



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Sean Davis, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

February 22, 2018

REQUEST: Remington Neighborhood Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Acceptance

STAFF: K. Reni Lawal

PETITIONERS: Greater Remington Improvement Association

OWNERS: Mayor and City Council and Multiple Private Property Owners

GENERAL AREA

Remington is located in north central Baltimore on the east side of the Jones Falls River. Its historical boundaries are the Jones Falls to the west, Wyman Park Drive and Johns Hopkins University to the north, Howard Street to the east and West 21st Street to the south. The neighborhood covers a total area of about 200 acres (.33 square miles).

Remington's historic development was tied to three main factors: stone quarries, water-powered industrial development along the Jones Falls, and commercial activity along North Avenue. Remington experienced many changes over the centuries as industries changed and the city lost population to the growth of the suburbs. However, in recent years, Remington, like other neighborhoods in Baltimore, has experienced a resurgence of interest and development. There has been a lot of investment in Remington including the redevelopment of a former tire shop into a restaurant, theater and office spaces; the Remington Row development that includes apartments, offices, retail and restaurants; and the many rehabbed, formerly vacant rowhomes and corner stores.

The housing stock is characterized primarily by modest two-story rowhomes, some with porches, but many without. Many blocks in Remington were developed in the traditional Baltimore style where each end rowhouse functioned as a commercial outlet servicing the local neighbors. There are also a couple of newer apartment buildings that have been developed within the past decade. Remnants of Remington's industrial past are still present in the neighborhood with many old factory buildings on the fringes of the neighborhood boundaries. Some of them are still operational with some type of industrial use while others have been reimagined and developed into retail, office and residential uses.

The Remington neighborhood has fairly easy access to public transit options such as the MTA Link Bus system and the Charm City Circulator. There is also convenient access to the Jones Falls Expressway, which allows for easy commutes to downtown Baltimore. Remington is generally a walkable neighborhood, but the high volume streets that serve the Jones Falls Expressway can make it difficult for people to access other parts of the neighborhood and its amenities. Remington is traversed by mostly small neighborhood streets, but some of the major thoroughfares in the neighborhood include Howard Street, 25th, 28th, and 29th Streets.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS & POLICIES

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 3: Maintain and Create Safe, Clean, & Healthy Neighborhoods

Strategy 1: Implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards

Strategy 2: Target housing and sanitation code enforcement using the Housing Typology

- LIVE Goal 2: Elevate the Design and Quality of the City's Built Environment**

Objective 3: Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) 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

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

- 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 2: Make Baltimore bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

The request conforms to the Neighborhood Plans Policy, adopted by the Planning Commission on January 11, 2018. During its planning process, which spanned over several years, GRIA fulfilled the following aspects of the policy:

- Meet with DoP staff to discuss the nature of the plan, proposed boundaries, preliminary stakeholders identified, etc.;
- Host at least three (3) open, public meetings during the process with broad notification;
- Provide documentation of all meeting notifications; and
- Meet with stakeholders who will be affected by the plan's recommendations (property owners, institutions, public agencies, other neighborhoods, etc.).
- Good-faith efforts by the sponsoring community organization(s) must be made to address any geographic boundary issues or conflicts during the planning process.

Additionally the plan document is:

- Consistent with the City's Comprehensive Master Plan and other City policies;
- Includes standardized topics such as process, existing conditions, background data, goals, strategies, recommended action steps;
- Includes a detailed implementation chart, in a format acceptable to the Planning Department; and
- In a well-designed, easy to read format.

ANALYSIS

The Remington Neighborhood Plan is a community-managed plan developed by the Greater Remington Improvement Association (GRIA). It was originally prepared by the Neighborhood Design Center and then updated by GRIA. While this plan was not initiated by any City agency, the Department of Planning was involved in the initial development of the plan and the recommendations were reviewed by the appropriate City agency staff. This plan began prior to the Neighborhood Plans Policy adoption by the Planning Commission on January 11, 2018. Planning Department staff determined that most of the guidelines were met and able to move forward with Planning Commission acceptance of the Remington Neighborhood Plan.

Purpose & Plan Scope

The Remington Neighborhood Plan (the Plan) is a collaborative effort by residents, business owners, community associations and interested partners to guide the neighborhood's development in the 21st century. The plan's overarching goal is to ensure that physical, social and environmental development is consistent with the vision of those living and working in the Remington community. Through its goals and strategies, this plan will create a framework through which changes may occur for the benefit of current and future Remington community members. The Plan is comprehensive focusing on the residential, commercial/ industrial, open space, transit, and safety & sanitation aspects of the neighborhood.

Process

Beginning in 2008, community leaders sought technical assistance to develop a master plan that would address community needs. From mid-2008 to early 2009, the community worked with the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) to begin the process of researching neighborhood history, creating a master plan steering committee and examining community plans from nearby communities. This process included 14 steering committee and volunteer team meetings and several community workshops focusing on the planning process, work timeframes and community outreach strategies.

In March 2009, the steering committee worked with community leaders to discuss what residents liked about Remington and discuss opportunities to improve the neighborhood. Working along with the NDC, further opportunities for community engagement took place through summer 2009 to learn about the neighborhood's challenges and residents' ideas for its future.

In September 2009, the steering committee and NDC began holding monthly planning discussion sessions to discuss the community feedback gathered (a total of five meetings during the fall 2009/winter 2010 seasons). Attended by residents, businesses, local non-profits, faith-based organizations and elected officials, the sessions informed all stakeholders of resident concerns and desires, made request for further new ideas and put forth potential Plan goals and recommendations. At the conclusion of the sessions, the steering committee began to develop the master plan document. Further technical assistance was sought from Greater Homewood Community Corporation, now Strong City Baltimore, and Johns Hopkins University for Plan development.

On April 2, 2013, a first draft of the Plan was presented to the Remington community. Residents and other stakeholders were given the opportunity to submit comment during a subsequent 30-day comment period. Following the conclusion of the comment period, the feedback received from community members was analyzed and portions of the Plan were modified. A second public meeting was held on July 3, 2013 to review the updates and allow the public to comment during a final 30-day comment period.

In March of 2015, a follow-up meeting was held to update the commercial section of the community approved master plan, taking into consideration development planned and underway in the neighborhood. A public meeting was held in June of 2015 and a 30-day outreach period began to facilitate community input and improve turnout at the final July 2015 public meeting to review final updates. This update coincided with the Remington Rezoning effort that was underway. With the adoption of Transform Baltimore lingering, community members and property owners rallied together to change the zoning of several corner properties so that neighborhood scale commercial uses could once again exist in them. The update to the commercial section was used as the foundation for the Zoning and Land Use Study in the Remington Central Business Area adopted by the Planning Commission in August 2015.

After another round of edits based on feedback from the city agencies, the Greater Remington Improvement Association hosted a final public meeting on January 17, 2018, walking attendees through the development of the plan, its overarching goals, and specific recommendations.

The following document presents a multi-year effort by all stakeholders to put forth a vision for Remington over the next ten years. Policy recommendations are provided in the following Plan element areas: residential, commercial, open space, mobility and public safety. It is expected that the implementation of these policies will be a collaborative effort involving the Remington community, local government, property owners, and local institutions & non-profits.

Recommendation Summary

Residential

- R1 - Ensure Remingtonians of all ages, ethnicities, incomes, and family structures will have access to adequate housing.
- R2 - Consider adaptive re-use of historic industrial/commercial buildings to meet residential housing demand, where appropriate.
- R3 - Actively participate in the development process for any proposed residential and mixed-use developments
- R4 - Encourage residential and mixed-use development (both new construction and re-habilitation) that incorporates sustainable building practices
- R5 - Engage City and community partners that offer programs to help residents maintain, improve and stay in their homes.
- R6 - Foster a partnership between the community and City government, in particular DHCD, to address vacant properties and code violations
- R7 - Provide resources to individual renters and neighbors who have problems with irresponsible landlords and support efforts to enforce responsible rental property ownership
- R8 - Actively market and promote the Remington neighborhood to new residents.

Commercial

- C1 - Welcome commercial uses of a variety of sizes and functions in the neighborhood, particularly those that encourage greater social interaction.
- C2 - Encourage new, non-residential development to occur in a manner and density that respects the neighborhood's walkable mixed-use character.
- C3 - Support the continued existence and growth of educational facilities within the neighborhood.
- C4 - Discourage oversaturation of one type of use, such as taverns, carryout restaurants, or convenience stores.
- C5 - Promote neighborhood-scale commercial uses along four major corridors: Remington Avenue, Huntingdon Avenue, 28th Street, 29th Street, as well as minor corridors with historic storefronts.
- C6 - Encourage adaptive re-use of underutilized historic buildings.

C7 - Work with City government to enact zoning regulations that allow neighborhood-scale businesses and residential activities to coexist peacefully.

C8 - Support forming a Remington Merchant Association

C9 - Support the creation of cottage industries or home-based businesses that will generate income for Remington Residents

Open Space

O1 - Ensure that a network of open spaces should be available and accessible to everyone who lives, works, and plays in Remington.

O2 - Ensure that publicly-owned parkland is properly maintained by the City.

O3 - Support the creation and maintenance of pocket parks, community gardens, and other outdoor community spaces.

O4 - Add trees, greenery, signage and amenities along streets and in vacant lots to enhance the curb appeal of the area and help residents feel safe

O5 - Engage in relationship building activities with relevant organizations to improve accessibility to open spaces in Remington.

Mobility

M1 - Ensure that all parts of Remington are accessible by foot, mobility devices, bicycle, transit and automobile.

M2 - Work with the Baltimore City Department of Transportation to ensure that the neighborhood streets and sidewalks are safely passable by pedestrians and bicyclists by studying and implementing, where feasible, the following short term improvements

M3 - Undertake a study on the conversion of 28th and 29th Streets back to two-way, neighborhood scale streets.

M4 - Improve bike infrastructure.

M5 - Support efforts to bring new transportation options to Remington

M6 - Work with Baltimore City Department of Transportation and the Baltimore City Police Department to ensure that heavy truck traffic does not overwhelm neighborhood streets.

Public Safety & Sanitation

P1 - Ensure that all Remingtonians can live, work, and play in a safe and sanitary environment

P2 - Work closely with City agencies to enforce the sanitation code.

P3 - Engage with the Baltimore City Police Department's Northern District command to facilitate increased police presence and effectiveness

P4 - Develop a coordinated community effort to monitor, address, report, and eliminate criminal and suspicious activity.

NOTIFICATIONS

Staff has notified by email the Greater Remington Improvement Association, Remington Neighborhood Alliance, Johns Hopkins University, Councilwoman Mary-Pat Clarke, and Councilman Robert Stokes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Stosur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and a stylized "S" for "Stosur".

**Thomas J. Stosur,
Director**

