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| FROM | NAME & TITLE | David E. Scott, Director | CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO |  |
| | AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS | Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building | | |
| | SUBJECT | CITY COUNCIL BILL 08-0092 | | |

DATE: May 21, 2008

TO The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Karen Randle
Room 400 - City Hall

I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 08-0092 introduced by Council Members Spector, Clarke, Holton, Henry, Kraft, Cole, D'Adamo, President Rawlings Blake, Council Members Welch, Conaway, Middleton, and Reisinger.

The purpose of the Bill is to require the address number of a building to be affixed or otherwise placed, in a certain manner, at the rear of a building as well as at the front; increase the penalty for a violation of the laws governing building addresses; provide for alternative enforcement by environmental citation; conform, correct, and clarify related language; provide for a special effective date; and generally relating to the numbering of houses and other buildings in the City of Baltimore.

The Baltimore City Charter grants authority to the Department of Public Works to establish and maintain a system for the uniform identification of all real property within the City, to maintain adequate records, to name or approve the names of streets or alleys (public or private), and to "...determine and fix the number of every new building and shall have the power to change existing numbers" (Article VII § 40). Article 26 Subtitle 6 of the Baltimore City Revised Code (Edition 2000) requires the owner of any new house or other building to affix and maintain the correct street number at the front entrance to the premises so that the number is plainly visible and legible in daytime from a point located 4 feet above the curb line. Failure to do so is a misdemeanor and may result in a fine of not more than \$10 for each offense, and for every day that the violation continues.

City Council Bill 08-0092, if approved, would require owners whose property abuts an alley to affix the appropriate street number on the premises at the rear (or other property immediately behind the numbered structure), plainly visible in daytime from a point located 4 feet above the grade level of the alley. The Bill would increase the misdemeanor fine to not more than \$500 for each offense, and each day that an offense were to continue would be a separate offense. In addition, a prepayable citation of \$25 could be issued. If approved, the provisions of the Ordinance would take effect 120 days after its enactment.

F/Comments

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Building addresses provide a means of property identification and are needed for orientation purposes, for delivery of mail, for government services, and in times of emergencies (medical, fire and police). This Department sends approximately 20 violation notices per month to owners of property lacking street numbers on the fronts of their buildings. There are approximately 234,000 assessed accounts in Baltimore and it is estimated that upwards of 150,000 of those properties abut public and private alleys, therefore falling under the requirements of this legislation. The Department of Public Works understands the practicality and potentially life-saving purposes of the legislation and supports its passage for those reasons. However, the Department respectfully requests the Council to consider the following as this legislation moves forward:

- Baltimore City buildings would also be subject to these provisions, requiring some unknown outlay of funds to comply.
- Some buildings abut other streets or named alleys. Affixing a building address on the rear of a building that abuts a street or named alley may result in some confusion if only street numbers are used. For example, the Abel Wolman Municipal Building has a Holliday Street address of 200. Technically, the rear of the building would be Guilford Avenue. Placing the number 200 on the side of the building facing Guilford might imply a 200 Guilford Avenue address to the casual observer. While the Guilford Avenue side of the building has no entrance, the Lexington Street and Dickey Place facades do.
- The legislation provides for a 120 day grace period before the new building address provisions take effect. During that period, the City would need to make the public aware of their responsibilities and the need to comply with the new law by the end of that period. Preparing such a campaign, depending on its frequency and type, would carry some as yet unidentified cost to the City. Enforcement through prepayable citations may encourage compliance, but it should be understood that substantial numbers of these violations could be issued after the provisions take effect.



DAVID E. SCOTT
DIRECTOR