Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT

Thomas J. Stosur
Director

May 12, 2016

REQUEST: City Council Bill #16-0650 – Sale of Property – 111 South Hanover Street
For the purpose of authorizing the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore to sell, at either public or private sale, all its interest in certain property known as 111 South Hanover Street (Ward 04, Section 10, Block 0670, Lot 002) and no longer needed for public use; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Christina Hartsfield

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER: Kate Edwards

PETITIONER: Baltimore Development Corporation, Inc.

OWNER(S): Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

SITE AREA
Site Conditions: The subject property is a vacant lot that abuts the property known as 100 South Charles Street to its north and it bounded by South Hanover Street to the west, South Charles Street to the east, East Pratt Street to the south. It is .542 acres in size and zoned B-5-2.

General Conditions: This site is located in the Downtown West area, just outside of the Central Business District and active Inner Harbor Urban Renewal Plan Areas. This property was within the Inner Harbor West Urban Renewal Plan area when the plan was active. The Baltimore Convention Center is directly south of the site and the Baltimore Inner Harbor is two block to the east.

HISTORY
No prior Planning Commission history exists for this property.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS
Comprehensive Master Plan: This City Council Bill is compatible with the Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore City, specifically LIVE; Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods; Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties throughout the City.

ANALYSIS

City Council Bill #16-0650 will authorize the sale of 111 South Hanover Street. The subject property is a block-long rectilinear lot that runs parallel to Pratt Street that creates an expansive landscaped buffer between Pratt Street and the Bank of America Building located at 100 S. Charles Street. The site is currently undeveloped but improved with a brick-paved promenade, a landscaped strip, and the France-Merrick Fountain at the corner of E. Pratt Street and S. Charles Street. This parcel of land, along with similar parcels along Pratt Street, was acquired by the City through the acquisition authority of the Inner Harbor West Urban Renewal Plan (expired 2011). These parcels were acquired to facilitate the creation of public, open space along Pratt Street that would enhance pedestrian connections and support the need for passive recreation downtown.

In 2006, City leaders underwent a redesign effort to enhance the condition of Pratt Street, which climaxed in the creation of the Pratt Street Design Guidelines. The guidelines are consistent with the URP's overall intent of providing public space and enhanced pedestrian connections downtown. However, the guidelines also propose adding more retail frontage and pedestrian-friendly landscape to create a more consistent and robust streetscape. The most recent type of this improvement is at 400 E. Pratt Street, where a two-story addition was added to the front of the existing building, housing four new retail tenants, a bank branch, and office space. The enhanced walkway includes outdoor seating and a densely-planted bio-swale.

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) is currently facilitating the future development of 111 South Hanover Street according to the recommendations of the Pratt Street Design Guidelines. The BDC is currently in discussion with the owners of 100 S. Charles Street to install an addition similar to 400 E. Pratt Street. A Request for Proposal for the development of the property will be released, subject to the enactment of the proposed sale ordinance. This sales ordinance will allow the disposition and sale of the property, which will increase the City's tax revenue while still providing a pedestrian-friendly public space.

Community Notification:

The Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, Inc. and Charles Street Development Corporation were notified of this action.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director