



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 5th, 2024
TO: Economic & Community Development Committee
FROM: Colin Tarbert, President and CEO
POSITION: Support
SUBJECT: City Council Bill No. 23-0444
Charter Amendment – Inner Harbor Park

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin Tarbert", written over the printed name in the "FROM" field.

INTRODUCTION

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) is reporting on City Council Bill No. 23-0444 introduced by Councilmember Costello and President Mosby

PURPOSE

This bill seeks to amend the Charter of Baltimore City, specifically the provision dedicating the Inner Harbor Park area south of Pratt Street, east of Light Street, and north of Key Highway as a public park. This amendment is necessary to facilitate a proposed redevelopment of Harborplace.

BRIEF HISTORY

This charter amendment makes two notable changes to the current charter language regarding Harborplace. The first, is that it increases the allowable development footprint for Harborplace from its current 3.2 acres to 4.5 acres. The current footprint is sited within the approximately 21.55 Acres of public space within the Inner Harbor Park (15.5 Acres of public space in Development Area 15a; Block 089 Lot 003 plus the 6.55 Acres of public space at Rash Field Park, Development Area 17; Block 0890 Lot 006). The Charter Amendment would amount to a 6% reduction in the area of the Inner Harbor Park that is restricted from commercial uses. In other words, 94% of the public space in the current Inner Harbor Park would remain protected from additional commercial or residential development. In addition, under the development plan the area known as McKeldin Plaza, and areas of right of way proposed to be closed, would be added into the boundary of Inner Harbor Park, leading to a net *gain* of protected public park space under the Charter.

The second change in the proposed charter amendment would be to allow for residential use and associated parking within the Harborplace footprint. Currently, the entire 3.2 acres of Harborplace is dedicated to commercial uses. This modification to the charter would allow for the creation of mixed-use buildings within the development footprint.

The redevelopment of Baltimore's Harborplace is one of the most important projects the City will undertake in the near future. The owner of the Harborplace pavilions has released plans for their vision of the site which require, among other elements, changes to the zoning, land use, height and massing restrictions currently in place for the site and legally enshrined in the Urban Renewal Plan. Under current code, Harborplace is limited to the height and massing currently in place. In order to achieve any redevelopment of the property that will include greater diversity of uses, commercial density, increased public access and visibility to the water, and enhanced public spaces on the private Harborplace properties, modifications to the Urban Renewal Plan, Zoning Code, and City Charter are necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

AGENCY POSITION

The Baltimore Development Corporation respectfully **supports** City Council Bill No. 23-0444 and companion bills 23-0448 (Urban Renewal Plan amendment) and 23-0446 (Zoning Modifications C-5-IH). If you have any questions, please contact Kim Clark at 410-837-9305 or KClark@baltimoredevelopment.com.

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

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