


FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR <i>Chris Ryer</i>	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #25-0037/ ZONING – CONDITIONAL USE CONVERSION OF SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING UNIT TO 3 DWELLING UNITS IN THE R-8 ZONING DISTRICT – 1727 MCCULLOH STREET		

TO

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

DATE: April 15, 2025

At its regular meeting of April 3, 2025, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0037, for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-8 Zoning District on the property known as 1727 McCulloh Street (Block 0341, Lot 020), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting a variance regarding off-street parking requirements; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report which recommended approval of City Council Bill #25-0037, and adopted the following resolution, with eight members being present (eight in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission finds, in accordance with §5-406 of the Zoning Code of Baltimore City, that the proposed use provided in this bill:

- would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare;
- would not be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- would not be contrary to the public interest; and
- meets all criteria for approval specified in §5-406(b) of the Zoning Code of Baltimore City, as described in the Departmental staff report; and further.

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, adopts the findings and equity analysis outlined in the staff report, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #25-0037 be amended and approved by the City Council, with the following amendment:

- Following testimony from the applicant, who indicated that one off-street parking space will be provided in the rear yard, that the parking variance included in the bill is no longer necessary and can be removed.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/jw

attachment

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



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

April 3, 2025

REQUEST: City Council Bill #25-0037/ Conditional Use Conversion of Single-Family Dwelling Unit to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-8 Zoning District – Variances – 1727 McCulloh Street

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-8 Zoning District on the property known as 1727 McCulloh Street (Block 0341, Lot 020), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting a variance regarding off-street parking requirements; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Justin Walker

PETITIONER: Victoria Wu

OWNER: Jared Zheng

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 1727 McCulloh Street is located on the east side of the street, approximately 115' south of the intersection with Laurens Street. This property measures approximately 15' by 105' and is currently improved with a three-story building measuring approximately 15' by 64'. This site is zoned R-8 and is located within the Madison Park South Urban Renewal Plan (URP) area.

General Area: The subject property is located in the Madison Park neighborhood, a predominantly residential area characterized by rowhouse development. To the north, Wilson Street includes some institutional uses, such as Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School. The property is within a tenth of a mile of MTA bus stops on Eutaw Place.

HISTORY

The property is currently listed as an attached single-family dwelling. There is no legislative history regarding changes to this lot.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

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

ANALYSIS

Background: The applicant seeks to convert a single-family rowhouse into two dwelling units. The proposed units will consist of one three-bedroom unit and one four-bedroom unit. The total gross floor area of the structure is 2,067 square feet, which meets the conversion standards of §9-703 of the Zoning Code. The minimum floor area requirement for units with three or more bedrooms is 1,250 square feet, and the proposed units will have floor areas of 1,334 and 1,466 square feet, respectively, meeting this requirement. The conversion will add one dwelling unit to the site, requiring one additional parking space. As no additional parking can be provided on-site, a variance is required for one parking space.

Residential Conversions: In the Residence Districts, the conversion of a single-family dwelling to a multi-family dwelling is allowed only in the R-7, R-8, R-9, and R-10 Districts, subject to: (1) the requirements of this subtitle; and (2) in the R-7 and R-8 Districts, conditional-use approval by Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council (§9-701).

Off-Street Parking: In this zoning district, multi-family dwellings require one off-street parking space per dwelling unit (Table 16-406). For two dwelling units, one additional parking space is required to serve the new dwelling unit; none are to be provided. Therefore, a 100% variance for parking will be needed, and has been included in the bill.

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 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.

Below is the staff's review of Article 32 – *Zoning*, §5-406 {"Approval standards"}: Staff finds that the proposal meets the outlined requirements for a conversion. The structure's size, shape, and arrangement are suitable for the use, as demonstrated by its compliance with the conversion requirements of Zoning Code § 9-703. The addition of one dwelling unit to the property will not have undue impacts on the surrounding community or traffic and aligns with the designation of the General Land Use Plan, which designates the property as *Residential: Higher Density*. The conversion is not precluded by any law or Urban Renewal Plan. Allowing this conversion will return the property to productive use and provide more options for renters in the community.

Variance Approval Standards:

§ 5-308. Approval standards.

- (a) Required finding of unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty.
In order to grant a variance, the Zoning Administrator, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, or the City Council, as the case may be, must find that, because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific structure or land involved, an unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, would result if the strict letter of the applicable requirement were carried out.
- (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 conditions on which the application is based are unique to the property for which the variance is sought and are not generally applicable to other property within the same zoning classification;
 - (2) the unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty is caused by this Code and has not been created by the intentional action or inaction of any person who has a present interest in the property;
 - (3) the purpose of the variance is not based exclusively on a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property;
 - (4) the variance will not:
 - (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;
 - (5) the variance is in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code;
 - (6) the variance is not precluded by and will not adversely affect:
 - (i) any Urban Renewal Plan;
 - (ii) the City's Comprehensive Master Plan; or
 - (iii) any Historical and Architectural Preservation District; and
 - (7) 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 the requested variance conforms to the standards of §5-308. The size of the lot and access provided by the rear alley present only one opportunity for providing a parking space; two spaces that meet the size requirements of the code would not fit in the rear yard of the property. Allowing a variance for one parking space to return a building to productive use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other properties nor conflict with the purpose and intent of the code. The property is located within walking distance of multiple MDOT-MTA bus routes, providing transportation options that do not necessitate a parking space.

Equity:

The proposed conversion of a single-family rowhouse into two dwelling units supports housing access by increasing the availability of housing options within the community. Unlike many conversions that result in one- or two-bedroom units, this proposal includes a three-bedroom and a four-bedroom unit, providing much-needed rental opportunities for larger families who may struggle to find appropriately sized housing. By diversifying housing types, the project helps accommodate a wider range of household sizes and income levels. The property is located in a walkable area with access to public transit, reducing reliance on personal vehicles and supporting transportation access. Additionally, this conversion aligns with broader housing goals by facilitating gentle density increases without significantly altering the neighborhood's character. Ensuring that existing housing stock is adapted to meet current housing needs helps promote affordability and long-term neighborhood stability.

Notification: The Madison Park Improvement Association has been notified of this action and provided a letter of support. The applicant posted the required notice on the property for the mandated ten-day period before the hearing.



Chris Ryer
Director