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**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE**

Mission Statement

The Committee on Ways and Means (WM) is responsible for ensuring taxpayer dollars are expended prudently and equitably. WM will exercise regular oversight of the City's budget, expenditures, loans, and other financial matters. The committee's areas of jurisdiction include: budget & appropriations, taxation, financial services, consumer protection, audits, and the Comptroller's Office.

**The Honorable Eric T. Costello
Chairman**

PUBLIC HEARING

**TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2024
10:10 AM**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council Bill #24-0500

Zoning – Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control - Amendment

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BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Ways and Means

Bill 24-0500

Zoning – Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control - Amendment

Sponsor: Councilmember Costello at the request of Baltimore Urban Revitalization LLC

Introduced: February 26, 2024

Purpose:

For the purpose of revising the criteria for Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control; and providing for a special effective date.

Effective: On the date it is enacted.

Agency Reports

Law Department	Favorable
Department of Housing & Community Development	None as of this writing
Planning Commission	Favorable
Board of Municipal & Zoning Appeals	None as of this writing
Department of Transportation	None as of this writing
Baltimore Development Corporation	None as of this writing
Parking Authority of Baltimore City	None as of this writing

Analysis

Current Law

Article 32 – Zoning, Title 17 – Signs, Subtitle 5 – Areas of Special Signage Control – outlines the rules, regulations and mandates for Signs.

Background

The Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control was created in 2017 as part of the new zoning code, also known as Transform Baltimore.

Per the Law Department, upon enactment, the bill would change the text of the Zoning Code to make clear that the Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control is the entirety of the area zoned PC (Port Covington Zoning District) and not limited to the area mapped as PC in the first Zoning Map adopted in 2017.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): City Code, Bill 24-0500 and all agency reports, and all correspondence received as of this writing.

Analysis by: *Marguerite M. Currin*
Analysis Date: July 19, 2024

Direct Inquiries to: (443) 984-3485

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 24-0500
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Costello
At the request of: Baltimore Urban Revitalization LLC
Address: c/o Alyssa Domzal, Esq., Ballard Spahr LLP
111 S. Calvert Street, 27th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Telephone: (410) 528-5510

Introduced and read first time: February 26, 2024

Assigned to: Economic and Community Development Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Housing and Community Development, Planning Commission, Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, Department of Transportation, Baltimore Development Corporation, Parking Authority of Baltimore City

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Zoning – Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control – Amendment**

3 FOR the purpose of revising the criteria for the Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control;
4 and providing for a special effective date.

5 BY repealing and re-ordaining, with amendments

6 Article 32 - Zoning
7 Section 17-502(a)
8 Baltimore City Code
9 (Edition 2000)

10 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
11 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

12 **Baltimore City Code**

13 **Article 32. Zoning**

14 **Title 17. Signs**

15 **Subtitle 5. Areas of Special Signage Control**

16 **§ 17-502. Applicability.**

17 (a) *Districts.*

18 (1) An Area of Special Signage Control may be applied for in the C-1, C-1-E, C-1-VC,
19 C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, IMU-1 or 2, OR, or TOD Zoning Districts.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 24-0500

1 (2) The entire PC Zoning District[, as mapped on the adopted Zoning Map, as of
2 June 5, 2017,] is designated an Area of Special Signage Control, unless the
3 boundaries of the Area of Special Signage Control are otherwise amended per
4 § 17-505.

5 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect the date it is
6 enacted.

Council Bill 24-0500

AGENCY REPORTS

See attached

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW
EBONY M. THOMPSON, CITY SOLICITOR
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET
SUITE 101, CITY HALL
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

March 8, 2024

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 24-0500 – Zoning – Area of Special Signage Control –
Amendment

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 24-0500 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill would change the text of the Zoning Code to make clear that the Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control is the entirety of the area zoned PC and not limited to the area mapped as PC in the first iteration of the Zoning Map adopted in 2017. It is arguable that the language currently provides for the entirety of the PC zoned areas to be in the Area of Special Signage Control, but this clarifies the intent.

Some procedural requirements apply to this bill because a change in the zoning code text is deemed a “legislative authorization.” Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-501(1). Specifically, notice of the City Council hearing must be given by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the City, at least 15 days before the hearing. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-601(b); 5-601(e). The notice of the City Council hearing must include the date, time, place and purpose of the hearing, as well as the address or description of the property and the name of the applicant. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, § 5-601(c).


The bill is the appropriate method for the City Council to change the text of the Zoning Code. Assuming the procedural requirements are satisfied, the Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

Very truly yours,

Hilary Ruley
Chief Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson, City Solicitor

Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office of Government Relations
Elena DiPietro, Chief Solicitor, General Counsel Division
Jeff Hochstetler, Chief Solicitor
Ashlea Brown, Chief Solicitor
Michelle Toth, Assistant Solicitor

FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #24-0500 / ZONING – PORT COVINGTON AREA OF SPECIAL SIGNAGE CONTROL – AMENDMENT		

TO

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

DATE: May 13, 2024

At its regular meeting of May 10, 2024, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #24-0500, for the purpose of revising the criteria for the Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control; 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 #24-0500 and adopted the following resolutions, with seven members being present (six in favor, one abstained):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, adopts the findings and equity analysis outlined in the staff report, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #24-0500 be **approved** by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
 The Honorable Eric Costello, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
 Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC
 Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA
 Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
 Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
 Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
 Mr. Liam Davis, DOT
 Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services
 Ms. Alyssa Domzal, attorney for applicant



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

May 9, 2024

REQUEST: City Council Bill #24-0500/ Zoning - Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control - Amendment

For the purpose of revising the criteria for the Port Covington Area of Special Signage Control; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Caitlin Audette

PETITIONER: Baltimore Urban Revitalization LLC, c/o Alyssa Domzal

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The Port Covington Area of Special Sign Control consists of those areas with the PC Zoning Districts. Located at Port Covington, also known as Baltimore Peninsula, the area is the location of a large development as identified in the Port Covington Master Plan.

General Area: The Port Covington zoning district is limited to Port Covington or Baltimore Peninsula. This is an area of the city along the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River in South Baltimore. It is adjacent to the Locust Point industrial area to the east, and west of the Hanover Street Bridge, south of I-95.

HISTORY

The Port Covington Areas of Special Sign Control was created in 2017 as part of the new zoning code, also known as Transform Baltimore.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This action is not represented in any plans.

ANALYSIS

Background: The amendment seeks to remove the date associated with the Port Covington Area of Special Sign Control. Presently Section 17-502 of Article 32 states the following.

§ 17-502. Applicability.

The entire PC Zoning District, as mapped on the adopted Zoning Map, as of June 5, 2017, is designated an Area of Special Signage Control, unless the boundaries of the Area of Special Signage Control are otherwise amended per § 17-505.

The request would remove the date, allowing any additional areas zoned PC to be part of the Area of Special Sign Control.

Equity:

- **Impact:** This amendment would have minimal impact to the surrounding community in both the short and long term and would not impact existing patterns of inequity in Baltimore.
- **Engagement:** There is a limited residential community in the area. The petitioner is connected with the larger development at Port Covington, and has regular meeting with the surrounding residential and industrial communities.
- **Internal Operations:** This action will have no impact on staff operations.

Notification: Surrounding community and business associations have been made aware of the proposed amendment.



Chris Ryer
Director

Council Bill 24-0500

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

See attached