



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

July 9, 2015

REQUEST: Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval/
Port Covington PUD #71 – 301 East Cromwell Street

RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with final landscape details to be approved by staff.

STAFF: Alexandra Hoffman

PLANNING DISTRICT: Downtown South

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER: Alexandra Hoffman

PETITIONER: 301 East Cromwell Street, LLC

OWNER: 301 East Cromwell Street, LLC

SITE AREA

General Area: The Port Covington Planned Unit Development (PUD) is on the South Baltimore peninsula. To the immediate north and west is a mix of manufacturing, production and utility uses. The City's Ferry Bar Park is adjacent to the southwest corner of Port Covington. South Hanover and McComas Streets provide access to East Cromwell Boulevard, the main entrance to the four Areas that make up the Port Covington PUD. Those three streets handle major traffic in all directions and provide access to and from Interstate 95. Just beyond those streets to the north are the South Baltimore and Riverside neighborhoods, with the Locust Point neighborhood to the northeast.

Site Conditions: The 68-acre Port Covington PUD is located at the southwest end of the South Baltimore peninsula along the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River. Port Covington is part of Baltimore's Critical Area; portions of the PUD fall within Baltimore's 100 Year Floodplain and the Critical Area's 100 Foot Buffer. The PUD is broken into four areas (Exhibit 1). Area I of this PUD includes a Wal-Mart and a now-defunct Sam's Club that is being retrofitted for Under Armour offices, plus additional in-line retail that has not been constructed to date. Areas II, III, and IV are occupied by Tidewater Yacht Service, with residential also permitted on Areas II and IV (excluding Pier 6) but has not been constructed to date. The subject Areas of this proposed Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval action are Areas II and III of the Port Covington PUD. No use of the piers in Area IV is proposed or anticipated as part of this action.

HISTORY

- Ordinance #90-0425 established the Port Covington Planned Unit Development for approximately 72 acres of undeveloped land owned by CSX Railroad.
- On January 23, 1997, the Planning Commission approved the Final Subdivision for the CSX property within the Port Covington Planned Unit Development to create a 40.26 acre Parcel A and 14.90 Parcel B for disposition purposes.
- On March 6, 1997, the Planning Commission approved a Minor Amendment to allow two naval vessels to dock on Pier 6 at the Port Covington PUD.
- Ordinance #00-0057 amended the Port Covington PUD to allow development of a shopping center on Area I.
- On December 14, 2000, the Planning Commission gave Final Design Approval to three buildings, signage, and landscaping for a shopping center in Area I that included a Wal-Mart, Sam's Club and a strip shopping center.
- On April 4, 2002, the Planning Commission gave Final Design Approval to a KFC/A&W Restaurant on Area 4.
- Ordinance #02-0431 amended the Port Covington PUD Ordinance and added sheets to the Development Plan for the PUD to allow a gasoline or service station as an accessory use to a principal permitted use and include design details for a service station to be added to Area I.
- On December 6, 2004, Ordinance #04-0884 amended the Port Covington PUD Ordinance to permit the relocation of Tidewater Yacht Service from Key Highway to Areas II, III and IV, with approvals for future residential development on Areas II and IV, excluding Pier 6.
- On October 16, 2014, the Planning Commission approved a Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval to retrofit the former Sam's Club building for offices for Under Armour.

ANALYSIS

This request proposes constructing a whiskey distillery with accessory restaurant use in Areas II and III of the PUD. In Section 3 of the Ordinance, the PUD permits uses "permitted in the underlying M-1 District"; however, the underlying zoning is M-3. It is staff's interpretation that this represents an error in the original drafting of the Ordinance and the section cited above should reference permitted uses in the underlying M-3 District. Alcohol Distillation is a permitted use in the M-3 District and under staff's interpretation is permitted by the PUD. If the Planning Commission concurs with staff's interpretation, the Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval request is limited to modifications to the site plan and elevations necessary to accommodate the construction of the whiskey distillery as described below:

- *Site Plan:* The proposed distillery facility includes three buildings (accessory restaurant, processing and distillery) that frame a courtyard along East Cromwell Street to the north. The distillery "campus" is served by surface parking lots on both the east and the west, with the western parking lot primarily for visitor parking and the eastern parking lot for loading and overflow parking. The site plan was approved by the Site Plan Review Committee on June 29, 2015. No use of the piers in Area IV is proposed or anticipated at this time.

- *Elevations:* The form of the proposed buildings draw from the agrarian tradition of whiskey distillation with peaked metal roofs and specifically the spring house on Sagamore Farm. The materials reference the rough stone of the Sagamore Farms spring house as well as modern spandrel glass and industrial metal framing. The courtyard features an iconic water tower with the Sagamore logo that will hold water from the Sagamore Farm spring to be used in the distillation of the whiskey and will serve as a beacon to the site. The proposed design completed the design review process with the Department of Planning's Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel.
- *Signage:* The three buildings will feature signage identifying "Sagmore Spirits" with additional signage incorporated into a sun scrim on the southern elevation of the central building that is oriented to the water. The water tower has the Sagamore triple diamond logo painted on it that will be visible from all directions.
- *Landscaping:* The landscape plan includes two new primary open spaces: a courtyard framed by the three buildings on the distillery "campus" and East Cromwell Street to the north, and a second waterfront green that the restaurant will overlook to the water. The plantings along the water's edge will be bolstered to meet the requirements of the Critical Area program. A publically-accessible trail is proposed along the waterfront, consistent with the recommendations of the Middle Branch Master Plan.
- *Critical Area & Floodplain:* Part of the subject portion of Areas II and III for this request is within both Baltimore's 100 Year Floodplain and the Critical Area's 100 Foot Buffer. A preliminary review of the proposal indicates that the design complies with the Floodplain program; however, an elevation certificate will need to be submitted demonstrating compliance with the Floodplain program along with a site plan that shows the 100 year and 500 year regulated floodplain lines and cross sections showing that all electrical, mechanical and plumbing work will be done 2 feet above Base Flood Elevation (BFE) to the Flood Protection Elevation and any distribution boxes will be at 3 feet above the BFE before construction permits can be issued. It is anticipated that the requirements of the Critical Area program will be satisfied by planting or treating as buffer at least 50% of the buffer area, a requirement for non-water dependent projects in the Waterfront Industrial Area. Although additional details and the final approval by the Critical Area Commission are still required, these issues will be resolved before construction permits can be issued.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

Comprehensive Master Plan: This request is compatible with the Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City, specifically:

EARN

Goal 1: Strengthen Identified Growth Sectors

Objective 1: Retain and Attract Businesses in all Growth Sectors

PLAY

Goal 2: Improve Nightlife, Entertainment, and Recreational Experiences for Residents and Visitors

Objective 2: Promote Unique Retail venues as Shopping and Tourist Destinations

Goal 3: Increase the health of Baltimore's Natural Resources and Open Spaces for Recreation and to Improve Water Quality

Objective 3: Ensure Public Access to the Waterfront

Port Covington Urban Renewal Plan: The subject Areas of the PUD are within the Port Covington Urban Renewal Plan which does not prohibit or further restrict the proposed action.

Middle Branch Master Plan: In accordance with the Middle Branch Master Plan (adopted by the Planning Commission on September 20, 2007), the site plan incorporates public access to the waterfront.

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

The following community organizations have been notified of this action: Baltimore Industrial Group, Locust Point Civic Association, Maryland Port Administration, South Baltimore Business Alliance, South Baltimore Neighborhood Association, and Riverside Neighborhood Association.



**Thomas J. Stosur
Director**

Exhibit 1: Port Covington PUD Areas I through IV

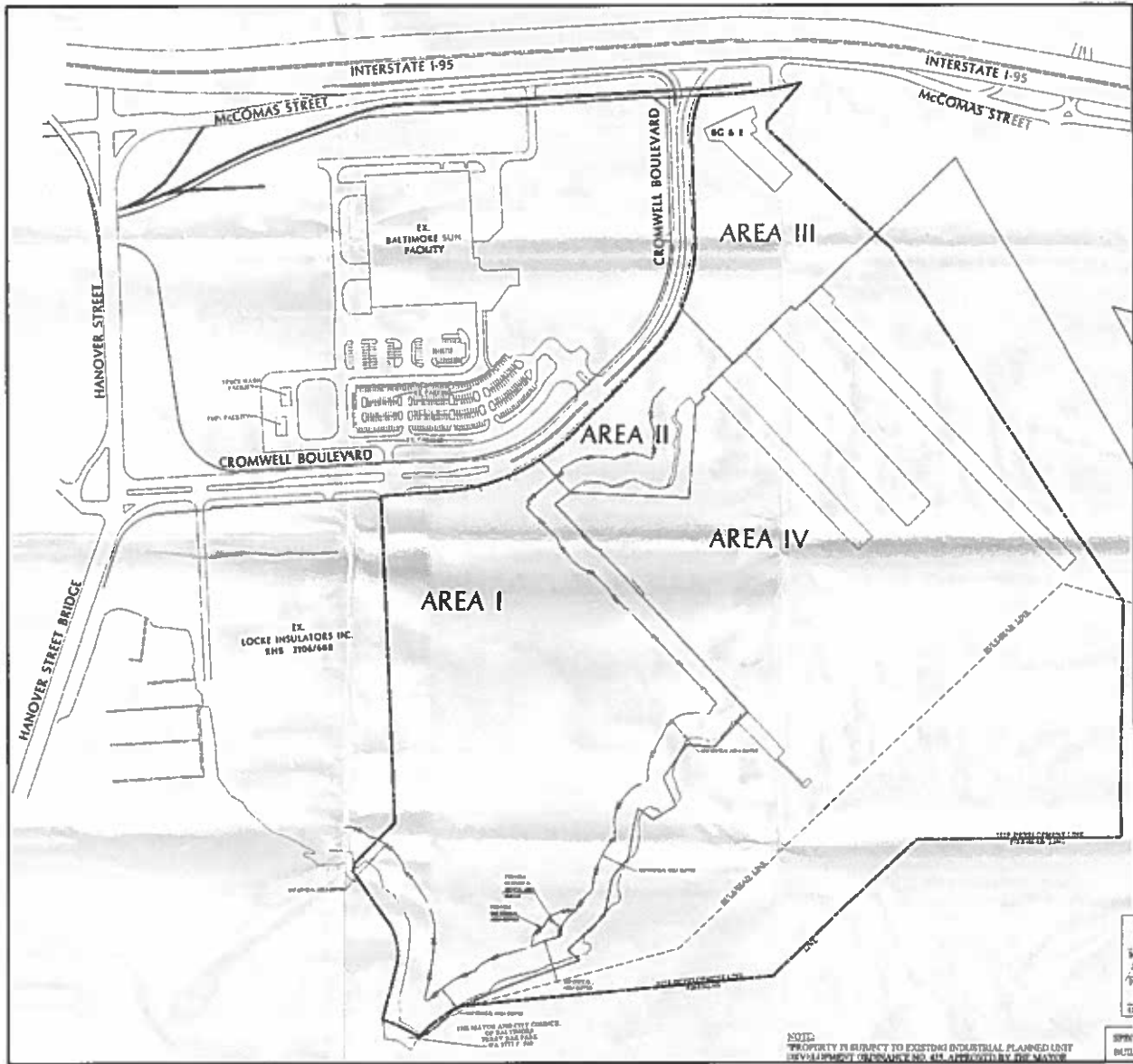


Exhibit 2: Proposed Site Plan for Subject Portion of Areas II and III

