



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

April 23, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0513/ Rezoning – Certain Properties in the Sharp-Leadenhall Community – Block 0947

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; as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the R-7 Zoning District to the B-2-4 Zoning District; as outlined in green on the accompanying plat, from the M-3 Zoning District to the B-2-4 Zoning District; and as outlined in yellow on the accompanying plat, from the O-R-3 Zoning District to the B-2-4 Zoning District.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval, subject to the adoption of City Council Bill #15-0485/Urban Renewal – Sharp Leadenhall – Amendment which recommends this rezoning

STAFF: Alexandra Hoffman

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER: Alexandra Hoffman (Downtown South District)

PETITIONER: Councilman Eric T. Costello on behalf of Stadium Square I, LLC

OWNER(S): Stadium Square I, LLC, Christopher Weaver, Housing Authority of Baltimore City

SITE AREA

Block 0947, which includes all of the subject properties for this rezoning, is bounded by W. Cross Street to the north, Race Street to the east, W. West Street to the south and Leadenhall Street to the west. The block is within the Sharp Leadenhall neighborhood in the westernmost portion of the South Baltimore peninsula, just east of the stadiums and separated by the elevated Interstate 395. Sharp Leadenhall is generally residential in character with a mix of rowhouse and apartment housing types, with commercial uses along the Hanover Street corridor to the east and industrial uses concentrated in the southern portion of the neighborhood.

All of the properties are further restricted by the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan and the existing rowhouses that front on W. Cross Street are within a CHAP local historic district which would require additional review for any exterior modifications to the impacted properties.

HISTORY

The Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan 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 on March 12, 2015 which is pending City Council approval (CCB #15-0485). The pending amendment to the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan proposes the expansion of 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 which bisects the subject block.

ANALYSIS

This bill would rezone Block 0947, bounded by W. Cross Street to the north, Race Street to the east, W. West Street to the south and Leadenhall Street to the west, from a mix of residential (R-7), industrial (M-2-2, M-3) and office-residential (O-R-3) zoning classifications to B-2-4. This rezoning is consistent with the recommended zoning for the subject properties in City Council Bill #15-0485/Urban Renewal – Sharp Leadenhall – Amendment which the Planning Commission approved on March 12, 2015.

Petitioner Request: The petitioner, Stadium Square I, LLC, has consolidated ownership of Block 0947 with plans for The Hanover Company to develop the majority of the site for an approximately 300-unit apartment building with ground floor retail. Plans for the rowhouses are still forthcoming and any exterior modifications to those properties will necessitate CHAP approval associated with their designation in a local historic district. The petitioner owns all of the properties impacted by the proposed rezoning except 125 W. Cross Street, 127 W. Cross Street, 129 W. Cross Street, 131 W. Cross Street and 1103 Leadenhall Street. The petitioner has contracts to purchase all of these properties from their owner, Christopher Weaver, except 129 W Cross Street, which is owned by the Housing Authority of Baltimore City. Of these properties, only 1103 Leadenhall Street is anticipated to be included in the development site for The Hanover Company.

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 the Planning Commission on March 12, 2015 which is pending City Council approval.

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

LIVE

Goal 1: Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods

Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for All Residents

Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties throughout the City

Goal 2: Elevate the Design and Quality of the City’s Built Environment

Sharp Leadenhall Plan: The Sharp Leadenhall Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission in 2004. This bill is consistent with the Sharp Leadenhall Plan, including the following recommendations:

- Amend the Sharp-Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan to maximize the flexible use of industrial parcels.
- Encourage the creation of a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use Cross Street corridor connecting the public market to Solo Gibbs Park and the Light Rail station. Allow rezoning along Cross Street to allow for a broad range of uses, including light industrial, residential, commercial, and office.
- Encourage high-density infill construction, bringing more residents to the neighborhood and creating opportunities for affordable units, while maintaining the existing fabric.

TransForm Baltimore: This bill is consistent with the mapping recommendations under TransForm Baltimore, the draft new Zoning Code (amended and approved by the Planning Commission on September 21, 2013), which would allow additional flexibility in industrial areas through the Industrial Mixed Use district.

MARYLAND LAND USE CODE REQUIRED FINDINGS

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: see the “Conformity to Comprehensive Master Plan” section, above, and fulfilling the proposed recommended zoning within the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan under CCB #15-0485.
2. The needs of Baltimore City: Allows for expanded mixed-use development opportunities.
3. The needs of the particular neighborhood: Allows for additional mixed-use development opportunities.

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 amendment and 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: See "Conformity to Comprehensive Master Plan" section, above, and fulfilling the proposed recommended zoning within the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan under CCB #15-0485.

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. This bill would qualify as a substantial change, as cited in the "Conformity to Comprehensive Master Plan" section, above, and fulfilling the proposed recommended zoning within the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan under CCB #15-0485.

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

Staff mailed notification of this hearing to the property owners for the impacted properties not owned by the petitioner, Christopher Weave and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, as well as to the Sharp Leadenhall Planning Committee, the Sharp Leadenhall Improvement Association, the South Baltimore Partnership, the West Federal Hill Residents and Homeowners Association, Federal Hill Main Street, City Council President Bernard C. "Jack" Young and the Eleventh District Councilman Eric Costello.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

SHEET NO. 65 OF THE ZONING DISTRICT MAP OF THE BALTIMORE CITY ZONING CODE.



1" = 200'

In Connection With Properties Known As Nos. 101-107 And 117-121 WEST CROSS STREET. The Applicant Wishes To Request The Zoning Change Of The Aforementioned Properties From M-2-2 Zoning District To B-2-4 Zoning District, As Outlined In Blue Above.

**WARD - 23 SECTION - 7
BLOCK - 947 LOTS - 1 & 3**

In Connection With Properties Known As Nos. 123, 125, 127, 129, 131, 133 And 135 WEST CROSS STREET And 1103, 1105, 1107, 1109 And 1111 LEADENHALL STREET. The Applicant Wishes To Request The Zoning Change Of The Aforementioned Properties From R-7 Zoning District To B-2-4 Zoning District, As Outlined In Red Above.

**WARD - 23 SECTION - 7 BLOCK - 947
LOTS - 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15**

In Connection With Properties Known As Nos. 1135 LEADENHALL STREET And 138 WEST WEST STREET. The Applicant Wishes To Request The Zoning Change Of The Aforementioned Properties From M-3 Zoning District To B-2-4 Zoning District, As Outlined In Green Above.

**WARD - 23 SECTION - 7
BLOCK - 947 LOTS - 16 & 30**

In Connection With Properties Known As Nos. 1110 And 1112 RACE STREET. The Applicant Wishes To Request The Zoning Change Of The Aforementioned Properties From O-R-3 Zoning District To B-2-4 Zoning District, As Outlined In Yellow Above.

**WARD - 23 SECTION - 7
BLOCK - 947 LOTS - 39 & 43**

MAYOR

PRESIDENT CITY COUNCIL

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RPE 3-24-16