


FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #15-0486 / REZONING – A PORTION OF 901 SOUTH CATON AVENUE		

TO

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

DATE:

8 May 2015

At its regular meeting of May 7, 2015, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #15-0486, for the purpose of changing the zoning for a portion of the property known as 901 South Caton Avenue, as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the O-R-2 Zoning District to the B-2-2 Zoning District.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended disapproval of City Council Bill #15-0486. Upon a motion to instead support the bill, five members voted in favor of approving the bill, two voted against the bill, and two abstained. Pursuant to the Charter of Baltimore City § 72(1), the Planning Commission “may report and submit to the City Council amendments to the Baltimore City Zoning Ordinance. Any such amendment shall be submitted only by resolution, adopted by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the entire membership of the Commission.” As the Planning Commission did not have six votes in the affirmative, they are unable to make a recommendation to the Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-4488.

TJS/WA

Attachment

- cc: Ms. Kaliopé Parthemos, Chief of Staff
 Mr. Colin Tarbert, Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development
 Mr. Leon Pinkett, Assistant Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development
 Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor’s Office
 The Honorable Rochelle “Rikki” Spector, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
 Mr. David Tanner, BMZA
 Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
 Ms. Sharon Daboin, DHCD
 Ms. Barbara Zektick, DOT
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
 Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services
 Ms. Melissa Krafchik, PABC
 Ms. Caroline Hecker, Attorney for Applicant



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

STAFF REPORT

May 7, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0486/ Rezoning – a Portion of 901 South Caton Avenue
For the purpose of changing the zoning for a portion of the property known as 901 South Caton Avenue, as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the O-R-2 Zoning District to the B-2-2 Zoning District.

RECOMMENDATION: Disapproval

STAFF: Eric Tiso

PETITIONER: St. Agnes Hospital c/o Caroline Hecker, Esq.

OWNER: Gibbons Commons, LLC

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 901 South Caton Avenue is an approximately 32-acre site at the southeast corner of Wilkens and Caton Avenues and is zoned predominantly O-R-2 Office-Residential, with a portion of the northeastern corner of the property zoned B-2-2 Commercial. This is the site of the former Cardinal Gibbons High School, which closed in 2010, and was acquired by St. Agnes in 2013. The property has some historical significance, as George Herman "Babe" Ruth, Jr. attended the former St. Mary's Industrial School on this property, and he also played on the baseball diamond on the property.

General Area: The property is located at the intersection of Wilkens and Caton Avenues within the Wilhelm Park community of southwest Baltimore. The site enjoys close proximity to both I-95 and I-695. Its immediate neighbors include PS 226, Jenkins Memorial, and the Archbishop Keough Seton High School. The Amtrak-MARC rail line crosses paths with Wilkens Avenue, and Loudon Park Cemetery lies just beyond.


HISTORY

- Ordinance #13-162, dated September 13, 2013, approved the rezoning of this property from the M-1-1 Zoning District to the O-R-2 Zoning District, with a portion of the property to be rezoned to the B-2-2 Zoning District.

2. **The availability of public facilities;** There are adequate public facilities to serve a variety of uses in this area.
3. **Present and future transportation patterns;** This site has convenient access to local and interstate highways. Staff is concerned that additional commercial zoning would negatively impact traffic on this corridor. Additionally, at the time that the concept plan was reviewed, a previous request for a curb cut from South Caton Avenue into the southern portion of the site was rejected, due to concerns over traffic volume and public safety. Should this southern portion of the site eventually be rezoned, access to that commercial area would need to come from the proposed internal loop road, as opposed to directly from Caton Avenue.
4. **Compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area;** Staff believes that the current concept plan to develop the site as an Office-Residential campus is an appropriate and compatible use. The proposed B-2-2 zoning brings the potential for a much higher intensity of commercial uses that are not compatible with the surrounding area.
5. **The recommendations of the Planning Commission and the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA);** For the above reasons, the Planning Department will recommend disapproval of the rezoning request to the Planning Commission. The BMZA has not yet commented on this bill.
6. **The relation of the proposed amendment to the City's plan.** There is nothing in the Comprehensive Plan that expressly calls for rezoning of this property, nor is the site included in any other adopted master plan that governs land use.

The City Council may grant the amendment to change the zoning classification based on a finding that there was: (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; or (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification. Staff previously supported the rezoning of the site from M-1-1 to O-R-2 only, in recognition of the change in the campus' ownership and proposed use. We do not believe that a further intensification of use is warranted.

Community Notification: The following community organizations have been notified of this action: the Wilhelm Park Neighborhood Association, the Violetville Community Association, Inc., the Morrell Park Community Association, Inc., and the Gwynns Falls Neighborhood Association.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director