



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Mission Statement

On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the Land Use & Transportation Committee is committed to shaping a reliable, equitable, and sustainable future for Baltimore's land use and transportation systems. Through operational oversight and legislative action, the committee aims to develop and support lasting solutions grounded in principles of good governance.

**The Honorable Ryan Dorsey
CHAIR**

PUBLIC HEARING

December 1, 2025

9:00 AM

CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Bill: 25-0090

***Title: Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a
Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the
R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver
Street***



Meeting: Bill Hearing

Committee: Land Use & Transportation

Bill # 25-0090

Title: Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street

Purpose: FOR the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220 North Culver Street (Block 2275A, Lot 135), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting a variance regarding certain bulk regulations (lot size area); and providing for a special effective date.

REPORTING AGENCIES

Agency	Report
Law Department	Approve for form & sufficiency
Planning Commission	Favorable
Department of Housing & Community Development	Favorable
Board of Municipal & Zoning Appeals	
Department of Transportation	

BACKGROUND

Current Law

Article 32– Zoning, Sections 5-201(a), 5-501, 5-508, 14-331, 9-301 (Table 9-301), and 9-401 (Table 9-401) Baltimore City Revised Code (Edition 2000) The City Council must consider the following when evaluating changes to the text of the City’s Zoning Code:

1. The amendment’s consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan;
2. Whether the amendment would promote the public health, safety, and welfare;
3. The amendment’s consistency with the intent and general regulations of this Code;
4. Whether the amendment would correct an error or omission, clarify existing requirements, or effect a change in policy;
5. The extent to which the amendment would create nonconformities.

To grant a variance, the City Council must find that, “because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific structure or land involved, an unnecessary hardship

or particular difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result if the strict letter of the applicable requirement were carried out.” The City Council must also make seven other findings:

1. The conditions on which the application is based are unique to the property for which the variance is sought and are not generally applicable to other property within the same zoning classification.
2. The unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty is caused by this Code and has not been created by the intentional action or inaction of any person who has a present interest in the property.
3. The purpose of the variance is not based exclusively on a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property.
4. The variance will not: a. be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity; or b. substantially diminish and impair property values in the neighborhood.
5. The variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code.
6. The variance is not precluded by and will not adversely affect: a. any Urban Renewal Plan; b. the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan; or c. any Historical and Architectural Preservation District.
7. The variance will not otherwise: a. be detrimental to or endanger public health, safety, or welfare; or b. be in any way contrary to the public’s interest.

Bill Summary

Bill 25-0090 grants permission for property known as 220 North Culver Street to be converted from a single-family dwelling unit to a multifamily (2-unit) dwelling unit.

The property is a row home located in the Allendale neighborhood. The property is located near the Hilton Park and is within the Edmonson Village Plan. The proposed use has received a letter of support from the Allendale Community Association.

Variances

The Planning staff reports that this bill requires a variance to accommodate the proposed conditional use at 220 North Culver Street. The variance would be for insufficient lot area; however, because of the passage of Council Bill 25-0064 Zoning- Bulk & Yard Requirements – Amendments, this is no longer required.

The requested variances will not negatively impact the goals of the Urban Renewal Plan or the Comprehensive Master Plan. The variances will not be detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare, nor contrary to the public interest.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Note:

This bill should not have a fiscal impact

Information Source(s):

- 25-0090 1st reader & Agency reports
 - Baltimore City Code Article 32 – Zoning Code
-

Analysis by: Tony Leva
Analysis Date:11/17/2025

Direct Inquiries to: Anthony.Leva@BaltimoreCity.Gov

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 25-0090
(First Reader)

Introduced by: Councilmember Gray

At the request of: Malik Thomas

Address: 1420 McCulloh Street

Baltimore, MD 21217

Telephone: (443) 739-0700

Introduced and read first time: August 18, 2025

Assigned to: Land Use and Transportation Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Planning Commission, Department of Housing and Community Development

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in**
3 **the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street**

4 FOR the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family
5 dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220
6 North Culver Street (Block 2275A, Lot 135), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat;
7 granting a variance regarding certain bulk regulations (lot size area); and providing for a
8 special effective date.

9 BY authority of

10 Article 32 - Zoning

11 Sections 5-201(a), 5-305(a), 5-308, 9-401 (Table 9-401), 9-701(2), and 9-703(d)

12 Baltimore City Revised Code

13 (Edition 2000)

14 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That
15 permission is granted for the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in
16 the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220 North Culver Street (Block 2275A,
17 Lot 135) as outlined in red on the plat accompanying this Ordinance, in accordance with
18 Baltimore City Zoning Code §§ 5-201(a) and 9-701(2), subject to the condition that the property
19 complies with all applicable federal, state, and local licensing and certification requirements.

20 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That pursuant to the authority granted by
21 §§ 5-305(a) and 5-308 of Article 32 - Zoning, permission is granted for a variance from the
22 requirements of §§ 9-401 (Table 9-401: Rowhouse and Multi-Family Residential Districts - Bulk
23 and Yard Regulations) and 9-703(d), as the minimum lot size requirement for 2 dwelling units in
24 the R-7 Zoning District is 2,200 square feet and the existing lot area size is approximately 1,650
25 square feet, requiring a variance of 25%.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 25-0090

1 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That as evidence of the authenticity of the
2 accompanying plat and in order to give notice to the agencies that administer the City Zoning
3 Ordinance: (i) when the City Council passes this Ordinance, the President of the City Council
4 shall sign the plat; (ii) when the Mayor approves this Ordinance, the Mayor shall sign the plat;
5 and (iii) the Director of Finance then shall transmit a copy of this Ordinance and the plat to the
6 Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, the Planning Commission, the Commissioner of
7 Housing and Community Development, the Supervisor of Assessments for Baltimore City, and
8 the Zoning Administrator.

9 **SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day
10 after the date it is enacted.

Baltimore City Council



Land Use & Transportation

Committee

Bill: 25-0090

**Title: Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion
of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling
Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance –
220 North Culver Street**

Agency Reports



**BALTIMORE CITY
BOARD OF MUNICIPAL
AND ZONING APPEALS**

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Justin A. Williams
Interim Executive Director

Members
Leland Shelton
Chair

Victor Clark
Liz Cornish
David Marcozzi

417 E. Fayette St., Ste. 922
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 396-4301
zoning.baltimorecity.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee
From: Justin A. Williams, Interim Executive Director
CC: Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administrator
Date: November 19, 2025
Re: Council Bill No. 25-0090 – Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion
220 North Culver Street
Position: No Objection

The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) staff have reviewed City Council Bill #25-0090. This bill seeks to permit the conversion of a single-family dwelling into two dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District at 220 North Culver Street, requiring a conditional use authorization by Ordinance and a variance from minimum lot area regulations.

Agency Position on Approval Standards

As a quasi-judicial agency, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals typically adjudicates land use matters based on specific evidentiary standards. Because this legislation places the authority to grant the Conditional Use and Variance directly with the City Council, the Board defers to the Council's judgment regarding whether the applicant has satisfied the specific approval standards outlined in the Zoning Code. Accordingly, the Board takes no position on the specific factual merits of the application, but offers No Objection to the passage of the bill.

Legislative Context: Procedural Reform and the Housing Options and Opportunity Act

While the Board takes no position on the specific merits of this property's conversion, this bill serves as a pertinent example of the regulatory inefficiencies currently embedded in the Zoning Code—inefficiencies that the pending Housing Options and Opportunity Act (City Council Bill #25-0066) is designed to correct.

1. The Jurisdictional “Dead End”

Under the current Zoning Code, the conversion of a rowhome in an R-7 district from one unit to two units requires a Conditional Use by Ordinance. The BMZA is statutorily prohibited from hearing these cases in the R-7 district, regardless of the project's scale or impact. This forces property owners—often seeking modest changes to creating housing—to pursue a time-consuming and costly legislative process (a City Council Ordinance) rather than a streamlined administrative or quasi-judicial review.

2. Streamlining Development Review

As noted in the Board's report for CCB #25-0066, the Housing Options and Opportunity Act would establish a permitted-by-right framework for “Low-Density Multi-Family” dwellings (2-4 units) in R-7 districts, provided they meet specific bulk and area standards.

Impact on this Case: Had CCB #25-0066 already been enacted, the property owner at 220 North Culver Street likely would not have required this legislative intervention. The proposed reforms typically align lot area requirements with the realities of Baltimore’s historic housing stock (e.g., reducing lot area per unit requirements), potentially rendering the variance request moot and allowing this project to proceed “by right.”

3. Efficient Use of City Council Resources

By modernizing the code through CCB #25-0066, the City Council would be relieved of the burden of legislating individual, small-scale residential conversions. This would allow the Council to focus its legislative capacity on broader policy matters, while allowing the BMZA and administrative staff to handle routine land use adjustments through established, predictable processes.

Conclusion

City Council Bill #25-0090 represents the type of “jurisdictional workaround” currently necessitated by an outdated regulatory framework. While the Board offers No Objection to the relief sought by the applicant for 220 North Culver Street, this case underscores the urgent need for the systemic reforms proposed in the Housing Options and Opportunity Act, which would expedite approval processes for small-scale housing providers and reduce administrative burdens on the City Council, provided they meet strict new size and quality standards.

For any questions regarding this report or to discuss these concerns further, please contact **Justin Williams** at justin.williams@baltimorecity.gov or **(410) 396-4301**.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Alice Kennedy, Commissioner, Housing and Community Development
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	September 22, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0090 Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 25-0090 Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220 North Culver Street (Block 2275A, Lot 135), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting a variance regarding certain bulk regulations (lot size area); and providing for a special effective date.

If enacted, City Council Bill 25-0090 would allow the property located at 220 North Culver Street to convert from a single-family home to 2 dwelling units while granting a variance for lot size. If approved, this Bill will take effect on the date of its enactment.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

DHCD generally supports conditional use conversions that turn single family dwelling units into multiple units, when allowed to do so by their zoning designation. This is especially true when such efforts are supported by the surrounding community, and the President of the Allendale Community Association has submitted a letter in support of this project.

The property in reference is not located within any of DHCD's Streamlined Code Enforcement Areas, Community Development Zones, or Impact Investment Areas. This conditional use conversion may increase affordable housing opportunities for the Allendale neighborhood and its surrounding surrounding communities.

FISCAL IMPACT

As drafted, this Bill would have minimal fiscal or administrative impact on DHCD.

AMENDMENTS

DHCD does not seek any amendments to this Bill at this time.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Veronica P. McBeth, Director, Department of Transportation
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	November 19, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0090 • Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street

Position: Without recommendation

BILL SYNOPSIS

Council Bill 25-0090 would allow for the single-family home known as 220 North Culver Street to accommodate two dwelling units. This is a very minor change and is unlikely to impact local traffic conditions. Additionally, the property is in the vicinity of several bus transit routes.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

This conversion will have a little to no impact on traffic operations. Therefore, DOT provides no recommendation on Council Bill 25-0090.

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW
EBONY M. THOMPSON, CITY SOLICITOR
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET
SUITE 101, CITY HALL
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

November 14, 2025

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 25-0090 – Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 25-0090 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill would permit the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220 North Culver Street (Block 2275A, Lot 135), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat. The bill would also grant a variance from the R-7 District bulk and yard requirements for lot area.

Conditional Use Standards

The conversion of a single-family dwelling to a multi-family dwelling in an R-7 District requires conditional-use approval by ordinance. City Code, Art. 32, § 9-701(2). The only properties eligible for conversion are those that meet the standards set forth in Section 9-703 of Article 32 of the Baltimore City Code. Eligible properties must “continue to conform to the applicable bulk and yard regulations, including lot area per dwelling unit, for the district in which the building is located”. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 9-703(b). Properties “may not violate any dwelling unit occupancy regulations or restrictions of the City Code” and “the exterior of the dwelling must retain its existing residential character”. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 9-703(c)-(d).

The converted dwelling must continue to conform to the bulk and yard regulations, including minimum lot size, for the district in which the building is located. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 9-703(b). The minimum lot size for two dwelling units in an R-7 district is 2,200 square feet currently, but will change on December 3, 2025 to only 1,500 square feet. Art. 32, Tbl. 9-401; Baltimore City Ord. 25-0063. The Planning Commission notes that this lot contains approximately 1,650 square feet, which requires a variance of 550 square feet (25%) under the current law, but

will no longer need a variance after December 3, 2025. Thus, this bill contains the variance language in the eventuality that this bill is enacted before that date.

To approve a conditional use, the City Council must find:

- (1) the establishment, location, construction, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare;
- (2) the use would not be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (3) the authorization would not be contrary to the public interest; and
- (4) the authorization would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code.

Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-406(b).

These findings must be guided by 14 required considerations:

- (1) the nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape and the proposed size, shape, and arrangement of structures;
- (2) the resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading;
- (3) the nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use might impair its present and future development;
- (4) the proximity of dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, and other places of public gathering;
- (5) accessibility of the premises for emergency vehicles;
- (6) accessibility of light and air to the premises and to the property in the vicinity;
- (7) the type and location of adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities that have been or will be provided;
- (8) the preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures;
- (9) the character of the neighborhood;
- (10) the provisions of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan;
- (11) the provisions of any applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (12) all applicable standards and requirements of this Code;
- (13) the intent and purpose of this Code; and
- (14) any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare.

Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-406(a).

Variance Standards

To grant any variance, the City Council must find that, “because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific structure or land involved, an unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result if the strict letter of the applicable requirement were carried out.” Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-308(a). The City Council must also make six other findings:

- (1) the practical difficulty is caused by this Code and has not been created by the intentional action or inaction of any person who has a present interest in the property;
- (2) the purpose of the variance is not based exclusively on a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property;
- (3) the variance will not: (i) be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity; or (ii) substantially diminish and impair property values in the neighborhood;
- (4) the variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code;
- (5) the variance is not precluded by and will not adversely affect: (i) any Urban Renewal Plan; (ii) the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan; or (iii) any Historical and Architectural Preservation District; and
- (6) the variance will not otherwise: (i) be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare; or (ii) be in any way contrary to the public interest.

Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-308(b).

Planning Report

The Planning Commission accepted the Planning Staff recommendation and recommended approval of this bill. The report also notes that if City Council Bill 24-0064, which amends the bulk and yard requirements in the Zoning Code, takes effect before the passage of this bill, no variance would be required because the property would meet the total lot area requirements (1,500 square feet for a 2 dwelling-unit property in the R-7 District). Since that bill was enacted on November 3, 2025, effective thirty days thereafter, the variance will not be required if this bill is enacted after December 3, 2025.

Procedural Requirements

The City Council committee assigned the bill must consider it at a scheduled public hearing wherein it will hear and weigh the evidence. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-404; 5-406; 5-507; 5-602. After weighing the evidence presented and submitted into the record before it, the Committee is required to make findings of fact with respect to the factors and considerations outlined above. If, after its investigation of the facts, the Committee makes findings which support

the conditional use and the variances sought, it may adopt these findings and the legal requirements will be met.

Certain procedural requirements apply to this bill because both conditional uses and variances are considered "legislative authorizations." Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5- 501(2)(i), (ii). Specifically, notice requirements apply to the bill, and it must be referred to certain City agencies, which are obligated to review it in a specified manner. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-504, 5-506, 5-602. Additionally, certain limitations on the City Council's ability to amend the bill apply. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-507.

This bill is the appropriate method to review the facts and make the determination as to whether the legal standards for a conditional use and variance have been met. Assuming the required findings are made at the hearing, all procedural requirements are satisfied, and the required amendments are made the Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DLuckey", is positioned above the typed name.

Desiree Luckey
Assistant Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson, City Solicitor
Hilary Ruley, Chief Solicitor, General Counsel Division
Jeff Hochstetler, Chief Solicitor
Ashlea Brown, Chief Solicitor
Michelle Toth, Assistant Solicitor

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Eric W. Tiso,  Director of Development Oversight and Project Support	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Planning 8 th Floor, 417 East Fayette Street		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #25-0090 / Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street		

TO

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

DATE: October 10, 2025

At its regular meeting of October 9, 2025, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0090, for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220 North Culver Street (Block 2275A, Lot 135), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting a variance regarding certain bulk regulations (lot size area); and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #25-0090 and adopted the following resolution:

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 #25-0090 be **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.

TK/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
The Honorable John Bullock, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. Justin Williams, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administrator
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
Ms. Hilary Ruley, Law Dept.
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
Mr. Luciano Diaz, DOT
Ms. Nancy Mead, Council Services
Mr. Malik Thomas, Applicant



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Tim Keane
Director

October 9, 2025

LEGISLATION: City Council Bill #25-0090/ Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220 North Culver Street (Block 2275A, Lot 135), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting a variance regarding certain bulk regulations (lot size area); and providing for a special effective date.

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: There are two requests made in CCB #25-0090. The first is a conditional use to convert a single-family dwelling into two dwelling units in the R-7 District. Under § 9-701, conversions in the R-7 and R-8 zoning districts require approval as a conditional use by ordinance of the Mayor and City Council.

The second request is for a variance from the bulk and yard requirements of the R-7 District, as outlined in Table 9-401 of the Zoning Code. The property does not meet the minimum lot area required for two dwelling units; therefore, a variance is necessary.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Justin Walker

PETITIONER: Malik Thomas

OWNER: Malik Thomas

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 8

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 220 North Culver Street is located on the north side of the street, approximately 100' west of the intersection with West Saratoga Street. This property measures approximately 22' by 75' and is currently improved with a two-story building measuring approximately 22' by 40'. The building is currently built as two dwelling units, including layout and BGE meters. This site is zoned R-7 and is located within the Edmondson Village plan area.

General Area: The site is located with the Allendale neighborhood. The site is surrounded with blocks of R-7 and R-6 residential zoning. The area contains primary rowhouse and low-density multi-family dwellings. Two blocks east is the open space zone of Hilton Park.

HISTORY

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

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore was enacted by Ordinance #24-426, dated December 2, 2024. The subject property is designated in the Residential: Medium Density group in the General Land Use Plan. This proposed development conforms to that designation.

This site is not located in any Urban Renewal Plan (URP) area.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL AND CODE CONTEXT:

The applicant purchased the property configured as two dwelling units. Upon attempting to replace the existing BGE meters, the applicant learned that the property was not recognized as two dwelling units in City records. The proposal retains the existing structure with no proposed changes; however, the passage of this bill would allow the units to be legally rented and the necessary permits to be obtained.

Conditional Use: In this zoning district, the conversion of a single-family dwelling to a multi-family dwelling is a conditional use, requiring approval by ordinance of the Mayor and City Council (§ 9-701).

Insufficient Lot Area: In this zoning district, multi-family dwellings require 1,100 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit (Table 9-401). In this case, for two dwelling units, 2,200 square feet of lot area is required. The lot only encloses 1,650 square feet, and so does not meet this requirement. A variance of 550 square feet, or 25 percent is required.

Impacts of proposed CCB #25-0064: The current proposed legislation would impact the bulk and yard requirements of the subject property's zoning district. CCB #25-0064 would decrease the minimum lot area for a multi-family dwelling from 1,100 to 750 square feet per dwelling unit in the R-7 district. If this bill were to take effect, the project would require a total lot area of 1,500 square feet for two dwelling units. The existing lot would meet that requirement, and no variance would be needed if the bill were adopted as currently proposed.

CONDITIONAL USE:

§ 5-406. Approval standards.

(a) *Evaluation criteria.*

As a guide to its decision on the facts of each case, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals or the City Council must consider the following, where appropriate:

- (1) the nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape and the proposed size, shape, and arrangement of structures;
- (2) the resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading;
- (3) the nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use might impair its present and future development;

- (4) the proximity of dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, and other places of public gathering;
- (5) accessibility of the premises for emergency vehicles;
- (6) accessibility of light and air to the premises and to the property in the vicinity;
- (7) the type and location of adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities that have been or will be provided;
- (8) the preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures;
- (9) the character of the neighborhood;
- (10) the provisions of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan;
- (11) the provisions of any applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (12) all applicable standards and requirements of this Code;
- (13) the intent and purpose of this Code; and
- (14) any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare.

(b) *Limited criteria for denying.*

The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals or the City Council, may not approve a conditional use or sign unless, after public notice and hearing and on consideration of the standards required by this subtitle, the Board or Council finds that:

- (1) the establishment, location, construction, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use or sign would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare;
- (2) the use or sign would not be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (3) the authorization would not be contrary to the public interest; and
- (4) the authorization would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code.

VARIANCE(S):

§ 5-308. Approval standards.

(a) *Required finding of practical difficulty.*

To grant a variance, the Zoning Administrator, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, or the City Council, as the case may be, shall find that:

- (1) because of the conditions peculiar to the property, including particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific structure or land involved, a practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result if the strict letter of the applicable requirement were carried out; or
- (2) because of exceptional circumstances related to the specific structure or land involved, a practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result if the strict letter of the applicable requirement were carried out.

(b) *Other required findings.*

The Zoning Administrator, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, or the City Council, as the case may be, must also find that:

- (1) the practical difficulty is caused by this Code and has not been created by the intentional action or inaction of any person who has a present interest in the property;
- (2) the purpose of the variance is not based exclusively on a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property;
- (3) the variance will not:
 - (i) be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity; or
 - (ii) substantially diminish and impair property values in the neighborhood;
- (4) the variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code;
- (5) the variance is not precluded by and will not adversely affect:
 - (i) any Urban Renewal Plan;
 - (ii) the City's Comprehensive Master Plan; or
 - (iii) any Historical and Architectural Preservation District; and
- (6) the variance will not otherwise:
 - (i) be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare; or
 - (ii) be in any way contrary to the public interest.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

As noted above, for Conditional Uses, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals or the City Council must consider the following, where appropriate. Staff's assessment follows each of these criteria.

§ 5-406 (a) Evaluation criteria:

The nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape and the proposed size, shape, and arrangement of structures; The site is suitable for the proposed two dwelling units, which will be fully contained within the existing rowhouse structure. The minor increase in density can be accommodated by the site and the existing building configuration.

The resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading; Staff anticipates minimal impact to area traffic patterns from the addition of a single dwelling unit. The site is exempt from the parking requirements of the Zoning Code under § 16-601, which exempts all residential uses of three units or fewer.

The nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use might impair its present and future development; The surrounding area is designated Residential: Medium Density in the General Land Use Plan. The existing development pattern is consistent with this designation. The proposal is not anticipated to have any impact on future development in the area.

The proximity of dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, and other places of public gathering; The addition of a single dwelling unit is not expected to impact nearby dwellings, churches, schools, or public institutions. The closest institution is Green Street Academy, located approximately two blocks southeast of the subject property.

Accessibility of the premises for emergency vehicles; The conversion to two dwelling units within the existing structure is not anticipated to affect emergency vehicle access.

Accessibility of light and air to the premises and to the property in the vicinity; The conversion to two dwelling units within the existing structure is not anticipated to affect access to light and air.

The type and location of adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities that have been or will be provided; The existing utilities, roadways, and drainage infrastructure are sufficient to accommodate the addition of a single dwelling unit.

The preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures; The proposal will have no impact on cultural and historic landmarks or structures.

The character of the neighborhood; The proposal is contained to the interior of the property, and therefore will not impact the neighborhood's character.

The provisions of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan; The proposal is consistent with the City's master plan.

The provisions of any applicable Urban Renewal Plan; There is not applicable Urban Renewal Plan that impacts the site.

All applicable standards and requirements of this Code; With the variance request included as part of this bill's approval, all applicable standards of the Zoning Code will be met.

The intent and purpose of this Code; and Any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare. The proposal is consistent with the conversion standards applicable to the R-7 Zoning District. No adverse impacts to the general welfare are anticipated.

§ 5-406 (b) Limited criteria for denying:

The establishment, location, construction, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use or sign would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare; The addition of a single dwelling unit within the existing structure will have little to no impact on public health, safety, or welfare. The unit already exists, and no construction is proposed. It will be operated in accordance with applicable City laws governing rental properties, and maintenance needs are not expected to exceed those typical of a single-family dwelling.

The use or sign would not be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan; The residential conversion is not precluded by any law or Urban Renewal Plan of which staff is aware.

The authorization would not be contrary to the public interest; and The authorization would allow an existing unit to be returned to productive use and would not be contrary to the public interest.

The authorization would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code. The authorization is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Code.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt these findings and recommend the bill favorably, with respect to the conditional use.

§ 5-308 (a) Variance approval standards and finding of practical difficulty:

To grant a variance, the Zoning Administrator, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, or the City Council, as the case may be, shall find that:

Because of the conditions peculiar to the property, including particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific structure or land involved, a practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result if the strict letter of the applicable requirement were carried out; or The existing condition of the property as two dwelling units demonstrates that strict application of the Code would create a hardship, as the building would need to be reverted to a single-family dwelling at significant cost before being returned to productive use. The conditions were not created by any intentional action of the current property owner or anyone with a present interest in the property..

Because of exceptional circumstances related to the specific structure or land involved, a practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result if the strict letter of the applicable requirement were carried out. The structure was purchased by the current owner as two dwelling units. The site included existing mailboxes and BGE electrical meters indicating two units. When the applicant attempted to update the utilities, it was discovered that City records identified the property as a single dwelling unit.

§ 5-308 (b) Other required findings:

The Zoning Administrator, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, or the City Council, as the case may be, must also find that:

The practical difficulty is caused by this Code and has not been created by the intentional action or inaction of any person who has a present interest in the property; The current owner purchased the dwelling in its existing condition; the circumstances were not created by anyone with a present interest in the property. The purpose of the variance is to authorize the continued use of the structure as two dwelling units consistent with its existing configuration.

is not based exclusively on a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property; The variance does not appear to be based solely on a desire to increase the income potential of the property. Without the variance, significant expense would be required to revert the structure to a single-family dwelling.

The variance will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity; The subtle increase in density, contained within the existing structure, is unlikely to impact the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties.

The variance will not substantially diminish and impair property values in the neighborhood; No negative impact on nearby property values is anticipated.

The variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code; The variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Code, as it supports the continued residential use of an existing structure consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The variance is not precluded by and will not adversely affect any Urban Renewal Plan; The variance is not precluded by, and will not adversely affect, any Urban Renewal Plan applicable to the property.

The variance is not precluded by and will not adversely affect the City's Comprehensive Master Plan; The variance is consistent with the goals of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, which supports the maintenance and reinvestment of existing housing stock in established neighborhoods.

The variance is not precluded by and will not adversely affect any Historical and Architectural Preservation District; The property is not located within a designated CHAP district.

The variance will not otherwise be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare; The variance will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare. The continued residential use of the existing structure is compatible with surrounding properties and poses no adverse impacts.

The variance will not otherwise be in any way contrary to the public interest. The variance will not be contrary to the public interest.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt these findings and recommend the bill favorably, with respect to the variance requested.

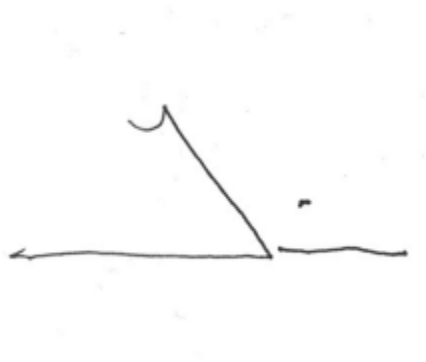
Other provisions or Article 32 – Zoning:

Off-Street Parking: The amount of off-street parking required for a multi-family dwelling is one parking space per dwelling unit (Table 16-406). In this case, under § 16-601.b. of the Zoning Code, the use is exempt from the code's parking requirements.

EQUITY:

The property owner purchased the dwelling in good faith as a two-unit structure, supported by existing mailboxes and BGE meters. Requiring the owner to fully revert the building to a single-family dwelling would create a disproportionate financial hardship and could lead to loss of housing stability or vacancy. Approval of the variance would legitimize an existing condition without expanding the building footprint, maintaining neighborhood character while supporting equitable access to housing and avoiding unnecessary financial and logistical burdens on the property owner.

NOTIFICATION: In addition to the required on-site posting and the notice distributed by staff via GovDelivery, the Allendale Community Association was notified of this action and submitted a letter of support.



Tim Keane
Director



BALTIMORE CITY
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Office of the Zoning Administrator
417 E. Fayette Street, Benton Bldg., Room 147

Ref: 220 North Culver Street

Date: July 03, 2024

This memo is submitted to confirm the review of a request from the owner and/or representative of the property (or properties) referenced above for authorization to:

Convert existing premises into two dwelling units - R-7 Zoning District

Please be advised that the Office of the Zoning Administrator has determined that the authorization requested above (in whole or in part) requires approval by Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore. In the furtherance of said Ordinance approval, the Zoning Administrator has determined that the following variances per the Zoning Code of Baltimore City are required or needed to be incorporated into the bill for approval.

- The required lot area for two units is 2,200 square feet. The existing lot is approximately 1,650 square feet. (Subsection 9-703(d), Table 9-401)
- For two dwelling units, at least one off-street parking space is required. The rear lot appears sizable enough to provide at least one off-street parking space to comply with the off-street parking requirements. If not provided, a variance will be needed. (Subsection 9-703(f), Table 16-406)

This memo is being submitted in accordance with Subsections 5-201 and 5-303 of the Zoning Code for Baltimore City.

Respectfully,

Geoffrey M. Veale
Zoning Administrator

cc: Department of Legislative Reference
Malik Thomas, Applicant
Councilmember Kristerfer Burnett
Department of Planning

Baltimore City Council



Land Use & Transportation

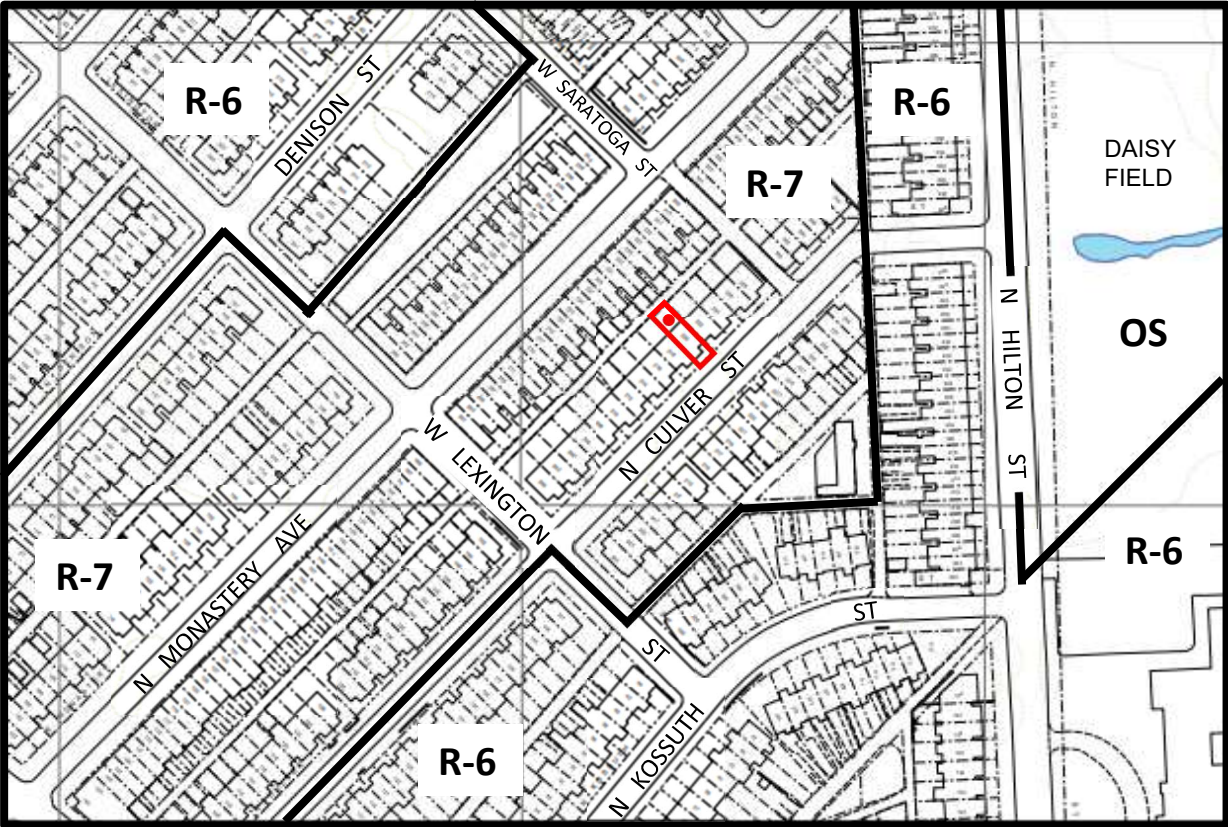
Committee

Bill:25-0090

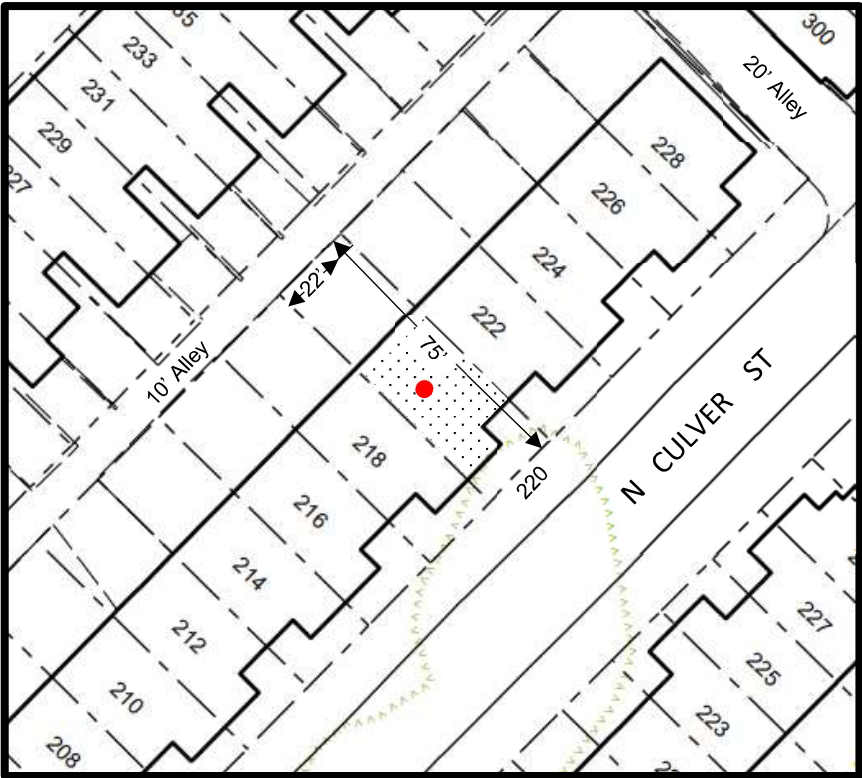
**Title: Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion
of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling
Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance –
220 North Culver Street**

Additional Materials

SHEET NO. 52 OF THE ZONING MAP OF
THE ZONING CODE OF BALTIMORE CITY



Scale: 1" = 200'



Scale: 1" = 50'

Note:
In Connection With The
Property Known As No. 220
NORTH CULVER STREET.
The Applicant Wishes To
Request The Conditional Use
Conversion Of The
Aforementioned Property From
A Single-Family Dwelling Unit
To Two Dwelling Units In The
R-7 Zoning District, As
Outlined In Red Above.

WARD 20 SECTION 18
BLOCK 2275A LOT 135

MAYOR

PRESIDENT CITY COUNCIL

ALLENDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, Inc.

P.O. Box 224, Baltimore, Md 21203



Letter of Support February 7, 2025

Re: 220 N. Culver St., Baltimore, Md 21229

To Whom It May Concern,

I am Anita Cathcart, President of the Allendale Community Association and have been in contact with Mr. Malik Thomas regarding reconfiguring his home into a multiunit dwelling at 220 N. Culver St., Baltimore, 21229. I am in support of him making this change, and I was informed that a zoning bill will have to be introduced by City Councilman Paris Gray's Office for Mr. Thomas to officially make this change.

Please note that city residents elected Councilman, Paris Gray, as new District 8 City Councilman in November 2024, and he may direct you to his constituent services team if necessary to address this request.

I am requesting that this matter be resolved as soon as possible, so that Mr. Thomas can proceed in a timely manner. If there are any issues, questions or concerns regarding this request, please feel free to contact me at (443) 827-1693 (Mobile), or via email at allendalecomm@gmail.com.

Thanks very much in advance for your assistance. Have a great day!

Respectfully,

Anita Cathcart /s/

President
Allendale Community Association, Inc.
(443) 827-1693

"Building and Serving Our Community Together!"

220

APT. A B

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING ON BILL NO. 25-0090

The Land Use & Transportation Committee of the Baltimore City Council will conduct a public hearing on City Council Bill No. 25-0090 on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 9:00 AM in the Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber, City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. Information on how the public can participate in the hearing virtually, via Webex, will be available at <https://baltimore.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – Variance – 220 North Culver Street

FOR the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 220 North Culver Street (Block 2275A, Lot 135), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting a variance regarding certain bulk regulations (lot size area); and providing for a special effective date.

Applicant: Malik Thomas

For more information, contact the Committee Staff at (410) 396-1091.
NOTE: This Bill is subject to amendment by the Baltimore City Council.

RYAN DORSEY
Chair

SEND CERTIFICATION TO:
Anthony Leva

1420 McCulloch Street
Baltimore, MD 21217
(443) 739-0700
Levaoking@gmail.com

SEND BILL TO:
Baltimore City Council

1420 McCulloch Street
Baltimore, MD 21217
(443) 739-0700
Levaoking@gmail.com