



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Tim Keane
Director

February 5, 2026

LEGISLATION: City Council Bill #25-0136/ Rezoning – 3009 Greenmount Avenue:

For the purpose of changing the zoning for the property known as 3009 Greenmount Avenue (Block 4074, Lot 004), as outlined in red on the accompanying plat, from the R-6 Zoning District to the C-2 Zoning District.

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: Council Bill #25-0136 proposes to rezone the property located at 3009 Greenmount Avenue (Block 4074, Lot 004) from the R-6 Residential District to the C-2 Commercial District, as outlined on Zoning Map Sheet 36.

The applicant intends to convert the existing single-family dwelling into a multi-unit residential and/or mixed-use building in accordance with the permitted uses in the C-2 district. The proposed rezoning would better align the property's zoning designation with the surrounding built environment, which includes a mix of residential and commercial uses along the Greenmount Avenue corridor.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Findings and Approval

STAFF: Austin C. Davis

INTRODUCED BY: Councilwoman Ramos

OWNER: Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 14

SITE/GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: The subject property is a detached masonry institutional structure, historically associated with the adjacent St. John's Episcopal Church as a former parish or auxiliary building. The building is set back from Greenmount Avenue and is separated from the public sidewalk by a fenced lawn area. The property directly abuts the church campus, including the associated cemetery, which is part of the church parcel and not part of the subject lot. To the south, the site is adjacent to a one-story commercial structure fronting Greenmount Avenue.

General Area: Greenmount Avenue serves as a mixed-use commercial corridor with a variety of small businesses, institutional uses, and multi-family housing types. Adjacent zoning includes R-6, R-7, C-1, and IMU-1, showing a transitional zone between residential blocks and more active mixed-use/commercial areas. The subject block is surrounded by a range of zoning classifications within one to two blocks in each direction.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The Comprehensive Master Plan Land Use Map designates the subject parcel at 3009 Greenmount Avenue for multifamily residential use, while the abutting parcel to the south is designated for pedestrian-focused commercial use, reflecting the planned transition along Greenmount Avenue from interior residential blocks to a mixed-use corridor.

While the Plan anticipates residential use on the subject parcel, it also recognizes the need for flexibility at corridor transition points, particularly where institutional properties abut commercial designations. In this context, the proposed rezoning from R-6 to C-2 can be accommodated without undermining the Plan's broader land use framework and is consistent with the Plan's intent to support walkable, mixed-use corridors while maintaining neighborhood stability.

REZONING:

Below are the approval standards under §5-508(b) of Article 32 – Zoning for proposed zoning map amendments:

(b) *Map amendments.*

(1) *Required findings.*

As required by the State Land Use Article, the City Council may approve the legislative authorization based on a finding that there was either:

- (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; or
- (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification.

(2) *Required findings of fact.*

In making the determination required by subsection (b)(1) of this section, the City Council must also make findings of fact that address:

- (i) population changes;
- (ii) the availability of public facilities;
- (iii) present and future transportation patterns;
- (iv) compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area;
- (v) the recommendations of the City agencies and officials; and
- (vi) the proposed amendment's consistency with the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.

(3) *Additional standards – General*

Additional standards that must be considered for map amendments are:

- (i) existing uses of property within the general area of the property in question;
- (ii) the zoning classification of other property within the general area of the property in question;
- (iii) the suitability of the property in question for the uses permitted under its existing zoning classification; and
- (iv) the trend of development, if any, in the general area of the property in question, including changes, if any, that have taken place since the property in question was placed in its present zoning classification.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

As noted above, for rezonings, the City Council must consider the following, where appropriate. Staff's assessment follows each of these criteria.

§ 5-508 (b) Evaluation criteria:

As required by the State Land Use Article, the City Council may approve the legislative authorization based on a finding that there was either: (i) a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood where the property is located; (ii) a mistake in the existing zoning classification.

The proposed zoning map amendment must meet the standards outlined in § 5-508(b) of Article 32 – Zoning. As required by State law and City Code, the City Council may approve a zoning change if it finds either: (1) that there has been a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood since the last comprehensive zoning update; or (2) that there was a mistake in the existing zoning classification. In either case, the Council must also make additional findings of fact related to population, infrastructure, transportation, development compatibility, agency recommendations, and plan consistency.

In this case, the applicant seeks to rezone the subject property at 3009 Greenmount Avenue from R-6 (Rowhouse Residential) to C-2 (Community Commercial). The Planning Department finds that the rezoning is appropriate under the “substantial change” criterion. While the Comprehensive Plan was adopted relatively recently, the subject property’s institutional use has ceased, and the building is no longer functioning as part of an active religious campus. This change in use, combined with the parcel’s location along a mixed-use corridor and adjacency to pedestrian-focused commercial zoning, represents a material change in the functional character of the site and its relationship to the corridor. Rezoning the subject property to C-2 would formalize this transition and support compatible development patterns.

Required findings of fact:

(i) Population changes

ACS-based demographic summaries indicate that the Waverly area has experienced a modest year-over-year population decline of approximately 3–4%, suggesting overall stability with some resident loss.

By contrast, portions of the Greenmount West and immediate corridor area have shown moderate short-term population growth, with recent ACS estimates indicating annual increases of roughly 6–7%, consistent with residential turnover and reinvestment activity along the corridor.

(ii) Availability of public facilities

The area continues to be adequately served by existing municipal water, sewer, and public services. Additionally, the property benefits from its location on an arterial corridor with bus transit access, supporting the viability of commercial development.

(iii) Present and future transportation patterns

Greenmount Avenue is a primary north-south arterial that serves as a transit and commercial spine for several neighborhoods. MTA bus lines run directly along the corridor, providing access to downtown Baltimore and other job centers. The property is walkable and bikeable, and part of a larger network of transit-oriented development opportunities. Rezoning to C-2 will support a land use pattern that reduces car dependency and aligns with Baltimore’s Complete Streets goals.

(iv) **Compatibility with existing and proposed development for the area**

The proposed C-2 zoning would allow uses that are compatible with surrounding development and the evolving character of the Greenmount corridor. Within one to two blocks of the site, properties are zoned C-1, IMU-1, and R-7, with active uses including multifamily housing, community resource centers, and local retail and services.

While zoning determinations are not based on a specific user, staff notes that the intended community-oriented use reflects a transitional, low-impact commercial function consistent with the surrounding context and supports adaptive reuse of the existing structure without significant physical alteration.

(v) **Recommendations of City agencies and officials**

The proposed zoning map amendment will be reviewed by the Department of Planning, Department of Transportation, Department of Housing and Community Development, BMZA, and others as required. Based on the Planning Department's preliminary review, the rezoning is supported due to its alignment with adopted land use policies and zoning best practices. Final agency recommendations will be included in the legislative record as the bill advances.

(vi) **Consistency with the City's Comprehensive Master Plan**

The current Comprehensive Master Plan establishes a long-range framework for land use decisions intended to balance corridor reinvestment with neighborhood stability. Under the Plan's Land Use Map, the subject parcel at 3009 Greenmount Avenue is designated for multifamily residential use, while the abutting parcel to the south is designated for pedestrian-focused commercial use, reflecting the transition along Greenmount Avenue from interior residential blocks to a mixed-use corridor.

The proposed rezoning to C-2 is a limited departure from the parcel-level designation in the Comprehensive Plan. However, the Plan also anticipates flexibility at corridor transition points, particularly where institutional properties abut pedestrian-oriented commercial designations. In this context, the rezoning can be accommodated without undermining the Plan's broader residential framework, provided it is evaluated as a site-specific condition rather than a corridor-wide precedent.

While C-2 zoning permits a broader range of uses than currently envisioned for this parcel, staff finds that the lot's size, configuration, and adjacency conditions limit the likelihood of out-of-scale development, and that approval of this rezoning alone would not materially alter the corridor's planned land use pattern.

Accordingly, while staff finds that the proposed rezoning can be supported as a site-specific response to existing corridor conditions, it represents a departure from the Plan's parcel-level designation and warrants careful consideration of long-term corridor implications when evaluating future zoning requests in this area.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission adopt these findings and recommend the bill favorably, with respect to the rezoning.

EQUITY:

1) Short / long-term impact on surrounding community: In the short term, the proposed rezoning of 3009 Greenmount Avenue may enable adaptive reuse of a vacant or underutilized structure, activating the property with either a multifamily residential use or a neighborhood-serving commercial tenant. This can improve public safety, aesthetics, and foot traffic, contributing to corridor stabilization. But in the long term, C-2 zoning introduces the potential for greater land use flexibility, including housing, retail, and community-serving institutions. If redevelopment aligns with community needs, the site can become a neighborhood asset that enhances walkability, promotes local entrepreneurship, and supports reinvestment in a historic corridor. However, without safeguards or community engagement, there's a risk that future changes could contribute to displacement pressures or mismatched uses.

2) Impact on Baltimore's existing patterns of inequity: Greenmount Avenue runs through neighborhoods historically shaped by racial segregation, redlining, and disinvestment. Many surrounding blocks are majority-Black, and the area has faced challenges related to vacancy, underemployment, and limited retail access. This rezoning supports incremental reinvestment in a corridor long targeted for revitalization.

If developed thoughtfully, the C-2 designation can enable a mix of affordable housing, small-scale businesses, and cultural uses, aligning with equity goals around neighborhood self-determination, access to opportunity, and reinvestment without displacement. However, there is also a risk that speculative investment could further widen existing disparities without community-centered protections.

3) Impact on internal operations: The rezoning itself will not significantly affect day-to-day operations. However, a shift to C-2 will likely trigger additional oversight responsibilities and interagency coordination between the Department of Planning, Zoning Administration, and Housing to ensure compliance with bulk standards, parking, and community impact mitigation. The proposed zoning designation is common and well-supported by the existing administrative framework.

NOTIFICATION: The site has been posted as required, and the Better Waverly Community Association has been notified. Additionally, GovDelivery electronic notification was sent out when the project was scheduled for Planning Commission.



Tim Keane
Director