



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

February 16, 2017

REQUESTS: Street Closing/Closing Arch Street, Vine Street and Rieman Court- University of Maryland

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Tamara Woods

PLANNING DISTRICT: Downtown

PETITIONER: The University of Maryland at Baltimore

OWNER: The Mayor and City Council

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The streets proposed to be closed are internal alley streets adjacent to properties that are owned by the University of Maryland, The State of Maryland and an apartment building. There are no buildings that front the streets. Rieman court is improved with greenspace and a fence.

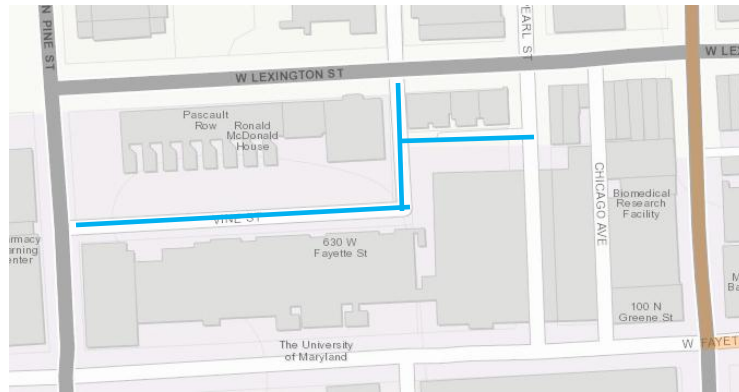
General Area: The streets proposed to be closed are located in the University of Maryland neighborhood on the west side of Downtown. This area is primarily comprised of University of Maryland Hospital buildings and the University of Maryland Baltimore campus. Just to the east is the downtown area that is generally high density mixed use.

HISTORY

No prior history for this site.

ANALYSIS

Proposal: The University of Maryland at Baltimore has requested the Department of General Services to close: 1.) North Arch Street between West Lexington Street and Vine Street, 2.) Vine Street between North Arch Street and Pine Street and 3.) Rieman Court between North Arch Street and North Pearl Street (as indicated below).



The University of Maryland is proposing to incorporate the three streets into their campus and will restrict the streets to emergency vehicles only. There are utilities that need to be closed. For those that are not abandoned or relocated, an easement will be retained.

The proposed street closings are part of a broader vision from The University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) to build a surface parking lot to be constructed on the footprint of the Walter P. Carter Center (along Fayette Street), using the portion of Vine Street that is proposed to be closed. The portion of Arch Street from Vine to Lexington Streets will be improved and used as a pedestrian walkway that will access the proposed parking lot. Though the parking lot is to be used for UMMC, the street closings are being pursued by the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB). Though there are no plans for building on the Walter P. Carter footprint, per their agreement, if UMB determines there is a need for a future educational or research building, they will retain that rights to the parcels and street beds to be closed. Rieman Court is currently a greenspace with fencing. There are no plans to further improve this portion of right-of-way. It is a paper street and the closing would provide for clean title.

The applicant has stated to staff that the abutting owners have provided written consent to the closures. The applicant will work with the Department of Transportation to continue with the formal process of closing the street.

This action has been referred to the Planning Commission for review as an extension of the Master Plan review authority assigned by the City Charter, Art. VII, §§72 and 74. Given that the streets proposed for closure are surrounded present and future University of Maryland uses or already improved (Rieman Court) staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that there is no further need for public use of the alley and it can be closed.

Community Notification: The Market Center Merchants Association, Ronald McDonald House, University Place Apartments LLC & University Place Apartments Partner and City Councilman Eric Costello have been notified of this action.

Thomas J. Stosur
Director