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FROM	NAME & TITLE	Robert Cenname, Budget Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432, City Hall (410) 396-4774		
	SUBJECT	Council Bill 20-0504 – Charter Amendment – City Council – Composition		

TO

DATE:

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

March 3, 2020

Position: Oppose

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 20-0504, Charter Amendment-City Council-Composition, the purpose of which is to increase the size of the City Council from 14 members to 15 members, each elected from a Council district. The bill provides that the City Council members appoint a President, Vice President, and representative to the Planning Commission from the membership.

Background

The composition of the City Council was last changed in November 2002 through a Charter amendment, confirmed by the voters. The City Council previously contained 6 three-member districts and a City Council President elected at-large for a total of 19 members. The final details were prescribed into law by the Mayor and City Council. The first election under the new City Council structure was in November 2004.

Fiscal Impact

The legislation requires that an additional council office be added to comply with the changes. In order to remain cost neutral, the plan would decrease the community relations staff in the Office of the City Council President.

The Office of the City Council President would be preserved as the official administration for the agency. Since the City Council will elect a President who will preside over both offices, there will be a reduced need for community relations and communications staff within the Office of the City Council President as a more internally focused office. This is based on the precedent in peer cities such as Philadelphia. Below is one example of a staffing structure that would be cost neutral compared to the current model.

Position Class Title	Current			Proposed		
	Number	Cost	Total Amt.	Number	Cost	Total Amt.
District						
Council Member	14	105,245	1,473,430	15	105,245	1,578,675
Council Technician	14	89,680	1,255,520	15	89,680	1,345,200
Secretary City Council	14	70,158	982,212	15	70,158	1,052,370
Council Assistant	14	64,623	904,722	15	64,623	969,345
Council President						
Neighborhood Liaison	10	88,751	887,510	6	88,751	532,506
Total	66		5,503,394	66		5,478,096

Conclusion

Although this legislation is cost neutral, the Department of Finance believes that major changes to the structure of the City's government should go through a Charter Review Commission. Making changes to complex structures such as representation of City residents could have unintended consequences if not appropriately considered.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance opposes City Council Bill 20-0504.

cc: Henry Raymond
Matthew Stegman
Nina Themelis