



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor's Office of Government Relations

From: Stephanie Murdock, Director of Legislative Services, DHCD

Date: September 25, 2024

Re: 24-0507 Study and Report - Infrastructure and Urban Meadows

Introduction

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill Study and Report - Infrastructure and Urban Meadows for the purpose of requiring the Baltimore City Administrator, the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, and the Baltimore Commission on Sustainability to submit a report to the Mayor and City Council assessing the costs and benefits of installing and maintaining 100 acres of low-maintenance and self-sustaining native plant communities (otherwise known as "urban meadows") and mapping vacant lots and existing areas with packed dirt that could be transformed into urban meadows; and providing for a special effective date.

DHCD Analysis

Though not named in the Bill, DHCD would appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Office of Sustainability and other partners during the mapping exercise to ensure that the vacant lots recommended in the report align with neighborhood and community plans and current activity in those areas.

For example, additional considerations may be made for lots that may be suitable for urban meadows if those properties are tied to DHCD activity such as; acquisition, disposition, In-rem foreclosure, tax sale foreclosure, condemnation, negotiated sale, donations, site assembly and receivership or properties that may be included as part of the anticipated Affordable Housing TIF legislation.

DHCD's Office of Policy & Research would like to request the opportunity to coordinate with the City Administrator, the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, and the Baltimore Commission on Sustainability in the development of the report and the mapping of any proposed lots. DHCD may wish to exclude certain properties that are in the acquisition, disposition or site assembly pipeline. We would also recommend including other agencies responsible for property that may be suitable for urban meadows in the discussion such as the Dept. of Real Estate, BCRP, DGS, DPW and the Comptroller's Office.

Conclusion

DHCD respectfully submits this **informational memo** on City Council Bill 24-0507.