



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Caron Watkins Interim Director, Office of Equity & Civil Rights Interim Chief Equity Officer
ANALYST	Zachary Wellman Equity Policy Analyst, Office of Equity & Civil Rights
DATE	September 9, 2024
SUBJECT	OECR Report on Baltimore City Council Bill 24-0564 Sale of Property - Subterranean portions of Streets and Alleys bounded by portions of Linden Avenue, W. North Avenue, Eutaw Place, Ducatel Street, Brookfield Avenue, Reservoir Street, Whitelock Street, Newington Avenue, Callow Avenue, Park Avenue, and Mt. Royal Terrace (Group 4)

OECR POSITION: No Recommendation

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION

The Office of Equity & Civil Rights (OECR) has reviewed and is herein reporting on City Council Bill 24-0564 – *Sale of Property - Subterranean portions of Streets and Alleys bounded by portions of Linden Avenue, W. North Avenue, Eutaw Place, Ducatel Street, Brookfield Avenue, Reservoir Street, Whitelock Street, Newington Avenue, Callow Avenue, Park Avenue, and Mt. Royal Terrace (Group 4)*. This bill would sell a portion of underground Baltimore City property to Amtrak in order to develop the Frederick Douglass Tunnel Project. The bill enables the Mayor and City Council to divest their interests in the property by way of sale through the authority of the Comptroller, as outlined by Article V, Section 5(b) of the Baltimore City Charter.

ANALYSIS

The OECR recognizes the necessity to sell the property named in City Council Bill 24-0564 to Amtrak to establish an intermediate ventilation facility and portions of the Frederick Douglass Tunnel project. The OECR also recognizes this project is being carried out by Amtrak in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the State of Maryland.

However, the OECR also acknowledges the concerns regarding equity expressed by the residents of Reservoir Hill, the community in which the property outlined by the bill is located, which culminate in a complaint with the U.S. Department of Transportation for violation of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

CONCLUSION

The OECR has reviewed City Council Bill 24-0564 and makes **no recommendation** on the legislation. The OECR believes it is prudent for the ongoing Title VI complaint lodged against the U.S. Department of Transportation – and any potential legal action therein – to conclude before selling the identified property for the purpose of developing the Frederick Douglass Tunnel.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the letters 'C' and 'W' joined together.

Caron Watkins
Interim Director, Office of Equity & Civil Rights