

FROM

NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR
AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET
SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #18-0305 / REZONING – CERTAIN PROPERTIES IN THE HARWOOD COMMUNITY

CITY of
BALTIMORE
MEMO



TO

DATE:

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

February 25, 2019

At its regular meeting of February 21, 2019, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #18-0305, for the purpose of changing the zoning for certain properties in the Harwood Community as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the R-7 Zoning District to the C-1 Zoning District; for certain properties as outlined in blue on the accompanying plat, from the R-8 Zoning District to the C-1 Zoning District; for certain properties as outlined in green on the accompanying plat, from the R-8 Zoning District to the I-MU Zoning District; and for certain properties as outlined in yellow on the accompanying plat, from the R-7 Zoning District to the I-MU Zoning District.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report which recommended approval of City Council Bill #18-0305 and adopted the following resolution nine members being present (nine in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #18-0305 be passed 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: 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. Jeff Amoros, Mayor's Office
The Honorable Edward Reisinger, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. William H. Cole IV, BDC
Mr. Derek Baumgardner, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
Ms. Sharon Daboin, DHCD
Mr. Tyrell Dixon, DCHD
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
Mr. Michael Castagnola, DOT
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services
Mr. Ervin Bishop, Council Services



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean D. Davis, Chairman



Chris Ryer
Director

STAFF REPORT

REQUEST: City Council Bill #18-0305/ Rezoning – Certain Properties in the Harwood Community

For the purpose of changing the zoning for certain properties in the Harwood Community as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the R-7 Zoning District to the C-1 Zoning District; for certain properties as outlined in blue on the accompanying plat, from the R-8 Zoning District to the C-1 Zoning District; for certain properties as outlined in green on the accompanying plat, from the R-8 Zoning District to the I-MU Zoning District; and for certain properties as outlined in yellow on the accompanying plat, from the R-7 Zoning District to the I-MU Zoning District.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: K. Reni Lawal-Simmons

PETITIONERS: Councilmembers Clarke, Stokes

OWNERS: Various, of properties in the odd-numbered 2600 and 2700 blocks of Greenmount Avenue, of properties in the even and odd numbered 500 block of East 27th Street, of properties in the even-numbered 2600 and 2700 blocks of Mathews Street, and of 509 and 513 East 28th Street.

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: A vast majority, thirty-three of the fifty-six subject properties, are vacant lots. The properties along Greenmount Avenue are improved with three-story attached structures, most in poor condition with the exception of a few with retail operations on the ground level. The structures that remain on East 27th and Mathews Streets are modest, brick two-story attached rowhomes.

General Area: The properties that are the subject of this bill are situated between the CSX railroad tracks to the south, Greenmount Avenue to the west, 28th Street to the north, and Mathews Street to the east. The broader neighborhood is comprised of modest two-story rowhomes, a retail shopping center, built in the 1950s, north of Greenmount Avenue and 28th Street, a sprawling apartment complex east of the shopping center and Greenmount Avenue between 29th and 27th Streets, and industrial buildings east of Greenmount Avenue south of 28th Street.

HISTORY

The subject properties were included in the comprehensive rezoning of Baltimore City that was adopted by Ordinance 16-581 and technically amended by Ordinance 17-015. This, the current Zoning Code, became effective on June 5, 2017.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed action is consistent with LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, the Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City, LIVE Goal 2, Objective 2: Streamline and Strengthen the Development Process by Modernizing the Zoning Code to meet current needs. The new, now current, Zoning Code created many new and more flexible land use categories in recognition of the fact that changes in economic and cultural factors drive decisions on land use and their details, such as choice of location for business or personal residential use. The proposed action also supports EARN Goal 1, Objective 1: Retain and attract Businesses in all Growth Sectors, to the extent that it would, by increasing possible uses of the existing structures in the area that would be rezoned, offer small and start-up businesses additional locations to consider within the City of Baltimore.

This rezoning effort is a direct result of the Greenmount LINCS initiative that began in the summer of 2015. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) report recommends several strategies to revitalize the Greenmount Avenue corridor including connecting major development nodes with multi-story mixed-use structures. The properties in this bill are situated between two major nodes identified in the report: the 25th Street and the 29th Street retail nodes. The proposed action would allow for the type of development along Greenmount Avenue that is appropriate for a major commercial corridor as well as other appropriate infill development just outside the corridor, as detailed in the report.

The East Harwood Land Use Plan, an effort spearheaded by the Harwood community with technical support from the Neighborhood Design Center, focuses on a vision for the area between the CSX tracks to the south, Greenmount Avenue to the west, 28th Street to the north and Mathews Street to the east. The first phase of the planning included a visioning workshop, which resulted in the community identifying the 2600 and 2700 blocks of Greenmount Avenue for major redevelopment. This bill would support the type of redevelopment the community is seeking for this blighted area.

ANALYSIS

“Comprehensive rezoning” means an ordinance that is

- (1) Initiated by City government to modify the zoning classifications of multiple properties;
- (2) Based on considerations concerning the common needs of a substantial geographic area, involving a considerable number of properties;
- (3) Designed to control and direct the use of land and structures according to present and planned future conditions; and
- (4) The product of: (i) careful consideration and extensive study by the Planning Department; and (ii) review by the Planning Commission. *Zoning Code, §1-304(m)*

Through the City-wide study, beginning in 2010, of the all properties in Baltimore in preparation the for comprehensive rezoning of the City, both the Planning Department and the Planning Commission recommended the subject properties of City Council Bill 18-0305 be zoned R-7, R-7/R-MU, and R-8 based upon their current land uses, existing structures, and land use trends influencing north-central areas of Baltimore. Specifically, the R-7/R-MU overlay designation was used to preserve the bow front, three-story rowhomes along Greenmount Avenue while allowing for limited non-residential uses.

More recent study of this area through the Greenmount LINCS initiative (2015) and the subsequent East Harwood Land Use Visioning process (2017) has revealed that the structures intended to be protected by the zoning categories chosen have been demolished or became severely distressed.

The proposed change for the Greenmount and 27th Street properties to C-1 is the most appropriate zoning classification for the corridor. This C-1 category permits neighborhood commercial as well as multi-family. Greenmount Avenue is a busy commercial thoroughfare that does not lend itself to rowhouse living. Many of the rowhomes in close proximity that face Greenmount Avenue are vacant. Commercial or mixed-use buildings with residential units above non-residential uses are better suited for this type of commercial corridor. Also, the proximity to other industrial business along the east side of Mathews Street makes the proposed I-MU zoning change for the properties along 28th Street and the west side of Mathews Streets a seamless transition from the dense residential area.

City Council Bill 18-0305, if adopted, would be considered a comprehensive rezoning action due to the number and extent of the properties affected, its reflection of consideration of common needs of the geographic area concerned, its direction of use of land and structures according to present and future conditions, and the fact that its outcome would reflect careful consideration and extensive study by the Planning Department and review by the Planning Commission.

Notification: Public notice of this hearing was given by posting of signs meeting Planning Commission specifications at three locations in the affected area: 509 E. 28th Street, 2641 Greenmount Avenue, and 2714 Mathews Street. Separate direct notices were sent to all property owners of record for the fifty-six properties that would be affected by this action.



Chris Ryer
Director