

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

FINDINGS OF FACT

City Council Bill No: 21-0118

For the purpose of approving the application of Downtown Partnership of Baltimore to designate an Area of Special Sign Control known as the North Harbor District; and providing for a special effective date.

Upon finding with regard to:

- (1) The designation will not increase the likelihood of traffic congestion or distraction: Downtown Baltimore has a lot of existing traffic and the presence of large billboards will not increase the amount of traffic congestion.
- (2) The designation will not add to the visual clutter in the area: Though there is some concern regarding architectural issues, those can be addressed through the architectural standards for the billboards coming. Because of the dense nature of the zone, those issues do not present a reason to not allow the Area of Special Sign Control; but could look at it again later with the specific plans in mind to address any future visual clutter concerns.
- (3) The designation will not be incongruous with the existing or contemplated design of downtown area: In the case of the downtown district, having digital billboards and special signing, is quite congruous with the neighborhood and with a downtown business district that Baltimore wants to have. In addition, there is some level of cost benefit analysis and that there's a significant need for downtown to grow and to be strategic about trying to build businesses.

SOURCE OF FINDINGS:

1. Planning Report – Planning Commission's report, dated October 8, 2021, which included the Department of Planning Staff Report, October 7, 2021
2. Testimony presented at the Committee hearing held on October 12, 2021
3. Oral – Witness:
 - Caitlin Audette, Planning Commission
 - Shelonda Stokes, Downtown Baltimore Partnership
 - Alyssa Domzal, Downtown Baltimore Partnership

Written:

- Law Department, Agency Report – Dated September 2, 2021
- Department of Finance, Agency Report – Dated September 24, 2021
- Baltimore Development, Agency Report – Dated September 20, 2021
- Department of Transportation, Agency Report – Dated September 20, 2021
- Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, Agency Report – Dated September 23, 2021
- Greater Baltimore Committee, Report – Dated October 12, 2021

AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE

- Approved by Planning Commission
- Approved by Committee members

COMMITTEE MEMBERS VOTING IN FAVOR

Eric Costello, Chair

Kristerfer Burnett

Ryan Dorsey

Danielle McCray

Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer

Robert Stokes