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MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee
From: Justin A. Williams, Interim Executive Director
CC: Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administrator
Date: October 29, 2025
Re: Council Bill No. 25-0101 – Repeal of Ords. 86-711 and 92-147
Planned Unit Development – Mount Clare Junction
Position: **Favorable**

The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) has received and reviewed City Council Bill 25-0101, which proposes to repeal Ordinance 86-711, as amended by Ordinance 92-147. These ordinances designated certain properties as a Business Planned Unit Development known as Mount Clare Junction. Due to timing constraints, this report was prepared by BMZA staff and has not been reviewed or voted upon by the full BMZA Board.

The BMZA notes that the repeal of a Planned Unit Development may not technically constitute a “legislative authorization” as defined in § 5-501 of the Baltimore City Zoning Code, which would require referral under § 5-504. Section 5-501(2) defines legislative authorization to include ordinances that “approve, authorize, or amend a prior approval or authorization relating to 1 or more specific properties,” but the repeal of such authorization arguably falls outside this definition.

Nevertheless, the BMZA appreciates the City Council’s referral of this matter and is pleased to provide its written report and recommendation in accordance with § 5-506(b), which requires the BMZA to submit its report within 30 days of a bill's introduction when referred.

Background

The Mount Clare Junction Planned Unit Development was established by Ordinance 86-711 in 1986 to support the development of a shopping center in the Pigtown neighborhood area. The PUD covered approximately 31.5 acres and was substantially completed by 1987, with over 400,000 square feet of retail and office space.

Ordinance 92-147, approved in 1992, amended the PUD to modify certain use restrictions. Prior to the Transform Baltimore comprehensive rezoning in 2017, the underlying zoning for most of the site was B-2-2. Following Transform Baltimore, the underlying zoning is now C-3 (General Commercial) for the primary shopping center parcels, with portions zoned C-2 and R-8.

IV. ANALYSIS

A. Framework for Review

The Transform Baltimore Zoning Code, adopted in 2017 as the City’s current comprehensive zoning ordinance, was created to establish a more modern code that fosters growth and development while maintaining the character of Baltimore's neighborhoods. As part of the City’s

Zoning oversight framework, the BMZA reviews referred legislation with consideration for actions that promote the general welfare of the community and foster appropriate development that serves the public interest.

IV. ANALYSIS

A. Framework for Review

Under the Baltimore City Charter, the BMZA “hears and determines all zoning appeals, basing its decisions on what will promote the health, security, morals, and general welfare of the community.” The Transform Baltimore Zoning Code, adopted in 2017 as the City’s current comprehensive zoning ordinance, was created to establish a more modern code that fosters growth and development while maintaining the character of Baltimore’s neighborhoods.

Consistent with these principles, it is the BMZA’s general position to support zoning actions that promote the general welfare of the community and foster appropriate development that serves the public interest. The BMZA evaluates this proposal through that lens.

B. Consistency with Zoning Code Standards

Section 13-205 of the Zoning Code establishes standards for the repeal of planned unit developments. The Planning Commission and City Council must find that:

1. The repeal is in the public interest; and
2. The approved development plan has been substantially completed, is no longer necessary in light of the property’s underlying zoning, is no longer consistent with the City’s Master Plan, or has been abandoned.

The evidence indicates that the original development plan was substantially completed by 1987, satisfying § 13-205(2)(i). Additionally, as noted in the Planning Department’s staff report, the uses intended by the creation of the PUD are now largely available under the current C-3 zoning district by right, rendering the PUD no longer necessary under § 13-205(2)(ii).

C. Public Interest Considerations

The BMZA finds that the repeal of this PUD serves the public interest in several important ways:

- **Removal of Barriers to Mixed-Use Development:** The current PUD framework, created nearly 40 years ago for a single-purpose commercial development, does not contemplate or accommodate housing. The repeal removes a regulatory barrier to mixed-use redevelopment that could include a housing component, which appears to be a primary driver of this legislative action.
- **Addressing Housing Demand:** Future redevelopment of additional housing units in this location will serve the public interest by helping to fill demand for housing in this

area. The site's proximity to existing neighborhoods, transit connections, and community amenities makes it well-suited for residential development.

- **Supporting Neighborhood Economic Development:** Adding residential density to this commercial area will support neighborhood economic development by expanding the customer base for existing retail establishments, including the shopping center tenants. Additional residents will bring vitality to the area and help sustain local businesses.
- **Enhanced Commercial Viability:** Increased patronage from nearby residents will benefit the shopping center and help ensure its long-term viability as a community asset, continuing to serve the grocery and retail needs identified by the community.

D. Modern Zoning Framework

The PUD was created under zoning conditions and planning approaches that predate Transform Baltimore by more than three decades. The current C-3 zoning district is specifically intended for “more intensive commercial uses and key commercial nodes that require additional controls, particularly for shopping centers and larger retail establishments,” while also accommodating mixed-use development.

The repeal allows the property to operate under a modern zoning framework better aligned with contemporary planning goals and community needs, rather than restrictions designed for a different era. This approach is consistent with the goals of Transform Baltimore to create a code that fosters growth and development in ways that serve Baltimore's neighborhoods.

V. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The BMZA notes that Citizens of Pigtown, the community association for the area, has expressed support for this legislation, as documented in correspondence dated September 23, 2025. The community association recognizes that repealing the outdated PUD will facilitate beneficial redevelopment while committing to ongoing engagement in future planning processes.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The BMZA finds that the repeal of Ordinances 86-711 and 92-147 is in the public interest and meets the standards established in § 13-205 of the Zoning Code. The proposed action removes unnecessary regulatory barriers while allowing the property to be governed by the comprehensive zoning framework established through Transform Baltimore.

Zoning processes and regulations should facilitate, not hinder, appropriate investment and development that serves community needs. This legislation accomplishes that goal by removing outdated restrictions while maintaining appropriate land use controls through the underlying C-3, C-2, and R-8 zoning districts.

The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals recommends APPROVAL of City Council Bill 25-0101.

For any questions regarding this report or to discuss these concerns further, please contact **Justin Williams** at justin.williams@baltimorecity.gov or (410) 396-4301.