


FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE  <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #23-0360 / ZONING - CONDITIONAL USE CONVERSION OF A SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING UNIT TO 2 DWELLING UNITS IN THE R-7 ZONING DISTRICT - VARIANCES - 2206 WEST SARATOGA STREET		

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

DATE: October 11, 2024

At its regular meeting of October 10, 2024, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #23-0360, for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-7 Zoning District on the property known as 2206 West Saratoga Street (Block 144, Lot 004), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; 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 #23-0360 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 #23-0360 be **approved** by the City Council.

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

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office  
The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC  
Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA  
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD  
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC  
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services  
Mr. Jesse Correa, applicant



Brandon M. Scott  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

### STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer  
Director

October 10, 2024

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #23-0360/ Zoning - Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling Unit to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District - Variances - 2206 West Saratoga Street:

City Council Bill #23-0360/ Zoning - Conditional Use Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling Unit to 2 Dwelling Units in the R-7 Zoning District - Variances - 2206 West Saratoga 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-7 Zoning District on the property known as 2206 West Saratoga Street (Block 0144, Lot 004) as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; and granting variances for lot area and gross floor area.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval with Variances

**STAFF:** Austin C. Davis

**PETITIONER:** Astro Homes LLC

**OWNER:** Baltimore Group 1 LLC

### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: 2206 West Saratoga Street is located on the north side of the street near the intersection with North Monroe Street. The property measures approximately 14 feet by 42.6 feet, with a total lot area of 1,417 square feet. The existing structure is a two-story rowhouse that was originally constructed as a single-family dwelling but has historically been used as a two-unit property. The structure has an above-grade square footage of 1,193 square feet, which does not meet the gross floor area requirement for the proposed duplex conversion.

General Area: The property is located in the Penrose/Fayette Street Outreach neighborhood, which primarily consists of residential rowhouses. The area benefits from its proximity to Mary Ann Winterling Elementary School and a MARC station, offering convenient public transit access. The neighborhood includes a mix of single-family and multi-family housing units, contributing to a diverse community composition.

### **HISTORY**

According to Permit #000000822, 2206 West Saratoga Street was originally constructed as a two-unit dwelling. In 1993, the property was legally converted to a single-family dwelling, but retained two electric meters and remnants of a second kitchen, suggesting its prior use as a duplex. This conversion would allow the property to revert to its historic use as two units, consistent with the character and history of the property.

## **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

This proposal aligns with the Baltimore Comprehensive Plan, particularly its emphasis on affordable housing and equitable neighborhood development. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the need for diverse housing options in growing neighborhoods and encourages adaptive reuse of existing structures to maintain housing affordability and neighborhood stability. The rezoning and conversion of this property support these goals by offering additional residential units without altering the neighborhood's character.

## **ZONING CODE REQUIREMENTS**

Use: The property is located in the R-7 zoning district, where the conversion of a single-family dwelling to a duplex is permitted subject to conditional-use approval by the City Council. However, the existing lot area and gross floor area do not meet the current zoning requirements for duplex conversion without variances.

Lot Area and Variance: The R-7 zoning district requires 1,100 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit, meaning a total of 2,200 square feet is required for two units. The subject lot has an area of 1,417 square feet, resulting in a shortfall of 783 square feet. This necessitates a 35.6% variance from the required lot area.

Gross Floor Area and Variance: Per the zoning code, the existing structure must contain 1,500 square feet of gross floor area for a two-unit conversion (§9-703.b.). The structure at 2206 West Saratoga Street only has 1,193 square feet of above-grade space, requiring a variance of approximately 20.5% from this requirement.

Unit Size Requirements: The zoning code also mandates that each 1-bedroom unit contain at least 750 square feet of gross floor area. The proposed 1-bedroom units are 596 square feet each, requiring a 20.5% variance for both units (§9-703.c.).

## **ANALYSIS**

Background: The applicant seeks approval to convert the existing single-family dwelling into two 1-bedroom units. The property's history as a two-unit dwelling supports this request, and retaining the structure as a duplex would restore its previous configuration while providing affordable housing. The variances required for lot area and gross floor area are modest, and the proposal would not significantly alter the building's exterior or increase neighborhood density beyond its historical levels.

Use History: Given the property's past use as a two-unit dwelling, this conversion aligns with the neighborhood's historical development pattern. The retention of two electric meters and the second kitchen highlights the property's long-standing function as a duplex.

Impact on Neighborhood: The proposed conversion is consistent with the character of the surrounding rowhouses and will not adversely impact the community. In fact, it is expected to contribute to neighborhood stability by providing affordable housing for small families or individuals. The proximity to public transit and schools makes this an ideal location for low- to moderate-income residents.

**Required Findings:**

As required by §5-406(b) of the zoning code, the City Council must find that:

1. The proposed use would not be detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare;
2. The use would not be precluded by any other law or applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
3. The authorization would not be contrary to the public interest; and
4. The authorization is in harmony with the purpose and intent of the zoning code.

Staff believes that the proposed conversion satisfies these standards, as it will maintain the existing building's scale and appearance while providing additional housing in an area that supports such development. No known legal or planning obstacles exist that would prevent this conditional use.

**Equity:**

This project aligns with the Equity Framework outlined in Baltimore's Comprehensive Plan by increasing access to affordable housing in a historically underserved neighborhood. The proposed conversion supports the goal of equitable neighborhood development and transgenerational equity by offering housing options that cater to smaller families and individuals with limited incomes. Additionally, the project would contribute to the neighborhood's economic diversity while promoting housing retention in a desirable urban area.

The requested rezoning and variances for 2206 West Saratoga Street are in harmony with the goals of the **Baltimore Comprehensive Plan** and align with the city's broader vision for **affordable housing** and **neighborhood revitalization**. The variances requested are modest, and the conversion will restore the building's historical use as a duplex without negatively impacting the surrounding community.

Planning staff recommends approval of this conditional-use conversion with the associated variances.

Notification: Fayette Street Outreach has been notified of this action.



**Chris Ryer**  
**Director**