



CITY COUNCIL BILL: 23-0440
BILL REPORT

**SALE OF PROPERTY – MARKET CENTER URBAN
RENEWAL AREA – 32 PROPERTIES**

TO: The Honorable Nick Mosby, President, Baltimore City Council
FROM: Dana Petersen Moore, Director, Office of Equity and Civil Rights
THRU: Nina Themelis, Director, Mayor’s Office of Government Relations
ANALYST: Ty’lor Schnell, Leg. Liaison & Policy Analyst, Office of Equity and Civil Rights
DATE: 11/27/2023
POSITION: **Favorable**

Introduction

The Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) has reviewed and is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0440 – Sale of Property – Market Center Urban Renewal Area – 32 Properties. This bill aims to grant authorization to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the sale, either publicly or privately, of their stake in thirty-two (32) specific properties situated within the previously designated Market Center Renewal Plan Area. This area was initially established by Ordinance 77-579 and was last modified by Ordinance 18-214. The properties in question are deemed no longer necessary for public use by the City of Baltimore.

Background

Baltimore's Urban Renewal Plans have roots tracing back to the late 1960s, representing comprehensive strategies sanctioned by the Mayor and City Council to formulate and execute redevelopment objectives. These plans encompass four primary categories – downtown, commercial corridors, industrial areas, and neighborhood plans. Initially, Urban Renewal Plans were grounded in extensive redevelopment initiatives, exemplified by projects like Charles Center, the Inner Harbor, and substantial residential redevelopment in areas such as Harlem Park.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the focus of Urban Renewal Plans shifted towards stimulating the redevelopment of commercial corridors. These plans conferred authority for property acquisition, proposed changes in land use and zoning, and set forth design standards for the corridors. Over time, there was an increasing integration of design guidelines and land use restrictions within these plans to enhance and regulate these areas. In numerous instances, Urban Renewal Plans played a pivotal role in establishing necessary regulations, particularly as the zoning code lagged behind in staying current.

Analysis

This ordinance was introduced by request of the Administration on behalf of the Baltimore Development Corporation. Per the the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the disposition of these properties via Sales Ordinance is necessary so that redevelopment projects can occur in the area. The properties to be disposed are a mix of unoccupied and vacant buildings and lots.

Certain properties slated for disposition are situated within a Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) District and a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) District. As a result, these properties may be subject to additional stipulations and requirements concerning any prospective alterations to existing buildings in the future.



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By divesting from underutilized properties, the city not only invites private investment but also stimulates economic growth and revitalization. This procedural step aligns with the city's vision for fostering vibrant communities, attracting new businesses, and creating opportunities for residents. The sale of these properties represents a proactive step towards transforming dormant spaces into dynamic hubs, contributing to the overall prosperity and vitality of Baltimore.

Conclusion

The Office of Equity and Civil Rights endorses a **favorable** committee report on this bill, enabling the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore to sell, either through public or private means, their interest in thirty-two (32) designated properties within the Market Center Renewal Plan Area.