



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur  
Director

July 11, 2013

**REQUEST:** CCB #13-0210/ Zoning – Parking Lot District – 301 East Lombard Street (aka 300 East Pratt Street):

For the purpose of permitting, subject to certain conditions, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of an open off-street parking area on the property known as 301 East Lombard Street (aka 300 East Pratt Street), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Amendment and Approval, with the following amendments:

- On page 1, amend line 17 to read "1. That the owner will implement the site plan dated July 8, 2013 and approved by the Site Plan Review Committee on July 9, 2013, which is made part of this Ordinance."
- On page 1, amend lines 18-19 to read "2. That the requirements shown on the site plan will be implemented and maintained thereafter."
- On page 1, in line 25, strike all text after the period, continuing through to, and including the end of, page 2, line 2. Replace with: "If bona fide efforts have been made to develop the property, as determined in the reasonable judgment of the Director of Planning, the property owner shall be entitled to a 2-year extension of this permission to be conclusively evidenced by a letter from the Director of Planning."
- On page 2, before line 3, add a new Section 3: "And be it further ordained, that the Planning Commission shall have the authority to approve a substitute plan for the plan attached hereto, after public notice and hearing, which plan shall become a part of this Ordinance." Then renumbering Sections 4 and 5 to 5 and 6 respectively.

**STAFF:** Eric Tiso

**PETITIONER:** 301 East Lombard Development, LLC, c/o Jon Dooley

**OWNER:** Urban American LP

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

Site Conditions: 301 East Lombard Street (aka 300 East Pratt Street) is located on the southeastern corner at the intersection with South Street, contains ±0.998 acres, and is currently improved as a surface parking lot. The site is zoned B-5-2, and is within the Inner Harbor Project I Urban Renewal Plan (URP) area. This property is also located within the downtown Parking Lot District (*cf.* Zoning Code, Title 10, Subtitle 5).

General Area: This site is located within the Inner Harbor area, and is located between the Renaissance Harbor Place Hotel to the west, the former Examiner building to the East, and the Pratt Street Pavilion and the World Trade Center to the south.

## **HISTORY**

- Ordinance #92-111, dated July 2, 1992, granted conditional use approval for a parking lot, with a two-year expiration limit.
- Ordinance #94-343, dated June 17, 1994, granted conditional use approval for a parking lot for three additional years.
- Ordinance #97-130, dated March 31, 1997, granted conditional use approval for a parking lot for three additional years.

## **CONFORMITY TO PLANS**

This project is compatible with LIVE Goal 2: Elevate the Design and Quality of the City's Built Environment, Objective 1: Improve Design Quality of Baltimore's Built Environment, specifically: Create and adopt a City-wide landscape ordinance. This parking lot complies with the design intent of the draft Landscape Manual for retro-fitting additional landscaping on existing surface parking lots in the downtown area.

## **ANALYSIS**

Project: This bill will reauthorize 301 East Lombard Street as a surface parking lot. The prior authorization had lapsed, and the property has continued its operation as a public pay lot. The property is in negotiation for sale, and the current bill has provisions that will limit the land use authorization to not more than four years, with a potential two year extension. At the same time, TransForm Baltimore, the draft Zoning Code approved by the Planning Commission, proposes that principal use surface parking lots will be prohibited in the C-5 Downtown zoning districts, in which this property is located. It is important to note that if the new zoning code is approved with the downtown surface parking lot prohibition, the prohibition will take effect before the four- or six-year duration of this land use approval expires. This bill will allow the parking lot to be "grandfathered" and continue following the effective date of the new zoning code, but the expiration at the end of the four or six year period will be permanent.

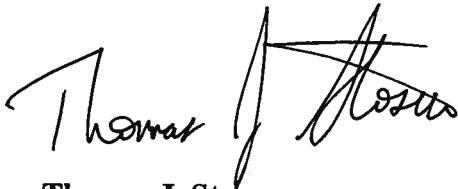
Downtown Parking Lots: As part of TransForm Baltimore, the comprehensive rewrite of our Zoning code, staff has created a draft Landscape Manual that requires attractive landscaping for new parking lots generally, and requires additional screening and planting for existing parking lots in the Downtown area. This site plan complies with the design intent of the draft Landscape Manual through reinforcing landscaping buffers at the northern and southern ends of the site, adding planters to the east and west sides, and by upgrading the perimeter fencing around the entire site.

Site Plan Review Committee: The SPRC has reviewed an improved site plan for this parking lot, dated July 8, 2013, and it was approved by the committee on July 9, 2013. This site plan adjusts the parking space layout for better design and function, improves ADA access, adds additional landscaping and planters, and includes a second entrance (with no exit) to the lot from South Street.

Amendments: Staff recommends that the bill be approved with amendments that can be summarized as follows:

1. The amendments proposed will attach the site plan approved by the SPRC to the legislation, and will require that it be implemented and maintained thereafter.
2. The bill initially approves the parking lot for a four year period, with a possible extension of two years, but doesn't provide details on how this is evidenced or approved. The proposed amendments will clarify this extension to be approved by the Director of Planning, by letter.
3. The final amendment adds a new Section 3, which authorizes the Planning Commission to approve an alternate site plan, after public notice and hearing, without requiring other hearings or amendments to the Ordinance.

Community Input: The Downtown Partnership and the Central Business District Coalition have been notified of this action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Stosur". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

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