



Brandon M. Scott
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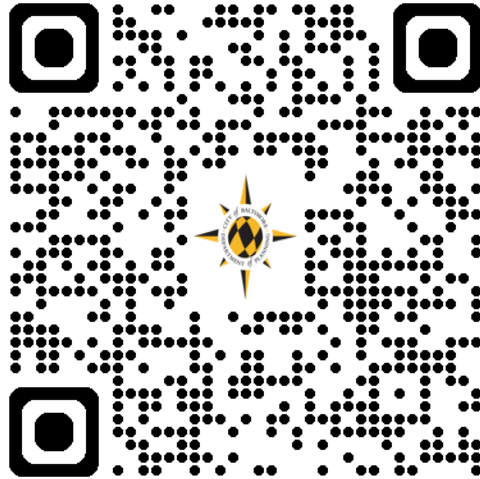
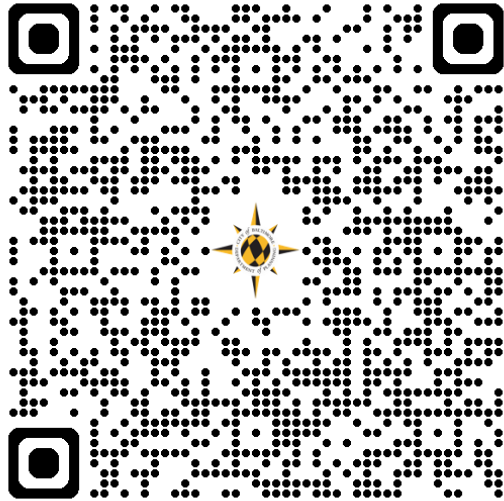
Land Use and Transportation Committee

Housing Options & Opportunity Act

PREPARED BY
Department of Planning

November 20, 2025

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What Does this Bill Do?

Introduces a New Housing Use

“Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)”, defined as any home with 2 to 4 units.

Expands Where 2–4 Unit Homes Are Allowed

Permitted by-right in:

- R-1-A to R-4 (Detached & Semi-Detached zones)
- R-5 to R-8 (Rowhouse & Multi-Family zones)
- Office-Residential (OR) Districts

Not permitted in R-9 and R-10, already reserved for high-density development.

Eliminates Outdated “Residential Conversion” Rules

- Ends the outdated process that restricts converting single-family homes into multi-family ones.



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What Does this Bill Do

Ties Housing to Structure Size, Not Lot Size

Units allowed based on gross floor area (excluding basements, garages, attics):

- 1,500 sq. ft. = 2 units
- 2,250 sq. ft. = 3 units
- 3,000 sq. ft. = 4 units

Aligns Standards for Consistency

- Updates zoning tables and bulk requirements so 2 to 4-unit homes follow the same rules as existing detached or rowhomes.



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Technical Overview

History of Conversion of Dwellings in Baltimore

- **1931** - Zoning Code for the City was created.
- **1971** - Major reform in 1971 that converted the Zoning Code into a more modern Euclidean-style code.
- **1999** - Reformatting of the Zoning Code, no major changes to content.
- **1999** - Ord. #99-425, prohibited conversions R-6 and lower density. Required Conditional Use for higher-density zones by BMZA in R-7 through R-10.
- **2011** - Ord. #11-525, Changed approval for R-8 to require a Conditional Use Ord.
- **2012** - Ord. #12-040, Changed approval for R-7 to require a Conditional Use Ord.
- **2014** - Ord. #14-219, Required conversions to meet bulk standards per the zone.
- **2017** - TransForm Baltimore, entire Zoning Code re-write. Conversions allowed in R-7 and R-8 by Ordinance, R-9 and R-10 by BMZA.



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13 **Baltimore City Code**

14 **Article 32. Zoning**

15 **Title 1. General Provisions**

16 ***Subtitle 3. Definitions***

17 **§ 1-305. “Day-care home: Adult” to “Electric substation: Outdoor”.**

18 (R) *DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY).*

19 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

20 “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” MEANS A DWELLING THAT
21 CONTAINS AT LEAST 2 BUT NO MORE THAN 4 DWELLING UNITS, EXCEPT AS
22 OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

23 (2) *INCLUSIONS.*

24 “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” INCLUDES COMMON FACILITIES FOR
25 RESIDENTS, SUCH AS LAUNDRY ROOMS.

26 **§ 1-309. “Lot line” to “Motel”.**

27 (I) *LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING.*

28 *SEE “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)”.*



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1 **Title 4. Development Reviews**

2 ***Subtitle 4. Design Review***

3 **§ 4-405. Applicability.**

4 (a) *In general.*

5 Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, design review is required for the
6 following types of development:

7 [(5) when exterior modifications are proposed for residential conversion in the R-7,
8 R-8, R-9, and R-10 Districts;]



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10 **Title 8. Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts**

11 ***Subtitle 2. District Descriptions***

12 **§ 8-201. Common standards.**

13 [(a) *Residential development.*]

14 In the districts described in this subtitle, residential development is limited to EITHER 1
15 single-family dwelling unit per lot OR 1 LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING.

16 [(b) *Residential conversions.*]

17 [In any of the districts subject to this title, the conversion of a single-family dwelling to a
18 multi-family dwelling is prohibited.]



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Zoning Tables

**Table 8-301: Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses**

Uses	Districts									Use Standards
	R-1A	R-1B	R-1C	R-1D	R-1E	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	
Residential										
...										
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
...										



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Table 8-401: Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts – Bulk and Yard Regulations

Categories	Specifications (Per District)								
	R-1A	R-1B	R-1C	R-1D	R-1E	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4
Minimum Lot Area									
...									
Dwelling: Detached, [or] Semi-Detached, OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2 acres	1 acre	21,780 sq. ft.	14,520 sq. ft.	9,000 sq. ft.	7,300 sq.ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	3,000 sq. ft.
...									



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MINIMUM ENCLOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA ³

DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.
	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.
	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.
...									

³ GROSS FLOOR AREA MAY NOT INCLUDE ANY BASEMENT AREA.



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**Table 9-301: Rowhouse and Multi-Family Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses**

Uses	Districts						Use Standards
	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10	
Residential							
...							
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	P	P	P			
...							



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***Table 9-401: Rowhouse and Multi-Family Residential Districts –
Bulk and Yard Regulations***

Categories	Specifications (Per District)					
	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
Minimum Lot Area						
...						
Dwelling: Rowhouse OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2,500 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft.	1,100 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	500 sq. ft.



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	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
...						
MINIMUM ENCLOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA ⁸						
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.		
	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.		
	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.		
Maximum Bldg Height						
...						
Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	35 or 45 feet ²	35 or 45 feet ²	35 or 45 feet ²	45 or 60 feet ³	3.0 FAR	6.0 FAR
...						



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17	Maximum Lot Coverage					
18	...					
19	Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	40%	45%	70%	80%	40%
20						80%
21						
22	...					
23	Maximum Impervious Surface					
24	Dwelling: Detached [or], Semi-Detached, OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
25						
26						
27	...					
28	Minimum Front Yard					
29	...					
30	Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	25 feet	20 feet	10 feet	None	45 or 65 feet ⁶
31						None
32						
33	...					
34	...					
35	...					
36	...					
37	...					
38	...					



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		R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
1	Minimum Interior-Side Yard						
2	...						
3	Dwelling: Multi-	15 feet	15 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet
4	Family OR						
5	MULTI-FAMILY						
6	(LOW DENSITY)						
7	...						
8	Minimum Corner-Side Yard						
9	...						
10	Dwelling: Multi-	20 feet	20 feet	15 feet	None	25 feet	None
11	Family OR						
12	MULTI-FAMILY						
13	(LOW DENSITY)						
14	...						
15	Minimum Rear Yard						
16	...						
17	Dwelling: Multi-	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	10 feet	10 feet
18	Family OR						
19	MULTI-FAMILY						
20	(LOW DENSITY)						
21	...						



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22 . . .

23 ² For a structure located on an interior lot, the maximum height is 35 feet. For a structure located on a corner lot at which each
24 of the adjoining street rights-of-way are at least 30 feet wide, the maximum height is 45 feet.

25 ³ For a structure located on an interior lot, the maximum height is 45 feet. For a structure located on a corner lot at which each
26 of the adjoining street rights-of-way are at least 30 feet wide, the Zoning Board may allow a height of up to 60 feet as a
27 conditional use.

28 . . .

29 ⁶ For a structure that comprises 6 or fewer stories, the minimum front-yard requirement is 45 feet. For a structure that
30 comprises 7 or more stories, the minimum front-yard requirement is 65 feet. However, a structure designed with a courtyard is
31 allowed a reduction of the minimum front-yard requirement, as provided in § 9-403 {"Setback reduction for courtyard
32 design"}.

33 . . .

34 ⁸ GROSS FLOOR AREA MAY NOT INCLUDE ANY BASEMENT AREA.



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**Table 12-301: Office-Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses**

Uses	Districts	Use Standards
	OR	
Residential		
Bed and Breakfast	CB	
Day-Care Home: Adult or Child	P	Per §14-310
Dwelling: Detached	P	
Dwelling: Semi-Detached	P	
Dwelling: Multi-Family	P	Per § 14-327
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	
Dwelling: Rowhouse	P	
Fraternity or Sorority House	CO	Per § 14-313
Residential-Care Facility (16 or Fewer Residents)	P	Per § 14-334
Residential-Care Facility (17 or More Residents)	CO	Per § 14-334
Rooming House	CO	



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Interaction with Housing Package

Interaction with Other Rules

- CCB #25-0064 – Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements – Amendments (Ord. #25-063)
- CCB #25-0065 – Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements (Ord. #25-064)
- History of Conversions of Dwellings
- State of Maryland – Policy on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), (SB0891/HB1466)



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State of Maryland Policy on ADUs

A recent State law change to the Land Use Article was implemented via SB0891/HB1466 and took effect at the start of October.

This bill entitled “Land Use and Real Property – Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements and Prohibitions” and is intended to encourage Charter Counties (the City of Baltimore is one of those) to accept Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) where single-family detached homes are allowed.



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State of Maryland Policy on ADUs

SUBTITLE 5. ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS.

4-501.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) (1) “ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT” MEANS A SECONDARY DWELLING UNIT THAT IS:

(I) ON THE SAME LOT, PARCEL, OR TRACT AS A PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT ;
AND

(II) NOT GREATER THAN 75% OF THE SIZE OF AND SUBORDINATE IN USE TO THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT.

(2) “ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT” INCLUDES A STRUCTURE THAT IS:

(I) SEPARATE FROM THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT; OR

(II) ATTACHED AS AN ADDITION TO THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT.

(C) (1) “DWELLING UNIT” MEANS A SINGLE UNIT PROVIDING COMPLETE LIVING FACILITIES FOR AT LEAST ONE INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING, AT A MINIMUM, PROVISIONS FOR SANITATION, COOKING, EATING, AND SLEEPING.

(2) “DWELLING UNIT” DOES NOT INCLUDE A UNIT IN A MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING.

...

4-502.

THIS SUBTITLE APPLIES ONLY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ON LAND WITH A SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT AS THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT.



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State of Maryland Policy on ADUs

4-503.

- (A) IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ON LAND WITH A SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT AS THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT IN ORDER TO MEET THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS OF MARYLAND.
- (B) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN THIS SUBTITLE AND SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THIS SUBTITLE DOES NOT ALTER OR ABROGATE ANY ZONING POWER OR RELATED AUTHORITY GRANTED TO A LOCAL JURISDICTION UNDER THIS TITLE.
 - (2) LOCAL JURISDICTIONS SHALL ESTABLISH POLICIES THAT FURTHER THE INTENT OF THIS SUBTITLE.

4-504.

- (A) (1) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2026, EACH LEGISLATIVE BODY SHALL ADOPT A LOCAL LAW AUTHORIZING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION.
- (2) A LEGISLATIVE BODY MAY ADOPT A LOCAL LAW THAT:
 - (i) ESTABLISHES STANDARDS FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT SAFETY; AND
 - (ii) PROHIBITS THE FULL OR PARTIAL CONVERSION OF AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE AS AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT IF THE ONLY VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE IS FROM AN ALLEY.

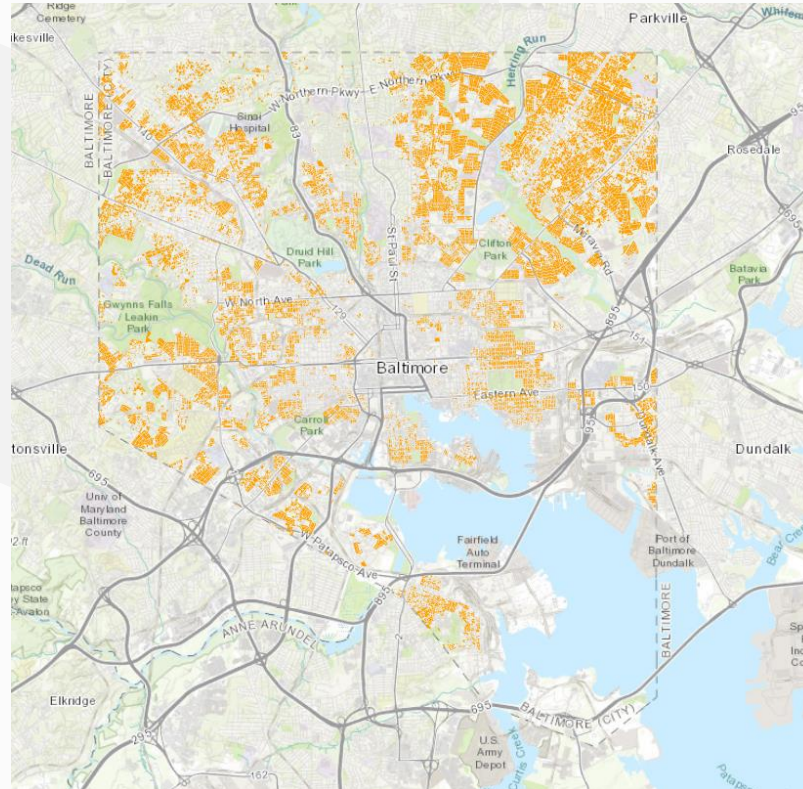
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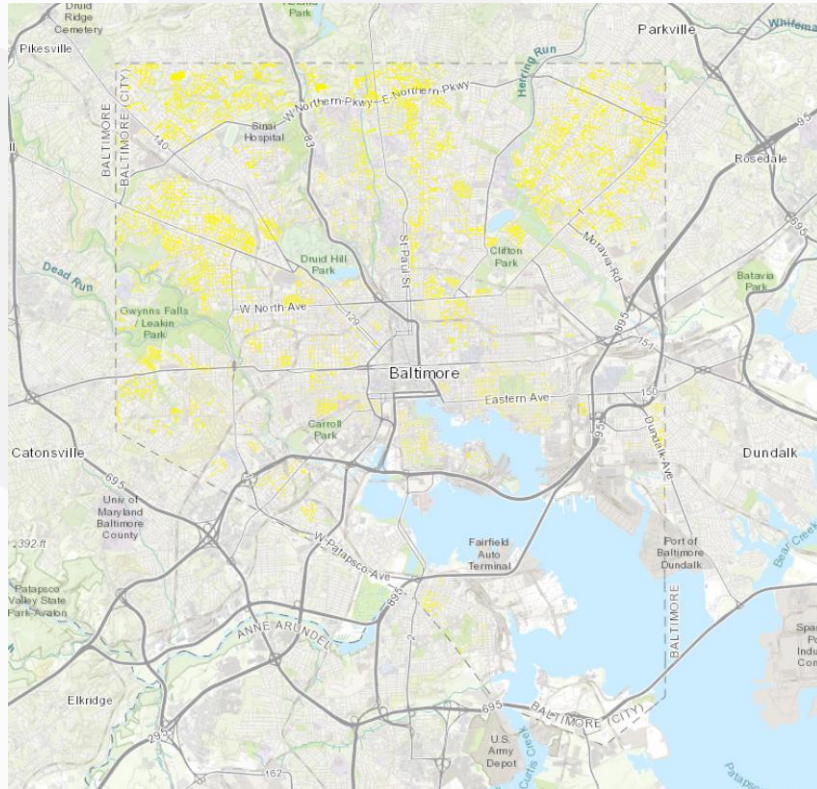
Applicability

Under 1,500 Sq. Ft. (No impact)



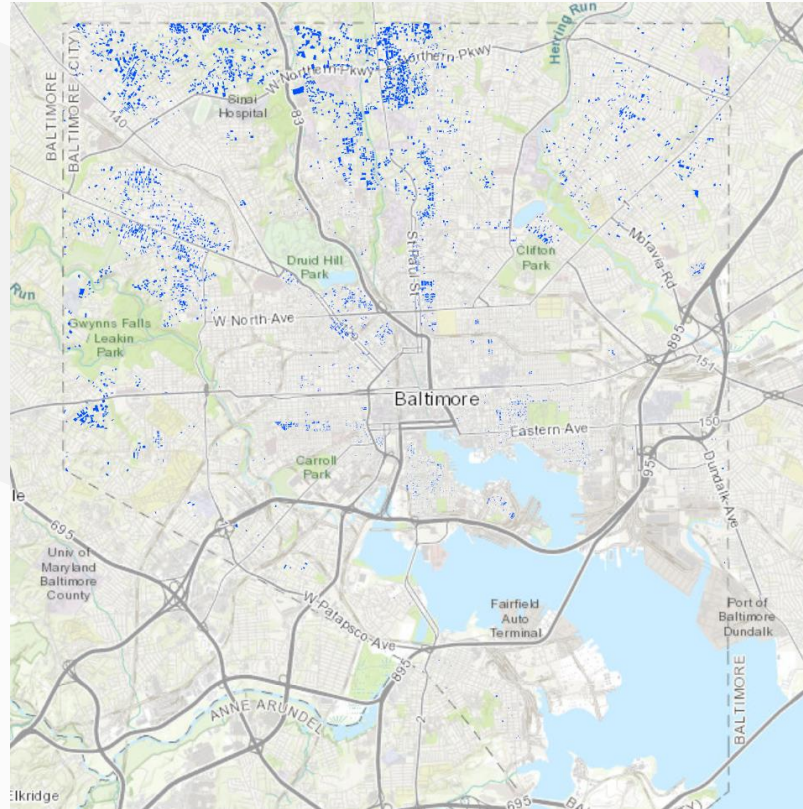
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1,500 – 2,249 Sq. Ft. (up to 2 units by right)



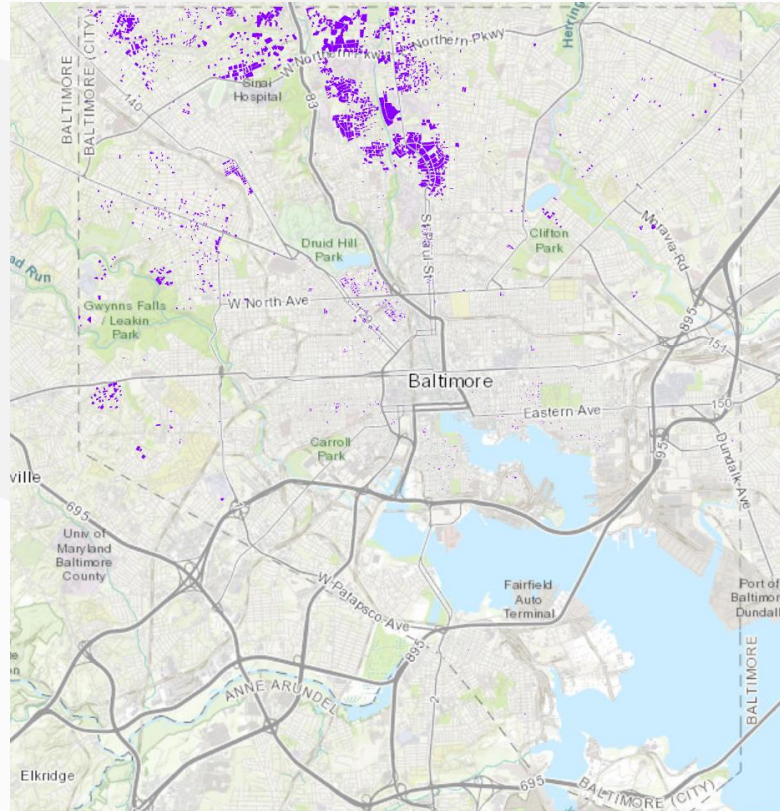
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2,250 – 2,999 Sq. Ft. (up to 3 units by right)



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3,000+ Sq. Ft. (up to 4 units by right)



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Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Area (Acres)	% of City	% of Residential Land
R-1A	88.83	0.15%	0.33%
R-1B	296.88	0.50%	1.09%
R-1C	1233.29	2.09%	4.55%
R-1D	723.28	1.22%	2.67%
R-1E	1123.1	1.90%	4.14%
R-1	1837.79	3.11%	6.77%
R-2	66.56	0.11%	0.25%
R-3	3986.17	6.75%	14.69%
R-3/HR	2.06	0.00%	0.01%
R-4	1607.02	2.72%	5.92%
R-4/D-MU	20.19	0.03%	0.07%
R-4/HR	14.34	0.02%	0.05%
R-5	3837.51	6.50%	14.14%
R-5/HR	1.21	0.00%	0.00%
R-6	6155.98	10.42%	22.69%
R-6/HR	1.87	0.00%	0.01%
R-6/R-MU	1.08	0.00%	0.00%
R-7	1261.04	2.14%	4.65%
R-7/HR	1.18	0.00%	0.00%
R-7/R-MU	1.6	0.00%	0.01%
R-8	2600.51	4.40%	9.58%
R-9	1038.13	1.76%	3.83%
R-10	1232.1	2.09%	4.54%
Totals	27131.72	46%	100%



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**This bill does not
require conversion, it
provides the option**

Examples of Multi-Family Conversion



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THANK YOU!



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