



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Alice Kennedy, Commissioner, Housing and Community Development
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	September 4, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0064 Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 25-0064 Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements - Amendments for the purpose of amending certain bulk and yard requirements in residential zoning districts.

If enacted, Council Bill 25-0064 would amend the zoning code to increase maximum lot coverage and reduce minimum yard requirements in certain residential districts. If approved, this Bill will take effect on the 30th day after its enactment.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

At its regular meeting of August 28th, 2025, the Planning Commission concurred with the recommendation of its Departmental Staff and recommended that City Council Ordinance 25-0064 be approved by the City Council. Their report noted that the proposed changes to bulk and yard requirements may assist in the production and preservation of housing by allowing for the development of currently empty lots that would otherwise be difficult to develop without variances. The Commission also noted that the Bill may enhance the potential for individuals to renovate and improve existing vacant structures, while expressing some concerns about the reductions in green space that may result.

DHCD supports the efforts of this Bill to better align bulk and yard requirements with the contemporary housing needs of Baltimore City. We also support reducing the number of applicants needing to prove to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) that a “practical difficulty” exists before they can develop or improve a given property. By eliminating that extra step, this Bill may in turn shorten development timelines and create more of the housing opportunities that Baltimore so greatly needs.

FISCAL IMPACT

As drafted, this Bill would have minimal fiscal or administrative impact on DHCD.

AMENDMENTS

DHCD does not seek any amendments to this Bill at this time.