

*M.S.*

<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #15-0590/ DEMOLITION, ETC., OF CITY STRUCTURES

CITY of  
BALTIMORE  
**MEMO**



**TO** The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400  
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: November 10, 2015

The Department of Planning is in receipt of City Council Bill #15-0590, Demolition, etc., of City Structures, for the purpose of prohibiting the demolition or reconstruction of certain City-owned structures unless expressly authorized by an ordinance of the Mayor and City Council; defining certain terms; and requiring that, on introduction of a proposed authorizing ordinance, the bill be referred to certain agencies for their reports and recommendations.

This bill would require an ordinance for the demolition or reconstruction of City owned buildings that have been used for municipal purposes such as schools, libraries and fire stations. The bill does not establish criteria for this review nor does it define reconstruction, but it does require reports from the Planning Department, user agency and Department of Real Estate.

Building reconstruction is a very open-ended term and could be interpreted to mean major repairs or improvements. These repairs could include all the work needed to keep these buildings functioning; this could be hundreds of contracts per year. The requirement for each of these to be heard by City Council would slow down needed building improvements and given the lack of criteria for review, have little to no benefit. The agencies required to report to the Council for these approvals per this bill, are already involved in their review. The Department of Real Estate and Department of General Services already review agency locations, renovations etc. The Department of Planning oversees the capital budget and works with the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) on review of municipal buildings.

Building demolition is very expensive. In difficult budget circumstances, it is not something done lightly or without thorough consideration. In addition, Article 6 of the City Code, Historic Preservation, Section 8-13, requires the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) to review all demolition of all city owned and municipal use buildings and report to the Mayor prior to demolition.

In addition, this bill could cause an increase in vacant City buildings, if the agency has no use for the building but there is opposition to demolition, this limbo would leave a neighborhood with a vacant building.

The Department of Planning recommends disapproval of City Council Bill #15-0590, as it would cause redundant public reviews and significantly slow city action when building reconstruction or demolition is needed, without clear public benefit.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Laurie Feinberg, Asst. Director at 410-396-1275.

TJS/WA

cc: Ms. Kaliopé Parthemos, Chief of Staff  
Mr. Colin Tarbert, Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development  
Mr. Leon Pinkett, Assistant Deputy Mayor for Economic and Neighborhood Development  
Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor's Office  
The Honorable Rochelle "Rikki" Spector, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
Ms. Sharon Daboin, DHCD  
Ms. Barbara Zektick, DOT  
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
Ms. Marcia Collins, DPW  
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services