



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake*  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman*

### STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur*  
Director

**August 8, 2013**

**REQUEST:** Street Closing/ Closing Portion of North Side of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street West of Howard Street

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval, subject to requirements from the Department of Public Works

**STAFF:** Martin French

**PETITIONER:** City of Baltimore Department of General Services

**OWNER:** Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

#### **SITE/ GENERAL AREA**

**Site Conditions:** The portion of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street proposed to be closed lies immediately west of the intersection of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street and North Howard Street. The proposed right-of-way closing is approximately 304' in length running with the southern lot line of the private property known as 2600 North Howard Street. The closure's width is approximately 6' from its western end for approximately 140' of its length extending eastward, which then flares to a maximum of approximately 55' in width at its eastern end at Howard Street. The total land area affected is approximately 3,059 square feet.

**General Area:** The proposed closing is located at the eastern boundary of the Remington neighborhood, which is predominantly comprised of row-homes and some limited commercial uses. Across Howard Street from this proposed closing area is Millers Court, a recently renovated industrial building converted for use as work-force rental housing. Beyond Millers Court is the Charles Village neighborhood, which like Remington is predominantly row-homes and some limited commercial (retail and office) uses on its western side. Recent rezoning of 2600 North Howard Street has made it the northwestern anchor of the commercial corridor running along 25<sup>th</sup> Street from the 2500 block of North Howard Street eastward to Greenmount Avenue. On the south side of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street where this closure is proposed is a railroad cut, where the Baltimore Belt Railroad emerges from its tunnel under the north-south streets of central Charles Village. As a result, there is a steep downward-sloping embankment with no buildings directly opposite the area proposed for closure.

## **HISTORY**

As noted above, Ordinance 13-133, enacted June 18, 2013, rezoned much of the portion of the right-of-way proposed for closing here from the M-1-2 Zoning District to the B-2-2 Zoning District. City Council Bill 13-0208 which became this ordinance was the subject of a Planning Commission hearing and favorable report on April 18, 2013.

## **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

This proposed action is consistent with LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, the Comprehensive Master Plan for Baltimore, Live Goal 1, Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods. This right-of-way closure would support previously approved redevelopment of the "Tire Shop" site at 2600 North Howard Street, as explained in the analysis below.

## **ANALYSIS**

Because the northern branch of the 200 block of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street meeting Howard Street dead-ends there, while the southern branch of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street meeting Howard Street continues eastward into Charles Village, the northern branch is redundant as a public right-of-way, and is not needed to provide access to adjacent properties. There is also a cut-off leftover piece of land, a triangular grassy area bounded by curbing in the middle of the overlapping 26<sup>th</sup> Street rights-of-ways. It is therefore Planning staff's opinion that the northern portion of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street west of Howard Street shown on the sketch provided by the Department of General Services is no longer needed for a public purpose and can be closed, declared surplus right-of-way, and sold.

This action would also support commercial re-use of the property known as 2600 North Howard Street. Given its location, developer representatives and Planning staff agreed during the Site Plan Review process that creating an area for accessory outdoor table service for its restaurant would be appropriate and desirable. 2600 North Howard Street was recently rezoned to the B-2-2 District, encouraging redevelopment to commence along the northern edge of the public right-of-way proposed for closure here. The southeastern-most corner of the portion of the north side of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street to be closed remains in a M-1-2 District.

Staff notified the Charles Village Civic Association, Greater Remington Improvement Association, Remington Neighborhood Alliance, and Greater Homewood Community Corporation of this action.



**Thomas J. Stosur**  
**Director**