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Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

October 6, 2016

REQUEST: Oldtown Redevelopment Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of Oldtown Redevelopment Plan Update Addendum

STAFF: Tamara Woods

PETITIONER: Department of Planning

OWNER: Mayor and City Council and various private property owners

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The boundaries of the Oldtown Redevelopment Plan study area are the JFX to the west, Broadway to the east, and Monument and Fayette Street to the north and south respectively. The Oldtown area is centrally located between downtown Baltimore and the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions.

General Area: The Oldtown Redevelopment Area is located directly to the east of Downtown. The Oldtown Mall Redevelopment site is bordered roughly by Aisquith, Orleans, and Ensor streets. The plan area includes the Oldtown Mall, site of the former Somerset Homes, Dunbar Homes, the main Post Office, BG&E and part of the State's correctional complex. Oldtown is also home to several important institutions and organizations including Sojourner-Douglass College, Dunbar High School, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, East Baltimore Community Corporation and a new public library.

HISTORY

- Ordinance No. 70-760 – Established Oldtown Urban Renewal Plan enacted 7 April, 1970.
- Oldtown Redevelopment Plan, Planning Commission Adoption, May 27, 2010

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, Objective 2: Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties Throughout the Objective 3: Maintain and Create Safe, Clean, & 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 (TOD) and Mixed-use Development to Reinforce Neighborhood Centers and Main Streets)
- EARN Goal 2: Improve Labor Force Participation Rate Among City Residents (Objective 1: Align Employers with Job Seekers and Training Resources)

ANALYSIS

Background

On May 27, 2010 the Planning Commission adopted the Oldtown Redevelopment Master Plan. Oldtown was one of three original settlements in the downtown area. During the course of the 19th century, Oldtown was absorbed and surrounded by a rapidly growing metropolitan center. Gay Street, one of the major arteries from the 17th and 18th centuries, grew into prominence as an important shopping street and market area for the African- American community. In the 20th century, changes to the arterial street network and the addition of an elevated highway over the Fallsway River and development pattern changes, including the several public housing complexes and the desire for shopping in the suburbs, Gay Street declined as a shopping destination. The street was closed to traffic and pedestrianized, and eventually the historic market was torn down. In 2009, Baltimore Housing razed the Somerset Homes site.

The Oldtown Redevelopment Plan was needed because Baltimore Development Corporation and Baltimore Housing were both planning for major redevelopment efforts adjacent to each other. In 2005, Baltimore Development Corporation selected Continental Realty Corporation and McCrary Development to prepare a redevelopment proposal for the Oldtown Mall. Also, Baltimore Housing was beginning to prepare for the redevelopment of Somerset Homes, which is directly to the east of the Oldtown Mall redevelopment site. The City has since parted ways with this development team.

Given the overall condition of the area and the impact to the area of the two proposed projects, it was decided that a master plan was needed to guide the redevelopment and solidify the development goals, not just of the two projects, but of the entire plan area, which many agree because of its location is important to Downtown Baltimore.

Existing May 2010 Oldtown Redevelopment Plan Summary

The Redevelopment Plan not only gives recommendations and creates a framework for physical redevelopment, but also makes recommendations on sustainability and to support the human development needs of the area. The physical redevelopment recommendations were based on 5 overall design principles:

- Better connect Oldtown to Downtown
- Greening of arterial streets
- Improve existing residential developments and build new mixed-income housing
- Create a new neighborhood center for retail and community services
- Create new parks and open space links to adjacent neighborhoods

The key physical redevelopment recommendations included in the plan are for the redevelopment of Oldtown Mall and the former Somerset Homes site. The other major recommendations in the plan, though very long term, are for the partial tear-down of the JFX and for the redevelopment of the Edison properties near the Fallsway. In addition there is a Human Development Component.

Oldtown Mall and Gay Street Area

The Oldtown Mall and Gay Street Area will be redeveloped as a mixed-use commercial center with approximately 91,000 square feet of retail including a 50,000 square foot grocery store, 488 mixed-income residential units, a new community market building and structured parking. The retail center will be organized along a landscaped main street, in line with the historic market location, connecting Orleans with Hillen.

Somerset Homes

The existing Somerset Homes site will be redeveloped as mixed-income housing with approximately 268 units. New streets and blocks will be developed in Somerset homes to provide a development framework for the new housing.

Fayette Street Initiatives

Baltimore Housing is planning to redevelop multi-family housing along Fayette Street as possible replacement housing for Somerset Homes. Sojourner-Douglass College would like to build a School of Hotel Management and Wellness Center.

Edison Properties and BG&E

The plan recommends redevelopment of the existing parking lots and maintenance yards into mixed-use blocks of substantial density. The mix of uses will include approximately 1,300 mixed-income residential units, 440,000 square feet of offices, a neighborhood park and adjustments to the street and block structure of the area.

Jones Falls Expressway (JFX)

The plan recommends the replacement of the elevated JFX with a landscaped parkway that properly connects to the city street network. The plan also recommends several interim solutions including painting and providing better lighting.

Sustainability

This Plan addresses (either directly or indirectly) many of the goals of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan, such as having energy efficient housing and mixed-use buildings, limiting hardscape and increasing the quantity of permeable surfaces in order to promote water efficiency, maximizing opportunities for “green” jobs and green design in the physical component of the plan. Opportunities for sustainable design and construction include:

- Reuse of existing buildings
- Use of recycled and local materials in new construction
- Use of low-emitting materials in residential and commercial interiors

Human Development

The plan offers several human and economic development recommendations that will assist in strengthening all aspects of life of the current and future residents of the Oldtown area.

The goal is also to create a community in which the existing residents can thrive within the “mixed income” environment that the Redevelopment Plan envisions.

The plan makes several recommendations that provide the framework for human development within the Oldtown area. In the plan document, listed under each of the overarching recommendations are several examples of how the main Human Development recommendations may be achieved. The main recommendations are as follows:

- Improve access to quality affordable housing (both rental and for sale) and increase the rate of homeownership for existing residents.
- Improve educational attainment by providing suitable educational resources for people of all ages.
- Facilitate access to employment and career development opportunities.
- Support opportunities for business development in Oldtown.
- Build wealth.
- Improve health and balance throughout all phases of the life-cycle and the whole person.
- Improve public safety through comprehensive and coordinated efforts.
- Plan for human-scale development.
- Provide for a well-balanced, well-designed transportation system including: car, transit, bicycle, and walking, and car-sharing.
- Protect the character of existing communities and limit displacement of current residents as changes occur.
- Improve accessibility so that all people, regardless of age and ability, can easily navigate the community.
- Keep local residents actively participating in the community and future decision making for the Oldtown area.

2016 Oldtown Redevelopment Plan Update Addendum

This 2016 update does not seek to replace the 2010 Planning Commission Adopted Oldtown Redevelopment Plan, but instead updates and adds new information regarding the current implementation of the plan. The 2016 update mainly addresses the following:

- Joint Request for Proposal (RFP) for Oldtown Mall/ former Somerset Homes
- Developer Proposal for the RFP
- Investment in the Plan Area
- Update to the Human Development Section
- Updated Implementation Table

Most of the plan that was adopted in 2010 is still relevant with the exception that two major components of the plan have changed; 1.) The developer Continental Realty Corporation and McCrary Development is no longer the developer for Oldtown Mall and 2.) The redevelopment of the Somerset Homes site is no-longer envisioned to be a purely residential mixed income

development. The Department of Planning, Baltimore Development Corporation and Baltimore Housing are now in a position to reimagine both sites as mixed-income, mixed-use sites.

In revisiting the Design Principles outlined on page 11 of the 2010 Plan and evaluating lessons learned, it was decided that the best possible way to redevelop both sites, achieve a mixed-income walkable community, shore up the historic Oldtown Mall storefronts and change the area would be to do a joint Request For Proposals (RFP) between the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) and the Housing Authority for Baltimore City (HABC) for both the Oldtown Mall redevelopment site and the former Somerset Homes site, which was demolished in 2009.

On April 17, 2014, the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), on behalf of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore (The City), and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC), issued a Joint Request for Proposals (RFP) for a mixed-use development to be located on approximately 16 acres in the Oldtown community. The site included 7.5 acres of City-owned land, as well as 8.7 acres from the former Somerset Homes public housing site owned by HABC. Broadly, the goals of this RFP sought to:

- Build a Recognizably Urban Neighborhood.
- Plan for and Promote Economic and Social Diversity.
- Improve Connectivity.
- Increase Residents' Access to Healthy Foods.
- Achieve Quality Urban and Architectural Design.
- Maintain and Enhance the View and Connection from Oldtown to City Hall.
- Respect Physical, Historical, and Cultural Traditions.
- Enhance Residents' Ability to Reach their Full Potential through Community and Supportive Services.
- Provide for Formal Community Participation.
- Achieve Positive Economic Impacts for the City of Baltimore.
- Provide Internet Connectivity.

The joint-venture team including The Beatty Development Group, The Commercial Development Group, Mission First Housing Development Corporation, and The Henson Development Co. (The Development Team) was selected to pursue the redevelopment of the lower portion of the Oldtown Mall and the former Somerset Homes site. In addition, they have included an expanded area east of Central Avenue and a portion of the Sojourner-Douglass College campus. Over the last two years the development team has been working to come up with a conceptual redevelopment proposal to move forward in implementation of the plan. To date the developer has done several presentations to BDC-HABC staff, community members, business stakeholders and state and local representatives. Though the entirety of the plan was included in our discussions with the developer, it is recognized that many more conversations regarding the expanded portion will have to occur with the property owners and the community.

The new plan (Exhibit 1), as shown below, is in keeping with the original intent of the 2010 Redevelopment Plan to create a walkable mixed-use mixed-income community. In September 2016, the developer received comments from the City's Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel (UDARP). The comments will be used to help refine the plan and guide future

implementation. This redevelopment scenario which was completed by the selected development team that is included in this 2016 Oldtown Redevelopment Plan Update is long-term and may be modified through implementation and phasing of various sections. As each building and phase is being developed it will be checked against the goals of the RFP and of this Plan.

The developer is currently working with various agencies within the City of Baltimore to secure the land through a Land Disposition Agreement. The first two mixed-income buildings have been identified. One is a family housing project with retail on the ground floor on the former Somerset Homes site and the other a senior building with retail on the Oldtown Mall site.

As part of the developers' proposed redevelopment, they have expanded the area in which they would like to work. This area is to the east of Central Avenue and south of Orleans. Though the proposal is outside of the scope of the RFP, it was reviewed as part of the discussion with UDARP. This is a much later phase of proposed redevelopment and will have many more discussions with the communities and property owners as to the particular redevelopment scenario that would move forward, including any future demolition and street alignments.

In addition to the update in the developer, the Human and Economic Development section is now being led by the Change4Real Coalition. Change4Real was previously affiliated with Sojourner-Douglass College. They have since become their own non-profit 501(c)(3). In addition they are working with the development team to provide human development services for Oldtown Mall/Somerset RFP area.

The implementation chart for the 2010 Oldtown Redevelopment plan is being replaced by an updated implementation chart to not specify the name of a developer, include the HABC Resident Advisory Board for the redevelopment of the former Somerset Homes site and remove the Fayette Street Initiative Proposals. This site as noted in the 2010 plan is owned by Baltimore Housing. They will revisit the future development of this site. Most of the implementation chart remains the same as was adopted in the 2010 Oldtown Redevelopment Plan.

NOTIFICATIONS

Staff has notified the following: The Beatty Development Group, The Commercial Development Group, The Henson Development Co., Change4Real, Housing Authority of Baltimore City Resident Advisory Board, Pleasant View Gardens Tenant Council, Sojourner-Douglass College, Dunbar Coalition and the 12th District City Councilman Carl Stokes.



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