



CITY OF BALTIMORE  
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

<b>TO</b>	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
<b>FROM</b>	Caron Watkins Interim Director, Office of Equity & Civil Rights Interim Chief Equity Officer
<b>ANALYST</b>	Zachary Wellman Equity Policy Analyst, Office of Equity & Civil Rights
<b>DATE</b>	October 15, 2024
<b>SUBJECT</b>	OECR Report on Baltimore City Council Bill 24-0583 The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore

**OECR POSITION: Favorable**

**SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION**

The Office of Equity & Civil Rights (OECR) has reviewed and is herein reporting on City Council Bill 24-0583 – *The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore*. This is an administration-led planning resolution developed by the Department of Planning in partnership with other agencies in the City of Baltimore.

The resolution seeks to accomplish the following:

- Review, revise, and adopt the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan of the City of Baltimore.
- Adhere the City of Baltimore to Maryland State Land Use Article, § 1-405, in which the City must enact, adopt, amend, and execute a comprehensive plan that contains the policies, statements, goals, and interrelated plans for private and public land use, transportation, and community facilities for the City’s future development.
- Provide a deadline by which the Comprehensive Master Plan of the City must be adopted (December 31, 2024)
- Detail the organization of the Plan.
- Explain the land use map of the Plan.
- Highlight the goals of the policy recommendations made in the Plan.
- Require the land use map be reviewed and updated by the Department of Planning on a quadrennial basis.
- Require a copy of the enacted Comprehensive Master Plan be sent to the Mayor, Maryland State Department of Planning, Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, Department of Finance, Health Department, Baltimore City

Heritage Area, Baltimore Dept. of Housing & Community Development, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Law Department, Department of Legislative Reference, Mayor's Office of Minority Business Development, Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods, Department of Planning, Police Department, Department of Public Works, Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Transportation, the Commission on Aging, Retirement and Education, the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities, the Enoch Pratt Free Library System, the Baltimore City Public School System, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety, Baltimore City Information Technology, and the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals

- Provide an effective date of the day it is enacted for the resolution and the Plan.

## ANALYSIS

The OECR reviewed the Comprehensive Master Plan and provided a list of requested amendments to the Planning Commission which were accepted and included in the Plan as revised on October 11, 2024. These amendments consist of language alterations to the goal statements in both the Plan and the associated goals in City Council Bill 24-0583. The amendments are viewable in the Planning Commission's Staff Report dated October 10, 2024, and include the following:

### 24-0583:

#### *Livable Places*

- Affordable Housing (B): Increase the amount and types of housing supports tailored to the needs of the City's most vulnerable to housing insecurity to better ensure that all Baltimoreans have stable and safe housing.
- Affordable Housing (D): Increase the number of affordable housing units available for purchase and rent within the City to minimize payment burden for residents, with a priority on reducing the burden on those most vulnerable to housing insecurity.
- Equitable Neighborhood Development (B): Increase opportunities for community and individual wealth building among low-income, immigrant, and BIPOC residents.
- Revise Vacant Housing (D): Strengthen strategies for addressing vacant buildings and improve the supports to residents to purchase and/or rehabilitate individual vacant buildings, particularly underserved residents most affected by the vacancy crisis.

#### *Equitable Access*

- Revise Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation (B): Expand and improve programming in parks, open spaces, and at recreational facilities to ensure that all residents have access to outdoor and recreational programs with a priority on underserved, under-represented, and historically marginalized communities.
- Revise Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation (D): Develop and implement an equitable capital investment strategy to make existing and future recreational facilities and parks more accessible and better maintained, with a priority on underserved, under-represented, and historically marginalized neighborhoods.
- Revise Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation (E): Increase the frequency and quality of maintenance for existing neighborhood parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities to improve public recreational experiences, especially in underserved, under-

- represented, and historically marginalized communities.
- Revise Digital Access (A): Increase access to modern computing devices, specifically targeting communities with low digital equity scores.
  - Revise Digital Access (C): Increase the quality and availability of digital skills training, education, and technical support among residents of low socioeconomic status throughout the city.
  - Revise Food Access (D): Provide economic supports to help grow local food businesses and develop the local food economy, with an intentional focus on minority and women-owned businesses as well as those led by other underrepresented identities.
  - Revise Transportation Equity (B): Increase city transit service accessibility, frequency, reliability, and affordability for historically marginalized and underserved communities.
  - Revise Transportation Equity (E): Support efforts to expand regional transit in partnership with MTA and MDOT to connect more people and places within the Baltimore metro area, with a focus on meaningfully connecting residents of underserved, disinvested, and historically marginalized communities.
  - Revise Transportation Equity (F): Update and modernize the City transit system to increase ridership, with an intentional focus on historically marginalized and underserved communities.

#### *Healthy Communities*

- Revise Design for Public Safety (B): Increase efforts to educate and empower residents to appropriately use design principles to improve public safety in their communities.
- Revise Design for Public Safety (E): Increase the use of appropriate public safety design principles by City agencies.
- Revise Design for Public Safety (G): Support the appropriate use of public safety design principles in the creation and maintenance of public spaces in an effort to deter crime.
- Revise Environmental and Climate Justice (D): Reduce the sources of, and exposure to, environmental pollutants in frontline, overburdened, and Environmental Justice Communities.
- Revise Neighborhood Cleanliness (A): Increase and diversify the types of efforts the City provides to support neighborhood-led clean ups.
- Revise Neighborhood Cleanliness (C): Increase City-led efforts to improve and maintain sanitary conditions in public spaces, especially in underserved and historically marginalized communities.
- Revise Public Health Disparities Extreme Heat (A): Implement measures that reduce heat exposure at the pedestrian level to minimize the impacts of extreme heat on youth, aging adults, chronically diseased, low-income, unhoused, and outdoor worker populations in Baltimore.
- Revise Public Health Disparities Extreme Heat (B): Implement strategies to make the built environment, specifically homes, schools, and senior centers especially in underserved, disinvested, and historically marginalized communities, more resilient during extreme heat.
- Revise Public Health Disparities Extreme Heat (E): Reduce the number of residents, specifically low-income residents, marginalized populations, and disinvested communities, who experience electrical service interruption on days when the heat

index is higher than 105 degrees.

### *Inclusive Economy*

- Revise Freight Movement (C): Reduce the environmental impacts of freight movement within the neighborhoods most affected by environmental injustice, environmental racism, and pollution-related health disparities to protect residents most affected by historic environmental marginalization.
- Revise Freight Movement (D): Reduce transportation and training barriers for Baltimore city residents seeking freight movement jobs, particularly for traditionally excluded residents.
- Revise Small Business Ecosystem and Neighborhood Retail (A): Evaluate the viability, implementation, and success of commercial corridors, city retail programs, and business incentives to identify how best to develop neighborhood retail owned by BIPOC, low socioeconomic status, immigrant, women, and other marginalized residents.
- Revise Small Business Ecosystem and Neighborhood Retail (B): Identify policy and practical measures to align broader economic development with local small businesses and neighborhood owned and operated retail development, particularly located in underserved, disinvested, and historically marginalized communities.
- Revise Small Business Ecosystem and Neighborhood Retail (C): Increase the availability and accessibility of services and supports for helping to launch and maintain small businesses, especially those owned by BIPOC, low socioeconomic status, immigrant, women, and other marginalized residents.
- Revise Small Business Ecosystem and Neighborhood Retail (D): Provide more supports to encourage the development of locally-owned and operated retail establishments.
- Revise Small Business Ecosystem and Neighborhood Retail (E): Provide supports to underserved, disinvested, and historically marginalized communities to help them diversify the types of retail available so that the local economy better matches their needs.
- Revise Workforce Development (A): Improve quality of and access to job training in high priority fields within the state and region that pay family supporting wages, particularly for populations with lower rates of participation in the workforce.
- Revise Workforce Development (B): Increase the readiness of all BCPS students for employment and/ or post-secondary education, per the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- Revise Workforce Development (C): Streamline and centralize access to the City's workforce and wrap-around services to make them more accessible to historically excluded residents, such as formerly justice-involved and re-entering residents in order to make it more equitable to residents of Baltimore.

The OECR believes these amendments highlight the necessity for equitable policy recommendations to identify and actively target most affected/vulnerable populations. This is because equal application of policy is not equitable, and equity isn't applied equally.

The amendments reflect the equitable intent of the policy recommendations throughout the

Comprehensive Master Plan. The OECR worked with the Department of Planning to make these changes because it is important for the goals of the Plan to center the specific populations/communities affected by the problems addressed by the Plan rather than apply equally across the entire city. This is because the goals of the Comprehensive Master Plan are the mechanism with which the City and its residents may measure the success of the Plan's implementation.

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore

*Healthy Communities - Designing for Public Safety*

The OECR collaborated with the Department of Planning to amend the Designing for Public Safety section to better reflect the Plan's equitable intent and synchronous methods. The changes emphasize the Department's holistic approach to addressing public safety and how Livable Places, Equitable Access, Healthy Communities, and an Inclusive Economy all work together to improve safety outcomes for Baltimore residents through a city-wide planning approach.

**CONCLUSION**

The Office of Equity & Civil Rights requests a favorable committee report on the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan of the City of Baltimore as revised on October 11, 2024. The OECR requests a **favorable** committee report on City Council Bill 24-0583, **provided the aforementioned amendments listed in the Planning Commission's Staff Report are adopted.**

Respectfully Submitted,



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Caron Watkins

Interim Director, Office of Equity & Civil Rights