

FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #17-0073 / FEDERAL HILL LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT		

TO

DATE:

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

July 28, 2017

At its regular meeting of July 27, 2017, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #17-0073, for the purpose of designating the area located within certain boundaries as the Federal Hill Local Historic District; 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 the designation as a local historic district. Thus, the Planning Commission recommended approval of City Council Bill #17-0073 and adopted the following resolution; eight members being present (eight in favor).

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #17-0073 be passed by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Wolde Ararsa, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-4488.

TJS/WA

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. Kyron Banks, Mayor's Office
 The Honorable Edward Reisinger, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
 Mr. David Tanner, BMZA
 Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
 Ms. Sharon Daboin, DHCD
 Mr. Patrick Fleming, DOT
 Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.
 Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services
 Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

July 27, 2017

REQUEST: City Council Bill #17-0073/ Federal Hill Local Historic District:

For the purpose of designating the area located within certain boundaries as the Federal Hill Local Historic District; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Walter W. Gallas, AICP

INTRODUCED BY: Councilman Eric Costello

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: Situated on a street grid with street names retained from its original development, Federal Hill demonstrates distinctive characteristics of a significant place combining various architectural styles and workmanship well-preserved over the course of its long history. Federal Hill comprises about 24 city blocks just south of the Inner Harbor. At its northeast corner, Federal Hill Park rises steeply from Key Highway overlooking the downtown skyline and providing open recreational space for the community.

The neighborhood retains remarkably intact streets of largely residential properties reflecting the building eras from 1788 to 1945 and the economic status of their early residents. Early houses were built of wood with side gables, and the form continued in Flemish bond brick with gabled roofs and dormers. Simple Greek Revival rowhouses are found throughout the district, along with many Italianate rowhouses, and a few detached houses.

Commercial structures, some with ornate storefronts, along the two primary thoroughfares, Light Street and Charles Street, reflect a range of 19th and early 20th century styles. A number of churches, a fire station, and an adaptively re-used high school and junior high school are examples of institutional buildings in the district.

The district is also significant for its social and cultural history, because it represents the housing and neighborhoods of various working class groups from the 1790s to 1945. Federal Hill was home to many groups of immigrants and migrants, including French Acadians, Germans, African Americans, Irish and workers from the rural South, all of whom contributed to the economic development—especially the maritime trade—of the city from the late 18th century to World War II.

General Area: The proposed boundaries of the Federal Hill local historic district are generally the centerlines of Hughes Street/Key Highway to the north; the centerline of Covington Street to the east; the centerline of Cross Street to the south; and the centerline of Hanover Street to the west (See map below).

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site. However, the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation supported Council Bill #17-0073 in a unanimous vote on July 11, 2017.

ANALYSIS

The July 11, 2017, vote of the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation giving final approval for the designation of the Federal Hill local historic district was the culmination of CHAP and community efforts reaching back to 2008. CHAP met with the Federal Hill Neighborhood Association on numerous occasions over the years, contacted property owners, made information available for newsletters and Facebook pages, created an FAQ brochure, and set up a GovDelivery email list to communicate to interested parties. The Federal Hill Neighborhood Association made the formal request for local district designation to Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake on February 22, 2014. On November 9, 2016, in accordance with *CHAP Rules and Regulations*, Federal Hill Local Historic District Designation Hearing One was held at which the Commission requested that staff prepare a "full and proper study with findings of fact" to support the designation (See CHAP Staff Report, November 9, 2016). On January 10, 2017, CHAP held Federal Hill Local Historic District Designation Hearing Two and approved the study and designation (See CHAP Staff Report, January 10, 2017). The district designation returned to CHAP one more time when the district boundary was amended to remove the Cross Street Market (See CHAP Staff Report, July 11, 2017). The district boundaries, with that amendment, are the ones before the City Planning Commission today.

CHAP determined that the neighborhood meets CHAP's criteria for designation one "that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history and three "that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction."

The Planning Commission and its staff apply all relevant plans to proposed historic district designations. In the case of Federal Hill, staff applied the Comprehensive Master Plan, and also reviewed the Montgomery Urban Renewal Plan which affects a large portion of the proposed district.

The Federal Hill local district designation is consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan. The LIVE element of the plan includes Goal 2: Elevate the Design and Quality of the City's Built Environment with Objective 4: Protect and Enhance the Preservation of Baltimore's Historic Buildings and Neighborhoods which encourages actively pursuing local historic district designation. The Commission determined that Criteria for Evaluation 1 and 3, and that based on Step 1: Historical Assessment and Property Owner Survey, and Step 2: Analysis, the Federal Hill

District designation should proceed to Step 3: Designation. At the November 9, 2016 hearing, the Commission concurred with this finding, directing the staff to produce this full and proper study and findings of fact.

The Montgomery Urban Renewal Plan has been a preservation-based neighborhood revitalization tool affecting nearly half of the physical area of the proposed Federal Hill local historic district for decades. It was originally adopted in 1979 and amended in 1981, 1982, and 1986. Local designation is consistent with the goals of the plan, among them: to achieve a good residential neighborhood with compatible land uses appropriate to an urban environment; to preserve and enhance the historic and architectural character of the neighborhood and the structures; to eliminate deterioration through rehabilitation of buildings consistent with the historical and architectural character of the neighborhood where possible; to eliminate blighting influences and to protect the area from future blighting influences; and to develop a more detailed plan in conjunction with residents and other interested citizens for a general physical improvement of the area through coordinated public and private improvements. The Montgomery Urban Renewal Plan includes an appendix with nine detailed rehabilitation standards to guide the modifications to properties within the project area. They address treatment of windows and doors, exterior structural elements, exterior building surfaces, addition of contemporary equipment, signage, new additions and rooftop decks. These are consistent with CHAP's *Historic Preservation Design Guidelines*. When the Urban Renewal Plan sunsets, the application of CHAP guidelines is expected to be a smooth transition for the area. The URP will expire on May 14, 2019.

Federal Hill was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. This was part of a strategy of the Society for the Preservation of Federal Hill and Fells Point in light of the threats to both neighborhoods from the highway and bridge construction plans along the Baltimore waterfront during this time. Fells Point was named to the National Register in 1969 and became a local historic district in 2007. Given the similar histories of these two important waterfront neighborhoods, and the conformity of the proposed designation with the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Montgomery Urban Renewal Plan, staff recommends the designation of Federal Hill as a local historic district.

Notification: The Federal Hill Neighborhood Association, the Federal Hill South Neighborhood Association, Federal Hill Main Street and the Baltimore National Heritage Area have been notified of this action.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

