

FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR <i>Chris Ryer</i>	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 #25-0072 / ZONING – CONDITIONAL USE CONVERSION OF SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING UNITS TO 2 DWELLING UNITS EACH IN THE R-8 ZONING DISTRICT – 1703 AND 1709 EDMONDSON AVENUE		

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

DATE: June 30, 2025

At its regular meeting of June 26, 2025, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0072, for the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-8 Zoning District on the property known as 1703 Edmondson Avenue (Block 0121, Lot 017) and a single-family dwelling unit to 2 dwelling units in the R-8 Zoning District on the property known as 1709 Edmondson Avenue (Block 0121, Lot 020), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; granting variances regarding off-street parking requirements; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended adoption of findings and approval of City Council Bill #25-0072 and adopted the following resolutions, with six members being present (six in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission finds, in accordance with §5-406 of the Zoning Code of Baltimore City, that the proposed use provided in this bill:

- would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare;
- would not be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- would not be contrary to the public interest; and
- meets all criteria for approval specified in §5-406(b) of the Zoning Code of Baltimore City, as described in the Departmental staff report; and further

At the hearing, staff noted that the parking variance included in the bill is no longer needed following a recent amendment to Article 32 – *Zoning*, and so that variance should be amended out of the bill.

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 #25-0072 be **amended and approved** by the City Council, with the parking variance removed from the bill.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office  
The Honorable John Bullock, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA  
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD  
Ms. Hilary Ruley, Law Dept.  
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC  
Mr. Luciano Diaz, DOT  
Ms. Nancy Mead, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair*

### STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer  
Director

**June 13, 2025**

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #25-0072/ Zoning – Conditional Use Conversion of Single-Family Dwelling to Two Dwelling Units in the R-8 Zoning District – 1703 & 1709 Edmondson Avenue

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the conversion of a single-family dwelling unit to two dwelling units in the R-8 Zoning District on the properties known as 1703 & 1709 Edmondson Avenue as outlined in red on the accompanying plat; and providing for a special effective date.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt findings and approve.

**STAFF:** Justin Walker

**PETITIONER:** Nathan Gorham

**OWNER:** Nathan Gorham

#### **SITE/GENERAL AREA**

Site Conditions: 1703 and 1709 Edmondson Avenue are similar mid-block rowhouses located within the same row. Both lots measure 16 feet by 98 feet and are improved with three-story structures. Each site has a last authorized use as a single-family attached dwelling. Both structures are currently vacant and in need of significant repairs. The sites are zoned R-8 and are located within the West Baltimore MARC Station TOD Plan area.

General Area: The site is located in the Harlem Park neighborhood, immediately north of Harlem Inner Block Park V. The block of rowhomes is primarily vacant, with a few occupied homes remaining. The dwellings are in varying states of disrepair. Across the street is a multi-family structure, Harlem Gardens, which contains 94 dwelling units.

#### **HISTORY**

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

#### **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 residential: higher density group in the General Land Use Plan. This proposed development conforms to that designation.

In addition to aligning with the General Land Use Plan, the proposed development is consistent with the area master plan—the West Baltimore MARC Station Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan. This plan calls for increased density close to the MARC Station to better leverage the potential of the transit system by providing more people with convenient access to the station, which also serves as a major bus hub. The plan further emphasizes the importance of offering a diversity of housing types while respecting the neighborhood's character and aesthetic. No exterior design changes to the building are proposed as part of this development. Reuse of the existing structure allows for increases in density without aesthetic changes to the neighborhood.

## **ANALYSIS**

**Background:** The proposal involves the conversion of two existing single-family dwellings into two, two-bedroom units. The project would return the currently vacant properties to productive use.

### **Conditional Use Approval Standards:**

#### **§ 5-406. Approval standards.**

(a) *Evaluation criteria.*

As a guide to its decision on the facts of each case, the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals must consider the following, where appropriate:

- (1) the nature of the proposed site, including its size and shape and the proposed size, shape, and arrangement of structures;
- (2) the resulting traffic patterns and adequacy of proposed off-street parking and loading;
- (3) the nature of the surrounding area and the extent to which the proposed use might impair its present and future development;
- (4) the proximity of dwellings, churches, schools, public structures, and other places of public gathering;
- (5) accessibility of the premises for emergency vehicles;
- (6) accessibility of light and air to the premises and to the property in the vicinity;
- (7) the type and location of adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and other necessary facilities that have been or will be provided;
- (8) the preservation of cultural and historic landmarks and structures;
- (9) the character of the neighborhood;
- (10) the provisions of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan;
- (11) the provisions of any applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (12) all applicable standards and requirements of this Code;
- (13) the intent and purpose of this Code; and
- (14) any other matters considered to be in the interest of the general welfare.

(b) *Limited criteria for denying.*

The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals or the City Council, may not approve a conditional use or sign unless, after public notice and hearing and on consideration of the standards required by this subtitle, the Board or Council finds that:

- (1) the establishment, location, construction, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use or sign would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare;
- (2) the use or sign would not be precluded by any other law, including an applicable Urban Renewal Plan;
- (3) the authorization would not be contrary to the public interest; and
- (4) the authorization would be in harmony with the purpose and intent of this Code.

Below is the staff's review of Article 32 – *Zoning*, §5-406 {"Approval standards"}: Staff finds no evidence that the proposed conversion would negatively affect public health, safety, or welfare. Rehabilitating these long-vacant structures and returning them to active residential use would benefit the community. The site is not located within an Urban Renewal Plan area, and no other regulations preclude the proposed conversion. The request is consistent with the General Land Use Plan as well as the goals of the applicable area master plan.

Equity: This project supports equity goals by reinvesting in two long-vacant rowhouses and creating new housing opportunities within a designated growth area identified in the West Baltimore MARC Station Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan. By providing two additional units close to transit, the proposal advances equitable access to transportation and housing, particularly for individuals who do not own vehicles. The reuse of existing structures also supports environmental goals, while maintain the character of the block.

Notification: The Harlem Park Neighborhood Council has been notified of this action and provided a letter of support for both properties.



**Chris Ryer**  
**Director**