




BALTIMORE CITY  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Michael Braverman, Housing Commissioner 

Date: August 1, 2019

Re: **City Council Bill 19-0390: Rezoning — 1617 Broening Highway**

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The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 19-0390, for the purpose of changing the zoning for the property known as 1617 Broening Highway (Block 6810, Lot 001) from the C-4 Zoning District to the C-3 Zoning District.

If passed, this bill would change the zoning of 1617 Broening Highway from the C-4 Zoning District, for heavy commercial uses, to the C-3 Zoning District, for intensive commercial uses and key commercial nodes. Currently, the property is used as a vehicle wholesale lot across the street from industrial warehouses zoned I-2. The applicant wishes to build an affordable multi-family dwelling on the property, a use not permitted in the C-4 District without ground-floor retail.

The site is industrial in nature and physically isolated from the Broening Manor neighborhood, with poor access to public transportation. Affordable housing in this location would isolate low-income tenants from nearby communities, services, and employment opportunities. While expanding affordable housing is a priority for DHCD, this development does not represent high-quality investment or provide strong opportunities for residents.

Redevelopment of the site would require Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) allocation from the State of Maryland. LIHTC resources are a limited and competitive source of equity to support both affordable housing and community development in the City and other jurisdictions. The development could reduce availability of LIHTC support for projects that not only provide housing with superior opportunities for residents but also contribute vital equity to neighborhood revitalization.

The site is less than a mile from the Port of Baltimore. The Port is a critical and growing economic engine for the City and regional economy. The Planning Commission and Planning Department staff find that the current zoning fits this usage and should be maintained to support economic activity near the Port. DHCD concurs with this finding.

DHCD opposes the passage of City Council Bill 19-0390.

MB:td

cc: Mr. Jeffrey Amoros, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*  
Mr. Eric Tiso, *Department of Planning*