
CITY OF BALTIMORE

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October 6, 2025

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

Re: City Council Bill 25-0081 – Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to 3 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District – 6901 Reisterstown Road

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department reviewed City Council Bill 25-0081 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill would permit, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 3 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 6901 Reisterstown Road. The ordinance would take effect on the date of its enactment.

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. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 9-701(2). 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). In making these findings, the City Council must be guided by fourteen “considerations” involving such things as the “nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use might impair its present and future development,” “the character of the neighborhood,” and “the resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of proposed off-street parking.” Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-406(a).

Planning Commission Recommendations

The Planning Commission accepted the Planning Staff recommendation and recommended approval of this bill. The property is located within the Northwest Community Planning Forum area. There is no applicable Urban Renewal Plan. The property is also located in the Fallstaff Neighborhood Statistical Area.

The lot area of the subject property is 4,360 square feet, which meets the 3,300 square foot minimum lot area required for a structure with three dwelling units in the R-7 district. City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 9-401. The property is an end-of-row, single-family attached dwelling. To the north and east are residential areas consisting primarily of duplexes zoned R-4. The Reisterstown Road Plaza is directly across from the subject property and is zoned C-3. The current City Comprehensive Master Plan designates this property as Residential: Higher Density. The Planning Report states that the property meets all other bulk and yard requirements for the zoning district. The Zoning Administrator's Opinion noted that a variance for off-street parking was required; however, the Opinion was written prior to the present applicable exemption to off-street parking taking effect. It is noted in the Planning Report that the subject property is exempt from off-street parking requirements under Section 16-601(b)(1) of Article 32 of the City Code. Council Bill 25-0081 does not request any variances, and the Planning Report appears to support that no variance is required for this conditional use conversion.

The Staff Report finds facts supporting the approval of the proposed conditional use for the property. Specifically, the Report finds that the proposed conversion is consistent with the property's designation under the Comprehensive Master Plan. The Report notes that the size, shape, and arrangement of the existing structure will not change since all alterations will be to the interior. The property will remain accessible to emergency vehicles and no adverse impacts on light or air to neighboring properties are anticipated. The Planning Report contains an analysis of the equity considerations relating to the proposed conversion of the dwelling to three units. The Staff Report notes that conversion of the vacant dwelling "provides additional rental options in the Fallstaff neighborhood, supporting a range of household needs while maintaining community character."

Hearing Requirements

Certain procedural requirements apply to this bill beyond those discussed above because an ordinance that authorizes a conditional use is considered a "legislative authorization." Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-501(2)(ii). Specifically, notice requirements apply to the bill, and the bill must be referred to certain City agencies which are obligated to review the bill in a specified manner. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-504, 5-506, 5-602. Finally, certain limitations on the City Council's ability to amend the bill apply. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-507.

The bill is the appropriate method for the City Council to review the facts and make the determination as to whether the legal standard for a conditional use has been met. Assuming the required findings are made at the hearing, and all procedural requirements are satisfied, the Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

Sincerely yours,



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