

<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #17-0076 / Urban Renewal – Coldstream Homestead Montebello – Amendment __

CITY of  
BALTIMORE  
**MEMO**



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

DATE: July 7, 2017

At its regular meeting July 6, 2017, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #17-0076, for the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for Coldstream Homestead Montebello to modify the provisions of certain land uses in the Plan; waiving certain content and procedural requirements; making provisions of this Ordinance severable; providing for the application of this Ordinance in conjunction with certain other ordinances; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #17-0076, and adopted the following resolution, eight members being present (eight in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its Departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #17-0076 be passed by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-4488.

TJS/WA

Attachment

- cc: Mr. Pete Hammen, Chief Operating Officer
- Mr. Jim Smith, Chief of Strategic Alliances
- Ms. Karen Stokes, Mayor's Office
- Mr. Colin Tarbert, Mayor's Office
- Mr. Kyron Banks, Mayor's Office
- The Honorable Edward Reisinger, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
- Mr. David Tanner, BMZA
- Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
- Ms. Sharon Daboin, DHCD
- Mr. Patrick Fleming, DOT
- Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
- Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services
- Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC



Catherine E. Pugh  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur  
Director

July 6, 2017

**REQUEST:** City Council Bill #17-0076/ Urban Renewal – Coldstream Homestead Montebello – Amendment \_\_\_:

For the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for Coldstream Homestead Montebello to modify the provisions for certain land uses in the Plan; waiving certain content and procedural requirements; making the provisions of this Ordinance severable; providing for the application of this Ordinance in conjunction with certain other ordinances; and providing for a special effective date.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval

**STAFF:** Martin French

**PETITIONER:** Councilmember Mary Pat Clarke

**OWNERS:** Various and numerous, within the defined Urban Renewal Area known as Coldstream Homestead Montebello

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

Site Conditions: The boundaries of the Coldstream Homestead Montebello Urban Renewal Area (URA) are: 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and 32<sup>nd</sup> Streets on its north; Loch Raven Road on its west; 25<sup>th</sup> Street and the Baltimore Belt Railroad on its south; and Harford Road on its east, with a small extension east of Harford Road at the southeast corner of the URA taking in the properties known as 2501- 2555 Harford Road. The Coldstream Homestead Montebello URA has a concentration of attached residential structures spread across its northeastern, central, and southern portions, split into an upper and lower section by the boulevard known as The Alameda; a concentration of public schools and other public facilities in its western section along Loch Raven Road; a concentration of commercial and small industrial uses in its southwest section south of Exeter Hall Avenue and along its southern border next to the Baltimore Belt Railroad right-of-way; and small commercial uses along its southeastern border along Harford Road. Most of the residential portion of this Urban Renewal Area was originally developed in the second and third decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but this large-scale development was preceded by construction of small groups of houses along Harford Road in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

General Area: The Coldstream Homestead Montebello URA is located in the now-inner northeastern part of Baltimore City. To its northeast is the Montebello Reservoir and Water Purification Plant, supplier of drinking water for the entire eastern area of Baltimore City and

Baltimore County. The northern boundary of the URA is 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, the historic boulevard which forms part of the street network linking central and downtown Baltimore to Baltimore's northeast sections (via Loch Raven Boulevard, The Alameda, Hillen Road and Perring Parkway, and Harford Road) and eastern sections (via 32<sup>nd</sup> Street extended through Clifton Park to Erdman Avenue, and Erdman Avenue to Belair Road and Philadelphia Road/ Pulaski Highway). City College, a Baltimore landmark, is located at the northwest corner of the URA. West of the URA, across Loch Raven Road, is the predominantly residential area known as Waverly. Clifton Park, which includes a municipal golf course and public schools, is across Harford Road southeast of the URA. South of the URA, across the railroad right-of-way, is a mixed residential, industrial, and commercial area known as East Baltimore Midway, itself another Urban Renewal Area having Harford Road as its southeastern border.

## **HISTORY**

The Coldstream Homestead Montebello Urban Renewal Plan was originally approved by the Mayor and City Council by Ordinance no. 289 dated February 28, 1977. This Urban Renewal Plan (URP) was last amended by its Amendment no. 8, dated February 12, 2007, approved by the Mayor and City Council by Ordinance no. 07-571 dated November 27, 2007. The Coldstream Homestead Montebello Historic District was certified to the National Register of Historic Places on October 23, 2013.

## **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

The proposed amendment to the URP would be consistent with LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, the Baltimore Comprehensive Master Plan, Live Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods. The amendment would also further the URP objective to achieve a strong residential neighborhood including supporting commercial and public facilities in the Coldstream Homestead Montebello Area (URP, Project Description, Urban Renewal Plan Objectives (A.2.)).

## **ANALYSIS**

The predominantly residential northeast part of the URA located along and northeast of The Alameda is a National Register Historic District also called Coldstream Homestead Montebello. The southwest portion of the URA is designated as Industrial, and the northwest portion of the URA is designated as Public (for schools, parks, and recreation facilities). Only Harford Road, which forms the eastern or southeast border of the URA, has a mixture of original residential structures, some partially or wholly converted to non-residential use, and commercial structures, many in the URA's southern section closer to the railroad.

The proposed amendment would apply to the portions of the URA now designated by the URP as "Neighborhood Business", "Community Business", and "Community Commercial". The URA's Land Use Plan map places the Neighborhood Business designation on a triangular area where Hillen Road meets Harford Road, and at 2501 Harford Road near the southeast corner of the URA. The same map places the Community Business designation along the 2500, 2600, and 2800 blocks of Harford Road, and the Community Commercial designation at the southeast corner of the URA between Harford Road and Aisquith Street. In practical terms, the proposed amendment would directly affect primarily the west side of Harford Road between 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Abbotston Street, and the triangular area where Hillen Road meets Harford Road.

Harford Road bordering the Coldstream Homestead Montebello URA has not developed as a coherent commercial area. Although the comprehensive rezoning that became effective on June 5, 2017 has placed most of the Harford Road-fronting properties that would be directly affected by the proposed action in the new C-1 Neighborhood Business Zoning District, enactment of that zoning does not guarantee that the proviso recited in City Council Bill 17-0076, "Street-facing ground floor uses must be primarily retail or service establishments that deal directly with consumers, rely heavily on walk-in business, and have regular daily hours" will actually be realized. This is because the list of permitted and conditional uses contained in Table 10-301, "Commercial Districts – Permitted and Conditional Uses" of the new Zoning Code includes numerous uses that could easily qualify under this criterion, and some which would not if their operator chose not to meet this criterion.

As the existing building stock in the portion of the URA that would be affected includes a number of residential mixed-use properties and some non-residential properties built for commercial purposes, the proposed amendment represents an opportunity to encourage more walk-to retail commercial establishments and personal services establishments to locate along these blocks of Harford Road, thus strengthening both the image of this section of Harford Road as a neighborhood-oriented commercial area, and its curb appeal as a cohesive node for small businesses in this part of Baltimore. This in turn could serve to strengthen the nearby residential area immediately northwest of Harford Road, parts of which have been beset by problems associated with neglected or abandoned properties.

The concept embodied in the proposed amendment to the Coldstream Homestead Montebello URP was initiated in the Hamilton Business Area URP, a plan originally adopted in November 1979. The Hamilton Business Area covers both sides of Harford Road where it meets Hamilton Avenue, and includes as its first objective "establishing a positive and identifiable image for the Hamilton Business Area" (Hamilton URP, A.2.a.), and as its second objective "promoting new retail business activity in the area (Hamilton URP, A.2.b.). Recognizing that these two objectives interconnect, the URP states, in its next section (Land Use Plan, Provisions and Standards [for] Permitted Uses, B.2.a.(3)) covering its Community Business areas, "street-facing ground floor uses must be primarily retail or service establishments that deal directly with consumers, rely heavily on walk-in business and have regular daily hours". To the extent that this requirement has succeeded in activating or rejuvenating a business area that had been in existence for almost one hundred years, the concept is worthy of consideration for use elsewhere, such as in the Coldstream Homestead Montebello URA's business area along Harford Road.

Notification: The Coldstream Homestead Montebello Community Development Corporation has been notified of this action.



**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**