


<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, 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 #12-009 /URBAN RENEWAL – INNER HARBOR PROJECT I – AMENDMENT		

**TO**

DATE:

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

September 21, 2012

At its regular meeting of September 20, 2012, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #12-0098, for the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for Inner Harbor Project I to add a new general land use category to the Land Use Provisions in the Plan, to change the land use category for certain Development Areas in the Renewal Plan, and to revise a certain exhibit to the Plan to reflect these changes; 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.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report which recommended approval of City Council Bill #12-0098 and adopted the following resolution (nine members present, nine in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #12-0098 be passed by the City 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. Kaliope Parthemos, Deputy Chief for Economic and Neighborhood Development  
 Mr. Alex Sanchez, Chief of Staff  
 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  
 Mr. Nicholas Blendy, DHCD  
 Ms. Barbara Zektick, DOT  
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
 Ms. Karen Randle, Council Services  
 Mr. Darrell Doane, BDC



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**Sept 20, 2012**

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #12-0098/Inner Harbor Project I URP Amendment

For the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for Inner Harbor Project I to add a new general land use category to the Land Use Provisions in the Plan, to change the land use category for certain Development Areas in the Renewal Plan, and to revise a certain exhibit to the Plan to reflect these changes

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Natasha Becker

**PETITIONER:** Administration (Baltimore Development Corporation)

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council

#### **SITE AREA**

Site Conditions: The Inner Harbor Project I Urban Renewal Plan area includes the portion of the downtown Central Business District within the approximate boundaries of Lombard Street to the north, Key Highway to the south, Gay Street and the Baltimore Inner Harbor to the east, and Charles Street to the west. The specific areas impacted by the requested legislation include Development Area 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 24.

#### **HISTORY**

The Inner Harbor Project I Urban Renewal Plan was approved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore via Ordinance No. 1045 on June 15, 1967. It was last amended via Ordinance No. 01-134, approved January 31, 2001 (Amendment #17).

#### **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

#### **BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS**

The requested amendment is an outgrowth of the September 2008 Pratt Street Concept Plan, the brief background of which follows:

Despite Pratt Street's status as Baltimore's premier urban boulevard, it was designed at a time when street level pedestrian activity was not encouraged. Instead it was channeled to a network of skywalks which are difficult to maintain and underutilized due to a perceived lack of safety. Ground level pedestrians on the north side of the street walk alongside earthen berms that were originally designed to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic while providing a green amenity.

Yet they have outlived their utility, forcing many pedestrians onto narrow strips of sidewalk directly next to traffic, while creating large, empty, and occasionally desolate areas of sidewalk. In select areas where the berms reach a height of approximately six feet, that desolation creates a real sense of insecurity.

Recognizing that Pratt Street's original design had become outdated and that Downtown's premiere boulevard had not benefitted from significant infrastructure improvements in decades, City leaders undertook a redesign effort in Spring 2006 with the following goals: to provide a comprehensive plan for Pratt Street (between Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard on the west and President Street on the east) that improves its aesthetic and functional design, usage, activities, and attractions; to provide additional retail amenities; to better activate and create public spaces; and to provide an active and engaging pedestrian experience.

The redesign was spearheaded by the Leadership Team composed of the Baltimore Development Corporation, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, and the Baltimore City Department of Planning. The plan was prepared by the Design Team composed of Ayers Saint Gross and Olin Partnership. Detailed input was received from the Baltimore City Departments of Transportation and Public Works, as well as from key stakeholders including private property owners, developers, community members, civic associations, and other interested parties.

The redesign effort culminated in a final Pratt Street Concept Plan that was introduced by the Mayor and presented to the public at the Baltimore City Convention Center Hotel in fall 2008. Major components of that design included: infill development, landscape & water, infrastructure, economics, and transportation. And while the Pratt Street Concept Plan had much support from City leaders, it was never formally adopted.

Even without formal adoption, some of the specific recommendations made in the plan have been implemented over time, including berm removal and temporary landscape installation on key blocks, new outdoor dining areas, temporary art installations, and landscaping design work. One of the original recommendations of the plan was to offer City-owned property on the north side of Pratt Street for additional infill development through additions to existing buildings. This would require an Urban Renewal Plan amendment for some of the properties to authorize a land use other than "Public." It was also mutually agreed upon that the City would need a set of Design Guidelines in place to guide that development, as well to answer questions as to what the ultimate streetscape design should be.

Baltimore Development Corporation, as the agency responsible for this particular Urban Renewal Plan, wishes to proceed with the land use changes necessary to implement the infill development recommendations of the Pratt Street plan. The specific provisions of City Council Bill #12-0098 are:

1. It adds a new general use category to the Land Use provisions of the plan. The new category is "Commercial/Public" and simply permits uses of both the Commercial and Public use categories which already exist in the plan.
2. Development Areas 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 24 are being modified to allow for Commercial/Public use, whereas they are currently only permitted for Public use. These

- are City-owned parcels adjacent to the Pratt Street right-of-way, but which function as right-of-way and which featured expanded sidewalks and landscaped berm areas.
3. The Land Use map in the Plan is being modified to reflect these changes.

With respect to future Design Guidelines, Planning staff is working with Baltimore Development Corporation, Downtown Partnership, and the Baltimore City Departments of Transportation and General Services to craft a set of controls for streetscapes and new construction. It is anticipated that these will be adopted by the Planning Commission and implemented through Land Disposition or Lease Agreements (as the case may be) for individual properties. In the future, they will be incorporated into TransForm Baltimore (Title 10, pertaining to the C-5 Downtown Core Sub-District) and/or a separate City landscape ordinance.

The Waterfront Partnership and Downtown Partnership of Baltimore have been notified of the requested action.



**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**