



MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Alice Kennedy, Housing Commissioner

Date: August 1, 2023

Re: City Council Bill 23-0388 Urban Renewal - Lauraville Business District - Amendment 1

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 23-0388 for the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for the Lauraville Business District to extend the life of the Plan; waiving certain content and procedural requirements; making the provisions of this Ordinance severable; providing for the application of this Ordinance in conjunction with certain other ordinances; and providing for a special effective date.

If enacted, Council Bill 23-0388 would extend the life of the Urban Renewal Plan (URP) for the Lauraville Business District. The Plan was established on October 28, 2003 and is set to expire on October 28, 2023. An amendment to the URP is necessary to extend the time the Lauraville Business District Urban Renewal Plan remains in full force and effect through October 20, 2024, so that the future of the plan can be explored by surrounding community associations.

At its regular meeting of June 8, 2023, the Planning Commission concurred with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommended that City Council Bill 23-0388 be approved by the City Council.

An Urban Renewal Plan (URP) is a form of overlay zoning that is more restrictive than the city's zoning code. Urban Renewal Plans typically regulate specific geographies ranging from small business districts to entire communities. Most Urban Renewal Plans include land use restrictions and design guidelines. Some Urban Renewal Plans also include acquisition and disposition authority.

Related to DHCD, the City's Urban Renewal Plans (URPs) are the primary source of acquisition authority for various properties in areas where the City is addressing vacant lots and buildings, and encouraging or catalyzing community-based redevelopment efforts. Pursuant to Maryland Code, Real Property, § 12-015.1, which was enacted in 2007, authority to acquire property by eminent domain must be renewed after 4 years if it has not been exercised. The Lauraville Business District is not in one of DHCD's Impact Investment Areas and DHCD is not actively engaged in real estate acquisition for the purpose of blight elimination activity in the area. However, the extension of this plan may be used to encourage and guide redevelopment of the Lauraville commercial corridors.

Brandon M. Scott, Mayor • Alice Kennedy, Housing Commissioner

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DHCD **does not object** to the passage of City Council Bill 23-0388.

AK/sm

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*

Brandon M. Scott, Mayor • **Alice Kennedy**, Housing Commissioner

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