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<b>FROM</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE</b>	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE <b>MEMO</b>	
	<b>AGENCY NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b>	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	CITY COUNCIL BILL #16-0638 / AMENDING HILTON NORTH BUSINESS AREA URBAN RENEWAL PLAN		

DATE:

TO

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

April 1, 2016

At its regular meeting of March 31, 2016, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #16-0638, for the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for the Hilton North Business Area to amend Exhibit 4 of the Plan to reflect the change in zoning, upon approval by separate ordinance, for the properties known as 3000-3052 West North Avenue.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report which recommended approval of City Council Bill #16-0638 and adopted the following resolution; seven members being present (seven in favor).

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #16-0638 be passed by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-4488.

TJS/WA

Attachment

- cc: Ms. Kaliopé Parthemos, Chief of Staff  
 Mr. Colin Tarbert, Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development  
 Mr. Leon Pinkett, Assistant Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development  
 Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor's Office  
 The Honorable Rochelle "Rikki" Spector, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
 Mr. David Tanner, BMZA  
 Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
 Ms. Sharon Daboin, DHCD  
 Mr. Patrick Fleming, DOT  
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
 Ms. Melissa Krafchik, PABC  
 Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services  
 Mr. Kevin Bell, The Woda Group, Inc.  
 Ms. Caroline Hecker, Rosenberg Martin Greenberg, LLP



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**March 31, 2016**

#### **REQUESTS:**

- City Council Bill #16-0637/ Rezoning – 3000-3052 West North Avenue
- City Council Bill #16-0638/ Urban Renewal – Hilton North Business Area- Amendment

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- City Council Bill #16-0637 (Rezoning): Approval
- City Council Bill #16-0638 (Urban Renewal Plan): Approval

**STAFF:** Tamara Woods

**PETITIONER:** North Avenue Gateway II, LP

**OWNERS:** Multiple (Mayor and City Council, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, and the North Avenue Gateway II Limited Partnership)

#### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: The subject site is within the Walbrook neighborhood. It is bounded by an alley to the north, North Avenue to the south, Rosedale Street to the west, and Longwood Street to the east.

General Area: The general project area lies within the Walbrook neighborhood, along North Avenue which is primarily a commercial corridor in this section, with some residential to the east of the subject parcels. The neighborhood has commercial uses, single-family attached and detached housing, as well as multi-family residential units.

#### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The proposed development plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically: LIVE Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods; Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents and Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties Throughout the City.

#### **HISTORY**

- Ordinance #1148, approved December 4, 1987, established the Hilton North Business Area Urban Renewal Plan.

#### **ANALYSIS**

The proposed North Avenue Gateway project is a mixed-used four story building, approximately 82,000 gross square feet, with 65 residential units and 2,100 square feet of retail. The subject

parcels, 3000 -3052 West North Avenue, are currently zoned B-2-2. The existing underlying zoning of B-2-2 does allow for the use of the proposed project, but not the density. Though the land use is currently permitted in the Urban Renewal Plan, it needs to be amended to call for the zoning change.

### **City Council Bill #16-0637 (Rezoning)**

The requested B-2-3 zoning district is a neighborhood business district designation that allows for high density residential with a minimum of 550 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 5.0. The current B-2-2 zoning allows for medium density residential with a minimum of 1100 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.5. For this request the base zone of B-2 remains, while the uses would remain the same, the allowable density would increase. The permitted use list provides for a variety of residential, office and commercial uses that are suitable for the area. No front, rear or street corner setbacks are required. No interior side yard setbacks are required, but if one is provided, it must be at least 10 feet. The current request is consistent with the B-2-3 zoning which exists to the south of this site.

### **Rezoning Standards for Review**

According to Maryland Land Use Article, Division I, Title 10 (Baltimore City Zoning), any proposed zoning changes must be referred to the Baltimore City Planning Commission and to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA), which must study the proposed changes in relation to:

1. The plan – The Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan is not so specific as to recommend land use and/or zoning changes for the properties in question. But as stated previously, this request is in-line with the goals and objectives of the LIVE section of LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, Goal One: Build human capital by strengthening Neighborhoods, Objective One: Expand housing choices for all residents.
2. The needs of Baltimore City- The proposed B-2-3 zoning district support the City's master plan to strengthen neighborhoods, expand housing choices for all residents and to redevelop vacant properties.
3. The needs of the particular neighborhood in the vicinity of the proposed changes- The proposed B-2-3 zoning district also supports the specific neighborhood needs to provide for a variety of housing options in the area by implementing a long-term vision of the City to redevelop these parcels. The proposed rezoning will allow for new construction that would help revitalize this section of North Avenue.

Once the Planning Commission and BMZA report their findings and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, the City Council shall make the following findings of fact:

1. Population change- The Walbrook neighborhood has experienced at 13.1% population decrease between the 2000 and 2010 Census. The proposed redevelopment will continue to help bring new residents to the Walbrook neighborhood.
2. Availability of public facilities- The property is well served by City services, with no expected impacts as a result of rezoning.
3. Present and future transportation problems- There are currently no transportation problems in the area. The exact future impact is not known at this time, but the developer

is currently working with the City of Baltimore Department of Transportation to ascertain any impact from the development and proper mitigation.

4. Compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area- The rezoning proposal is consistent with the objectives of the Hilton North Business Area Urban Renewal Plan.
5. Recommendations of the Baltimore City Planning Commission and the BMZA- For the above reasons, the Planning Department will recommend amendment of the rezoning request to the Planning Commission. The BMZA has not yet commented on this bill.
6. Relationship of the proposed amendment to Baltimore City's plan- As mentioned above, the proposed zoning changes are compatible with the existing zoning plan of the City and the Hilton North Business Area Urban Renewal Plan.

The City Council may grant the amendment to change the zoning classification based on a finding that there was either a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located, or that there was a mistake in the existing zoning classification. In this case, the neighborhood is undergoing substantial change in character that is a reflection of the revised master plan.

### **Substantial Change**

As noted above, between 2000 and 2010, the Walbrook neighborhood suffered a severe decline in population which left many vacant lots and homes. In 2012, the Planning Commission adopted the Greater Rosemont and Mondawmin Area (GRAMA) Master Plan. The plan includes principles and strategies which fall under five topic chapters: Neighborhood Revitalization, Economic Development, Transportation, Greening, and Historic Preservation. The Neighborhood Revitalization chapter addresses ways to improve the quality of life for residents, expand housing options, enhance stable areas, and redevelop areas with high vacancy. The Economic Development chapter provides strategies to revitalize the major corridors, capitalize on existing anchor institutions and assets, re-envision the industrial areas, and increase access to quality employment for residents.

In 2010, Baltimore Housing issued a Request for Proposals to help revitalize this section of North Avenue. The selected developer, WODA, completed North Avenue Gateway I in July 2013, which is comprised of two affordable residential buildings. This development is directly across the street on the south side of North Avenue. The North Avenue Gateway II proposal, like Gateway I, will help reverse the decline of the neighborhood and reduce vacancy in the area. This rezoning would support a higher density mixed-use building that is planned to have 65 affordable units and a small commercial space.

As shown, the sharp decline in population denotes a substantial change in the neighborhood and the work of the developer shows the resulting shift to help reduce the vacancy rate of the last several years.

### **TransForm Baltimore**

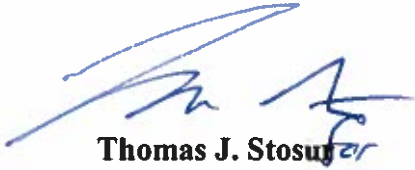
TransForm Baltimore recommends that these properties be re-zoned to C-1, which is the neighborhood commercial zoning district. The proposed rezoning is consistent with this recommendation.

**City Council Bill #16-0638 (Urban Renewal Plan)**

The bill provision of the Hilton Business Area Urban Renewal Plan amendment is to amend Exhibit 4, "Zoning Districts", to reflect the change in zoning for the properties known as 3000-3052 West North Avenue, to the B-2-3 Zoning District.

**Notifications:**

In advance of a hearing on this matter, staff notified Baltimore Housing, the Honorable Carl Stokes and the following community organizations: Citizens for Community Improvement, Gwynnbrook-Garriwood Neighborhood Association, Alliance of Rosemont Communities, and the North Avenue Gateway Community Organization.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Stosur". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

**Thomas J. Stosur  
Director**