



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

June 11, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0530/ Rezoning – Certain Properties in the Sharp-Leadenhall Community

For the purpose of changing the zoning for certain properties in the Sharp-Leadenhall Community: as outlined in blue on the accompanying plat, from the M-2-2 Zoning District to the B-2-4 Zoning District; and as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the R-8 Zoning District to the B-2-4 Zoning District.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Eric Tiso

PETITIONER: Stadium Square II, LLC and Stadium Square III, LLC, c/o Joe Woolman

OWNER: Stadium Square II, LLC and Stadium Square III, LLC

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: This bill addresses 137 ½ West Ostend Street (Stadium Square III), and most of the lots within the block bounded by West Ostend Street, Race Street, West West Street, and Leadenhall Street (Stadium Square II), as indicated on the plat accompanying the bill.

General Area: These properties are on the southern edge of the Sharp Leadenhall community, and the northern edge of the Spring Garden Industrial Area. There are a few remaining rowhomes on the south side of West West Street. The rest of the buildings are commercial or industrial in nature, and are principally low single-story buildings, with the exception of 150 West Ostend Street (four stories) and 137 ½ West Ostend Street (three stories).

HISTORY

- The Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan (URP) was approved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore via Ordinance No. 581 on April 19, 1974. It was last amended via Ordinance No. 228, approved May 15, 2006 (Amendment #7).
- The Planning Commission recommended approval of a subsequent amendment to the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan via CCB #15-0485 on March 12, 2015. This bill was just enacted into law as Ordinance #15-357 on May 14, 2015. The amendment to the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan expands the Community Business land use in areas that were previously industrial or office-residential and recommends corresponding zoning changes.

- Planning Commission previously approved City Council Bills #14-0450 and #14-0451 pertaining to the closing of the portion of Creek Alley. These bills were enacted March 16, 2015.
- The Planning Commission recommended approval of CCB #15-0513, which proposed rezoning in the Block 0947, which is to the immediate north of these subject blocks. This bill is currently in review by the City Council at second reader.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan: This bill is compatible with the recommended zoning for these properties under the amendment to the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan approved by Ordinance #15-357 on May 14, 2015.

ANALYSIS

Below is the staff’s review of the required considerations of §16-305 of the Zoning Code. Staff finds that this change is in the public’s interest, in that it is a continuation of the Stadium Square redevelopment project that will provide a mixed-use development with office, residential, and retail uses. These two blocks are the middle and southern blocks of the Stadium Square project, now comprised of existing warehouse, commercial and low-intensity industrial buildings that are not well used, and are in low demand. The rezoning of these properties from the M-2-2 to the B-2-4 district will enable productive reuse of the land, and will provide more compatible uses adjacent to the R-8 properties to the east, and the O-R-3 properties to the north. This overall redevelopment project hopes to connect and create a new commercial corridor from the Cross Street Market, west to Leadenhall Street, south along the three blocks of the proposed Stadium Square redevelopment project, and westward towards the stadium on Ostend Street.

Maryland Land Use Code – Requirements for Rezoning:

The Maryland Land Use Code requires the Planning Commission to study the proposed changes in relation to: 1. The plan; 2. The needs of Baltimore City; and 3. The needs of the particular neighborhood in the vicinity of the proposed changes (*cf.* Md. LAND USE Code Ann. 2012, §10-305). In reviewing this request, the staff finds that:

- 1. The Plan:** This rezoning will implement changes proposed by the recently-enacted amendment to the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan, which called for rezoning properties from the M-2-2 district to the B-2-4 district. While 137 ½ West Ostend Street is just outside of the URP, it is a contiguous and connected part of the three-block redevelopment program. This bill is also consistent with the mapping recommendations under TransForm Baltimore, the draft new Zoning Code, which would allow additional flexibility in industrial areas through the Industrial Mixed Use district.
- 2. The needs of Baltimore City:** The existing M-2-2 industrial-zoned properties within Block 0962 (Stadium Square II) are no longer in demand for industrial use, and can be used more productively with the potential for mixed-use redevelopment enabled by designating it as B-2-4 commercial.

- 3. The needs of the particular neighborhood:** The proposed rezoning will allow for mixed-use opportunities that are more compatible with the adjacent residential areas, and will help to eliminate vacant and under-utilized properties.

Similarly, the Land Use article requires the City Council to make findings of fact (*cf.* Md. LAND USE Code Ann. 2012, §10-304). The findings of fact include:

- 1. Population changes;** The population increased 14.9% between 2000 and 2010. The proposed rezoning will allow for additional housing options for residents as the population in the area continues to grow.
- 2. The availability of public facilities;** The property is well-served by streets, utilities, police, fire and schools.
- 3. Present and future transportation patterns;** The proposed zoning change is not anticipated to change existing transportation patterns.
- 4. Compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area;** The proposed zoning change is consistent with the proposed conversion of industrial properties to mixed-use development and better responds to the adjacency with the existing residential community.
- 5. The recommendations of the Planning Commission and the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA);** For the above reasons, the Planning Department will recommend approval of the rezoning request to the Planning Commission. The BMZA has not yet commented on this bill.
- 6. The relation of the proposed amendment to the City's plan.** This rezoning will support the goals of the Sharp Leadenhall URP, and the proposed zoning patterns under TransForm Baltimore.

The City Council may grant the amendment to change the zoning classification based on a finding that there was: (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; or (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification. The proposed rezoning reflects a substantial change in the neighborhood, and the new trends in land use patterns called for by the Sharp Leadenhall URP, and the proposed zoning patterns under TransForm Baltimore.

Community Notification: The following community organizations have been notified of this action: The South Baltimore Partnership, the Sharp-Leadenhall Planning Committee, the Sharp Leadenhall Improvement Association, the West Federal Hill Residents and Homeowners Association, and Federal Hill Main Street.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director