

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 05-0107R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Dixon, Councilmembers D’Adamo, Holton, Spector, Young, Curran,
Harris, Rawlings Blake, Conaway, Welch, Kraft, Mitchell, Reisinger

Introduced and read first time: November 21, 2005

Assigned to: Economic Development and Public Financing Subcommittee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Planning Department, Department of Finance,
Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc., Baltimore Development Corporation, Department of
Housing and Community Development

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – A Retail Assessment of Downtown Baltimore**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Director of Retail Development of the Downtown Partnership,
4 Inc., to brief the City Council on the findings of a recent retail market assessment of
5 downtown Baltimore; and inviting representatives from the Baltimore Development
6 Corporation, the Baltimore City Department of Planning, and the Charles Street
7 Development Corporation to join the Council for a discussion of the Strategy Team’s
8 progress on the development of a comprehensive retail survey and marketing program for the
9 City of Baltimore.

10 **Recitals**

11 The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.,
12 Baltimore City Department of Planning, and the Charles Street Development Corporation have
13 formed a Strategy Team to develop a comprehensive retail strategy and marketing program for
14 the City of Baltimore, focusing primarily on downtown Baltimore and select neighborhood retail
15 districts.

16 To facilitate the development of that strategy, the Team contracted with a consulting firm to
17 undertake a retail market assessment to garner an overall understanding of the national retail
18 market place and Baltimore’s ability to participate in that marketplace, as well as to provide a
19 foundation of data, information, and market realities on which to base an effective plan of action.

20 In part, the assessment showed that whereas Baltimore was once the commercial and
21 industrial hub of the metropolitan area, in the past 50 years it has lost both jobs and population.
22 What was once the hub now more closely resembles a target, with the waterfront a small bulls-
23 eye of prosperity, surrounded by a wide ring of poverty and crumbling infrastructure, that is in
24 turn surrounded by a ring of wealthy suburbs.

25 The study, by McDearman Associates, a local economic development consultant, shows that
26 Baltimore’s downtown now ranks 8th for wealth among major U.S. cities, that 40% of

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

1 Baltimore’s new housing in the last 5 years was in the downtown waterfront area, and that 3,145
2 households within a 1-mile radius of downtown earn more than \$75,000 a year but when a 5-
3 mile radius is reached, the median household income falls to \$32,000 a year – the lowest among
4 nearby suburban areas.

5 McDearman holds that “this demonstrates both the power of the wealthy suburban markets
6 and the demographic decline that Baltimore City has outside the 1-mile radius of the center city.
7 Baltimore’s effort to attract national retail chains has been held back by factors that include:
8 demographics that have only recently begun to become attractive to retailers; low rates of
9 downtown employment; no large shopping district or mall; stiff competition from surrounding
10 wealthy suburbs; easy access to high-end shopping attractions in New York, Philadelphia, and
11 D.C.; poorly coordinated public transportation; the perception of crime; and lack of information
12 about the Baltimore market.

13 Baltimore also has reason to be optimistic about our position to attract and support a strong
14 retail base – the City is one of the nation’s top downtowns; it meets many of the criteria that
15 drives location placement by national retail chain locations in top tier cities; it has high
16 population density and a high number of high income earners in the city center; it is meeting a
17 demand for high-end residential units; it has a high hotel occupancy rate, and more hotels are
18 planned for the near future; and it has the desirable authenticity of architecture, cultural, varied
19 neighborhoods, and diverse ethnicity that is driving urban renewal in many major markets.

20 In order to fully effectuate a turn around in Baltimore’s retail development, it is necessary to
21 obtain a working knowledge of the entire picture of the City’s surmountable weaknesses and
22 appreciable strengths.

23 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
24 Director of Retail Development of the Downtown Partnership, Inc., is requested to brief the City
25 Council on the findings of a recent retail market assessment of downtown Baltimore; and
26 representatives from the Baltimore Development Corporation, the Baltimore City Department of
27 Planning, and the Charles Street Development Corporation are requested to join the Council for
28 a discussion of the Strategy Team’s progress on the development of a comprehensive retail
29 survey and marketing program for the City of Baltimore.

30 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
31 President and Director of Retail Development of the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.,
32 the President and Director of Business Development of the Baltimore Development Corporation,
33 the President of the Charles Street Development Corporation, the Director of Planning, the
34 Commissioner of Housing, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.