



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

March 12, 2015

REQUEST: City Council Bill #15-0485/ Urban Renewal – Sharp Leadenhall – Amendment

For the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for Sharp-Leadenhall to modify certain permitted land uses, to delete certain provisions that allow property acquisition and the creation of disposition lots in the Renewal Plan, to modify certain provisions regarding community review and the process for amending the Renewal Plan, to clarify, conform, and correct certain language and references, to delete from the Plan certain provisions relating to inclusionary housing that have been superseded by an Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council, to delete Appendix A in its entirety, to reletter Appendix B to be Appendix A and to modify certain of its provisions, to delete certain exhibits from the Renewal Plan, to revise, renumber, and rename certain exhibits, and to add a new exhibit to the Plan; waiving certain content and procedural requirements; making the provisions of this Ordinance severable; providing for the application of this Ordinance in conjunction with certain other ordinances; and providing for a special effective date.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

STAFF: Alexandra Hoffman

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER: Alexandra Hoffman (Downtown South District)

PETITIONER: City Council President – Administration on behalf of the Department of Housing and Community Development

OWNER(S): Multiple

SITE AREA

The Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan is bounded by Sharp Street/Interstate 395 to the west and Ostend Street to the south and includes the properties on both sides of Henrietta Street to the north and the properties on both sides of Hanover Street to the east. The boundaries of the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan are generally consistent with the boundaries of 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.

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).

ANALYSIS

Background

The Sharp-Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan was originally adopted in 1974 and is an overlay district that governs land use and building design in the Plan area. Since it was last updated in 2005, the Sharp Leadenhall CHAP Local Historic District was established (2010) and there has been interest in the redevelopment of industrial properties for other uses. As written, the Plan expires 10 years from the date of last amendment, currently May 15, 2016.

Process

The planning process began in earnest on December 15, 2014 with a kick-off meeting at which a review of the existing Urban Renewal regulations was presented and goals for an update to the Urban Renewal Plan were established. Ahead of this kick-off meeting a mailed notification of the planning process was sent to all property owners as well as all renter-occupied properties.

After the kick-off meeting, a work group open to all stakeholders was established to assist the Department of Planning in the development of recommendations and met three times.

The draft recommendations developed by the Department of Planning in partnership with the work group were presented at a general meeting on January 28, 2015. After this meeting, a three week public comment period was held.

Recommendations

City Council Bill #15-0485/Urban Renewal – Sharp Leadenhall – Amendment was introduced by the Administration at the request of the Department of Housing and Community Development and reflects the Department of Planning’s recommended updates to the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan based on the public input solicited through the process outline above.

Generally, this bill makes the following text changes to the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan:

- *Land Use*
Remove prohibitions on certain uses within the Community Business land use and clarify certain references to the Zoning Code.
- *Acquisition and Disposition Authority*
Remove acquisition and disposition authority because there is no active public acquisition of private property nor is any anticipated in the future.
- *Community Review*
Update the community review procedures in the Plan to reference the online Community Association Directory maintained by the Department of Planning.

- *Design Guidelines*
Augment and clarify the existing design guidelines, exempt properties within the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation’s local historic district, add a waiver procedure if the overall design is consistent with the objectives of the Plan, clarify the applicability of certain design standards to the Residential Land Use only, and add more stringent standards for new construction within the Community Business Land Use including maximum building heights, minimum streetscape standards adjacent to whole block face redevelopment, a higher minimum requirement for ground floor transparency or openings and a requirement that all trash and servicing be internal to the structure.

This bill also updates the exhibits to the Plan as follows, with the full proposed exhibits detailing proposed changes included as attachments to this report:

- *Land Use*
Change Industrial and Office-Residential land uses to Community Business to allow for mixed-use redevelopment, add certain residential properties on Cross Street to Community Business to allow for retail opportunities along this key pedestrian connection between Solo Gibbs Park and the Cross Street Market, change certain Community Commercial properties along Hanover Street to Community Business to encourage a pedestrian-oriented environment, and reflect various existing land uses in land use designations (see Exhibit 2, attached).
- *Recommended Zoning*
Recommend M-2-2, M-3 and O-R-3 zoning be changed to B-2-4 to allow for mixed-use redevelopment, recommend certain portions of R-7 and R-8 zoning on Cross Street be changed to B-2-1 to allow for retail opportunities along this key pedestrian connection between Solo Gibbs Park and the Cross Street Market, recommend certain portions of B-3-3 zoning along Hanover Street be changed to B-2-1 to encourage a pedestrian-oriented environment, and reflect various existing land uses in recommended zoning (see Exhibit 3, attached).
- *Acquisition and Disposition*
Delete to reflect the text changes that remove acquisition and disposition authority from the Plan.
- *Historic District*
Update to reflect the final boundaries of the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation’s local historic district adopted in 2010 after the Plan was last amended (see Exhibit 4, attached).
- *Illustrative Plan*
Show the height limits included in the Design Guidelines for new construction in the Community Business Land Use, indicate key pedestrian and vehicular connections within the neighborhood and priority areas for streetscape improvements through the Department of Transportation’s Complete Streets Plan in coordination with the Baltimore Casino Local Development Council process (see Exhibit 5, attached).

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

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

Objective 1: Improve Design Quality of Baltimore's Built Environment

Objective 2: Streamline and Strengthen the Development Process

Objective 3: Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Mixed-Used Development to Reinforce Neighborhood Centers and Main Streets

EARN

Goal 1: Strengthen Identified Growth Sectors

Objective 1: Retain and Attract Business in All Growth Sectors

Sharp Leadenhall Plan: The Sharp Leadenhall Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission in 2004. This bill is generally 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 the creation of a mixed-use Ostend Street corridor that accommodates both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Allow rezoning along Ostend Street to allow for a broad range of uses, including light industrial, residential, and office.
- Respect the character of surrounding blocks and buildings.
- 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 and support a pedestrian-oriented commercial district on Hanover Street through the lowest-intensity commercial district (C-1).

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

Staff mailed hardcopy notifications 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. All individual participants in the planning process to update the Sharp Leadenhall Urban Renewal Plan that provided an email address to the Department of Planning also received an email notification of today's hearing.



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Director





