



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 #26-0177 / Rezoning – 901 South Caton Avenue		

TO

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

DATE: May 18, 2026

At its regular meeting of May 14, 2026, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #26-0177, for the purpose of changing the zoning for the property known as 901 S Caton Avenue (Block 2108C, Lot 001), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the OR-2 Zoning District to the C-2 Zoning District; 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 #26-0177 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 #26-0177 be **approved** by the City Council.

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. Caroline Hecker, Esq.



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Renata Southard
Acting Director

May 14, 2026

LEGISLATION: City Council Bill #26-0177/ Rezoning – 901 S Caton Avenue

For the purpose of changing the zoning for the property known as 901 S Caton Avenue (Block 2108C, Lot 001), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the OR-2 Zoning District to the C-2 Zoning District; and providing for a special effective date.

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: CCB #26-0177 will rezone the property located at 901 South Caton Avenue from the OR-2 Zoning District to the C-2 Zoning District to support redevelopment of the site. The standards of Zong Code §5-508(b) must be met for the approval of this map amendment.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt findings and approve

STAFF: Justin Walker

PETITIONER: Gibbons Commons, LLC Address: c/o Caroline Hecker

OWNER: Gibbons Commons, LLC

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 9th

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: 901 South Caton Avenue is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Wilkens Avenue and South Caton Avenue. The property measures approximately 29.66± acres and is currently improved with multiple buildings and uses. The northeast corner of the property contains a vacant five-story former educational building. The center of the site contains the Babe Ruth Field at Cardinal Gibbons, which serves as a multi-purpose sports field. The southwest portion of the property contains a surface parking lot currently used by Saint Agnes Hospital for overflow parking. The southeast portion of the site contains a four-story multifamily building containing 80 dwelling units. The site is currently zoned OR-2 and C-2 and was similarly zoned O-R-2 and B-2-2 prior to the 2017 comprehensive rezoning.

General Area: The surrounding area contains a mix of institutional, industrial, and residential uses within several zoning districts. Across South Caton Avenue to the west is Saint Agnes Hospital, which is located within the Hospital Campus Zoning District. Areas to the north and east of the site are zoned I-1 and are primarily improved with light industrial uses. To the northeast are portions of the Wilhelm Park neighborhood, which is zoned R-6 and developed with residential uses. The site is also located approximately one-half mile north of Interstate 95.

HISTORY

- Ordinance #13-162, dated September 13, 2013, approved the rezoning of this property from the M-1 Zoning District to the O-R-2 Zoning District, with a portion of the property rezoned to the B-2-2 Zoning District.
- Ordinance #15-390 dated June 29, 2015, approved the rezoning of a portion of the property to from the O-R-2 Zoning District to the B-2-2 Zoning District.
- The subject parcel was home to the campus of the Cardinal Gibbons School from the mid-1960s until 2010, when the school ceased operations. In 2012, St. Agnes Hospital purchased the property, as it is directly across the street from the hospital located at 3407 Wilkens Avenue. In 2013 and 2015, the above ordinances rezoned the majority of the property to O-R-2, which tracks to OR-2 under the current Zoning Code. Two small areas, one on the northeast corner and the other on the southwest corner, were zoned B-2-2, which tracks to C-2 under the current Zoning Code, creating a split-zoned lot. The zoning was enacted to support a development proposal that included apartments in the O-R-2 zoned area, as well as a grocery store and a gas station located on the B-2-2 portions of the site. The development project ultimately resulted in one 80-unit multifamily apartment building, but none of the other planned uses were constructed.

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 Mixed Use: Predominantly Residential group in the General Land Use Plan. This proposed development does not completely conform to that designation.

The proposed C-2 zoning tracks to the General Land Use category of Mixed Use: Predominantly Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial. As noted above, the General Land Use Plan designates the site as Mixed Use: Predominantly Residential. While this represents a slight deviation from the General Land Use Plan designation, the proposed zoning and development plan will still allow for a mixed-use development that includes residential, commercial, and open-space uses.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL AND CODE CONTEXT:

The applicant seeks to rezone the entire parcel to the C-2 Zoning District. After the 2013 development plan failed to fully materialize, the property owners developed a revised proposal that includes an athletic complex, retail uses, and additional multifamily residential units. The current OR-2 Zoning District permits only a limited range of commercial uses, which restricts the ability to develop the property as a mixed-use site.

REZONING:

Below are the approval standards under §5-508(b) of Article 32 – Zoning for proposed zoning map amendments:

(b) *Map amendments.*

(1) *Required findings.*

As required by the State Land Use Article, the City Council may approve the legislative authorization based on a finding that there was either:

- (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; or
- (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification.

(2) *Required findings of fact.*

In making the determination required by subsection (b)(1) of this section, the City Council must also make findings of fact that address:

- (i) population changes;
- (ii) the availability of public facilities;
- (iii) present and future transportation patterns;
- (iv) compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area;
- (v) the recommendations of the City agencies and officials; and
- (vi) the proposed amendment's consistency with the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.

(3) *Additional standards – General*

Additional standards that must be considered for map amendments are:

- (i) existing uses of property within the general area of the property in question;
- (ii) the zoning classification of other property within the general area of the property in question;
- (iii) the suitability of the property in question for the uses permitted under its existing zoning classification; and
- (iv) the trend of development, if any, in the general area of the property in question, including changes, if any, that have taken place since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

As noted above, for rezonings, the City Council must consider the following, where appropriate. Staff's assessment follows each of these criteria.

§ 5-508 (b) Evaluation criteria:

As required by the State Land Use Article, the City Council may approve the legislative authorization based on a finding that there was either: (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification.

Staff finds evidence of a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood that meets the above criteria. Prior to the comprehensive rezoning completed in 2017, the area was zoned O-R-2 and B-2-2. During the 2017 comprehensive rezoning, known as Transform Baltimore, the property retained the same zoning classifications under the new naming convention of the current Zoning Code as OR-2 and C-2. Staff finds that substantial changes warranting a rezoning have occurred since 2017. The area has experienced significant population growth, supporting more intense commercial development at the site. Additionally, certain aspects of the prior development proposal, namely the proposed Royal Farms Fuel Station, have since been developed at nearby sites, requiring a shift in the development strategy for the Gibbons Commons parcel.

Required findings of fact:

(i) Population changes

According to U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the population of Census Tract 2502.06 increased from approximately 2,021 residents in the 2013–2017 ACS period to approximately 2,713 residents in the 2020–2024 ACS period, representing an increase of approximately 34%. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates, Census Tract 2502.06, 2013–2017 and 2020–2024)

(ii) Availability of public facilities

The area continues to be adequately served by existing municipal water, sewer, and public services.

(iii) Present and future transportation patterns

No substantial changes in present or future transportation patterns have been identified. The site is located approximately one-half mile north of the interchange with I-95, providing convenient access for motor vehicles. The property is served by MTA LocalLink Route 76 on Wilkens Avenue and Route 29 on Caton Avenue. Bus stops for both routes are located adjacent to the property.

(iv) Compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area

The proposed C-2 Zoning District is “intended for areas of small- to medium-scale commercial use, typically located along urban corridors, that are designed to accommodate pedestrians and, in some instances, automobiles” (§ 10-204 of the Zoning Code). Caton Avenue functions as an urban corridor, providing direct access to I-95 as well as multiple MTA bus routes. Staff finds that the proposed C-2 zoning is compatible with both the existing and proposed development pattern.

(v) Recommendations of City agencies and officials

No recommendations have been identified from City agencies or officials that would oppose a change in zoning for this area.

(vi) Consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan

The proposed C-2 Zoning District is not one of the districts identified under the General Land Use Plan category of “Mixed Use: Predominantly Residential.” The C-2 Zoning District instead tracks to the category of “Mixed Use: Predominantly Pedestrian-Oriented Commercial.” While this represents a slight deviation from the General Land Use Plan designation, the proposed C-2 zoning will still allow for a mixed-use development at the site.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt these findings and recommend the bill favorably, with respect to the rezoning.

EQUITY: The proposed rezoning would support the continued redevelopment of a large underutilized institutional site with a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational uses. The proposal has the potential to expand access to neighborhood-serving amenities, support additional housing opportunities, and encourage reinvestment along the Caton Avenue corridor. The application also includes a letter of support from the Violetville Community Association, indicating support from the surrounding community for the proposed rezoning.

NOTIFICATION: The Violetville Community Association was notified of this action and provided a letter of support. Notification was also given via the required posting on the property, as well as via the GovDelivery service.



**Renata Southard
Acting Director**