

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FINDINGS OF FACT

MOTION OF THE CHAIR OF THE ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, AFTER A PUBLIC HEARING AT WHICH AGENCY REPORTS AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY WERE CONSIDERED, AND PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 32, SECTION 5-406 OF THE BALTIMORE CITY CODE, THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS THESE FINDINGS OF FACT CONCERNING:

City Council Bill No. 25-0077

Zoning - Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling Unit in the R-8 Zoning District – Variances – 541 Lafayette Avenue

1. the establishment, location, construction, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use **will not** be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare **for the following reasons:**
 - Staff reporting on this found that the proposed use would not be detrimental or endanger the public health.
2. the use **would not** be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
 - The subject property is not located in an area or subject to any law that would preclude this use.
3. the authorization **would not** be contrary to the public interest **for the following reasons:**
 - The proposed use would not be contrary to the public interest and has received support from a local community organization.
4. the authorization **would** be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code **for the following reasons:**
 - Staff finds that this use would be in harmony with the Code. In its equity consideration the Planning Department has found that this use could help improve the quality of life for residents of the area by returning the property to a productive use.

After consideration of the following, **where applicable (fill out all that are relevant):**

1. the nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape and the proposed size, shape, and arrangement of structures;
 - This property is located in the Upton neighborhood within the West Planning District and abuts Robert C. Marshall Park at the rear. It is an end-of-row attached dwelling on a lot measuring approximately 15 feet 6 inches by 80 feet, for a total lot area of about

1,240 square feet. The existing three-story structure has undergone some exterior improvements to the doors and windows and is awaiting approval for conversion to a multifamily use to allow interior renovations. The proposal involves converting the single-family dwelling into two apartment units: one one-bedroom unit with approximately 780 square feet of gross floor area and one two-bedroom unit with approximately 1,350 square feet of floor area.

2. the resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading;
 - Staff found no predictable change to the traffic flow that would result from the approval of this use.
3. the nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use might impair its present and future development;
 - This is a primarily residential area within the Upton neighborhood of the West Planning District. The block contains a significant number of vacant rowhouses, with sixteen vacant building notices issued, and one property on the block recently renovated. The subject property abuts Robert C. Marshall Park at the rear, providing open space and recreational amenities. The proposed conversion to two dwelling units aligns with the surrounding residential character and is consistent with the Upton Neighborhood Master Plan, which encourages a range of housing types and the rehabilitation of vacant properties, thereby supporting both present and future neighborhood development.
4. the proximity of dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, and other places of public gathering;
 - There is reasonable proximity of other dwellings, churches and other places of worship, schools, public structures, and places of public gathering.
5. accessibility of the premises for emergency vehicles;
 - The property is readily accessible to emergency vehicles via West Lafayette Street and the adjoining alleys, including the 20-foot-wide mid-block pedestrian access point along the west side of the lot. This configuration provides adequate frontage and clear routes for fire, police, and other emergency services.
6. accessibility of light and air to the premises and to the property in the vicinity;
 - There is adequate light and air to the premises and to properties 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;

- Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities have been provided.

8. the preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures;

- The proposed use of the existing structure would not affect preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures

9. the character of the neighborhood;

- This site is located in the Upton neighborhood within the West Planning District. The character of the neighborhood is primarily residential, consisting of traditional rowhouses, many of which are vacant or undergoing renovation.

10. the provisions of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan;

- The proposed development conforms to the designation of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

11. the provisions of any applicable Urban Renewal Plan;

- The property is not subject to an Urban Renewal Plan and is located within Upton Neighborhood Master Plan Area.

12. all applicable standards and requirements of this Code;

- The proposed use would meet all applicable standards and requirements of the Zoning Code.

13. the intent and purpose of this Code; and

- The proposed use is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Code.

14. any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare.

- The proposed use is consistent with any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare.

SOURCE OF FINDINGS (Check all that apply):

[X] Planning Commission's report, dated August 11, 2025, including the Department of Planning Staff Report, dated August 27, 2025.

[X] Testimony presented at the Committee hearing.

Oral – Witness:

15. Desiree Luckey – Law Dept

16. Jason Wright – DHCD

17. Eric Tiso – Planning Dept

18. Ty'lor Schnella – Office of Government Relations

Written:

- Law Department, Agency Report – Dated September 23, 2025
- Department of Housing and Community Development, Agency Report – Dated September 19, 2025
- Planning Commission, Agency Report – Dates August 11, 2025

COMMITTEE MEMBERS VOTING IN FAVOR

Ryan Dorsey , Chair

Sharon Green Middleton

Mark Parker

Paris Gray

John Bullock

Zac Blancahrd