



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

4/30/2026

9:00 AM

CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS

26-0150

*Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods
Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) –
Variances – 600 West North Avenue*

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BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

26-0150

*Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods
Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) –
Variances – 600 West North Avenue*

Agency Reports

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

April 7, 2026

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 26-0150 – Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods
Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West
North Avenue

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department reviewed City Council Bill 26-0150 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill is for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001); and granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums. The ordinance would take effect on the date of its enactment.

The subject property is in a C-2 zoning district. The Statement of Intent filed by the property owner lists the intended uses of the property as retail goods establishment (no alcoholic beverage sales), retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales), and a restaurant. It is the understanding of the Planning Commission that the owner intends to develop the property with a building housing a Streets Market grocery store with an attached retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales that is accessed by a separate entrance. The owner also intends to develop a separate multi-tenant building which will include a restaurant. Both a grocery store and a restaurant are permitted uses in a C-2 district. A retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales is a conditional use requiring approval by ordinance. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 10-301.

There is no minimum front yard required in the C-2 district, but if one is provided it cannot exceed 5 feet. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 10-401. On page 7 of the Planning Commission Staff Report (Staff Report) it is noted that there is “potential outdoor dining associated with the proposed retail and restaurant uses within the multi-tenant building.” Outdoor dining is a conditional use requiring Board approval in a C-2 district where it adjoins a residential zoning district on the side in which the outdoor dining is proposed and where it is separated from the residential district by an alley or street of less than 20 feet in width or if no alley or street is present. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-329(a)(1)(ii); Tbl. 10-301. The Staff Report indicates that the

potential outdoor dining would likely be located in the setback area between the multi-tenant commercial building and West North Avenue. Additionally, it appears from the site plan that the 16 foot, 6 inch setback applies only to the multi-tenant building. The grocery store building extends closer to West North Avenue. One or more residential districts appear to be across West North Avenue from the proposed outdoor dining associated with the multi-tenant building. If West North Avenue is less than 20 feet wide where the outdoor dining will potentially be located and if this use will be across from a residential district, then conditional use approval from the BMZA will be required for the outdoor dining.

Section 14-336 of the Zoning Code provides additional requirements for a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales. The establishment must have a Class A or Class A-2 License from the Baltimore City Board of Liquor License Commissioners. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(a). The establishment may not be detrimental to or endanger public health, safety, or welfare. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(b). The establishment must be located at least 300 feet from another existing retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales, although this spacing standard can be waived if the applicant can show that there will be no negative impact to public health, safety, and welfare. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(c). The City Board of Liquor License Commissioners may not issue a new liquor license in the 40th alcoholic beverage district where the subject property appears to lie. Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 12-1603(a), (b). A new liquor license may not be issued for, and an existing license may not be moved to, a building within 300 feet of the nearest point of a building housing a place of worship or a school. Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 12-1605(a)(1)(i). It appears that a building operating as part of the Maryland Institute College of Art is less than 200 feet from this property. If the Maryland Institute College of Art is a school to which Section 12-1605 of the Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Article of the Maryland Code applies, and if the establishment does not already have a Class A or Class A-2 license, then it cannot operate as a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales.

Conditional Use Standards

Since conditional use approval is needed, the Zoning Code requires that the City Council find the following facts:

- (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.

City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-404(a); 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.

City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-406(a); 5-404(a) (review in accordance with standards in Section 5-406).

Variance Standards

To grant a variance, the City Council must 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" or "because of exceptional circumstances related to the specific structure or land involved," a practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result from a strict application of the law's requirements. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-308(a). The City Council must also make five other findings:

1. the practical difficulty is caused by the 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 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
5. 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). It is important to note that all these criteria must be found, in addition to a finding of practical difficulty. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-308(a). The City Council must evaluate a request for a variance based on evidence presented at a public hearing. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-305(a).

Planning Commission Recommendations

The plans submitted by the owner propose redeveloping the subject property with a grocery store building and a separate multi-tenant retail building along with an associated parking lot. According to the Staff Report, the surrounding area “includes a mix of residential rowhouse neighborhoods and commercial uses along the North Avenue corridor.” The Staff Report describes North Avenue as a major commercial corridor and transit route. The property is part of a planned redevelopment project known as Madison Park North/Reservoir Square. The Staff Report provides an extensive history of the Madison Park North/Reservoir Square redevelopment project. The subject property is currently vacant.

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City designates the subject property as Community Commercial. The Staff Report states:

The proposed development conforms to that designation, as the site is intended to support neighborhood-serving commercial activity along a major corridor. The proposed grocery store and retail uses support the Comprehensive Master Plan’s goals of strengthening neighborhood commercial corridors and improving access to essential goods and services for nearby residents.

The proposed development also supports the Planning Department’s Healthy Food Environment Strategy “which seeks to improve equitable access to healthy and affordable food throughout Baltimore.”

The Planning Commission adopted the findings of its staff and recommended that Council Bill 26-0150 be amended and approved. The amendment recommended by Planning Staff would limit the conditional use approval for a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales to a specific portion of the subject property. The Planning Staff also recommended replacing the site plan filed with the application with a site plan which accurately reflects where the retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales will be located. Specifically, the amendments recommended by Planning are as follows:

1. Insert “A Portion of” immediately before “600 West North Avenue” in bill title;
2. Revise legislative purpose statement to read in part: “...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as shown in yellow on the accompanying site plans;...”
3. In Section 1, revise the 18th line to read in part: “...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, as shown in yellow on the site plan accompanying this Ordinance,...”
4. Replace the Site Plan dated 1/13/2026 and used in lieu of the plat referred to in the bill with the site plan dated 3/12/2026 showing “Proposed Retail Goods Establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales), Designated Tenant Space within Multi-Tenant Retail Building”.

The Law Department agrees with the first two amendments recommended by Planning. The third and fourth recommended amendments require further amendment. The third recommended amendment would result in Section 1 of Council Bill 26-0150 reading as follows: “That permission is granted for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001) as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, as ~~outlined in red on the plat shown in yellow on the site plan~~ accompanying this Ordinance...” Based on further discussions with the applicant, it is Planning’s understanding that the retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales will be housed in a portion of the

building where the grocery store will be located, and it will have a separate entrance. Therefore, the recommended addition of the phrase “as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building” should be removed from the third recommended amendment.

The fourth amendment recommended by Planning is to replace the site plan submitted by the applicant with a new site plan which shows where the proposed retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales will be located on the site. This amendment also refers to the multi-tenant retail building as the site for the alcoholic beverage sales establishment. As discussed above, the applicant intends to locate the alcoholic beverage sales establishment in the building housing the grocery store. The updated site plan should highlight the location of the proposed retail alcoholic beverage sales establishment as part of the building housing the grocery store. It is Planning’s understanding that the applicant would like the conditional use approval for the alcoholic beverage sales establishment to cover the entire grocery store property in the event that the law is changed to permit alcoholic beverages to be sold in grocery stores. Currently, a license to sell alcoholic beverages cannot be issued or transferred to a grocery store. See Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 4-205(b) (a local licensing board may not issue a license to sell alcohol to a chain store, a supermarket, or a discount house); Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 4-303 (a license to sell alcohol may not be transferred for use on the premises of a chain store, a supermarket, or a discount house).

Maryland Senate Bill 75 and Maryland House Bill 1303, both introduced in the current session of the General Assembly, would have permitted alcoholic beverage sales in grocery stores. Neither bill advanced out of Committee. Moreover, a local licensing board may not issue a license for use in an establishment with more than 10,000 square feet of floor space to be devoted to the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption. Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 4-206(a), (b)(1). On a more detailed site plan provided to Planning by the applicant, which is not included in the bill file for Council Bill 26-0150, the square footage of the grocery store portion of the building appears to exceed 12,000 square feet. Thus, under existing law, a conditional use for a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales cannot be issued for the grocery store portion of the building. A retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales must have a Class A or Class A-2 License from the Baltimore City Board of Liquor License Commissioners. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(a). Under the Maryland Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Code, a liquor license cannot be issued or transferred for use in a grocery store. If the establishment does not have a Class A or Class A-2 license, then it cannot operate as a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales. The Staff Report finds facts relating to the considerations for approval of a conditional use in Section 5-406(a), including that the proposed retail alcoholic beverage sales establishment would be located within a commercial development along the North Avenue corridor, the development is consistent with the character of the neighborhood, and there is no applicable Urban Renewal Plan. Additionally, the conditional use “advances the general welfare by supporting the redevelopment of a long-vacant site and introducing neighborhood-serving retail uses.”

The Staff Report also analyzed the approval standards for a variance in Section 5-308 of Article 32 of the City Code with respect to the requested variances from the maximum front yard setback and the maximum number of permitted off-street parking spaces provided. The Staff Report finds that a practical difficulty would result unless a variance is granted to the front yard setback and parking maximums due to conditions peculiar to the property.

The parking maximums are set out in Zoning Table 16-204. For a retail goods establishment the maximum number of off-street parking spaces that can be provided is 2 per 1,000

square feet of gross floor area. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 16-204. For a restaurant the maximum number of off-street parking spaces that can be provided is 2 per 1,000 square feet of public seating area. Id. The Staff Report does not indicate what the permitted or planned number of parking spaces are for the property. Neither the site plan, nor the plat filed by the applicant and posted to the bill file for Council Bill 26-0150, contain designations of square footage for the building to house the grocery store and separate alcoholic beverage sales establishment or for the separate multi-tenant retail building that is supposed to include the restaurant. The site plan in the bill file contains a calculation for the maximum allowable permitted parking spaces. The site plan notes that the plan provides 65 parking spaces while the maximum allowed is 36 spaces. The calculation of the maximum number of spaces allowed is based on 17,000 square feet of retail space which accounts for 34 of the parking spaces. The restaurant space is said to be 2,000 square feet. The site plan inaccurately states that the permitted parking spaces for a restaurant are 1 space per 1,000 square feet. The actual calculation is 2 spaces per 1,000 square feet of public seating area. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 16-204. Both the site plan and the plat cite to Section 16-205 of Article 32 of the City Code in reference to requiring zoning relief for the number of parking spaces to be provided. Section 16-205 was repealed by Ordinance Number 25-064.

The more detailed site plan provided by the property owner to Planning shows the square footage of the multi-tenant building where the restaurant will be located as 5,168 square feet. This version of the site plan also shows details of the building that will house the separate grocery store and alcoholic beverage retail establishment. The square footage of the grocery store is 12,428 square feet, the square footage of the retail alcoholic beverage establishment is 1,192 square feet, and a vestibule that will provide separate entrances to the grocery store and retail alcoholic beverage establishment is 323 square feet. It is unclear from the square footages provided how the number of 36 as the maximum allowable number of parking spaces was calculated.

In its analysis of the standards for approving the two requested variances, the Staff Report notes that the property represents one of the few undeveloped sites within the Madison Park North/Reservoir Square redevelopment area that can accommodate a grocery store and associated retail uses. As a result, the property is expected to attract customers from the surrounding communities as well as the broader corridor. Due to its location immediately adjacent to I-83 and along a major arterial corridor, the grocery store is expected to generate higher levels of vehicular activity than a typical neighborhood retail use. The strict application of the Zoning Code's parking maximums in Zoning Table 16-204 would limit the ability of the site to provide adequate parking to accommodate anticipated customer demand.

Regarding the variance from the front yard setback maximum of 5 feet, the Staff Report states:

the proposed building placement and site design incorporate additional space between the building and the street to allow for pedestrian circulation, landscaping, and potential outdoor dining associated with the proposed retail and restaurant uses within the multi-tenant building. This setback area will contribute to a more active and pedestrian-oriented frontage along North Avenue and provide space for outdoor seating that serves as a neighborhood amenity.

The Staff Report discusses each of the required findings under Section 5-308 of Article 32 of the City Code for the granting of a variance from the parking space maximum and front yard setback requirements in the Zoning Code. The Staff Report contains an equity analysis that

discusses that this development will bring grocery and retail uses to an area which has limited access to fresh food and household goods, will revitalize a long vacant property, and may ultimately provide employment opportunities for residents in nearby neighborhoods.

Hearing Requirements

Certain procedural requirements apply to this bill beyond those discussed above because an ordinance that authorizes a conditional use or a variance is considered a “legislative authorization.” Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-501(2)(i), (ii). Specifically, notice requirements apply to the bill, and the bill must be referred to certain City agencies that 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 standards have been met for a conditional use and for required variances. Assuming the required findings are made at the hearing, the required amendments are made, and all procedural requirements are satisfied, the Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

Sincerely yours,



Michele M. Toth
Assistant Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson
Councilmember Torrence
Ethan Hasiuk
Shamoyia Gardiner
Nina Themelis
Ty’lor Schnella
Aaron Degraffenreidt
Hilary Ruley
Jeff Hochstetler
Ashlea Brown
Desiree Luckey
Ahleah Clark

**LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE****The Honorable Ryan Dorsey
CHAIR****Bill Hearing***26-0150***Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) –
Variances – 600 West North Avenue**

Sponsor: Council Member James Torrence District 7

Purpose: FOR the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums; and, providing for a special effective date.

REPORTING AGENCIES

Law Department	Approved for form & sufficiency w/ Amendments
Board of Municipal & Zoning Appeals	No Objection
Planning Commission	Amend and approve
Department of Transportation	Without Recommendation
Department of Housing & Community Development	Favorable
Department of Health	Without Recommendation
Board of Liquor Licenses Commissioners	
Parking Authority of Baltimore City (Not referred, but submitting a report)	Favorable

BACKGROUND**City Law**Article 32 of the Baltimore City Code (Zoning Code) allows for the City to permit conditional use as an ordinance allowing properties [Article 32 Title 5 Subtitle 4](#) "...Certain uses exist, however, that, because of their unique characteristics, cannot properly be classified in any particular district without consideration, in each case, of the impact of those uses on neighboring land and of the public need for

the particular use at the particular location. These uses, referred to as conditional uses, may only be approved as specified in this subtitle.”

To approve a conditional use, the Council must consider:

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

Bill Overview

If this bill is enacted, it would create a Conditional Use for the property known as 600 West North Avenue, permitting a retail goods store (grocery store) with alcohol beverage sales. The site is located along the North Ave corridor, and the proposed grocery store would serve the Madison Park, Bolton Hill, & Reservoir Hill communities.

The site is currently improved with a building that has previously served as a day care facility, but has been vacant for several years.

The bill also contains variances for the maximum number of parking spaces and the front yard setback. Planning Department staff in their report noted that a grocery store in this area could expect to draw customers not only from the surrounding neighborhoods but also those traveling along both the North Ave corridor and the I-83 corridor. Along North Avenue, there would be limited access to on-street parking, and so the Planning Department is supportive of a variance for a 65-space off-street parking area.

The Department of Transportation, in its report, noted that there were initial concerns about on-street parking, and in the site plan review committee, on-street parking was initially rejected. Following additional conversations with the developer, DOT has removed its objections to the on-street parking and is also in favor of the variance for the 65-space parking area for the store.

The Planning Department, in its staff report, recommends four amendments:

- (1) 1. Insert “A Portion of” immediately before “ 600 West North Avenue” in bill title;
- (2) 2. Revise legislative purpose statement to read in part: “...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as shown in yellow on the accompanying site plans;...”

- (3) In Section 1, revise the 18th line to read in part: "...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, as shown in yellow on the site plan accompanying this Ordinance,..."
- (4) Replace the Site Plan dated 1/13/2026 and used in lieu of the plat referred to in the bill with the site plan dated 3/12/2026 showing "Proposed Retail Goods Establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales), Designated Tenant Space within Multi-Tenant Retail Building".

The Law Department, in its report, noted that they agreed with amendments 1 & 2 from Planning but believe that amendments 3 & 4 would require further amendments. In both amendments, Planning refers to a multi-tenant retail building. The Developer plans to locate alcohol sales in the building with the grocery store, but with a separate entrance. For Amendment 3, the law recommends removing the phrase "as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building." For Amendment 4, the Law Department recommends that the updated site plan highlight the location of the proposed retail alcoholic beverage sales establishment as part of the building housing the grocery store.

Analysis by: Tony Leva
Analysis Date: 4/27/2026

Direct Inquiries to: Anthony.Leva@baltimorecity.gov

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 26-0150
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Torrence
At the request of: MCB Blank Slate Madison Park LLC
Address: c/o Drew E. Tildon, Esq.
25 S. Charles Street, 21st Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
Telephone: (410) 727-6600

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2026

Assigned to: Land Use and Transportation Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, Planning Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Housing and Community Development, Health Department, Board of Liquor License Commissioners

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Zoning – Conditional Use –**
3 **Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances –**
4 **600 West North Avenue**

5 FOR the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and
6 operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property
7 known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001), as outlined in red on the
8 accompanying plat; granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street
9 parking maximums; and, providing for a special effective date.

10 BY authority of

11 Article 32 - Zoning
12 Sections 5-201(a), 5-305(a), 5-308, 5-404(a), 5-406, 5-501, 5-508, 10-301 (Table 10-301),
13 10-401 (Table 10-401), 14-336, and 16-204 (Table 16-204)
14 Baltimore City Revised Code
15 (Edition 2000)

16 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That
17 permission is granted for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods
18 establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 West North Avenue
19 (Block 3435, Lot 001), as outlined in red on the plat accompanying this Ordinance, in accordance
20 with Baltimore City Zoning Code §§ 5-201(a), 5-404(a), 5-406, 5-501, and 5-508, subject to the
21 condition that the retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) complies with all
22 applicable federal, state, and local licensing and certification requirements.

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

Council Bill 26-0150

1 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, That pursuant to the authority of §§ 5-305(a),
2 5-308, and 5-501 of Article 32 - Zoning, permission is granted for a variance from the
3 requirements of § 10-401 (Table 10-401: Commercial Districts (C-1 to C-4) - Bulk and Yard
4 Regulations) for the maximum front yard setback on the property known as 600 West North
5 Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001), as outlined on the plat accompanying this Ordinance, as up to
6 5 feet are permitted and 16 feet and 6 inches are proposed.

7 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, That pursuant to the authority of §§ 5-305(a),
8 5-308, and 5-501 of Article 32 - Zoning, permission is granted for a variance from the
9 requirements of § 16-204 (Table 16-204: Off-Street Parking Maximums) on the property known
10 as 600 West North Avenue, as outlined on the plat accompanying this Ordinance, as up to 36
11 spaces are permitted and 65 spaces are proposed.

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

20 **SECTION . AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, That this Ordinance takes effect on the date it is
21 enacted.

**AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL BILL 26-0150
(1st Reader Copy)**

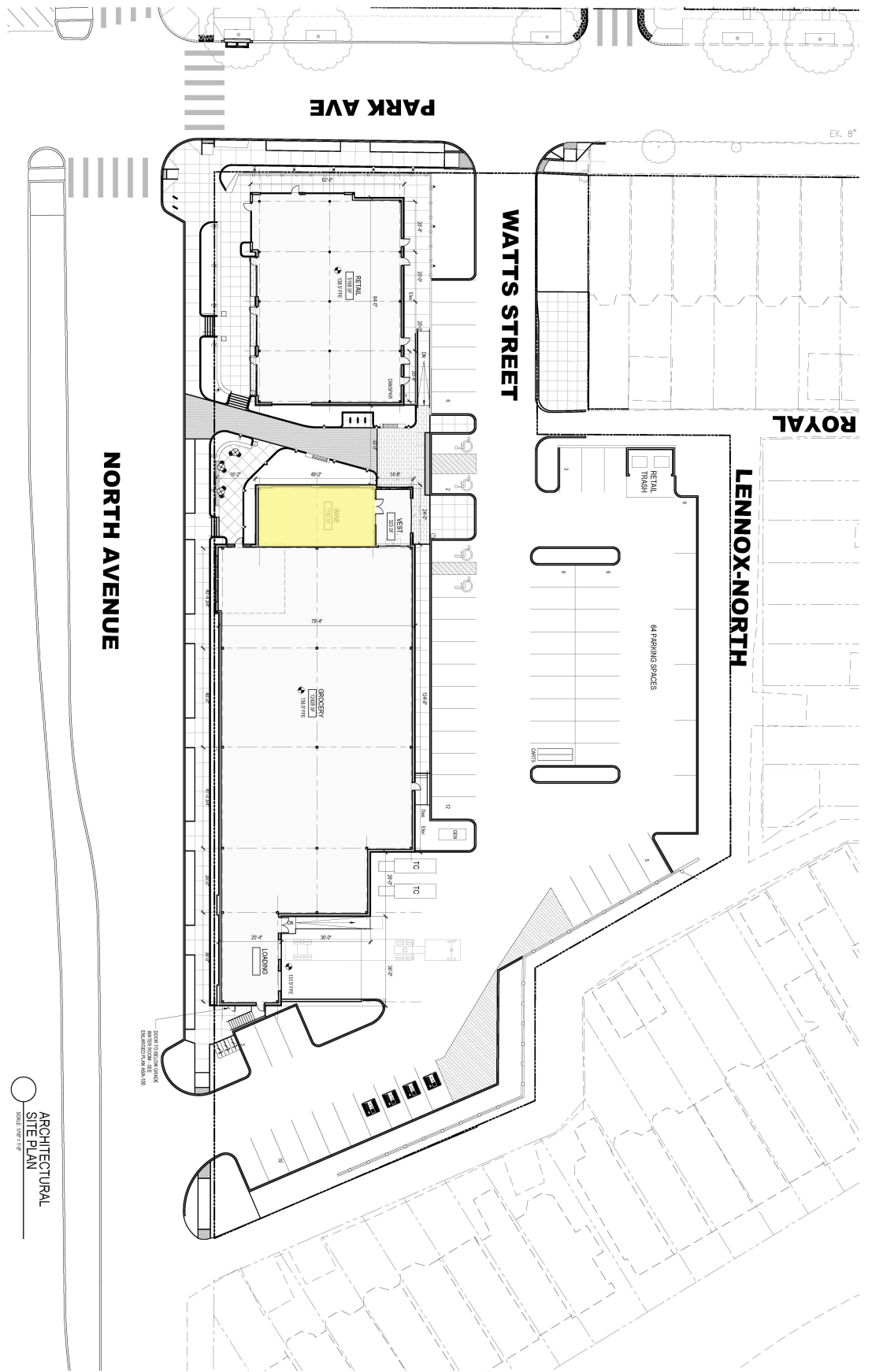
By: Planning Commission
{To be offered to the Land Use and Transportation Committee}

Amendment No. 1

On page 1, in line 4, before “**600 West North Avenue,**” insert “**A Portion of**”; and, on that same page, in line 6, after “on,” insert “**a portion of,**”; and, on that same page, beginning in line 7, strike “as outlined in red on the accompanying plat” and insert “**as shown in yellow on the accompanying site plans;**”; and, on that same page, in line 18, after “on,” insert “**a portion of,**”; and, on that same page, after “(Block 3435, Lot 001),” strike “as outlined in red on the plat” and insert “**as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, as shown in yellow on the site plan**”.

Amendment No. 2

Strike the accompanying plat in its entirety and substitute with the attached site plan.



ARCHITECTURAL
SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



JPA ARCHITECTS
2811 Dorton Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410.464.8300
www.jparchitect.com

CONSULTANTS
STRUCTURAL
CARROLL ENGINEERING, INC.
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MEP AND FIRE PROTECTION
HARRIS ENGINEERS ARCHITECTS
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FLORESA TETTER
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600 W NORTH AVENUE
600 W North Avenue
Baltimore, MD

REVISION DRAWING LOG

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION

PROJECT: 600 W NORTH AVENUE
CLIENT: MCB / BLANK SLATE
DRAWING TITLE: ARCHITECTURAL SITE PLAN
DRAWING NUMBER: A-100

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

April 7, 2026

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 26-0150 – Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods
Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West
North Avenue

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department reviewed City Council Bill 26-0150 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill is for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001); and granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums. The ordinance would take effect on the date of its enactment.

The subject property is in a C-2 zoning district. The Statement of Intent filed by the property owner lists the intended uses of the property as retail goods establishment (no alcoholic beverage sales), retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales), and a restaurant. It is the understanding of the Planning Commission that the owner intends to develop the property with a building housing a Streets Market grocery store with an attached retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales that is accessed by a separate entrance. The owner also intends to develop a separate multi-tenant building which will include a restaurant. Both a grocery store and a restaurant are permitted uses in a C-2 district. A retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales is a conditional use requiring approval by ordinance. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 10-301.

There is no minimum front yard required in the C-2 district, but if one is provided it cannot exceed 5 feet. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 10-401. On page 7 of the Planning Commission Staff Report (Staff Report) it is noted that there is “potential outdoor dining associated with the proposed retail and restaurant uses within the multi-tenant building.” Outdoor dining is a conditional use requiring Board approval in a C-2 district where it adjoins a residential zoning district on the side in which the outdoor dining is proposed and where it is separated from the residential district by an alley or street of less than 20 feet in width or if no alley or street is present. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-329(a)(1)(ii); Tbl. 10-301. The Staff Report indicates that the

potential outdoor dining would likely be located in the setback area between the multi-tenant commercial building and West North Avenue. Additionally, it appears from the site plan that the 16 foot, 6 inch setback applies only to the multi-tenant building. The grocery store building extends closer to West North Avenue. One or more residential districts appear to be across West North Avenue from the proposed outdoor dining associated with the multi-tenant building. If West North Avenue is less than 20 feet wide where the outdoor dining will potentially be located and if this use will be across from a residential district, then conditional use approval from the BMZA will be required for the outdoor dining.

Section 14-336 of the Zoning Code provides additional requirements for a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales. The establishment must have a Class A or Class A-2 License from the Baltimore City Board of Liquor License Commissioners. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(a). The establishment may not be detrimental to or endanger public health, safety, or welfare. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(b). The establishment must be located at least 300 feet from another existing retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales, although this spacing standard can be waived if the applicant can show that there will be no negative impact to public health, safety, and welfare. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(c). The City Board of Liquor License Commissioners may not issue a new liquor license in the 40th alcoholic beverage district where the subject property appears to lie. Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 12-1603(a), (b). A new liquor license may not be issued for, and an existing license may not be moved to, a building within 300 feet of the nearest point of a building housing a place of worship or a school. Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 12-1605(a)(1)(i). It appears that a building operating as part of the Maryland Institute College of Art is less than 200 feet from this property. If the Maryland Institute College of Art is a school to which Section 12-1605 of the Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Article of the Maryland Code applies, and if the establishment does not already have a Class A or Class A-2 license, then it cannot operate as a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales.

Conditional Use Standards

Since conditional use approval is needed, the Zoning Code requires that the City Council find the following facts:

- (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.

City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-404(a); 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.

City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-406(a); 5-404(a) (review in accordance with standards in Section 5-406).

Variance Standards

To grant a variance, the City Council must 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" or "because of exceptional circumstances related to the specific structure or land involved," a practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result from a strict application of the law's requirements. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-308(a). The City Council must also make five other findings:

1. the practical difficulty is caused by the 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 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
5. 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). It is important to note that all these criteria must be found, in addition to a finding of practical difficulty. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-308(a). The City Council must evaluate a request for a variance based on evidence presented at a public hearing. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-305(a).

Planning Commission Recommendations

The plans submitted by the owner propose redeveloping the subject property with a grocery store building and a separate multi-tenant retail building along with an associated parking lot. According to the Staff Report, the surrounding area “includes a mix of residential rowhouse neighborhoods and commercial uses along the North Avenue corridor.” The Staff Report describes North Avenue as a major commercial corridor and transit route. The property is part of a planned redevelopment project known as Madison Park North/Reservoir Square. The Staff Report provides an extensive history of the Madison Park North/Reservoir Square redevelopment project. The subject property is currently vacant.

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City designates the subject property as Community Commercial. The Staff Report states:

The proposed development conforms to that designation, as the site is intended to support neighborhood-serving commercial activity along a major corridor. The proposed grocery store and retail uses support the Comprehensive Master Plan’s goals of strengthening neighborhood commercial corridors and improving access to essential goods and services for nearby residents.

The proposed development also supports the Planning Department’s Healthy Food Environment Strategy “which seeks to improve equitable access to healthy and affordable food throughout Baltimore.”

The Planning Commission adopted the findings of its staff and recommended that Council Bill 26-0150 be amended and approved. The amendment recommended by Planning Staff would limit the conditional use approval for a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales to a specific portion of the subject property. The Planning Staff also recommended replacing the site plan filed with the application with a site plan which accurately reflects where the retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales will be located. Specifically, the amendments recommended by Planning are as follows:

1. Insert “A Portion of” immediately before “600 West North Avenue” in bill title;
2. Revise legislative purpose statement to read in part: “...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as shown in yellow on the accompanying site plans;...”
3. In Section 1, revise the 18th line to read in part: “...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, as shown in yellow on the site plan accompanying this Ordinance,...”
4. Replace the Site Plan dated 1/13/2026 and used in lieu of the plat referred to in the bill with the site plan dated 3/12/2026 showing “Proposed Retail Goods Establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales), Designated Tenant Space within Multi-Tenant Retail Building”.

The Law Department agrees with the first two amendments recommended by Planning. The third and fourth recommended amendments require further amendment. The third recommended amendment would result in Section 1 of Council Bill 26-0150 reading as follows: “That permission is granted for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001) as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, as ~~outlined in red on the plat shown in yellow on the site plan~~ accompanying this Ordinance...” Based on further discussions with the applicant, it is Planning’s understanding that the retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales will be housed in a portion of the

building where the grocery store will be located, and it will have a separate entrance. Therefore, the recommended addition of the phrase “as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building” should be removed from the third recommended amendment.

The fourth amendment recommended by Planning is to replace the site plan submitted by the applicant with a new site plan which shows where the proposed retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales will be located on the site. This amendment also refers to the multi-tenant retail building as the site for the alcoholic beverage sales establishment. As discussed above, the applicant intends to locate the alcoholic beverage sales establishment in the building housing the grocery store. The updated site plan should highlight the location of the proposed retail alcoholic beverage sales establishment as part of the building housing the grocery store. It is Planning’s understanding that the applicant would like the conditional use approval for the alcoholic beverage sales establishment to cover the entire grocery store property in the event that the law is changed to permit alcoholic beverages to be sold in grocery stores. Currently, a license to sell alcoholic beverages cannot be issued or transferred to a grocery store. See Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 4-205(b) (a local licensing board may not issue a license to sell alcohol to a chain store, a supermarket, or a discount house); Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 4-303 (a license to sell alcohol may not be transferred for use on the premises of a chain store, a supermarket, or a discount house).

Maryland Senate Bill 75 and Maryland House Bill 1303, both introduced in the current session of the General Assembly, would have permitted alcoholic beverage sales in grocery stores. Neither bill advanced out of Committee. Moreover, a local licensing board may not issue a license for use in an establishment with more than 10,000 square feet of floor space to be devoted to the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption. Md. Code, Al. Bev & Cann., § 4-206(a), (b)(1). On a more detailed site plan provided to Planning by the applicant, which is not included in the bill file for Council Bill 26-0150, the square footage of the grocery store portion of the building appears to exceed 12,000 square feet. Thus, under existing law, a conditional use for a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales cannot be issued for the grocery store portion of the building. A retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales must have a Class A or Class A-2 License from the Baltimore City Board of Liquor License Commissioners. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 14-336(a). Under the Maryland Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Code, a liquor license cannot be issued or transferred for use in a grocery store. If the establishment does not have a Class A or Class A-2 license, then it cannot operate as a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales. The Staff Report finds facts relating to the considerations for approval of a conditional use in Section 5-406(a), including that the proposed retail alcoholic beverage sales establishment would be located within a commercial development along the North Avenue corridor, the development is consistent with the character of the neighborhood, and there is no applicable Urban Renewal Plan. Additionally, the conditional use “advances the general welfare by supporting the redevelopment of a long-vacant site and introducing neighborhood-serving retail uses.”

The Staff Report also analyzed the approval standards for a variance in Section 5-308 of Article 32 of the City Code with respect to the requested variances from the maximum front yard setback and the maximum number of permitted off-street parking spaces provided. The Staff Report finds that a practical difficulty would result unless a variance is granted to the front yard setback and parking maximums due to conditions peculiar to the property.

The parking maximums are set out in Zoning Table 16-204. For a retail goods establishment the maximum number of off-street parking spaces that can be provided is 2 per 1,000

square feet of gross floor area. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 16-204. For a restaurant the maximum number of off-street parking spaces that can be provided is 2 per 1,000 square feet of public seating area. Id. The Staff Report does not indicate what the permitted or planned number of parking spaces are for the property. Neither the site plan, nor the plat filed by the applicant and posted to the bill file for Council Bill 26-0150, contain designations of square footage for the building to house the grocery store and separate alcoholic beverage sales establishment or for the separate multi-tenant retail building that is supposed to include the restaurant. The site plan in the bill file contains a calculation for the maximum allowable permitted parking spaces. The site plan notes that the plan provides 65 parking spaces while the maximum allowed is 36 spaces. The calculation of the maximum number of spaces allowed is based on 17,000 square feet of retail space which accounts for 34 of the parking spaces. The restaurant space is said to be 2,000 square feet. The site plan inaccurately states that the permitted parking spaces for a restaurant are 1 space per 1,000 square feet. The actual calculation is 2 spaces per 1,000 square feet of public seating area. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, Tbl. 16-204. Both the site plan and the plat cite to Section 16-205 of Article 32 of the City Code in reference to requiring zoning relief for the number of parking spaces to be provided. Section 16-205 was repealed by Ordinance Number 25-064.

The more detailed site plan provided by the property owner to Planning shows the square footage of the multi-tenant building where the restaurant will be located as 5,168 square feet. This version of the site plan also shows details of the building that will house the separate grocery store and alcoholic beverage retail establishment. The square footage of the grocery store is 12,428 square feet, the square footage of the retail alcoholic beverage establishment is 1,192 square feet, and a vestibule that will provide separate entrances to the grocery store and retail alcoholic beverage establishment is 323 square feet. It is unclear from the square footages provided how the number of 36 as the maximum allowable number of parking spaces was calculated.

In its analysis of the standards for approving the two requested variances, the Staff Report notes that the property represents one of the few undeveloped sites within the Madison Park North/Reservoir Square redevelopment area that can accommodate a grocery store and associated retail uses. As a result, the property is expected to attract customers from the surrounding communities as well as the broader corridor. Due to its location immediately adjacent to I-83 and along a major arterial corridor, the grocery store is expected to generate higher levels of vehicular activity than a typical neighborhood retail use. The strict application of the Zoning Code's parking maximums in Zoning Table 16-204 would limit the ability of the site to provide adequate parking to accommodate anticipated customer demand.

Regarding the variance from the front yard setback maximum of 5 feet, the Staff Report states:

the proposed building placement and site design incorporate additional space between the building and the street to allow for pedestrian circulation, landscaping, and potential outdoor dining associated with the proposed retail and restaurant uses within the multi-tenant building. This setback area will contribute to a more active and pedestrian-oriented frontage along North Avenue and provide space for outdoor seating that serves as a neighborhood amenity.

The Staff Report discusses each of the required findings under Section 5-308 of Article 32 of the City Code for the granting of a variance from the parking space maximum and front yard setback requirements in the Zoning Code. The Staff Report contains an equity analysis that

discusses that this development will bring grocery and retail uses to an area which has limited access to fresh food and household goods, will revitalize a long vacant property, and may ultimately provide employment opportunities for residents in nearby neighborhoods.

Hearing Requirements

Certain procedural requirements apply to this bill beyond those discussed above because an ordinance that authorizes a conditional use or a variance is considered a “legislative authorization.” Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-501(2)(i), (ii). Specifically, notice requirements apply to the bill, and the bill must be referred to certain City agencies that 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 standards have been met for a conditional use and for required variances. Assuming the required findings are made at the hearing, the required amendments are made, and all procedural requirements are satisfied, the Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

Sincerely yours,



Michele M. Toth
Assistant Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson
Councilmember Torrence
Ethan Hasiuk
Shamoyia Gardiner
Nina Themelis
Ty’lor Schnella
Aaron Degraffenreidt
Hilary Ruley
Jeff Hochstetler
Ashlea Brown
Desiree Luckey
Ahleah Clark

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 #26-0150 / Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue		

TO

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

DATE: March 16, 2026

At its regular meeting of March 12, 2026, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #26-0150, for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums; and, providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended amendment and approval of City Council Bill #26-0150 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 #26-0150 be **amended and approved** by the City Council.

The Planning Commission heard several concerns from the public related to the potential impacts to the surrounding neighborhood from patrons arriving by car, the amount of parking proposed, and multi-modal options for patrons. The Commission refers these concerns to the Department of Transportation for consideration in their report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at eric.tiso@baltimorecity.gov or by phone at 410-396-8358.

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
- Ms. Drew Tildon, Esq.



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Ren Southard
Acting Director

March 12, 2026

REQUEST: City Council Bill 26-0150 / Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001), as outlined on the accompanying site plan; granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with the following amendments:

1. Insert “A Portion of” immediately before “ 600 West North Avenue” in bill title;
2. Revise legislative purpose statement to read in part: “...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as shown in yellow on the accompanying site plans;...”
3. In Section 1, revise the 18th line to read in part: “...on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, as a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, as shown in yellow on the site plan accompanying this Ordinance,...”
4. Replace the Site Plan dated 1/13/2026 and used in lieu of the plat referred to in the bill with the site plan dated 3/12/2026 showing “Proposed Retail Goods Establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales), Designated Tenant Space within Multi-Tenant Retail Building”.

STAFF: Austin C. Davis

PETITIONER: Councilmember Torrence, at the request of MCB Blank Slate Madison Park LLC

OWNER: MCB Blank Slate Madison Park LLC

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001) is located along the south side of West North Avenue between Park Avenue and Brookfield Avenue. The site is currently improved with a former day-care building that has been vacant for several years. The submitted site plan proposes redevelopment of the property with a grocery store building and a separate multi-tenant retail building, along with associated parking and site circulation improvements.

General Area: The surrounding area includes a mix of residential rowhouse neighborhoods and commercial uses along the North Avenue corridor. North Avenue is a major east-west commercial corridor and transit route serving nearby neighborhoods including Madison Park, Bolton Hill, and Reservoir Hill.

The property is also part of the broader Madison Park West redevelopment area, which has seen substantial reinvestment in recent years including new residential and mixed-use development

HISTORY

While the subject property was historically used as a day-care facility but has remained vacant for several years, planning and redevelopment efforts for the West North Avenue corridor have evolved over several years as part of broader efforts to address long-standing disinvestment and vacancy in central and west Baltimore. During the mid-2010s, the site known as Madison Park North, located on the 800 block of West North Avenue, was identified for large-scale mixed-use redevelopment. Early planning for the area envisioned a phased redevelopment including new housing, improved public spaces, and eventual neighborhood-serving commercial uses along North Avenue.

By 2018, MCB Real Estate and development partners had assembled approximately 8 acres of property along West North Avenue and began planning a multi-phase redevelopment project now commonly referred to as Madison Park North or Reservoir Square. Initial phases of redevelopment focused on residential development, new streets, and infrastructure improvements intended to support future mixed-use development along the corridor. In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly established the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) to support long-term revitalization of the West North Avenue corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. The authority was created to coordinate redevelopment efforts and administer state funding to support housing, economic development, transportation, and public realm improvements within a defined corridor area.

In August 2022, Phase 1 of the Madison Park North redevelopment broke ground, introducing approximately 120 new townhomes, new internal streets, and public realm improvements along North Avenue. Later phases of redevelopment were envisioned to include a grocery store, additional retail space, residential development, and office uses. State support for the corridor continued to expand in 2023, when additional funding was allocated to WNADA to support revitalization initiatives along a 2.4-mile segment of West North Avenue. These investments are intended to facilitate long-term redevelopment, economic development, and improved neighborhood services along the corridor.

In 2025, MCB Real Estate and Blank Slate Development announced the acquisition of 600 West North Avenue, a site of approximately 1.5 acres located within the broader Madison Park redevelopment area. The development team announced plans to construct a neighborhood grocery store and associated retail space at the site. The proposed project includes a grocery store and a multi-tenant retail building intended to serve nearby residents and support continued revitalization along the North Avenue corridor.

On February 9, 2026, City Council Bill #26-0150 was introduced to authorize a conditional use for a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales on a portion of the property known as 600 West North Avenue, along with associated variances related to site development standards. The legislation supports the proposed redevelopment of the site consistent with the submitted site plan.

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 within the Community Commercial category in the General Land Use Plan. The proposed development conforms to that designation, as the site is intended to support neighborhood-serving commercial activity along a major corridor. The proposed grocery store and retail uses support the Comprehensive Master Plan’s goals of strengthening neighborhood commercial corridors and improving access to essential goods and services for nearby residents.

ANALYSIS

Background: The petitioner proposes redevelopment of the property at 600 West North Avenue with a grocery store and a separate multi-tenant retail building. The grocery store is anticipated to operate as a Streets Market grocery store, providing fresh food and everyday household goods to nearby residents. The request for a Retail Goods Establishment (with Alcoholic Beverage Sales) applies only to a portion of the proposed multi-tenant retail building located at the corner of West North Avenue, and not to the grocery store building itself. The conditional use would allow alcoholic beverage sales within a single tenant space within that retail building.

The legislation also includes requests for variances related to the maximum front yard setback and the maximum number of permitted off-street parking spaces associated with the proposed development. Redevelopment of this long-vacant property will support the continued revitalization of the North Avenue corridor and provide neighborhood-serving retail in a location well-served by transit and nearby residential communities.

Additionally, the proposed development supports the goals of the Planning Department’s Healthy Food Environment Strategy, which seeks to improve equitable access to healthy and affordable food throughout Baltimore. Many neighborhoods in central and west Baltimore have historically experienced limited access to full-service grocery stores.

While the conditional use request applies to a separate tenant space within the multi-tenant retail building, the proposed retail uses are intended to support and complement the grocery store and broader neighborhood-serving commercial activity planned for the site. Together, these uses will help strengthen the North Avenue commercial corridor while advancing the City’s goal of improving access to healthy food and daily necessities in underserved areas.

Conditional Use Approval Standards:

§ 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.

As a guide to its decision, the City Council must consider the evaluation criteria listed in §5-406(a). Staff has reviewed the proposed conditional use against these criteria and finds the following:

1. The nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape and the arrangement of structures, is appropriate for the proposed use. The redevelopment plan includes a grocery store building and a separate multi-tenant retail building on a site located along a major commercial corridor. The requested conditional use would apply only to a single tenant space within the proposed corner retail building, representing a limited portion of the overall development.
2. The resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of off-street parking and loading are appropriate for the proposed use. The redevelopment plan includes on-site parking and internal circulation designed to serve the grocery store and retail uses. Staff is recommending to meter the on-street parking in an effort to encourage use of the free parking on the rear of the site. The need for additional on-site parking, along with metered spots, aligns with other North Ave commercial developments and also supports the Department's goal to promote healthy commercial corridors.
3. The nature of the surrounding area includes a mix of residential neighborhoods and commercial uses along the North Avenue corridor. The proposed retail tenant with alcoholic beverage sales would be located within a commercial development along this corridor and is not expected to impair the present or future development of the surrounding area.

4. The proximity of dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, and other places of public gathering has been considered. While residential neighborhoods exist nearby, the proposed use is located within a commercial corridor and within a planned mixed-use redevelopment area. The limited scale of the tenant space associated with the conditional use is not expected to negatively impact nearby community institutions.
5. The accessibility of the premises for emergency vehicles will be adequate. The proposed redevelopment includes internal drive aisles and site access points designed to accommodate emergency access consistent with applicable codes and regulations.
6. The accessibility of light and air to the premises and to nearby properties will not be adversely affected. The conditional use will occur within a tenant space in a newly constructed retail building and will not alter building massing or site layout in a way that would affect surrounding properties.
7. The type and location of utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities will be provided as part of the overall redevelopment of the site. These improvements will support the proposed grocery store and retail uses and are adequate for the proposed tenant space associated with the conditional use.
8. The preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures will not be affected by the proposed use. The redevelopment of the site does not involve the alteration or demolition of any designated historic landmark.
9. The character of the neighborhood includes a mix of residential areas and commercial activity along North Avenue. The proposed retail use within the multi-tenant building is consistent with the commercial character of the corridor and the broader redevelopment of the Madison Park West area.
10. The proposal is also consistent with the provisions of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, which encourages the revitalization of neighborhood commercial corridors and improved access to goods and services for nearby residents.
11. There is no applicable Urban Renewal Plan that would preclude the proposed conditional use.
12. The proposed use will comply with all applicable standards and requirements of the Zoning Code, including conditional use standards and applicable development review requirements.
13. The proposal is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Code, which seeks to encourage appropriate commercial development along major corridors while supporting neighborhood-serving retail uses.
14. Finally, the proposed development advances the general welfare by supporting the redevelopment of a long-vacant site and introducing neighborhood-serving retail uses, including a grocery store, that will improve access to goods and services for surrounding communities.

Variance Approval Standards:

§ 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.

Below is the staff's review of Article 32 – Zoning, §5-308 {“Approval standards”}:

Staff finds that practical difficulty would result from strict application of the Zoning Code requirements related to the maximum front yard setback and the maximum number of permitted off-street parking spaces.

The subject property occupies a highly visible and unique location along West North Avenue, immediately adjacent to the I-83 interchange and within the broader Madison Park North / Reservoir Square redevelopment area. Within the larger redevelopment area, the subject parcel represents one of the few undeveloped sites capable of accommodating a grocery store and associated retail uses. The grocery store is intended to serve nearby residential neighborhoods that currently have limited access to full-service grocery options, and the development is expected to attract customers from both the surrounding communities and from the broader corridor due to its proximity to a major transportation route.

Because of the location of the site along a major arterial corridor and adjacent to the interstate, the proposed grocery store is expected to generate higher levels of vehicular activity than a typical neighborhood retail use. Strict application of the Zoning Code's parking maximum would limit the ability of the site to provide adequate parking to accommodate anticipated customer demand associated with a grocery store and supporting retail uses. Staff therefore finds

that the requested parking variance reflects the operational needs of the proposed development and the unique transportation context of the site.

With regard to the front yard setback, the proposed building placement and site design incorporate additional space between the building and the street to allow for pedestrian circulation, landscaping, and potential outdoor dining associated with the proposed retail and restaurant uses within the multi-tenant building. This setback area will contribute to a more active and pedestrian-oriented frontage along North Avenue and provide space for outdoor seating that serves as a neighborhood amenity.

Staff finds that these circumstances represent practical difficulty rather than mere inconvenience, as strict adherence to the setback and parking requirements would limit the ability of the site to function effectively as a neighborhood-serving commercial development anchored by a grocery store.

Staff also finds that the practical difficulty is caused by the application of the Zoning Code and has not been created by the intentional action or inaction of the current property owner. The need for the requested variances arises from the configuration of the site, its location along a major corridor adjacent to interstate infrastructure, and the parking demands associated with the proposed grocery store use.

Staff further finds that the purpose of the requested variances is not based exclusively on a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property, but rather to facilitate the redevelopment of a long-vacant property with neighborhood-serving retail uses that improve access to food and services for nearby residents.

The requested variances will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity and will not substantially diminish or impair property values in the neighborhood. The site is located within a commercial corridor and is part of a broader redevelopment effort intended to introduce new housing, retail, and public realm improvements along West North Avenue.

Staff finds that the requested variances are in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Code, which encourages appropriate commercial development along major corridors while supporting neighborhood-serving retail uses.

The variances are not precluded by and will not adversely affect any Urban Renewal Plan, the City's Comprehensive Master Plan, or any Historical and Architectural Preservation District.

Finally, staff finds that the requested variances will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare and will not be contrary to the public interest. The redevelopment of the site will replace a long-vacant structure with active commercial uses and will support ongoing revitalization along the West North Avenue corridor.

Equity:

- **Impact:**

In the short term, the project will introduce a full-service grocery store and supporting retail uses to an area that has historically experienced limited access to fresh food and neighborhood-serving commercial amenities. The addition of these uses will improve access to groceries, household goods, and other daily necessities for nearby residents while activating a long-vacant property along the North Avenue corridor. The project will also bring increased activity and vibrancy to the site and surrounding area through new retail destinations, pedestrian activity, and outdoor dining opportunities associated with the proposed retail spaces.

In the longer term, the development may provide employment opportunities for residents in nearby neighborhoods through grocery and retail jobs, while supporting the continued revitalization of the North Avenue corridor. By reintroducing neighborhood-serving commercial uses and improving access to fresh food, the project has the potential to help address long-standing patterns of disinvestment and limited food access that have affected many communities in central and west Baltimore.

- **Engagement:**

The broader redevelopment of the West North Avenue corridor and the Madison Park North / Reservoir Square area has involved extensive community engagement over several years. Residents, neighborhood organizations, and other stakeholders have participated in discussions related to redevelopment planning, housing, transportation, and economic development along the corridor.

Planning staff have also participated in community meetings related to the broader redevelopment effort and the proposed grocery and retail development at this site. Through these discussions, community members have expressed strong interest in the introduction of neighborhood-serving retail uses, particularly a grocery store, along the North Avenue corridor.

- **Internal Operations:**

The proposed legislation does not create significant operational impacts for the Department of Planning. Staff review of the proposal has occurred as part of the standard development and legislative review process.

Recommendation: Approval with Amendments

Notification: The Historic Mt. Royal Terrace Association (HMRTA), Reservoir Hill Association (RHA), the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC), and the Bolton Hill Community Organization (BHCA) have been notified of this action. Staff sent notice of this action to approximately 17,000 subscribers via GovDelivery.



Ren Southard
Acting Director



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Peter Little, Executive Director, Parking Authority of Baltimore City
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	April 23, 2025
SUBJECT	26-0150 • Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

City Council Bill 26-0150 proposes the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment, with alcoholic beverage sales, on the property known as 600 West North Avenue. Granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums; and providing for a special effective date.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Parking Authority of Baltimore City (PABC) has reviewed the proposed legislation. The property is characterized by unique conditions. Specifically, the site is effectively cut off from the east by I-83 and the south by the major arterial, North Avenue, which discourages non-motorized access (walking and biking) to the site from those directions and encourages motor vehicle use to access the site. Additionally, the mix of uses has the potential to regularly create times of higher parking demand. The neighborhood is in a transitional period and in the coming years will see an increase in density and activity. It can be anticipated that there will be even greater on-street parking demand, and less availability of overflow parking. A limited supply of on-site parking could make it difficult to operate retail-based businesses on the site as proposed. As a result of the unique conditions of the site, we are favorable to this request for a parking variance to allow the construction of up to 65 on-site parking spaces. The PABC will review any on-street parking regulations after the site has been granted occupancy.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill will have a minimal fiscal impact on PABC programs

AMENDMENTS

No amendments are being requested.



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	April 29, 2026
SUBJECT	26-0150 • Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue

Position: Favorable

BACKGROUND

Section 5-503(b)(5) of the Baltimore City Zoning Code (Article 32) requires the Department to provide reports on legislative authorizations related to variances, conditional uses, map amendments, master plans, areas of special sign control, and planned unit developments. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Department remains focused on managing the use of the public right of way, supporting safe and efficient traffic operations, and protecting vulnerable roadway users. (Please note that Council Bill 26-0150 does not concern on-street parking. The information below is provided for context.)

The proposed development at 600 W North Avenue was reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee on November 13, 2025. During the initial review, the Maryland Transit Administration and the Department of Transportation raised concerns regarding potential conflicts between on-street parking and bus lane operations. Through continued coordination with partner agencies and the developer, these concerns were successfully addressed. The Committee ultimately approved the requested on-street parking, supporting the viability of the proposed grocery store.

The Department supports efforts to expand access to fresh food in Baltimore communities. A grocery store at this location will improve access for West Baltimore residents by placing fresh food options within walking, biking, and short driving distance, while also maintaining connectivity to transit. This approach aligns with the Department's goals of promoting safe, multimodal access and supporting community-serving development that enhances quality of life.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Transportation supports efforts to provide all City residents with convenient access to fresh foods. The Department has no concerns with the proposed variance and requests a favorable report on Council Bill 26-0150.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Tim Keane, Acting Commissioner, Housing and Community Development
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	April 22, 2026
SUBJECT	26-0150 Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 26-0150 Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums; and, providing for a special effective date.

If enacted, City Council Bill 26-0150 would permit the operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 West North Avenue. If approved, this Bill will take effect on the date of its enactment.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

At its regular meeting of March 12, 2026, the Planning Commission concurred with the recommendation of its departmental staff and recommended that this Bill be amended and approved by the City Council. In their report, the Commission noted that the proposed grocery store, adjacent to Reservoir Square, would be in accord with the Comprehensive Master Plan as it would both enhance the neighborhood commercial corridor and improve access to essential goods. Their report also noted that there are no applicable Urban Renewal Plans that would preclude this proposed conditional use.

Reservoir Square is an 8-acre mixed used redevelopment of the former public housing site-Madison Park North apartments. MCB Real Estate was selected as the developer as part of a

public- private partnership with groundbreaking in 2022. The project is being developed in three phases including just over 170 townhomes, an office building and a proposed grocery store. In addition to the entire redevelopment being a gateway and pivotal piece of the resurgence of West North Avenue, the grocery store will fill a critical need by providing additional options for healthy food and daily necessities.

The property in reference is not located within any of DHCD's Impact Investment Areas, Community Development Zones, or Streamlined Code Enforcement areas. The granting of this conditional use may benefit Reservoir Hill and surrounding neighborhoods by providing a much-needed grocery store in a region of the City with limited alternatives while bringing a long vacant property back into productive use.

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.



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

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee
From: Justin A. Williams, Interim Executive Director
CC: Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administrator
Date: April 27, 2026
Re: **CCB No. 26-0150** – 600 West North Avenue
Position: No Objection

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Justin A. Williams
Interim Executive Director

Members
Leland Shelton
Chair

Victor Clark
Liz Cornish
David Marcozzi
Rian Hargrave

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

The staff of the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) have reviewed City Council Bill #26-0150 which seeks to permit the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property known as 600 W. North Avenue. This use requires conditional use authorization by ordinance and variances from bulk and yard regulations and parking maximums.

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 the Zoning Code requires retail goods establishments (with alcoholic beverage sales) in this district to obtain conditional use approval by city council ordinance, the Board staff defers to the Council’s judgment regarding whether the applicant has satisfied the specific approval standards outlined in the 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.

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	Dr. Michelle Taylor, Commissioner of Health, Baltimore City Health Department
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	April 21, 2026
SUBJECT	26-0150 – Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue

Position: Without Recommendation

BILL SYNOPSIS

Council Bill 26-0150 – Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue would permit, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of a retail goods establishment (with alcoholic beverage sales) on the property of 600 West North Avenue and grant variances from certain bulk and yard regulations and off-street parking maximums.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) appreciates the opportunity to review Council Bill 26-0150 – Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) – Variances – 600 West North Avenue. According to BCHD records, BCHD does not have an active license at this location. Therefore, BCHD submits a position of “without recommendation” on Council Bill 26-0150.

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

26-0150

*Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods
Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) –
Variances – 600 West North Avenue*

Public Testimony

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: davidjware1962@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 9:46 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: zekezeke.cohen@baltimorecity.gov; 'board'; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Abbie Cottle; leanna.m.brisson@gmail.com; s.adams.hoover@gmail.com; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); John.Bulluck@baltimorecity.gov; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; bpwgchair@reservoirhillassociation.org; hmrta-board@googlegroups.com; 600wn-neighbors@googlegroups.com; fredafanning@gmail.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council)
Subject: opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

That agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes**.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars.** A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!
-

Sincerely,

David Ware

1926 Mount Royal Terrace

Reservoir Hill home owner (my wife is Sarah Hoover, who also wrote to you)

Work contact information:

The Rev. David Ware, rector
The Church of the Redeemer
5603 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210

410-435-7333 X222 (work)

443-970-1716 (cell)

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Melda Washington <meldawashington@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 11:05 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: zekezeke.cohen@baltimorecity.gov; board@reservoirhillassociation.org; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); acottle@redeemerpds.org; leanna.m.brisson@gmail.com; sarah.hoover@jhu.edu; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); John.Bulluck@baltimorecity.gov; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; hmrta-board@googlegroups.com; 600wn-neighbors@googlegroups.com; fredafanning@gmail.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council)
Subject: Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150
Importance: High

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Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

That agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and create new conflicts between MTA buses and parked cars, potentially contributing to crashes.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars.** A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,
Melda Washington

2328 Eutaw Place
Baltimore, MD 21217

--

This email was sent to board@reservoirhillassociation.org, which includes all members of the Reservoir Hill Association Board of Directors.

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Micayla Rivin <micaylaeve11@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2026 10:18 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; hmrt-board@googlegroups.com
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Council-members Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

My name is Micayla Rivin, a resident in Reservoir Hill.

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes**. I have been a witness to more than 10 crashes on this street in the last 2 years. This proposal is dangerous.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars.** A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,

Micayla Eve Rivin (she/her)

2238 Eutaw Place, Baltimore, MD, 21217 (Reservoir Hill)

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Carson Ward <bpwgchair@reservoirhillassociation.org>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 10:30 AM
To: Testimony; Dorsey, Ryan (City Council)
Cc: Torrence, James (City Council); HMRTA Board; Brandon M Scott; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Board Of Directors; Lee Tawney; Upper Eutaw Madison Neighborhood Association
Subject: Reservoir Hill - Opposition to Bill 26-0150

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Councilman Dorsey,

You have campaigned on a vision where we prioritize sustainable transit infrastructure over private car storage. You stood before constituents and said that your support for zoning reform was about issues like environmental sustainability, not developer profits. You even cosponsored Bill 25-0065 to eliminate off-street parking requirements.

Now before this committee is a request for a variance to expand parking capacity. If you approve this request, you are signaling to every constituent that your Bikemore platform was more like a campaign-season facade. If you allow this variance to move forward, you are choosing to prioritize a developer's request for surplus parking over the literal lives of residents on a corridor that is the second-worst crash site in Baltimore (see [here](#)).

Do the rules you pass apply to everyone? Or do developers get a pass to disregard the very regulations you just finished crafting? Allowing such exemptions in this case would be acting in bad faith, particularly given the following facts:

- **High Traffic:** North Avenue is a major commuter artery, not a local street. According to the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Traffic Count Dashboard, North Avenue is a high-volume corridor with 25,501 average daily trips tracked in 2024, rivaling major state highways (see [here](#)), which makes sense given it is part of Route 1. Installing parking on what is functionally a high-volume highway is reckless, especially in a state that recorded 621 motor vehicle fatalities in 2023 (see [here](#)). Baltimore City bears a disproportionate burden of that crisis, accounting for nearly double our fair share of state pedestrian and bicycle motor vehicle fatalities (see [here](#) and [here](#)) considering we represent only 9% of the state's total population (see [here](#)). While statewide trends show a marginal decline, any policy that increases vehicle conflict points is an unacceptable risk to human life.
- **Crash Hotspots:** According to MDOT's State of Bicycle Pedestrian Safety in MD, data confirms this segment of North Avenue is among the highest-risk areas for fatal and serious injury crashes (see [here](#)).

- **Infrastructure Failure:** The current street and walking signals are outdated and often malfunctioning. I have countless videos documenting this. Adding parking to this high-volume crash hotspot without meaningful and reliable traffic calming measures will only increase aggressive driving, speed, and accident potential.
- **Parking Epidemic:** On North Avenue, more legal parking is likely to lead to more illegal double-parking, as drivers wait for spots to open or quickly hop out. This effectively turns a high-volume highway into a bottleneck. It also forces drivers to make sudden lane changes and swerves, which increases the likelihood of side-swipe and rear-end collisions.
- **30 MPH Kills:** According to MDOT's State of Bicycle Pedestrian Safety in MD, data shows crashes remain frequent, deadly, and at higher rates than crashes over 35 mph (see [here](#)). (60 fatal and 516 serious vs. 10 fatal and 79 serious) The standard speed limit on North Avenue is 30 mph.
- **Misalignment with Bikemore:** You were endorsed by Bikemore on the promise of prioritizing residents over cars. According to Bikemore, parts of the North Avenue corridor have zero-car household rates far exceeding the city average (see [here](#)). This is a clear indicator that the demand for parking is artificially inflated by the developer. As urban planning dictates that infrastructure must reflect actual usage patterns, 65 spots is more than sufficient to meet local demand without sacrificing local safety. Any further variance would be a waste that would be better served by prioritizing the pedestrian and transit-user base.
- **Misalignment with Yourself:** You said yourself that car-centric infrastructure fuels population loss (see [here](#)).

Will you stay true to your word and deny this variance? Or is it fair to say you prioritize developer interests over evidence-based community planning?

— Carson Ward

Testimony: Opposition to CB 26-0150
Baltimore City Council Land Use and Transportation Committee

Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

My home, 607 Lennox Street, directly abuts the proposed development site at 600 W. North Avenue. **I am writing to express opposition to the parking variance outlined in Baltimore City Council Bill 26-0150**, which would authorize an increase in off-street parking from 36 to 65 spots—an 81% increase in allowed off-street parking. My objection is rooted in preserving a walkable, resident-centered neighborhood and preventing the perpetuation of poor land use planning.

Let me be clear: I support the inclusion of a grocery store and other neighborhood commercial amenities on the site. **I am challenging the assertion that a commercial development project hinges on an 81% increase in surface parking. I am advocating for a development process that is conducted with basic consideration for the site neighbors, and a site design that does not impose avoidable and dangerous traffic outcomes and negative externalities on the surrounding blocks.**

Neither the development team nor Baltimore City DOT (BCDOT) has conducted a traffic study to assess the current or future conditions of the intersections around the 600 W. North site. Presently, at the complex high-volume intersection of North Avenue, Mount Royal Terrace, I-83 southbound ramp, and Mount Royal, pedestrians must navigate obstructed sightlines, incorrectly timed signals, and highway-speed vehicles racing to beat red lights to cross seven lanes of traffic. The intersection of North Avenue and Park Street—along Reservoir Hill’s safe route to school and a bicycle route—is the only intersection to require two crossing guards to keep vulnerable road users safe. My request for basic due diligence—particularly for a project that proposes such a significant expansion of driving demand and parking—is not an unreasonable ask.

Further, the proposed six additional on-street parking spaces along North Avenue will interfere with the existing dedicated bus lane that serves the more than 10,000 passengers who travel along the North Avenue corridor by transit each day. Interrupting that dedicated facility to add curbside parking does not improve mobility for any mode—it introduces needless friction into a system that moves a significant customer base for the new grocery.

BCDOT itself has expressed concern about the on-street parking element of the proposal. As summarized in the agency’s bill report: *“proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and create new conflicts between MTA buses and parked cars, potentially contributing to crashes.”* These are not theoretical risks; they are documented operational concerns from the very agency responsible for traffic safety.

Brandy Savarese
607 Lennox Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21217

Testimony: Opposition to CB 26-0150
Baltimore City Council Land Use and Transportation Committee

In recent years, Baltimore has actively updated its development standards to prioritize human-centric, resilient, and sustainable environments through zoning reforms, Complete Streets policies, and the recent repeal of parking minimums. These changes were made in service of the city that Baltimoreans want and deserve. **Urban design that de-prioritizes cars overwhelmingly improves safety, supports local businesses, and strengthens neighborhood stability. The assumption that more parking is necessary to sustain business success is an artifact of outdated planning models that contributed to the systemic disinvestment Baltimore is striving to reverse.**

The grocery tenant associated with the 600 W. North project has a demonstrated track record of operating successfully in dense, transit-rich environments where parking is limited or nonexistent. **It is therefore difficult to justify the assertion that an 81% increase in allowable parking is operationally necessary. The current design reflects a suburban retail template rather than the demonstrated needs of a neighborhood-serving grocery store.**

Minimum parking requirements were repealed in Baltimore because they consistently overestimated realistic demand. **Large surface parking lots induce additional short vehicle trips, creating strain on neighborhood roads, dangerous conditions for pedestrians, increased congestion, and infrastructure burdens.** Designing a development with substantially more parking than typical demand—particularly at a site located just off the Jones Falls Expressway—prioritizes vehicle storage over resident safety and quality of life.

The value of the 600 W. North Avenue site lies in its multimodal accessibility, geographic location, and neighborhood context. Expanding parking at a transit-rich location introduces traffic impacts and safety risks that neighboring residents will bear long after construction is complete. **The issue before you is not whether a grocery store belongs here—it clearly does—but whether the surrounding community should absorb the consequences of an unnecessarily parking-intensive design.**

The Land Use and Transportation Committee should not approve the zoning variance included in Council Bill 26-0150 and instead require a site design that is informed by a traffic impact analysis, aligns with transit-oriented principles, respects existing transportation infrastructure, and minimizes negative externalities on surrounding residential streets. A grocery store can and should be built here—but it should be built in a way that reflects Baltimore’s values and current planning standards.

Testimony for the Record

Submitted to the Land Use and Transportation Committee, Baltimore City Council
Council Bill 26-0150 - Zoning - Conditional Use - Retail Goods Establishment (with Alcoholic Beverage Sales) on the Property Known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001)

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Margaret Frey
Resident

Dear Chairman Dorsey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Margaret Frey. I am a Reservoir Hill resident, living less than two blocks from the 600 West North Ave development. While I welcome development in our neighborhood, I am opposed to the requested variances in Council Bill 26-0150.

When my husband and I purchased our home in 2024, I was delighted to learn a grocery store would be developed within the Reservoir Square site. I was even more excited to learn Streets would be the grocery tenant. Previously living in Washington, D.C., I have seen their success firsthand in small spaces in mixed income neighborhoods. In fact, many Streets locations do not have parking lots and are instead integrated into walkable, mixed-use developments - just as 600 West North Ave is envisioned.

The proposal of additional parking for this location, in particular the spaces on North Avenue, is unnecessary to achieve this. The suggestion to meter those spaces to encourage the use of free parking spaces highlights their futility. The potential interference with existing bus lanes will impact not just Reservoir Hill residents, but regular commuters, too.

It would be negligent to approve the requested variances without additional information. I would ask that the Council require a comprehensive traffic study to better understand the impact of additional parking on the surrounding neighborhood. Our community deserves a full understanding of how this development could change our day-to-day lives and shape the future of the neighborhood, as well as the opportunity to request appropriate remediations based on findings.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Margaret Frey

Land Use & Transportation Committee Members,

Regarding CCB 26-0150, I oppose the proposed parking variance. Baltimore City developed its off-street parking maximums to preserve a walkable, dense urban environment to the extent possible, and deviation from those maximums should only be allowed in exceptional situations. The applicant has not sufficiently supported its need for a significant off-street parking variance.

Mr. Tildon's memorandum (dated March 12, 2026) to Baltimore City Planning Commission as part of the Proposed Findings of Fact, in 7.a.ii. and 7.b.ii., points (twice) to the adjacent I-83 exit to highlight the need for additional off-street parking. West North Avenue Development Authority—a major stakeholder in the new shopping center and its work highlighted extensively by Mr. Tildon—serves a study area of 15 neighborhoods, none of which will access the proposed development via I-83. These 15 neighborhoods all access the site via North Avenue, which currently provides dedicated bus lanes for CityLink Gold and other MTA lines. Further, at least two of these neighborhoods (Upton and Sandtown-Winchester)—have more than 50 percent of households with no available vehicles (two more have between 40 and 50 percent).

In Exhibit 8 to his memorandum, Mr. Tildon attaches a parking memorandum showing the calculations to arrive at a need for 57–76 parking spaces between 4:00 and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays. The result hinges entirely on a bullet point with an unsupported statement: “Typical Parking Ratios for Grocery Stores: Nationwide, recommended parking ratios for supermarkets and grocery stores generally fall between 4-5 spaces per 1,000 sf.” Mr. Tildon does not provide context to this statement, but it appears to be a ratio needed for a suburban-style development only accessible by personal automobile. Research using Institute of Transportation Engineers' Parking Generation Manual shows a need of approximately 45 spaces based on land use types, sizes, and a denser urban context such as that surrounding 600 W. North Avenue. The maximum allowed number of spaces by code plus the new spaces provided on North Avenue cover the 45 spaces needed.

During the March 12, 2026, Planning Commission hearing, the applicant emphasized that the parking variance is a requirement to continue with the development, using this leverage to gain approval. Baltimore City is under no obligation to the applicant, and we should not yield to a developer and company that uses historical disinvestment as leverage in such an insulting, cynical, and disingenuous manner.

Matthew Best

607 Lennox St.



April 27, 2026

Baltimore City Council Land Use and Transportation Committee
100 E. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Chair Dorsey and Members of the Baltimore City Council Land Use and Transportation Committee:

Bikemore is writing this letter of information containing legal and fiscal responsibility concerns regarding Baltimore City Council Bill 26-0150, specifically the variance from certain bulk and yard regulations.

The proposed variance removes a federally-funded curbside dedicated bus lane and replaces it with dedicated on-street parking. If approved, the variance would shift bus operations to a shared through/turn lane adjacent to the newly created designated on-street parking.

The Baltimore City Complete Streets ordinance and manual guide legal decisionmaking on prioritizing travel modes in design of our city streets.

Baltimore City Article 26, § 40-9, states that:

This Transportation System must, to the greatest extent possible, promote walking, biking, and public transit.

The Baltimore City Complete Streets Manual further guides this prioritization citywide:

The foundation of this Complete Streets Manual rests on the establishment of a new modal hierarchy framework that prioritizes the safety and accessibility of people as they walk, bicycle, and take transit ahead of single occupant motor vehicles.

Baltimore's citywide modal hierarchy—recommended by the Complete Streets Advisory Committee and endorsed by the Baltimore City Department of Transportation—is prioritized as:

- 1. Walking*
- 2. Cycling / Public Transit / Micromobility*
- 3. Taxi / Commercial Transit / Shared Vehicles*
- 4. Single Occupant Automobiles*

Parking vehicles for extended periods of time is no longer considered the best use of the curbspace on many downtown and commercial Street Types. Additionally, measuring the success of the curbspace is no longer determined by parking revenue, but by the ability to move people and complementing the surrounding community.

Further guidance on street typologies with high-frequency transit in the Complete Streets Manual, including North Avenue, explicitly prioritize dedicated bus lanes over curbside loading and parking.

The dedicated bus lanes on North Avenue were installed as part of the North Avenue Rising project, completed in 2022. This \$27.3 million project included funding from a \$10 million USDOT TIGER Grant and an additional \$1.6 million from the Federal Highway Administration.

The TIGER Grant application competitiveness is based on an evaluation of the economic value of trip time savings for bus passengers along the North Avenue Corridor. 49 segments were analyzed, and the segment from Park Avenue to Mount Royal Terrace ranked #9 out of 49 segments in trip time savings. Per the analysis of this segment, it currently saves 1,175 hours of bus passenger travel time on the average weekday, savings that will be entirely lost with a shift to a shared through/turn lane.

Alterations to federally funded projects are subject to grant recapture. At minimum, it is likely Baltimore City will have to repay the federal government for the federally funded work on this section of the corridor. Given the vindictive nature of the present administration, it is possible that the lost travel time savings on this segment could open the door to a larger attempt at corridor-wide grant recapture.

Per city law, as a guide to its decision on the facts of each case, the City Council must consider all applicable standards and requirements of code, the intent and purpose of code, and any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare.

Additionally, City Council may not approve a conditional use unless council finds that the use would not be precluded by any other law, the authorization would not be contrary to the public interest, and the authorization would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code.

The proposed bulk and yard changes are precluded by other law and are contrary to the public interest.

- Removing a curbside dedicated bus lane to replace it with on-street parking is precluded by local law, Baltimore City Article 26, § 40-9, and multiple provisions within the codified Baltimore Complete Streets Manual including the city's adopted modal hierarchy and prioritization of dedicated transit lanes over parking in street typologies with high-frequency traffic like North Avenue.
- Removing a curbside dedicated bus lane is contrary to the public interest, as it will increase bus passenger travel time on the corridor by 1,175 hours per day.
- Removing a curbside dedicated bus lane is contrary to the public interest, as it will subject Baltimore City to federal grant recapture, harming the city's future competitiveness for federal dollars and forcing city taxpayers to pay for illegal removal of city transportation infrastructure.

The proposed bulk and yard changes are not in harmony with the purpose and intent of the zoning code. The code is intended "to promote and protect public health, welfare, and quality of life for current and future generations" and "to ensure that the visions set forth in the City's Comprehensive Master Plan are implemented by land use regulations consistent with the goals set forth."

- The proposed variance would reduce public welfare and quality of life for the city's most vulnerable residents—including individuals that lack access to a private vehicle and rely on transit to access jobs and opportunities.
- The proposed variance does not ensure implementation of visions or land use regulations consistent with the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.
 - The City Comprehensive Plan identifies this site as a TOD Opportunity Zone.

- The City Comprehensive Plan states “with TOD, buildings, roads, bikeways, walkways, and parking are designed to prioritize walking, biking, and transit with improved facilities for active transportation and a reduction in parking requirements. This also means employing principles of universal design to ensure that people of all abilities can get around the city more easily.”

Bikemore believes that Baltimore City Council cannot find facts to lawfully proceed with the variance, as the proposed bulk and yard changes are precluded by other law, contrary to the public interest, and are not in harmony with the purpose and intent of the zoning code.

Additionally, if the variance were to proceed, the city will be at great risk of federal grant recapture, exposing taxpayers to wasteful spending.

Sincerely,



Jed Weeks

Executive Director

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: pgentarch@comcast.net
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 2:18 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); 'Board Of Directors'; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; 'Carson Ward'; hmrta-board@googlegroups.com
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers: Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker

I oppose CCB #26-0150, and oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

"...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes.**"

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs and priorities of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars.** A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 parking spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,

Paul & Glenda Gentner

2028 Park Ave Baltimore, MD 21217
Reservoir Hill – a resident since Oct 1975

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Jackson <geshemj@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 2:08 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; HMRTA Board
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue. We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes. Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. In a city where public transit options are less than optimal, dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue. Additionally, there is no evidence to support an influx of shoppers from farther away neighborhoods just because this grocery near I83, especially with many county residents only travel into the city for work or entertainment.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and create new conflicts between MTA buses and parked cars, potentially contributing to crashes.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 with 6 on-street parking spots on W. North Avenue sends a message that you are willing to support developers over constituents, especially those who rely on the public transit system!

Sincerely,
Gyasi Moscou-Jackson
2008 Park Ave
Baltimore, MD 21217
Reservoir Hill

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Rosemary Peternel <rosemary.peternel@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 1:50 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; HMRTA Board
Subject: Council Bill 26-0150

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Dear Council members Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150 and MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue, as an 82 year old resident of Reservoir Hill and Park Ave

I personally object to the additional parking spaces as it is already sometimes difficult to navigate a right turn off eastern bound North Ave onto Park Ave and my home and greater traffic to a parking lot and retail stores may further back up traffic for those turning right onto Park.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and create new conflicts between MTA buses and parked cars, potentially contributing to crashes.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of me and the communities of Reservoir Hill and Bolton Hill within walking distance of the planned development of a needed grocery..

- We need a **traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes. Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes. Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- We deserve a **grocery store that prioritized community over cars**. A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- We won't sacrifice our safety for want of more parking! MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,

Rosemary Peternel
2022 Park Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21217-4816
410-523-4044
rosemary.peternel@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Matt Birkhold <birkhold@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2026 3:34 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; hmrta-board@googlegroups.com
Subject: CCB #26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes**.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of our community.

- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,
Matt Birkhold
808 Newington Ave
Reservoir Hill

www.visionarylab.org

If one needs a community to resist, interdependence must be seen as a moral obligation.

"Men don't need to show our manhood, we need to show our humanity" -- James Boggs, 1990

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: John Charlton <john.e.charlton@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 8:39 PM
To: Testimony; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylisia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; hmrt-a-board@googlegroups.com
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker,

I am writing to urge you to oppose City Council Bill 26-0150.

MCB and Blank Slate are requesting 29 additional parking spaces, including 6 spaces on W. North Avenue. I strongly oppose this request.

MCB has already broken trust with the surrounding neighborhoods. Residents were promised a project that would bring meaningful resources to the community, including retail, commercial space, apartments, structured parking, and improved walkability. Instead, MCB backed away from major pieces of that vision and shifted toward more row houses. Now, with Bill 26-0150, they are asking the City to weaken another core promise: a safer, more walkable North Avenue.

This bill is not just a technical zoning matter. It is a public safety decision.

North Avenue is already one of Baltimore's most dangerous corridors, and North Avenue and Eutaw Street has been identified as one of the city's worst crash locations. Adding more parking and more vehicle movements along this corridor will create additional conflict points for pedestrians, cyclists, bus riders, drivers, and MTA buses.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote that "agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking." She further stated that the proposed on-street parking was rejected because it would "diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and create new conflicts between MTA buses and parked cars, potentially contributing to crashes."

That should be enough to stop this bill.

We need uninterrupted, dedicated bus lanes. We need a path toward connected and protected bike lanes. We need a traffic study that clearly evaluates the impact on traffic, pedestrian safety, bus safety, and neighborhood access before any additional parking is approved.

The City recently celebrated the elimination of off-street parking requirements as a step away from outdated, car-centered, and inequitable zoning policy. Granting a special exception now, so soon afterward, sends exactly the wrong message. It tells residents that the City's commitment to walkability, transit access, and safety is

negotiable when a developer asks for special treatment.

The justification being offered is access to fresh food. I support bringing fresh food access to Reservoir Hill, Bolton Hill, and surrounding communities. But fresh food access should not be used as a pretext to make North Avenue more dangerous or less walkable. A grocery store that depends on additional parking and easy access for I-83 commuters is not the same as a neighborhood-serving, walkable resource.

Approving this variance would reward a developer for narrowing the public benefits of the project while asking residents to absorb the safety risks.

Baltimore should not prioritize storing private cars over the safety of people walking, biking, taking the bus, or simply trying to cross the street in their own neighborhood. We should not sacrifice public safety for six parking spaces on North Avenue.

I respectfully ask the Land Use and Transportation Committee to reject Bill 26-0150 and hold MCB and Blank Slate to the walkability and community-centered commitments that residents were promised.

Sincerely,
Dr. John Charlton
Brookfield Avenue
Reservoir Hill

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Janea McClain <janea.mcclain@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 7:26 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; hmrt-board@googlegroups.com
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and create new conflicts between MTA buses and parked cars, potentially contributing to crashes.

We need a traffic study to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.

We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes. Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.

We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes. Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south.

We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars. A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.

MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue . It's not worth the cost of lives and property.

Sincerely,
Janea McClain
2335 Eutaw Place
Reservoir Hill

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Rolando Maxwell <rolandomaxwell@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 12:47 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); acottle@redeemerpds.org; leanna.m.brisson@gmail.com; sarah.hoover@jhu.edu; Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; hmrt-board@googlegroups.com; 600wn-neighbors@googlegroups.com; fredafanning@gmail.com
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers: Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker

I oppose CCB #26-0150, and oppose the request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue. The removal of the existing bus lane to create street parking is absurd and dangerous. It is several yards from I-83 exit ramp onto North Avenue and close to a school crossing zone. Having vehicles parked on North Avenue will block the pedestrian view when having to cross over North Avenue at the major intersection. In addition, it may be dangerous for shoppers exiting and loading vehicles.

Please take into consideration the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposition and concerns.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

“...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and create new conflicts between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes.**”

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs and priorities of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars.** A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 parking spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,
Rolando Maxwell

828 Brooks Lane
Baltimore MD, 21217

--

This email was sent to board@reservoirhillassociation.org, which includes all members of the Reservoir Hill Association Board of Directors.

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Historic Mt Royal Terrace Association <info@hmрта.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 8:41 AM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council); rdorsey; Torrence, James (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; bpwgchaor@reservoirhillassociation.org; HMRTA Board; RHIC@RESERVOIRHILLBALTIMORE.ORG
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear City Council Members and the Land Use and Transportation Committee,

I am writing to you as a neighbor of residents of 600 WN and as president of HMRTA. The Historic Mount Royal Terrace Association (HMRTA) is a 501(c)(3) community nonprofit organization incorporated in 1999 and located in the Reservoir Hill neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. Since 2023, HMRTA has actively collected input from members at large, with particular attention to residents of Block 3435. Based on both qualitative and quantitative community feedback, HMRTA formally opposes Bill CB 26-0150 as currently written.

As proposed, the development at 600 W. North Avenue prioritizes automobile use and reflects a suburban-style design that is inconsistent with the existing urban fabric. Surveyed residents overwhelmingly identified reducing the number of off-street parking spaces as their preferred solution to address concerns with the site plan. While HMRTA acknowledges that the development team has reduced the number of parking spaces from earlier proposals, we believe further reductions are necessary.

Our membership remains concerned about the scale of the proposed parking lot and its impact on the community. Infill development of this nature should align with zoning standards that promote walkability, public transit use, and biking. This project presents an opportunity for the City to advance its stated goal of reducing automobile dependency in planning and development.

Community safety is also a primary concern. In the absence of a comprehensive traffic study demonstrating otherwise, we anticipate that a development with a high number of parking spaces will increase vehicular traffic entering the Reservoir Hill neighborhood. This anticipated increase, combined with the addition of six on-street parking spaces along W. North Avenue—which would interfere with the bus lane—poses a significant safety risk to both residents and property.

At the same time, neighbors are enthusiastic about new investment and amenities associated with the broader Reservoir Square development. Community feedback indicates that any development will be most beneficial if it preserves and enhances the neighborhood's walkable, resident-centered character. The site plan should prioritize pedestrian access and actively invite community use, rather than creating physical or visual barriers. Improving pedestrian accessibility would also support the developer's stated goal of increasing food access for West Baltimore residents.

Additionally, reducing the number of parking spaces would create opportunities for increased landscaping, buffering, and tree planting—particularly important given the planned removal of mature trees on the site. This is a clearly stated priority among community members.

For these reasons, HMRTA formally opposes CB 26-0150 unless it is amended to reflect the concerns outlined above and the feedback provided by the community

Sincerely,
Freda Alvarado Fanning
President, Historic Mount Royal Terrace Association

--

Historic Mount Royal Terrace Association

hmrta.org

2025-26 Officers and Directors:

Freda Alvarado Fanning, President

Mónica Navarro Leonard, Vice President

Angel St. Jean, Treasurer

Leanna Brisson, Board of Directors

Morgan Ashley Bryant, Board of Directors

Andrea Cuenca, Board of Directors

Gyasi Moscou-Jackson, Board of Directors

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Andrea Cuenca <amf3229@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 7:03 AM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Subject: Fwd: Reservoir Hill - Opposition to Bill 26-0150

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carson Ward** <bpwgchair@reservoirhillassociation.org>
Date: Mon, Apr 27, 2026 at 10:30 AM
Subject: Reservoir Hill - Opposition to Bill 26-0150
To: <testimony@baltimorecity.gov>, Ryan Dorsey <rd@baltimorecity.gov>
CC: James (City Council) <james.torrence@baltimorecity.gov>, HMRTA Board <hmrtaboard@googlegroups.com>, <mayor@baltimorecity.gov>, Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <zeke.cohen@baltimorecity.gov>, Mark Parker <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>, Zachary Blanchard <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>, Porter Phylcia R.L. <phylcia.porter@baltimorecity.gov>, John Bullock <john.bullock@baltimorecity.gov>, paris gray <paris.gray@baltimorecity.gov>, sharon.middleton@baltimorecity.gov <sharon.middleton@baltimorecity.gov>, Board Of Directors <board@reservoirhillassociation.org>, Lee Tawney <lee.tawney@gmail.com>, Upper Eutaw Madison Neighborhood Association <uemna.21217@gmail.com>

Councilman Dorsey,

You have campaigned on a vision where we prioritize sustainable transit infrastructure over private car storage. You stood before constituents and said that your support for zoning reform was about issues like environmental sustainability, not developer profits. You even cosponsored Bill 25-0065 to eliminate off-street parking requirements.

Now before this committee is a request for a variance to expand parking capacity. If you approve this request, you are signaling to every constituent that your Bikemore platform was more like a campaign-season facade. If you allow this variance to move forward, you are choosing to prioritize a developer's request for surplus parking over the literal lives of residents on a corridor that is the second-worst crash site in Baltimore (see [here](#)).

Do the rules you pass apply to everyone? Or do developers get a pass to disregard the very regulations you just finished crafting? Allowing such exemptions in this case would be acting in bad faith, particularly given the following facts:

- **High Traffic:** North Avenue is a major commuter artery, not a local street. According to the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Traffic Count Dashboard, North Avenue is a high-volume corridor with 25,501 average daily trips tracked in 2024, rivaling major state highways (see [here](#)), which makes sense given it is part of Route 1. Installing parking on what is functionally a high-volume highway is reckless, especially in a state that recorded 621 motor vehicle fatalities in 2023 (see [here](#)). Baltimore City bears a disproportionate burden of that crisis, accounting for nearly double our fair share of state pedestrian and bicycle motor vehicle fatalities (see [here](#) and [here](#)) considering we represent only 9% of the state's

total population (see [here](#)). While statewide trends show a marginal decline, any policy that increases vehicle conflict points is an unacceptable risk to human life.

- **Crash Hotspots:** According to MDOT's State of Bicycle Pedestrian Safety in MD, data confirms this segment of North Avenue is among the highest-risk areas for fatal and serious injury crashes (see [here](#)).
- **Infrastructure Failure:** The current street and walking signals are outdated and often malfunctioning. I have countless videos documenting this. Adding parking to this high-volume crash hotspot without meaningful and reliable traffic calming measures will only increase aggressive driving, speed, and accident potential.
- **Parking Epidemic:** On North Avenue, more legal parking is likely to lead to more illegal double-parking, as drivers wait for spots to open or quickly hop out. This effectively turns a high-volume highway into a bottleneck. It also forces drivers to make sudden lane changes and swerves, which increases the likelihood of side-swipe and rear-end collisions.
- **30 MPH Kills:** According to MDOT's State of Bicycle Pedestrian Safety in MD, data shows crashes remain frequent, deadly, and at higher rates than crashes over 35 mph (see [here](#)). (60 fatal and 516 serious vs. 10 fatal and 79 serious) The standard speed limit on North Avenue is 30 mph.
- **Misalignment with Bikemore:** You were endorsed by Bikemore on the promise of prioritizing residents over cars. According to Bikemore, parts of the North Avenue corridor have zero-car household rates far exceeding the city average (see [here](#)). This is a clear indicator that the demand for parking is artificially inflated by the developer. As urban planning dictates that infrastructure must reflect actual usage patterns, 65 spots is more than sufficient to meet local demand without sacrificing local safety. Any further variance would be a waste that would be better served by prioritizing the pedestrian and transit-user base.
- **Misalignment with Yourself:** You said yourself that car-centric infrastructure fuels population loss (see [here](#)).

Will you stay true to your word and deny this variance? Or is it fair to say you prioritize developer interests over evidence-based community planning?

— Carson Ward

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You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "HMRTA Board" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to hmрта-board+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To view this discussion visit https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/hmрта-board/CAMGWocWeb50bipak%3DSA6K8N6E_d_%2BJV6quk3Ze2%2Bur5H1vfCcw%40mail.gmail.com.

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Luke Ikard <lukesikard@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 10:39 PM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Subject: City Council Bill 26-0150

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Tony Leva,

As a homeowner at 1904 Mount Royal Terrace, directly next to the development, I strongly oppose increasing the parking variance as proposed by Bill 26-0150. The area is already egregiously unsafe for pedestrians, and as currently proposed, this development prioritizes cars and drivers. Additionally, as someone whose household uses the alleyway to exit their private parking pad and turn onto North Ave., I experience the dangers of automobile traffic at 600WN as it currently exists on a daily basis. Cars zoom by, disregarding pedestrian safety and going well above the speed limit, around and past Block 3435. With the number of parking spaces proposed, it will only increase the number of automobiles on North Ave, and I can only imagine how much more dangerous our neighborhood will become. I am very much in support of development that serves West Baltimore, Reservoir Hill, and the Mount Royal Terrace area, but the suburban design of what is currently being proposed, prioritizing commuters over community members, will only degrade the structure of this neighborhood.

Thank you for your time,

Luke Ikard
1904 Mount Royal Terrace

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: leanna <leanna.m.brisson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 9:09 PM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council); rdorsey; Torrence, James (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; bpwgchaor@reservoirhillassociation.org; hmrtta-board
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear City Counsel Members and the Land and Transportation Committee,

I am writing as a homeowner in Reservoir Hill whose house is directly bordering 600 WN (Block 3435, Lot 001). I have also been fortunate to be a board member of the Historical Mount Royal Terrace Association (HMRTA) this year. Overwhelmingly, there has been great excitement from neighbors for the developments happening within West Baltimore, and specifically Reservoir Hill. Many, including myself, are thrilled to have investors look our way and see how special this part of the city is, expanding the reach of community and creating accessibility in this neighborhood with an investment of economic resources as well as third spaces. This assertion feels crucial in noting why **I oppose Council Bill 26-0150**, a bill designed for commuters and not community members.

As the development for Block 3435 is currently proposed, it is built for a suburban environment, prioritizing cars and drivers. If this bill were to pass, it would give MCB the right to increase the number of parking spaces by 81% of what is currently allowed. This also includes 6 which are slated for W. North Avenue, interrupting a bus lane. **An abundance of parking spaces encourages use of services by individuals outside of the neighborhood, increasing traffic in our area and decreasing pedestrian/biker safety.** The addition of these spaces defeats what has been proposed as a crucial investment and resource for the neighborhood and creates unnecessary safety concerns modes of transportation that don't include driving. Further, I'm concerned that if this Council Bill 26-0150 is approved, this development will become a pit stop for drivers off 83, creating an increase in cars, traffic congestion, and taking from resources meant for West Baltimore. Not only that, but these concerns brought about by having a development built with automobile drivers preference increases traffic safety concerns in the North Ave/Mount Royal Ave intersection. So often, while I sit in my living room, I hear an accident around that intersection. This, among others on route to the proposed development, is an intersection that children from our neighborhood cross daily to get to school at Mount Royal. Even DOT Director Veronica McBeth shares concerns about increased parking spaces caused by the proposed design of the development, writing,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes.**

I'm deeply concerned at what having development designed to bring more cars into the neighborhood will mean for the public safety of both drivers and pedestrians. Why hasn't there been a traffic study? Should this not have been done given that the impact area is within 1/2 mile of the development's property line? It's been communicated to us that Streets Market, the proposed grocery tenant, is demanding maximum number of spaces to proceed with a lease. Given Streets numerous

locations in Baltimore (222 N Charles St; 3117 St Paul St), as well as in D.C., that have no designated parking lot/spaces, but full access to groceries such as produce, we have been left confused as to why this is a stipulation exists an area that is becoming increasingly dense in its population.

Maybe I am wrong in my concerns, but the lack of care and consideration around the lasting impact the design of this development will have on this entrance to Reservoir Hill leaves me with little faith in our community being prioritized by these proposed changes. What I ask is this:

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars.** A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Please know that I and many other community members are incredibly excited for development, but specifically development that is built for the community, not commuters. There is full support behind an urban design grocery store that prioritizes the direct community in Reservoir Hill and West Baltimore. Not only is there neighborhood support, but as proposed, this development would seemingly move West Baltimore's development against the City's stated goal of deprioritizing automobiles in the planning/development process. My opposition sits heavy on my heart. I am so elated for growth within this community. But if this truly a long-term investment in West Baltimore and the surrounding neighborhoods, it should be designed as such.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Take Care,

Leanna Brisson

1904 Mount Royal Terrace

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Sarah Hoover <s.adams.hoover@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 9:05 PM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Cc: Leanna Brisson
Subject: City Council Bill 26-0150

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Dear Mr. Leva:

As a Reservoir Hill resident living immediately adjacent to the proposed development at 600 W. North Avenue, **I am writing to express my opposition to the developers' proposed increase in the number of parking spots from 36 to 65.** Let me be clear that I am very much in favor of development on the site: I particularly look forward to the restoration of the urban fabric of the neighborhood, new housing, lots of new people moving in, increased density, new amenities (grocery store, cafe, and others), enhanced walkability, and restored commercial activity on North Avenue which provides city residents a reason to stop and shop locally.

My concerns center on the traffic and parking: the current proposal scales and situates the retail stores for a suburban context rather than the existing neighborhood's highly desirable urban density, walkability, and proximity to public transportation. The proposal simply does not seem to provide safe traffic planning solutions. No traffic study has been undertaken, so there is no analysis of the complex traffic patterns at the intersection of North Avenue and I-83's entrance/exit ramps, which are intertwined with the neighborhood roadways of Mount Royal Terrace, Park Avenue, and Lennox Streets, as well as the smaller alleys that run between them. The major way to reduce the impact of car traffic and truck deliveries is to limit the number of parking places to fit with the overall scale of the site, its roadways, and the character of the neighborhood.

For these reasons, **I do not support the expansion of parking contained within City Council Bill 26-0150.** Moreover, **I strongly advocate for a traffic study** to ensure that development is aligned with safety and engineering best practices to ensure the well-being of neighborhood residents and all who patronize the new amenities. We want Reservoir Square and subsequent development to help the North Avenue corridor flourish.

Respectfully,

Sarah Hoover
1926 Mount Royal Terrace

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Miguel Melendez <m.melend@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 8:27 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; hmrt-board@googlegroups.com
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

Every day during the work week I ride my bicycle through the neighborhood to Park Avenue, the only available place to cross into Bolton Hill. I ride toward Penn Station this way because it's the safest possible route for me to take. This is because of the long history of disinvestment in communities of color, and the failure of city government and planning departments to extend bicycle lanes into non-white demographic neighborhood, like the one that stops at Mount Royal Avenue and goes only east.

This needs to change. All residents deserve the opportunity and dignity to take advantage of all modes of transportation and to do so safely.

This bill is another bill that begins with the presumption that nonwhite neighborhoods don't deserve the same thoughtful planning that white neighborhoods do. We need a comprehensive plan to transform North Avenue from a race track to one that is safe for families to walk, bike, and otherwise travel through. Allowing dedicated parking along North Avenue in this particular space will only further complicate plans to achieve this.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes**.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes.** Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes.** Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars.** A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,
Miguel Melendez

Testimony for the Record

Submitted to the Land Use and Transportation Committee, Baltimore City Council
Council Bill 26-0150 - Zoning - Conditional Use - Retail Goods Establishment (with Alcoholic Beverage Sales) on the Property Known as 600 West North Avenue (Block 3435, Lot 001)

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Margaret Frey
Resident

Dear Chairman Dorsey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Margaret Frey. I am a Reservoir Hill resident, living less than two blocks from the 600 West North Ave development. While I welcome development in our neighborhood, I am opposed to the requested variances in Council Bill 26-0150.

When my husband and I purchased our home in 2024, I was delighted to learn a grocery store would be developed within the Reservoir Square site. I was even more excited to learn Streets would be the grocery tenant. Previously living in Washington, D.C., I have seen their success firsthand in small spaces in mixed income neighborhoods. In fact, many Streets locations do not have parking lots and are instead integrated into walkable, mixed-use developments - just as 600 West North Ave is envisioned.

The proposal of additional parking for this location, in particular the spaces on North Avenue, is unnecessary to achieve this. The suggestion to meter those spaces to encourage the use of free parking spaces highlights their futility. The potential interference with existing bus lanes will impact not just Reservoir Hill residents, but regular commuters, too.

It would be negligent to approve the requested variances without additional information. I would ask that the Council require a comprehensive traffic study to better understand the impact of additional parking on the surrounding neighborhood. Our community deserves a full understanding of how this development could change our day-to-day lives and shape the future of the neighborhood, as well as the opportunity to request appropriate remediations based on findings.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Margaret Frey

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: sarah buikema <sarah.buikema@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 10:42 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylisia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; HMRTA Board; buikema@erols.com; sarah buikema; Torrence, James (City Council); Torrence, James (City Council)
Subject: Opposition to CCB 26-0150

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Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue. We purchased our home in 1978 and try to be good stewards/neighbors.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes**.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
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- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,

Calvin and Sarah Buikema

1916 Mt. Royal Terrace

Baltimore, MD 21217

Becky Witt
rebecca.j.witt@gmail.com
410-908-6605

April 29, 2026

Baltimore City Land Use and Transportation Committee
100 E. Holiday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Chair Dorsey and Members of the Baltimore City Council Land Use and Transportation Committee:

I write in OPPOSITION to the requested zoning variances associated with City Council Bill No. 26-150 for the property located at 600 West North Avenue. While there is understandably broad community support for the neighborhood-serving grocery store/retail goods use itself, the requested variances do not satisfy the mandatory approval standards set forth in Baltimore City Code Article 32.

Under the Zoning Code and Maryland caselaw, a variance is intended to be an extraordinary form of relief and may be granted only where the strict statutory criteria are met. Those criteria are not met here.

1. The Code and Maryland Caselaw Require a Site-Specific Practical Difficulty, Not a Generalized Business Preference.

Art. 32, § 5-308(a) of Article 32 of the City Code requires a finding 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 that “exceptional circumstances related to the specific structure or land involved” create such a difficulty.

Maryland courts have repeatedly emphasized that the variance standard is intentionally narrow. Variances are not a tool for addressing generalized conditions or market preferences. **Where a condition is shared by other properties in the zoning district, it must be addressed legislatively rather than through a variance.**¹

Here, the record reflects that Appellant’s justification for the parking variance is not grounded in any physical characteristic of the site. Instead, it rests on anticipated customer demand, industry parking ratios for grocery stores, and the assertion that the prospective tenant will not enter into a lease without a minimum number of off-street parking spaces.

Appellant has suggested that a parking ratio of approximately five spaces per 1,000 square feet is the “industry standard.” That figure, however, is derived from suburban land use models developed in an era of abundant land, segregated uses, and universal automobile dependence. Such standards are not based on observed urban travel behavior, but rather on peak suburban demand assumptions that

¹ *Dan’s Mountain Wind Force, LLC v. Allegany County Board of Zoning Appeals*, 182 A.3d 252, 259 (Md. Ct. Spec. App. 2018) (holding that a variance cannot be based on conditions common to other properties and must instead rest on site-specific circumstances).

systematically oversupply parking, increase development costs, and induce unnecessary driving. They therefore bear little relationship to actual parking demand in dense, walkable, transit-served areas like North Avenue.

Baltimore has expressly rejected those suburban assumptions through its adoption of parking maximums and context-sensitive standards. Appellant's reliance on a generalized grocery store parking ratio is therefore not just legally insufficient, because it is not a condition peculiar to this property; it is inconsistent with the City's enacted policy framework.

Appellant and the Planning Commission's findings of fact also point to the site's proximity to I-83 as a rationale for increased vehicular demand. Many properties along North Avenue and throughout the city are adjacent to I-83 or other limited-access highways. That condition is not peculiar to this parcel, and no factual evidence has been presented demonstrating that this proximity creates parking demand materially different from other sites along the corridor. The uniqueness/peculiarity does not exist here, and even if it did, there is no nexus between the uniqueness and the practical difficulty that would result if the variance were not granted (see argument 2, below).

With respect to the front yard setback variance, this request exists solely because Appellant seeks to accommodate both a large building and an oversized parking lot within the lot lines. If fewer parking spaces were proposed, the front yard setback variance would not be necessary. **That is a design choice**, not a site constraint, and it cannot supply the required showing of practical difficulty.

Appellants often argue, as in this case, that front yard setback variances for commercial projects enable pedestrian-friendly design. This is a policy argument against setback requirements generally, not a variance argument tied to this parcel. If setback requirements are incompatible with contemporary urban design, that issue must be addressed legislatively, not through *ad hoc* variances.

The considerations put forward by Appellant are not "conditions peculiar to the property." Rather, they reflect generalized market and operational preferences that would apply with equal force to many other nearby parcels. Maryland law makes clear that a variance may not be granted merely because compliance with zoning requirements would be less convenient, less profitable, or incompatible with a preferred development program. As the Maryland courts have explained, the requisite showing of "[u]niqueness ... requires a finding that the property ... is — in and of itself — unique and unusual ... such that the zoning provision impacts disproportionately upon that property," not simply that the owner or tenant would prefer relief from generally applicable standards.² (Uniqueness and peculiarity are synonyms, per *Dan's Mountain Wind Force*.³)

2. The Claimed Difficulty Is Not Caused by the Zoning Code, but by Appellant's Design and Leasing Assumptions

² *Cromwell v. Ward*, 102 Md. App. 691, 694 (1995) (holding that a variance requires a showing that the zoning regulation impacts the property itself in a unique and unusual manner, not merely that relief would be convenient or desirable for the owner).

³ *Dan's Mountain Wind Force, LLC*, 182 A.3d at 263 (explaining that "unique," "unusual," and "peculiar" are used interchangeably in Maryland variance jurisprudence).

Article 32, § 5-308(b)(1) further requires a finding 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.”

Here, the claimed difficulty arises from **discretionary decisions** made by the developer and prospective tenant regarding store size, internal circulation, and parking layout, as well as from reliance on suburban parking standards that the City has explicitly rejected through its recently updated parking maximums. The Zoning Code’s parking limits are a legislative policy choice adopted to advance multimodal transportation, transit-oriented development, and reduced automobile dependence.

A variance may not be used to override those policy judgments simply because a particular tenant prefers a higher parking count. When a project is designed in a manner that exceeds the Code’s maximums, the resulting conflict is self-created and cannot lawfully support a variance.

3. The Request Is Functionally a Policy Objection to Parking Maximums, Not a Variance Justified by Particular Physical Constraints

Appellant’s arguments are, in substance, an objection to the existence of parking maximums as applied to grocery stores generally. But the Zoning Code does not permit variances to be granted on that basis. The variance procedure exists “to afford a property owner relief ... when practical difficulty exists,” not to reweigh legislative judgments about appropriate parking levels citywide.

If granted here, this variance would effectively establish a precedent that any sufficiently large retail user may exceed parking maximums by invoking anticipated demand. That outcome would collapse the distinction between legislative standards and case-by-case relief and would undermine the purpose of the Code and the City’s comprehensive planning goals.

4. The Variance Is Not in Harmony with the Purpose and Intent of the Zoning Code

Finally, Art. 32 § 5-308(b)(5) requires a finding that the variance “will not otherwise be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare; or be in any way contrary to the public interest.” The Code also requires harmony with the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan.

The adopted parking maximums, transit-oriented development policies, and multimodal transportation investments along the North Avenue corridor reflect an explicit public interest determination by the City Council. Granting a variance to significantly exceed those maximums, *absent a site-specific physical constraint*, is contrary to that intent and converts the City Code into an optional guideline.

At times, in my experience, the Planning Department recommends variance approval when a Zoning Code requirement conflicts with Planning departmental design objectives or guidance documents. Design manuals and Planning regulations cannot override the plain language of the Zoning Code. As a matter of law, the Code itself must control, and a variance may not be used to reconcile perceived policy tensions or to substitute administrative preferences for legislative standards.

I also adopt and agree with the arguments set forth in the BikeMore letter of opposition, submitted by Executive Director Jed Weeks, which further demonstrate that the requested variance is inconsistent with the City’s transportation, safety, and equity goals.

Conclusion

Appellant has not demonstrated a practical difficulty arising from conditions peculiar to 600 West North Avenue, nor has it shown that strict compliance with the Zoning Code is anything more than inconvenient for a preferred development program. Because the variance requests are based on generalized parking demand and leasing considerations rather than site-specific physical constraints, they do not satisfy the required approval standards of Baltimore City Code Article 32 and should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Witt, Esq.
rebecca.j.witt@gmail.com
410-908-6605




Building A Better Future For West Baltimore

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Baltimore City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re:CCB 26-0150 600 W. North Avenue Conditional Use – Retail Goods Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverages Sales) Variances – Maximum Front Yard Setback and Maximum Off-Street Parking

 info@wnada.org

 2500 West North Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21216

Honorable Mayor Brandon Scott and Members of the Baltimore City Council:

The State of Maryland's West North Avenue Development (WNADA) submits its support for MCB Blank Slate Madison Park LLC's ("MCB/Blank Slate") application for conditional use approval to operate a retail goods establishment with alcoholic beverage sales and variances from the Code's maximum off-street parking and maximum front yard setback requirements. These approvals will facilitate the redevelopment of 600 W. North Avenue (the "Property") into a multi-tenant commercial center anchored by a 15,000 sq. ft. grocery store. This project will hugely benefit our community, for which our State agency has invested \$2 million of grant funds to seed the acquisition, demolition, and pre-development of the site.

The West North Avenue Development Authority for Baltimore City is empowered by State law to create a plan for West North Avenue, ensure development occurs appropriately for West North Avenue, and provide advisory services to State and City agencies on planning and development for West North Avenue.

The [comprehensive plan](#) submitted by our Authority and adopted by the Governor and Maryland General Assembly in January 2024, is a visionary guide for planning our development activities for economic, housing, transportation, neighborhood, green space and arts and culture, that includes addressing the areas food desert and establishing commercial and retail businesses to increase density that will generate additional property, sales and income revenue for the State of Maryland and Baltimore City. The planned development at 600 W North Avenue for a Streets Market grocery store, accompanied by a retail/commercial building, aligns with our planning and development goals, objectives, and strategies articulated on pages 111–122 of our comprehensive plan.

SB4/HB258 (2025) – Economic Development Act – West North Avenue Development Authority, gives our agency powers and authorities to make rules and regulations for the operation and use of land, property, and undertakings under WNADA's jurisdiction. The 700 and 600 blocks of W North Avenue are within the "Target Area" and "Buffer Zone" of WNADA's





Building A Better Future For West Baltimore

jurisdictional Authority. We use this power and Authority in consultation with residents, businesses, and City and State planning and development officials.

In addition, as the appointed Executive Director of the West North Avenue Development Authority for Baltimore City, my position permits me to serve as an advisor to the Governor and General Assembly on economic development matters for Baltimore City and to refer that advice to the Mayor and the Baltimore City Council.

Therefore, after carefully studying the plans for the site, listening to concerns from the Reservoir Hill Association (RHA), which is one of sixteen neighborhoods that benefits from the West North Avenue corridor and the only neighborhood association opposed to the application, and receiving a debrief from Maryland DOT and Baltimore City DOT, the West North Avenue Development Authority supports the approval of the MCB Blank Slate Madison Park LLC application.

The proposed application site plan will correct and realign street parking along W North Avenue that will eventually allow for a more complete streets occupancy use of vehicles, including public bus transportation, and bicycles, while improving pedestrian safety as density increases in the area, for which the Reservoir Hill neighborhood actually would like to see realized partnership with WNADA.

My apologies for being unable to appear or send a representative to testify in person.

Respectfully,
Chad Williams
Executive Director



info@wnada.org



2500 West North Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21216



Dear Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Bullock, Porter, Gray, Blanchard, and Parker:

I am writing to oppose CCB #26-0150. I oppose MCB and Blank Slate's request for 29 additional spaces, 6 of which are slated for W. North Avenue.

On April 6, 2026, DOT Director Veronica McBeth wrote,

...agencies including the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the Department of Planning, and the Department of Transportation opposed the inclusion of on-street parking. Proposed on-street parking was rejected over concerns that it would diminish the effectiveness of dedicated bus lanes and **create new conflicts** between MTA buses and parked cars, **potentially contributing to crashes**.

Passing the CCB 26-0150 prioritizes the wants of developers over the needs of our community.

- **We need a traffic study** to determine the impact on traffic, pedestrian, and bus safety.
- **We need uninterrupted and dedicated bus lanes**. Parking on North Avenue will interrupt the flow of buses. Dedicated bus lanes have made buses run more efficiently for the more that 10,000 passengers a day on North Avenue.
- **We need a path to connected and protected bike lanes**. Protected bike lanes end at Reservoir Hill. We want a future that allows safe passage to the east, west, north and south!
- **We deserve a grocery store that prioritized community over cars**. A parking lot with 65 spaces sends a warm welcome to cars and I-83 commuters, increasing car congestion and impacting our safety as we navigate to and from our homes.
- **We won't sacrifice our safety for their want of 6 spots!** MCB/Blank Slate is requesting six additional spots on North Avenue - it's not worth the cost of lives and property!

Sincerely,
Jericka Robinson
2100 Bolton Street
Reservoir Hill

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



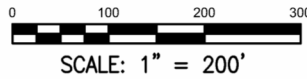
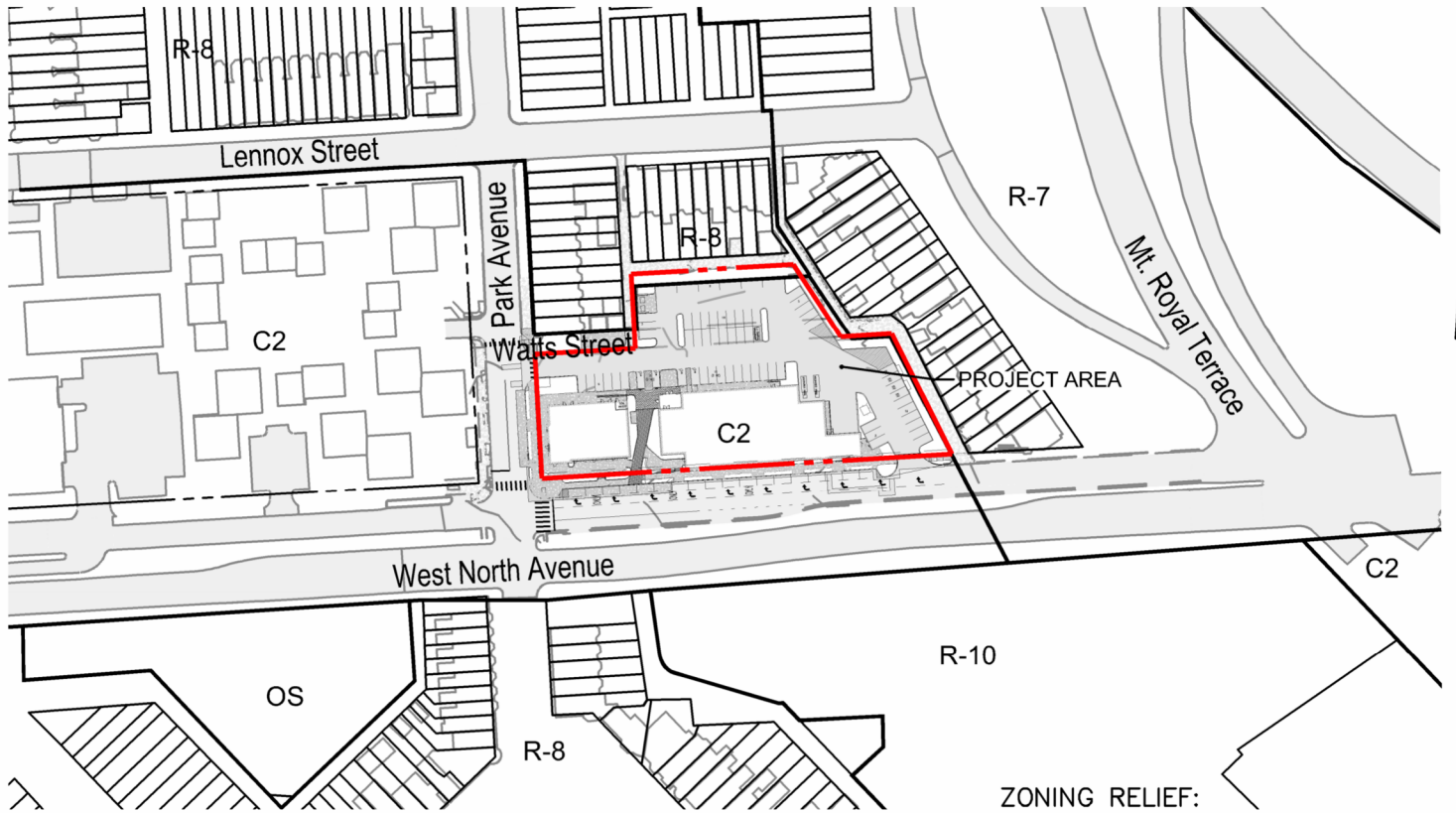
LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

26-0150

*Zoning – Conditional Use – Retail Goods
Establishment (With Alcoholic Beverage Sales) –
Variances – 600 West North Avenue*

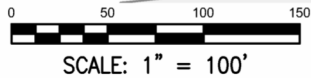
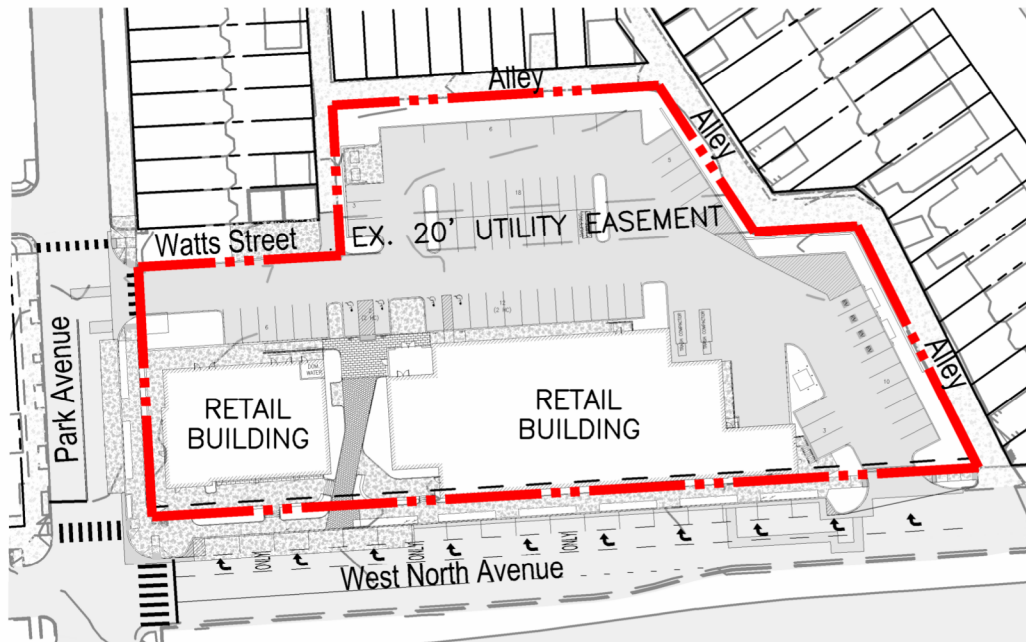
Additional Materials

**SHEET NO. 45 OF THE ZONING MAP OF THE
ZONING CODE OF BALTIMORE CITY**



ZONING RELIEF:

- (10-301) USE: ZONED C-2, ALLOWING LOW-TO-MID DENSITY COMMERCIAL USES LIKE GROCERY AND RETAIL. ALCOHOL SALES REQUIRE CONDITIONAL USE APPROVAL BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL.
- (10-401) BULK & YARD: C-2 ZONING REQUIRES A MAX 5 FT FRONT YARD SETBACK. THE PLAN PROVIDES UP TO 16'-6".
- (16-205) PARKING: MAX OF 36 SPACES ALLOWED. THE PLAN PROVIDES 65 SPACES.



WARD: 13
BLOCK: 3435
SECTION: 11
LOT: 001

LEGEND

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- PROPERTY LINES
- PROPERTY SETBACK
- ZONING BOUNDARY
- EXISTING BUILDING
- PROPERTY BUILDING

WEST NORTH AVENUE LOT 001 - ZONING PLAT

PROPERTY OWNER/APPLICANT:
MBC BLANK SLATE MADISON PARK LLC
2002 CLIPPER PARK ROAD, SUITE 105
BALTIMORE, MD 21211
CONTACT: DORI FARLEY
PH: 203.826.4720

PREPARED BY:
CARROLL ENGINEERING, INC.
215 SCHILLING CIRCLE, SUITE 102
HUNT VALLEY, MD 21031
CONTACT: JUDITH A. CARROLL
PH: 410.785.7423

MAYOR

PRESIDENT CITY COUNCIL

DATE PREPARED: 01/21/2026

**Baltimore City Council
Certificate of Posting - Public Hearing Notice**

Today's Date: [04/09/2026]

City Council Bill No.: 26-0150



(Place a picture of the posted sign in the space below.)

Address: Mount Royal Terrance Frontage

Date Posted: April 09, 2026

Name: Martin Ogle

Address: 9912 Maidbrook Road Parkville Md, 21234

Telephone: 443-629-3411

