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Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

October 29, 2015

REQUEST: South Baltimore Gateway Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Approval and Adoption

STAFF: Brent Flickinger

PETITIONERS: Department of Planning

OWNER: Multiple Property Owners

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

The South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan is the product of community stakeholders' and City agencies' input on a long-range vision for resource allocation and policy actions in the Horseshoe Casino Impact Area. Fourteen neighborhoods and two industrial zones in South Baltimore surrounding the Middle Branch will benefit from Local Impact Grant (LIG) funds resulting from revenues of the casino operations. These neighborhoods were determined to be "immediately impacted" by the operation of the casino. Such a designation is required by State law in order to qualify for Impact Funds.

Site Conditions: The plan area is bounded roughly by Pratt Street to the north, Key Highway and the Middle Branch of the Patapsco to the east, the Baltimore County line to the south, and Annapolis Road/Hollins Ferry Road/Carroll Park to the west. The neighborhoods included in the boundaries are: Barre Circle, Carroll Camden, Cherry Hill, Federal Hill, Lakeland, Mt. Winans, Pigtown, Ridgely's Delight, and Westport. The exact boundaries follow those identified on the Planning Department's "Baltimore Neighborhoods" map. Other neighborhood groups adjacent to the boundaries have asked to be included within the boundaries. However, only those that are members of the Local Development Council (LDC) as voting or associate members are included at this time.

General Area: The area is conveniently located adjacent to major streets: Russell Street and 295, 395 to 95, Pratt Street, and Monroe Street to 295. The Light Rail has stops in Westport and Cherry Hill. The Plan Area is quite large and diverse. The Plan divides the boundaries into three Sectors—West, East, and South, and describes the differences among the sectors. The Eastern Sector encompasses part of the South Baltimore peninsula and is home to many young people and the Federal Hill business district. This sector also includes large, underdeveloped tracts of land in Port Covington. The Western Sector is primarily comprised of Washington Village/Pigtown, Carroll Camden Industrial Business Park, and Carroll Park. The Southern Sector, which includes Westport, St. Paul, Mt. Winans, Cherry Hill, and Lakeland, faces a

number of social issues, but is also the location of large tracts of underdeveloped land on or near the water and the Light Rail stops.

There are several major development projects in progress in the plan area. Stadium Square in Sharp Leadenhall will bring mixed used development to sites previously occupied by low-scale industrial buildings. Under Armour and Sagamore Development own much of the land in Port Covington and the Westport waterfront and are creating plans for the redevelopment of the area, including locating Under Armour's international headquarters campus there. Plans are also being developed for the rebuilding of the Hanover Street Bridge and for the implementation of the Carroll Park Master Plan.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The request conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically:

- **LIVE Goal 1: Build human and social capital by strengthening neighborhoods.**
Objective 1: Expand Housing Choices for all Residents
Strategy 6: Create and preserve mixed-income neighborhoods in Competitive, Emerging and Stable neighborhoods with targeted disposition of City properties.
Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties throughout the City
Objective 3: Maintain and create safe, clean and healthy neighborhoods.
Objective 4: Target Neighborhood Planning to Leverage Investment
- **LIVE Goal 2: Elevate the design and quality of the City's built environment.**
Objective 1: Improve design quality of Baltimore's built environment.
Objective 3: Promote transit oriented development and mixed-use development to reinforce neighborhood centers and Main Streets.
Objective 4: Protect and enhance the preservation of Baltimore's historic buildings and neighborhoods.
- **LIVE Goal 3: Improve transportation access, accessibility and choice for City residents.**
Objective 1: Create a comprehensive transportation plan to improve mobility, accessibility and choice.
Strategy 2: Implement Bicycle Master Plan to create a complete bikeway system
- **EARN GOAL 2: Improve Labor Force Participation Rate Among City Residents**
Objective 1: Align employers with job seekers and training resources
- **EARN Goal 3: Improve access to jobs and transportation linkages between businesses.**
Objective 2: Promote economic development throughout the City by improving business-to-business connectivity via transportation linkages.
- **PLAY Goal 2: Improve nightlife, entertainment, and recreation experiences for residents and visitors.**

Objective 2: Promote unique retail venues as shopping and tourist destinations.

The request conforms to the goals and objectives of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan, specifically:

- CLEANLINESS GOALS: Towards Our Vision of a CLEAN Baltimore
Goal 1: Eliminate litter throughout the City of Baltimore
Goal 2: Sustain a clean and maintained appearance of public land
Goal 3: Transform vacant lots from liabilities to assets that provide social and environmental benefits.
- GREENING GOALS: Towards Our Vision of a GREEN Baltimore
Goal 1: Double Baltimore's Tree Canopy by 2037
Goal 3: Provide safe, well-maintained recreational space within ¼ mile of all residents.
- TRANSPORTATION GOALS: Towards Our Vision of a MOBILE Baltimore
Goal 1: Improve public transit services
Goal 2: Make Baltimore bicycle and pedestrian friendly.
- GREEN ECONOMY GOALS: Towards Our Vision of an INVESTED Baltimore
Goal 1: Create green jobs and prepare City residents for these jobs.
Goal 3: Support local Baltimore businesses.

The plan recognizes the goals in the overarching Middle Branch and Middle Branch Transportation Plans. Also considered during the planning process were the recommendations from the Cherry Hill, Key Highway, Westport-Mt. Winans-Lakeland community plans, the Pigtown Main Street plan, and several urban renewal plans and historic district requirements.

ANALYSIS

Process

Knowing that the Horseshoe Casino was to open in 2014, the preceding summer the Department of Planning began a planning process by meeting with City agencies to determine baseline data related to the neighborhoods that would be eligible for Impact Grants through the anticipated \$5-7 million expected to be generated from Horseshoe revenues. It was decided that the boundaries of the study area would coincide with the borders of those neighborhoods already determined to be "immediately impacted" because they had been designated as member organizations for the LDC, or adjacent neighborhoods that were allowed to have associate membership. The plan was envisioned as both a 20-year vision and a series of recommendations that could be implemented in the short and medium term.

In the fall of 2013, a series of four community input meetings were launched. In between these monthly meetings, City agencies met with the planners to review the input received from citizens and other stakeholders who attended the meetings. Once a draft of the plan was prepared by consultants, another series of three meetings were held in the spring of 2014. Subsequent to

those meetings, the plan was significantly revised by another consulting firm hired to organize and format the final plan.

During the planning process, the Local Development Council was consulted regularly as the major advisory group. Its subcommittees focused on refining the recommendations and time frames for plan implementation with an eye to which recommendations would rise to the level of priority for Impact Grants in the near future. The final draft of the plan was completed in October of 2015.

Those recommendations that are slated to be addressed in the immediate or five-year time frame will be used as the basis for a spending plan for Local Impact Funds. The LDC will recommend projects and initiatives that would be funded, at least in part, by Local Impact Grants. LDC recommendations play an important role in shaping final Local Impact Aid budgets, which are approved by the Mayor and City Council.

Recommendations

Some of the long-term outcomes envisioned in the plan are:

- A world-class waterfront park system
- Clean water in the Middle Branch
- A Community Benefits District organized to oversee and manage programs
- Expanded and coordinated arts, cultural and historical programs
- Expanded local business support networks and resources
- Transit-oriented development
- An upgraded Carroll Park
- “Complete Streets” that are safer and better accommodate all roadway users
- Fiber optic networks with access for SBG neighborhoods

The plan is organized into nine goals, which are summarized below. Each of the goals has a series of strategies and recommendations.

Goal I: Transportation Connectivity is about promoting safe transportation and improving access within the plan area and with the surrounding area. A key connectivity strategy is to improve the pedestrian and bicycling network. One of the recommendations is to implement a “Complete Streets” plan for each neighborhood. Complete Streets is defined as an approach that considers the needs of all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists – and develops street plans that balance those needs and are appropriate to each neighborhood.

Goal II: Environmental Sustainability is about improving the environment, parks, and other open spaces within the plan area, and promoting sustainability practices. This goal includes a strategy to improve the Middle Branch shoreline, habitat areas, and water quality. An important first step is to undertake a comprehensive feasibility and design plan for the Middle Branch

shoreline to “identify specific improvement areas, propose environmental restoration efforts and identify locations for community amenities, such as boat launches, docks and piers, waterfront parks and Water Taxi stops.”

Goal III: Safety is about promoting public safety through crime prevention efforts and improved emergency response. One of the strategies is to implement crime prevention programs. This includes recommendations related to expanding police-community partnerships and installing and upgrading lighting and public safety cameras.

Goal IV: Community Development and Revitalization addresses the need to make neighborhoods more marketable by implementing redevelopment strategies that improve quality of life and support economic growth. One key strategy is to establish and staff a community benefits district to provide services and manage community investments and programs to meet neighborhood needs.

Goal V: Economic Growth focuses on supporting business and workforce development. An immediate success has been the establishment of an Employment Connection Center using Impact Grant funds, as well as expanding job opportunities for youth.

Goal VI: Education hones in on providing services and programs to prevent absenteeism and to expand access to technology. Specific recommendations call for expanded programs to enhance English proficiency and opportunities for adult education.

Goal VII: Health and Wellness is predicated on the vision that a safe, clean, and thriving city depends on the physical and mental well-being of all residents. Two of the recommendations for improving access to health and wellness services support Planning’s Food Policy initiatives to expand local grocers, farmers markets, and community gardens, and to implement the food desert retail strategy.

Goal VIII: Quality of Life looks at a range of programs and initiatives to enhance recreation, culture, art, and the experience of history for residents in the Gateway neighborhoods. There are strategies for each of these topics and recommendations ranging from expanding boating access and programs to improved libraries and art programs, to creating exhibits to celebrate the historic legacy of the area.

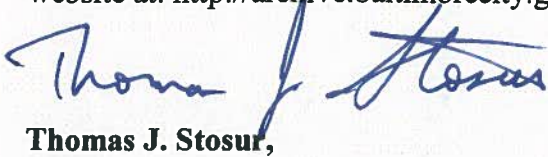
Goal IX: Infrastructure includes improving maintenance of public works and transportation infrastructure, as well as expanding digital technology and the use of renewable energy.

The plan provides maps that show where improvement projects are taking place and sites where development or habitat restoration could take place. These maps are shown by sector. The plan also touches upon some possible funding sources beyond City tax dollars and casino Impact Grants.

NOTIFICATIONS:

Staff has notified by email and by post the community organizations representing the neighborhoods included within the planning area: Barre Circle, Carroll Camden, Cherry Hill, Federal Hill, Lakeland, Mt. Winans, Pigtown, Ridgely's Delight, and Westport. The members of the LDC were notified by e-mail as well. We have also notified 10th District City Councilman Edward Reisinger, 11th District City Councilman Eric Costello, and City Council President Jack Young, as well as the elected officials involved with the Local Development Council.

Copies of the South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan are available on the Dept. of Planning website at: <http://archive.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Planning.aspx>



**Thomas J. Stosur,
Director**