increasing while family size is getting smaller. Relatively low (but increasing) home-sales prices indicate that the area is attractive to younger first-time buyers.
2. **The availability of public facilities;** The area is well-served by public facilities, with infrastructure improvements anticipated in conjunction with IIA initiatives. The existing infrastructure will support wide range of potential redevelopment options.
3. **Present and future transportation patterns;** The potential addition of more dense, mixed-use development in this area will be supported by a greatly improved transit system, including MTA’s Red Line and East-West Raise initiatives, both of which will have a station/stop less than ½ mile from the subject site. This project will support a walkable, pedestrian friendly environment that will reduce the necessity and reliance on vehicular travel.
4. **Compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area;** Several significant mixed-use projects are proposed or underway on West Baltimore Street,

including new construction at 1307-11 West Baltimore Street and 1401 West Baltimore Street, and adaptive reuse/rehabilitation projects at 1220 West Baltimore Street, 1420 West Baltimore Street, and 5 North Calhoun Street. This redevelopment aligns with these other mixed-use projects and an increasing density and walkability of the area.

5. **The recommendations of the Planning Commission and the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA);** For the above reasons, the Planning Department will recommend amendment and approval of the rezoning request to the Planning Commission. The BMZA has deferred a recommendation on this legislation to that of the report and recommendation of the Planning Commission.
6. **The relation of the proposed amendment to the City's plan.** This change supports the Baltimore City Master Plan's 'Live' category by meeting a need for more moderately-priced quality housing options that will help retain and attract new residents and strengthen the neighborhood.

There are additional standards under Article 32 – *Zoning* §5-508(b)(3) that must be considered for map amendments. These include:

- (i) **existing uses of property within the general area of the property in question;** This block contains one exclusively commercial use property, as well as single-family residential and several non-conforming uses that exist or existed previously within the R-8 zone, including storefronts. One half block to the east is the Hollins Market and other retail establishments, and West Baltimore Street, one block to the north, is a major commercial corridor.
- (ii) **the zoning classification of other property within the general area of the property in question;** Most of this block and blocks to the west and south are zoned R-8. The former mechanic shop at 1228 Hollins Street (under redevelopment as a restaurant) is zoned C-1 as are the blocks surrounding Hollins Market (South Carrollton Avenue and South Arlington Avenue at Hollins Street). West Baltimore Street is a mix of C-2 and C-1 zoning between South Arlington Avenue and South Calhoun Street.
- (iii) **the suitability of the property in question for the uses permitted under its existing zoning classification; and** The buildings that were on this group of properties were long-vacant and deteriorated for many years, to the point that emergency demolition was needed to remediate a public hazard. This indicates that redevelopment under the status quo is not desirable or feasible.
- (iv) **the trend of development, if any, in the general area of the property in question, including changes, if any, that have taken place since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification.** The recent trend in development includes several proposed and underway larger-scale mixed use projects in C-1 zoned locations indicates that the flexibility offered by this zoning classification is encouraging of investment.

Below is the staff’s review of the required considerations of §5-508(b)(3) of Article 32 – *Zoning*, where staff finds that this change is in the public’s interest, in that it will provide flexibility to support the local area plans that seek more investment, increased housing opportunities, economic development, walkable neighborhoods, and blight elimination. It is consistent with surrounding uses and development patterns.

Background: This rezoning bill would impact a development project currently under review by Planning staff. Rezoning and consolidation of the parcels will permit a proposed multi-family mixed-use building with increased unit density, retail on the ground floor, and reduced setbacks. **At present, this bill does not include the mid-block lot at 1226 Hollins St. Staff recommends including this lot as an amendment.** The developer has expressed an interest in this lot to incorporate into the project.

Equity:

- **Impact:** The proposed rezoning will have a positive effect on existing patterns of inequality that persist in Baltimore by encouraging investment in an underserved, formerly red-lined neighborhood, eliminating vacant and blighted properties, and creating more walkable, pedestrian friendly environment.
- **Engagement:** Notification has been provided to the Hollins Roundhouse Community Association leadership, as well as the Southwest Partnership organization and the Union Square association. The owner/developer of this project has engaged the community throughout the predevelopment process to ensure that it reflects the community vision, including most recently, at a status update on this rezoning bill on January 10, 2024.
- **Internal Operations:** Staff does not expect any impacts on staff time or resources as a result of this action.

Notification: The Hollins Roundhouse Neighborhood Association, Union Square Neighborhood Association, and the Southwest Partnership have been notified of this action.



Chris Ryer
Director