

Testimony December 1, 2025

Council Bill 25-0066

Greetings: Mayor Brandon Scott; President City Council Zeke Cohen; Councilmember Dorsey, et.al

As a citizen of Baltimore City and one who has worked very hard as a community leader for my neighborhood, I am very concerned there has been no Health Impact Assessments for ccb 25-0066. Specifically, I believe the City provided a great service with 96 gallon municipal trash and recycle cans to help control rodents and trash. There's an old adage that says a picture is worth a thousand words. (See attachment).

Current law provides trash pick up for one 96 gallon trash can per address, or three 32 gallon cans, i.e., for a single-family home. I have new neighbors who moved in around the 1st of October having only one 32 gallon trash can. Every week there is an abundance of trash overflowing. Trying to be a good neighbor I had two 32 gallon cans they could use. Still the trash is overflowing. The landlord told me the tenants called 311 to request cans. To date they have not received them. I have contacted the landlord twice asking him to provide me with the SR #, so I can help. The trash is drawing critters, including cats, rats, groundhog, etc. This problem will resolve itself, but I am wondering if the property nextdoor were 4 units, would each unit be able to put out 96 gallons of garbage per week. If so, either the yard or alley would be covered with trash.

Although five people live next door, each has a car, no one seems concerned about the eyesore or the reality the sanitation workers are not required to remove more than 96 gallons of refuse per address, nor is it the workers job to pick up trash on the ground.

In just a matter of two months, from a nextdoor rental, there is an abundance of trash and because there are five cars at that address, there are parking issues, which I believe would be far worse with multi-family units. There should have been studies done to understand what more density would look like and to be able to garner the impact of density on health, environment, and infrastructure before the passage of any of the five [re]zoning bills.

I urge the Mayor and City Council to do their due diligence to represent the people. A Health Impact Assessment can provide recommendations "to promote healthy environments, minimize poor health outcomes, and reduce health inequities." On behalf of the Parkway Community, I suggest a MORATORIUM to give the Council time to study the unintended consequences the proposed conversion bill 25-0066 has the potential to do without safeguards and studies.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Carey, President
Parkway Community, Inc.



Great Day, Council Members. I am Micah Hayden, a resident of the Ashburton community, one of Baltimore's many culturally rich, diverse, and close-knit neighborhoods. In 2022, I moved to Baltimore from Nashville, TN because of the sense of community and the unique, historic, and affordable housing options. However, I am concerned Bill 25-0066 will undo the very reasons why I moved here.

The proposed Bill 25-0066 would allow up to 4 units on every single-family lot city-wide. The reasoning I have heard at multiple community forums is that the planning and zoning department would like Baltimore to be more like Nashville, Austin, Atlanta, or Miami; however, some of these places have been declining in populations due to the cost of living growing faster than the means of the people. Is that the intent of the council? To make Baltimore unaffordable for the people who call it home?

This bill is being sold as a path to "affordable housing" and to increase population density in Baltimore, yet I believe the bill would undermine community fabrics, erode homeownership, and additionally prioritize the investor over the needs and voices of Baltimore citizens.

Studies have shown that increasing the # of investor-owned rentals reduce property values, weakens community engagement, and destabilize neighborhoods. (You can Refer to Federal HUD, U of Colo & Clemson U, or Habitat for humanity data)

My question to you is whether an unbiased data-driven study to determine the potential impacts on homeownership, schools, vacancy, property taxes and property values been conducted? Though this bill may potentially be an investor's biggest dream, it reads more like a homeowner's worst nightmare.

I urge the Council to vote NO to Bill 25-0066. Thank you.

Eligibility of Properties for Multi-Family Development in the R-5, R-6, R-7, R-8 Zones

Under Bill 25-0064 (which has already passed) and Bill 25-0066, properties in the R-5, R-6, R-7 and R-8 zones qualify for multi-family development based on lot size. Lots fit into 3 categories:

- **Small:** Would not accommodate multi-family development without a variance. (Bill 25-0066)
- **Medium:** The multi-family structure would have to meet a size requirement. (Bill 25-0066)
- **Large:** Could be developed w/o a required size for the multi-family structure. (Bill 25-0064)

In the R-8 zone, lots 750 square feet and larger could accommodate multi-family development.

- **Small:** Of the 72,800 lots zoned R-8, there are 8,600 lots (12%) that are smaller than 750 square feet and would need a variance in order to be developed as multi-family.
- **Medium:** On lots of 750-999 square feet (25,100 lots), there would be a size requirement for the planned multi-family structure (NOT the current structure).
- **Large:** On lots of 1,000 square feet or more (39,000 lots), multi-family development would be allowed without a required size for the planned structure.

In the R-7 zone, lots 1,100 square feet and larger could accommodate multi-family development.

- **Small:** Of the 21,900 lots zoned R-7, there are 2,100 lots (10%) that are smaller than 1,100 square feet and would need a variance in order to be developed as multi-family.
- **Medium:** On lots of 1,100-1,499 square feet (11,400 lots), there would be a size requirement for the planned multi-family structure (NOT the current structure).
- **Large:** On lots of 1,500 square feet or more (8,500 lots), multi-family development would be allowed without a required size for the planned structure.

In the R-6 zone, lots 1,500 square feet and larger could accommodate multi-family development.

- **Small:** Of the 54,900 lots zoned R-6, there are 10,500 lots (19%) that are smaller than 1,500 square feet and would need a variance in order to be developed as multi-family.
- **Medium:** On lots of 1500-1,999 square feet (21,200 lots), there would be a size requirement for the planned multi-family structure (NOT the current structure).
- **Large:** On lots of 2,000 square feet or more (23,200 lots), multi-family development would be allowed without a required size for the planned structure.

In the R-5 zone, lots 2,500 square feet and larger could accommodate multi-family development.

- **Small:** Of the 19,000 lots zoned R-5, there are 6,800 lots (36%) that are smaller than 2,500 square feet and would need a variance in order to be developed as multi-family.
- **Medium:** On lots of 2,500-2,999 square feet (1,800 lots), there would be a size requirement for the planned multi-family structure (NOT the current structure).
- **Large:** On lots of 3,000 square feet or more (10,300 lots), multi-family development would be allowed without a required size for the planned structure.

Summary: Of the 168,600 properties zoned R-5, R-6, R-7 and R-8:

- 28,000 properties (17%) are smaller than required to accommodate multi-family development.
- 59,500 properties could be developed if the planned multi-family building met a certain size.
- 81,000 properties could be developed w/o a size requirement for the multi-family structure.

Joan Floyd - Dec 1, 2025

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY IN BALTIMORE CITY¹

UNDER CURRENT ZONING CODE (MD STATE DESIGNATION)	4 UNITS/LOT UNDER BILL 25-0066 (MD STATE DESIGNATION)
R-1A = 0.50 units per acre (Low Density)	R-1A = 2.00 units per acre (Low Density)
R-1B = 1.00 units per acre (Low Density)	R-1B = 4.00 units per acre (Medium Density)
R-1C = 2.00 units per acre (Low Density)	R-1C = 8.00 units per acre (Medium Density)
R-1D = 3.00 units per acre (Medium Density)	R-1D = 12.00 units per acre (High Density)
R-1E = 4.84 units per acre (Medium Density)	R-1E = 19.36 units per acre (High Density)
R-1 = 5.97 units per acre (Medium Density)	R-1 = 23.88 units per acre (High Density)
R-2 = 8.71 units per acre (High Density)	R-2 = 34.84 units per acre (High Density)
R-3 = 8.71 units per acre (High Density)	R-3 = 34.84 units per acre (High Density)
R-4 = 14.52 units per acre (High Density)	R-4 = 58.08 units per acre (High Density)
R-5 = 17.42 units per acre (High Density)	R-5 = 69.68 units per acre (High Density)
R-6 = 29.04 units per acre (High Density)	R-6 = 116.16 units per acre (High Density)
R-7 = 39.60 units per acre (High Density)	R-7 = 158.40 units per acre (High Density)
R-8 = 58.08 units per acre (High Density)	R-8 = 232.32 units per acre (High Density)

¹ Maryland Department of Planning 2018 Statewide Land Use Classification Definitions (2024 Edition) - Urban Land Uses - Low/Med/High

John Stoyan - Dec 1, 2025

Dear Councilman Dorsey,

You asked for amendments at last City Council meeting (November 10th). The following are 3 things that I and Baltimore Citizens want - accountability and healthy change.

1. No Double Dipping. For council members to no longer be both members of committee, especially chair of Committee and on a corresponding Commission. For example, currently Councilwoman Phylicia Porter is the chair of the Public Health and Environment Committee and on the Sustainability Commission. Not one environmental rule/policy has been presented in 2025. Even perception of blocking vital environmental laws that Baltimore needs must be quelled. Baltimore is VASTLY behind cities ending gas appliances and HVAC and replacing with heat pumps and electric appliances, especially induction and hydronic floor heat at least in new build construction. Effective immediately.

2. Requirement that all City Council Members attend beginning to end all of their Committee Meetings and Hearings. City Council Committee meetings have attendance issues. Baltimore Citizens make an effort to attend hearings in person. Often citizens have to wait 2, 3, even over 6 hours in order to testify for just a few minutes. Something hurtful occurs to these citizens. The City Council members of that particular committee leave before, and just as "Testimonies" are to occur. City Council members are paid a full time pay for a part time job. But their "part-time job" requires them to attend at least their own committee hearings. Even partial attendance, leaving when want to is wrong. Beyond believing that their self-importance egos are beyond listening to Baltimore Citizens at Hearings, no other job they hold must interfere a Committee meeting.

3. Adopt – modify Baltimore City laws to reflect Maryland State and Federal laws, especially environmental laws to end confusion. It is very upsetting when people believe, even DHCD head, Commissioner Kennedy does not believe that there is a Maryland State environmental laws regarding razing – demolishing buildings. There is PCBs, Nitrogen Oxide, Nitric Oxide, lead, asbestos, gas, and other destructive toxins destructive to human, non-human, and all animal life. In other words, everything living is affected. For example, Asbestos testing requirements for razing - demolishing buildings. Asbestos fibers are prevalent in being carried through air, do not disintegrate in water, and hence, reside in soil, causing many deadly illnesses - from blood clots to cancer.

I would like to have a meeting with you regarding transportation. I saw you having monthly meetings regarding transportation. Unfortunately, I could not attend because they were always on Thursdays. I would like to meet with you to help me take the final stages of my research of 3 years into being able to draw a new public transportation system using what is currently available, and then the changes to a completely different system, one that was stolen by Greater Baltimore Committee members that never should of, the streetcar system. It has always been the superior transportation, the only truly net zero emissions (buses can never because of what tires are made of), makes available separate school cars with many double decker homework and library resources while riding, and man do they travel fast. There is even a baseball team still named after them – Brooklyn Trolley Dodgers – Los Angels Trolley Dodgers. Southern California is bringing back their streetcars.

"Orange County Begins Safety Testing on Long-Awaited Streetcars" - CBS Los Angeles: "It's a higher capacity service, meaning that our average 40-foot bus carries, roughly full, about 50 people," Dunning said. "The OC Streetcar single vehicle carries 211 people. It's over four times the number of people that you can carry." <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/orange-county-begins-safety-testing-on-long-awaited-street-cars/>

ITS ABOUT FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT.

NOT SINCE THE 1950'S HAVE BALTIMORE CITIENS BEEN ABLE TO TRAVEL FAST, AND TO MORE PLACES AROUND ITS PERIMETERS.

Sincerely,

Shaiyel Seltzer Tel; 410-841-9591 shaiyel4@mail2world.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: MELVIN SCHRIEFER <mschrief@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 30, 2025 2:52 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: No

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Please vote NO on this bill.....investors will ruin this section of Baltimore City....common sense tells us that this bill is ridiculous....

Sent from my iPad



HISTORIC MARBLE HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
PO Box 16560
Baltimore, MD 21217
United States

November 2025

Dear Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee,

As one of Baltimore's oldest and most culturally significant communities, Marble Hill remains committed to safeguarding the stability, heritage, and architectural character that define our neighborhood. Our residents share a deep belief that public policy must strengthen—not erode—the cultural, historical, and residential fabric that generations before us fought to preserve.

After careful review and numerous conversations with residents, preservation partners, and surrounding communities in Upton, Druid Heights, Madison Park, and Reservoir Hill, the Executive Board of the Historic Marble Hill Community Association submits this letter to formally oppose City Council Bill 25-0066. Our concerns are based on a comprehensive understanding of the conditions that shape West Baltimore's historic neighborhoods, including aging rowhouse structures, existing vacancy concentrations, long-standing infrastructure limitations, and the unique cultural identity embedded in these blocks.

Marble Hill is not a typical single-family enclave; it is a compact yet richly layered neighborhood composed of churches, childcare centers, and cultural anchors. The proposed zoning changes fail to reflect this unique land-use pattern. Equally concerning is that our repeated calls for neighborhood-specific analysis have not been incorporated into the drafting of this legislation. The bill moves forward without adequate acknowledgment of the vulnerabilities or preservation needs of historic West Baltimore.

We further urge the Committee to consider the City Law Department's recent caution regarding the structural inconsistencies within the bill, as well as public testimony from residents and experts who have raised substantial concerns about unintended consequences, displacement patterns, and the lack of community-driven planning.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Land Use and Transportation Committee reject Bill 25-0066 in its current form and support a more deliberate, community-informed approach that strengthens Baltimore's housing future while preserving the integrity of historic neighborhoods like Marble Hill.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and for your commitment to policies that honor both the past and future of our city. Marble Hill stands ready to partner with the Council, Planning Department, and neighboring communities to develop solutions that expand opportunity without compromising heritage or stability.

Sincerely,

The Executive Board

Historic Marble Hill Community Association

Baltimore, Maryland

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: janetallen2011 <janetallen2011@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, November 30, 2025 6:43 PM
To: Scott, Brandon (Mayor)
Cc: Testimony
Subject: Bill 25-0066 vote no

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When a bill as sweeping as CCB 25-0066 is introduced, the law requires that it follow critical steps: completion of an equity study, genuine engagement with residents, and assurance that essential services—trash collection, water, and code enforcement—can meet community needs. It should also identify which neighborhoods require affordable housing and which need pathways to homeownership. None of these safeguards have been taken.

The Council itself has admitted that our infrastructure is already overburdened and failing to meet residents' needs. So why advance a bill that benefits investors while harming city residents? Why push forward legislation that risks destabilization and destruction?

CCB 25-0066 would permit multi-unit conversions “by right,” bypassing community input and zoning board review. This opens the door to serious problems: overcrowded parking, increased trash, strained infrastructure, and absentee landlords. These are not abstract concerns—they directly erode the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S20 FE 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone

Testimony December 1, 2025

Council Bill 25-0066

Greetings: Mayor Brandon Scott; President City Council Zeke Cohen; Councilmember Dorsey, et.al

As a citizen of Baltimore City and one who has worked very hard as a community leader for my neighborhood, I am very concerned there has been no Health Impact Assessments for ccb 25-0066. Specifically, I believe the City provided a great service with 96 gallon municipal trash and recycle cans to help control rodents and trash. There's an old adage that says a picture is worth a thousand words. (See attachment).

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In just a matter of two months, from a nextdoor rental, there is an abundance of trash and because there are five cars at that address, there are parking issues, which I believe would be far worse with multi-family units. There should have been studies done to understand what more density would look like and to be able to garner the impact of density on health, environment, and infrastructure before the passage of any of the five [re]zoning bills.

I urge the Mayor and City Council to do their due diligence to represent the people. A Health Impact Assessment can provide recommendations “to promote healthy environments, minimize poor health outcomes, and reduce health inequities.” On behalf of the Parkway Community, I suggest a MORATORIUM to give the Council time to study the unintended consequences the proposed conversion bill 25-0066 has the potential to do without safeguards and studies.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Carey, President
Parkway Community, Inc.

Background

- City Council Bill 25-0066 Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act: Introduced by the Council President Cohen on behalf of the Administration, cosponsored by Councilmember Dorsey. This bill removes the existing prohibition on converting single-family dwellings to multi-family dwellings and permits up to 4 dwelling units on a single lot. The bill establishes a new category of "low-density, multi-family housing" which permits up to 4 dwelling units in all residential zoning districts R-1 through R-8, even if the existing underlying zoning is categorized as single-family detached dwellings.

As a homeowner in the North Harford RD area, I oppose zoning bill 25-0066. I live on a residential street that is already often impassable due to family's needs to park multiple vehicles.

My street could not withstand numerous multi-dwelling units. This is not a walkable area, so adding to the population after having removed traffic lanes on the main thoroughfare (to add bicycle lanes that are seldomly, if ever, used) is not sustainable, nor favorable to the existing homeowners in the area; residents who want to actually live here in a thriving neighborhood, not among a neighborhood full of investor-owned multi-unit dwellings. Please DO NOT prioritize profit over the well-being of our community.

Regards,

Debora Dormio

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: shamusideen kadiri <skadiri782000@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 30, 2025 7:56 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: NO to 25-0066

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Shamusideen Kadiri
Safety and Health Specialist

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mereida Goodman <mgoodman@go-northwesthrc.org>
Sent: Sunday, November 30, 2025 8:30 PM
To: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); McCray, Danielle (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Schleifer, Isaac (City Council); Torrence, James (City Council); Jones, Jermaine (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council); Ramos, Odette (City Council); Testimony; Brandon M Scott; Leach, Faith (Mayor's Office)
Cc: Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Mereida Goodman
Subject: City Council Hearing: Bill 25-0066-- Opposition Letter
Attachments: City Council Bill25-0066_ opposition letter_ 111925.docx

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Dear President Cohen and City Council Members--

Please see attached letter regarding opposition to passage of City Council bill 25-0066 and enter it in the official City Council record for this bill.

Please confirm receipt. Thank you.

Dear President Cohen and City Council members :

As a resident of Baltimore City and president of the Garwyn Oaks United Neighbors Association , I am writing to express opposition to the passage of City Council Bill 25-0066. This bill will negatively impact the growth, stability and sustainability of homeownership in Baltimore's neighborhoods as follows:

Undermines Homeownership and Neighborhood Stability in Baltimore City

By allowing up to four dwelling units on a residential lot in the city, this bill will reduce homeownership opportunities especially for first time, and low-moderate homebuyers as these buyers will be unable to compete with investors who have available and ready finances to purchase homes and settle quickly—advantages these homebuyers cannot match – posing a risk to Baltimore communities with high home ownership.

Weakens Baltimore's Neighborhoods Uniqueness

The proposed allowance of multi-family housing as a right in communities that have majority single-family homes risks altering the unique residential character and nature of our neighborhoods. We are not a cookie cutter city. Known as a City of Neighborhoods, it is this uniqueness

characteristic that draws homebuyers to buy and live in Baltimore communities. Removing that option will impact the attractiveness and desirability of our communities.

Undermines Years of City Investment in Homeownership

Instead of providing incentives for young and low-moderate income homebuyers to buy in Baltimore and continue the legacy of homeownership in our neighborhoods, this bill incentivizes investors to buy up single-family houses in our stable desirable neighborhoods and convert them to multi-family units, which negates Baltimore's efforts of promoting homeownership over the years. For 25 years Baltimore has invested millions through Live Baltimore, Healthy Neighborhoods, Baltimore City's Dept. of Housing and Community Development and other homeownership-oriented organizations to promote homeownership and help families and individuals purchase their homes in Baltimore City. This bill works against these efforts and the City's stated goal of increasing homeownership, especially among Black households.

Incentivizes Absentee Ownership, not Community Growth

Increasing the opportunity to have more rental units, increases percentage of absentee landlords in Baltimore versus invested homeowners. Increasing residential density increases existing challenges for communities and existing residents, i.e. lack of parking space, code enforcement, public safety and health concerns, and reduces the quality of life for current and future residents. Instead of strengthening community stability, the bill invites disinvestment and transiency among residents

Lacked Community Involvement and Input

The development of this bill lacked the necessary community engagement and education for Baltimore residents, so residents could be participants in the policies and zoning changes that greatly impact their lives,.. This bill favors investors' needs over residents' concerns, absentee landlords over homeowners, and increased density over neighborhood stability and sustainability.

The Garwyn Oaks United Neighbors has voted to oppose this bill at our July meeting held July 22, 2025. I ask that the Council members consider the aforementioned issues and vote no on the passage of City Council Bill 25-0066.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mereida Goodman

President, Garwyn Oaks United Neighbors Association

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kate Simms <knbeagle@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 30, 2025 11:29 PM
To: Brandon M Scott; Brandon M Scott; Testimony
Cc: FPRA; Keane, Timothy (DOP); Parker, Mark (City Council); Jones, Jermaine (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council); Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Ramos, Odette (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Torrence, James (City Council); Schleifer, Isaac (City Council); McCray, Danielle (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Hasiuk, Ethan (City Council); Pruitt, Adler (City Council); Winpigler, Shea (City Council); Serrano Portillo, Kony (City Council); Davis, Kirsten A. (City Council); Testimony; Cortese, Christina (City Council); bill.ferguson; Tyler.MCCurdy@mlis.state.md.us; luke.clipper; Mark Edelson; robbyn.lewis@house.state.md.us
Subject: Opposition to Bill 25-0066

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Dear Mayor Scott and Members of City Council,

My name is Kate Simms, and I'm writing as a life long resident of Baltimore to express my strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066. I am asking you **to slow down, Bill 25-0066**. Do not rush a citywide zoning change without real notice, independent study, and genuine neighborhood input. I want you to **vote NO or abstain on Bill 25-0066**.

As zoning codes currently stand, the changes in this bill can be achieved through a variance request process. Removing the request and approval processes leaves nothing to protect current residents, and takes away the opportunity for residents and communities to have a voice. Greater focus could be placed on improving the already existing process, such as permit and inspection efficiency and timelines, instead of removing the process entirely. We need legislation that fosters housing security, community stability, and pathways to home ownership and affordable rental options, not a deregulated free-for-all that accelerates displacement and degrades quality of life

I would like to make one more plea to please consider the concerns and sentiments of your constituents regarding this bill. Over the last few weeks, I have spoken to numerous residents and community leaders, and everyone I have encountered is opposed to these bills, sharing all of my concerns regarding these bills and the negative impacts they will have to current residents, not only in my community but throughout the city.

Additionally, based on council testimony during the recent hearings, areas all over the city also share these concerns and are in opposition to this bill. If the common goal is truly committing to passing legislation which improves equity and reverses the negative impacts to historically marginalized communities, then, when those exact communities speak out against legislation, PLEASE listen to them!

Baltimore is in urgent need of better housing outcomes, but these bills take the city in the wrong direction. The proposed zoning amendments do not solve the problems we face, they sidestep them entirely, offering more of the same policies that have favored absentee landlords and developers over community needs, accountability, and affordability. This bill does nothing to counter the great need for more affordable housing, and only leaves communities open to be prey to developers who can potentially alter the basic design and fundamental aspects of Baltimore's neighborhoods. More should be done with things such as permit reform and enforcement of current codes/violations to improve the zoning process before making sweeping city-wide changes that do not acknowledge the unique characteristics and charm of our neighborhoods.

Addressing the Real Problem: Vacancy and Ownership

Baltimore is not short on developable land, we are overwhelmed by vacant, neglected, and underutilized properties. This is not due to restrictive zoning, but to decades of disinvestment, speculation, and unchecked slumlord behavior. These bills do nothing to confront that reality. They offer no plan to convert vacant housing into ownership opportunities for longtime residents. They do not address the systemic failure to enforce existing codes. Instead, they propose looser rules for those already profiting from a broken system, developers who will carve up homes into small, high-rent units and leave neighborhoods with the cleanup, while pushing out long time, often multi generational residents.

In summary, I urge you to listen to your constituents and pause these bills as currently written. We need bold, data-driven policy, but that policy must prioritize enforcement, equity, and ownership, not expedience and deregulation.

Thank you in advance of your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kate Simms



RISE, RECLAIM, REBUILD

WWW.SBCLT.ORG

Opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066

November 30, 2025

Greetings to all city council members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I urge the City Council to oppose Bill 25-0066. While the stated purpose of the bill is to spur new housing options in Baltimore, its actual impact will be to accelerate displacement, undermine community planning, and exacerbate the longstanding inequities that shape our city's housing market.

The process behind this bill has been problematic. The drafting and introduction of Bill 25-0066 have been obscured from the public, lacking the transparency and engagement that such sweeping zoning changes require.

Next, this bill does not address the root problem that housing in Baltimore is unaffordable for far too many Baltimoreans. Increasing density is not the same as increasing affordability. Without proper protections, expanded supply can actually **increase rents for everyone except the highest-income households**. Some suggest Bill 25-0066 will support Baltimore's "missing middle," but there is no explanation for how blanket upzoning will create more housing for middle-income families. The development this bill encourages—primarily small one-bedroom units marketed toward young professionals—does not address the needs of Baltimore's existing residents, families, or workforce. For instance, most of the families in our pipeline are renters with multiple children that require larger units, of which the availability is already scarce.

Lastly, and most importantly, Bill 25-0066 compounds Baltimore's racist real estate history rather than correcting it. Loosening regulations for for-profit developers and absentee landlords in already dense, historically marginalized neighborhoods invites an economic shock that raises land values and accelerates speculation. These benefits appeal overwhelmingly to Real Estate Investment Trusts and outside investors—not to Baltimore residents.

By upzoning residential districts citywide without regard to neighborhood histories, community plans, or the cumulative impacts of past harm, Bill 25-0066 would become yet another chapter in Baltimore's long record of extractive land-use policy. Residents who have been harmed the most stand to lose the most again!

Yet there are proven strategies to increase affordability, expand housing options, and strengthen neighborhoods. This Council could:

- Attach meaningful inclusionary housing requirements to any density bonus.
- Support and scale shared-equity cooperative housing and community land trusts, models that have proven powerful in stabilizing neighborhoods, creating permanently affordable housing, and enabling residents to shape development according to community priorities.
- Engage in transparent, citywide planning processes that respect neighborhood histories and align zoning reform with anti-displacement protections.

Baltimore does not need blanket upzoning. Baltimore needs thoughtful, community-driven housing policy rooted in justice, permanent affordability, and long-term stability.

For these reasons, I urge you to reject City Council Bill 25-0066.

Best Regards,

Meleny Thomas, PhD

SBCLT Executive Director of Development

Email: Meleny@SBCLT.ORG

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Liz A. Bement <lizbement1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 7:12 AM
To: Brandon M Scott; Brandon M Scott; Testimony; Keane, Timothy (DOP); Parker, Mark (City Council); Jones, Jermaine (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council); Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Ramos, Odette (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Torrence, James (City Council); Schleifer, Isaac (City Council); McCray, Danielle (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Hasiuk, Ethan (City Council); Pruitt, Adler (City Council); Winpigler, Shea (City Council); Serrano Portillo, Kony (City Council); Davis, Kirsten A. (City Council); Cortese, Christina (City Council); bill.ferguson; McCurdy, Tyler; luke.clippinger; Mark Edelson; Robbyn Delegate Lewis
Subject: Re: Opposition to Bill 25-0066, "Housing Options and Opportunity Act"

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Dear Mayor Scott, City Council President Zeke Cohen and City Councilmembers,

I am writing as a longtime Baltimore resident to express my opposition to Bill 25-0066. This zoning proposal is being rushed forward without the careful study, transparency, and neighborhood engagement that such a sweeping change demands. Baltimore deserves thoughtful, evidence-based housing policy—not blanket deregulation.

This bill undermines community voice. The existing variance process ensures that residents can weigh in when changes affect their block or neighborhood. Eliminating that safeguard silences communities and removes accountability. Instead of dismantling the process, the City should improve it—by fixing delays in permits, inspections, and enforcement.

Beyond process, the bill fails to address Baltimore's real housing crisis: vacancy and neglect. Our city is dotted with thousands of abandoned homes and underutilized properties. The problem is not a lack of zoning flexibility, but decades of disinvestment and lax enforcement against absentee landlords. Bill 25-0066 does nothing to reclaim vacant housing for families, nothing to strengthen code enforcement, and nothing to expand pathways to ownership for longtime residents.

These important concerns that many Baltimore neighborhood leaders and residents have about this bill deserve your consideration:

- **Displacement risk:** Developers will be incentivized to carve up homes into high-rent units, pricing out multi-generational families who have sustained these neighborhoods for decades.
- **Equity gap:** If the goal is to support marginalized communities, then legislation must prioritize affordability, ownership, and enforcement. This bill instead tilts the balance toward speculative development.

- **Infrastructure strain:** Allowing multi-unit conversions without planning for parking, schools, and utilities will burden already fragile systems.
- **Loss of neighborhood character:** Baltimore's rowhouse blocks and single-family streets are part of our identity. Rapid, unregulated conversions risk eroding the historic and cultural fabric that makes our communities unique.

Baltimore needs bold housing solutions, but they must be rooted in equity, enforcement, and community stability. We should be investing in programs that convert vacant properties into affordable homes, strengthening code compliance, and supporting pathways to ownership—not loosening rules for developers who profit while neighborhoods absorb the consequences.

In summary, Bill 25-0066 sidesteps the real issues and risks accelerating displacement, eroding neighborhood identity, and silencing community voices. I urge you to pause this legislation and commit to policies that truly strengthen Baltimore's housing future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Liz Bement
Upper Fells Point Resident

Dr. Laura Dykes
107 S. Poppleton St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
12/1/2025

Baltimore City Council
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Opposition to Bill 25-0066

Dear Mayor Scott and Members of City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Bill 25-0066. While the bill is presented as a step toward affordable housing, it fails to address the needs of families in Baltimore and, in fact, threatens to make housing less affordable for them.

This bill will incentivize landlords to carve up existing 3- and 4-bedroom homes into studios and one-bedrooms. As the supply of family-sized homes dwindles, families will be forced to compete for fewer options, driving prices even higher. Families are the backbone of our neighborhoods—they send children to local schools, build long-term relationships, and strengthen community life. By contrast, short-term rentals like Airbnbs erode stability. Airbnbs do not hand out Halloween candy, pull in trash cans, or sign for packages. You cannot build community in a neighborhood dominated by short-term rentals.

The numbers speak for themselves: in Hollins Market there are about 35 homes available for traditional rent, compared to roughly 15 homes listed on Airbnb, 8 homes on Vrbo and 12 homes listed on Furnished Finder. Citywide, Baltimore has nearly 947 active Airbnb listings. On my block, the number of short-term rentals is equal to the number of homeowners. That is not sustainable. Even more troubling, only about 26 percent of homes in Hollins Market are owner-occupied, meaning the vast majority are rentals. This imbalance makes the neighborhood especially vulnerable to speculative conversions into short-term and mid-term rentals.

On the official map produced by the Mayor's office, just about every home in Hollins Market is marked as eligible to be carved up under this proposed bill. This means that the very fabric of our neighborhood could be systematically dismantled by right, leaving families with nowhere to go.

If the city truly wants to make development easier, it should fix the broken permit system. If the goal is affordability, lower taxes on owner-occupied homes and rentals occupied by families with children under 18. Subsidize the redevelopment of vacant properties into affordable family homes, and provide appraisal gap funding so developers can renovate homes for families rather than speculating on property values.

The idea that building micro-apartments will lower rents is a fallacy. Just look at Harbor East, Canton, and Federal Hill—massive apartment buildings sprout up every day, yet affordable housing remains out of reach. Section 8 families need 3- and 4-bedroom homes, not studios for traveling nurses. Families cannot compete with developers for family-sized homes and will lose the chance to build generational wealth through homeownership.

Hollins Market is already affordable. The median household income in Baltimore is \$56,623, while the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Hollins Market is \$1,250. Families need larger, affordable homes—not more studios that serve investors and short-term renters.

Bill 25-0066 is a gift to developers, not a tool to revitalize our neighborhoods. It leaves families behind and undermines the stability of communities like Hollins Market. I urge you to reject this bill and instead pursue policies that strengthen families, stabilize neighborhoods, and create true affordability.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Dykes".

Dr. Laura Dykes
Hollins Market Resident

2309 Tioga Parkway
Baltimore, MD 21215

December 1, 2025

Dear Councilman Dorsey and Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee,

I am writing as a Baltimore City resident to express my clear and firm opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066. This bill endangers the stability, character, and long-term health of communities like mine in Northwest Baltimore.

This bill undermines homeownership and long-term neighborhood stability.

Allowing up to four units “by right” on a single residential lot will tilt the housing market sharply toward investors—who can move fast, pay cash, and outbid everyday Baltimoreans. First-time buyers, young families, and low- to moderate-income residents will be pushed further out of competition. That shift weakens neighborhoods where homeownership has been the anchor of stability.

This bill erases the unique identity of Baltimore’s homeownership communities.

Baltimore is a City of Neighborhoods—each with its own rhythm, history, and architectural character. Opening the door to widespread multifamily conversions risks erasing the very qualities that make our communities desirable and livable. Once this character is lost, it cannot be rebuilt.

This bill reverses decades of investment in Baltimore homeownership.

For more than two decades, Baltimore has invested millions—through Live Baltimore, Healthy Neighborhoods, and the Department of Housing and Community Development—to expand and strengthen homeownership. These programs helped build generational stability, especially among Black households long denied access. Bill 25-0066 undermines that work by incentivizing investors to acquire and convert single-family homes at scale.

This bill encourages absentee ownership and weakens community fabric.

More units do not automatically mean stronger communities. Increased density without infrastructure leads to more absentee landlords, more code violations, more dumping, more parking strain, and elevated stress on public services already stretched thin. Transiency replaces rootedness. Disinvestment follows.

This bill lacked genuine community engagement.

Residents were not given the time, information, or respect needed to weigh in on a zoning change of this magnitude. A policy that reshapes homeownership, density, and neighborhood futures cannot and should not advance without real community participation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to vote NO on City Council Bill 25-0066.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelli Bigelow

2309 Tioga Parkway

Baltimore, MD 21215

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: No_on_zoning_bill_25-0066 <noonzoningbill25006@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 8:46 AM
Subject: Fwd: NO

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **MELVIN SCHRIEFER** <mschrief@aol.com>
Date: Sat, Nov 29, 2025 at 2:39 PM
Subject: NO
To: <noonzoningbill25006@gmail.com>

Please vote NO for this Bill....we and our neighbors do NOT want this to pass....

The Schriefers
Beverly Hills
21214

Sent from my iPad

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: No_on_zoning_bill_25-0066 <noonzoningbill25006@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 8:47 AM
Subject: Fwd: "NO" to City Council Bill 25-0066

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From: **Perl Young** <perline.young@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Nov 29, 2025 at 12:44 PM
Subject: "NO" to City Council Bill 25-0066
To: <testimony@baltimorecity.gov>

Dear City Council & Mayor

I am completely opposed to the City Council Bill 25-0066. This bill would freely allow any home in our area to be converted to a 3-4 unit building, without public hearing or notice to the surrounding property homeowners.

The owners, investors, or legal entities that would take advantage of this bill would only be tearing down our neighborhoods instead of improving the community for all of us that live here. Our Black and Brown communities will be hit the hardest while we deal with more people, more issues and more trouble.

I ask that all the City Council members and the Mayor reconsider their decision and please vote "NO" to Bill 25-0066 in order to save our neighborhoods and communities in Baltimore City.

Thank you

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Keondra Prier <president@reservoirhillassociation.org>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 9:46 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Board Of Directors; noonzoningbill25006@gmail.com; Torrence, James (City Council); Dorsey, Ryan (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Mereida Goodman; Brandon M Scott; Carson Ward; opengov@oag.state.md.us
Subject: Opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066

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Dear Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee and City Council President Cohen,

I am writing to share my opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066. Its merits as a tool for forwarding affordability and equitable density for Baltimore City is dubious at best. I have serious concerns about the bill's impact on the city. However, I would like to highlight my concern about the anti-democratic process that has been the foundation of the entire Housing Options and Opportunities Act. Below I will focus on the process issues with 25-0066:

1. During the December 1, 2025 Land Use and Transportation Committee Public Hearing no oral testimony was initially not taken from the public. After a break, the chair reversed position and only accepted testimony from some members of the public in the chamber. Without reason, the chair refused to take online testimony altogether, abridging the rights of working people and those physically unable to attend in person. This is in violation of Maryland's Open Meetings Law and the American for Disabilities Act
2. During the November 24, 2025 Land Use and Transportation Committee Public Hearing public participation was abridged. During the entire first half of the meeting there was no audio nor closed captions for the hearing impaired. Further the meeting was closed and reopened, violating Maryland's Open Meetings Law and the American for Disabilities Act.
3. According to the Law Department's assessment, dated November 12, 2025 this bill has moved forward despite serious concerns about its failure to follow City Code, Art. 32, § 5-601(b)(3). This should be alarming to the entire council.
4. Finally, this bill did not undergo an equity assessment, in violation of Baltimore City Code, Article 1 39-1.

For these reasons alone, there should be a moratorium on any vote on this bill.

President Cohen, we are requesting that you ensure the democratic processes of this city. Regardless of one's stance on the contents of this bill, the action of the chair has stymied the belief in the possibility of a fair and open public participation in the Baltimore City legislative process.

Sincerely,
Keondra Prier

Keondra A. Prier
President
Reservoir Hill Association

www.reservoirhillassociation.org
president@reservoirhillassociation.org
Cell: (904) 860-0859

"Nothing about us without us."

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Jessica Dailey <jessica.dailey@compass.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 12:18 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Submit for testimony - Opposition to CCB 25-0066

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Council Members,

I'm writing to strongly oppose CCB 25-0066. I've been selling real estate in Baltimore City for the past 20 years, and I'm also a long-time resident and a landlord here. I've seen firsthand what happens when rowhomes are subdivided into multiple units without proper oversight, accountability, or long-term investment.

Even licensed apartments are not being maintained properly in many cases. Allowing even more conversions—up to four units per rowhouse—will only intensify those problems. This change would dramatically alter the character and stability of many neighborhoods, and it opens the door for more absentee landlords who treat Baltimore as an investment play, not a community they're responsible to.

Baltimore doesn't need more poorly maintained multi-unit conversions; we need stronger enforcement, higher standards, and owners who actually live in or care for their properties. This bill moves us in the opposite direction.

For these reasons, I urge you to reject CCB 25-0066.

Thank you for your attention to this historically important matter.

-Jessica Dailey

Real Estate Agent @Compass

Owner of CookHouse & On The Hill Cafe

Baltimore City Resident

JESSICA DAILEY

Realtor® CRS GRI ABR

m: 443-838-8204 o: 410-886-7342

6227 N. Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21212

www.jessicadailey.com

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Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Darden Ann Bennett <dardenann@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 2:01 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: 25-0066 written testimony of Darden Ann Bennett

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From: Darden Ann Bennett <dardenann@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 10:17 AM
To: Darden Ann Bennett <dardenann@hotmail.com>
Subject: 250066 draft

My name is Darden Ann Bennett, a white professional, who lives in the 2 District on Ridgeview Avenue in Glenham Belhar for 40 years. As a lifelong city resident, I am dedicated to, and love Baltimore. My family lived in Harlem Park for generations since before 1870. My father from Harlem Park, later moved to Rosemont East, where I grew up and got an excellent education in the Baltimore City public schools.

First, would like to thank and praise my representative, Councilwoman Danielle McCray for her commitment, professionalism, competency, and work in public service serving the 2nd district, and voting no against the overlay bill. I applaud her challenging, and hopefully voting NO to 25-0066! She has my vote!

Thank you, Councilwoman Middleton, for challenging this bill, processes, and listening to constituents! Please keep up the good work!

For the sake of brevity, I'll simply state I am vehemently opposed to 25-0066. I am in agreement with all of the opinions voiced by the large opposition group at Mondays hearing. I dismiss the small pro legislation groups testimony, which showed ignorance, incompetence, and intolerance of fairness, in the aspect of public service, which requires listening and acting upon constituents concerns and comments. The citizens who testified and were dismissed by the gentleman who testified "pro" as "elderly" have life experience, and wisdom. Council persons supporting this bill are blind to the fact that this bill is stirring a venomous feeling of racial unfairness among the black community, talk of toxic white males, while touting it is eliminating obstacles, for the black community. Bill 25-0066 needs to be at the very minimum halted. It should

never pass. It is legislation that will destroy the remaining life Baltimore, a dying city, has, and be regaled in future history as a critical failure Baltimore.

Please the YouTube video (not short) Baltimore Maryland Hoods / 4th Most dangerous city in America by City2CityUSA. Look at the dead neighborhoods. My feeling is to reclaim these neighborhoods, bring life to them which includes housing. It is already successfully being done. See the Baltimore Sun, November 29 page 2 article by Jacques Kelly titled Economic boost for West North Avenue. I applaud and am overjoyed by the success this project is having. In 2015, I purchased one of a few "Fannie Mae" dilapidated vacants in the 1000 block of Bennett Place, and renovated it over a period of years from from savings, trying in my own small way to restore and breathe future life into my family's legacy Harlem Park neighborhood. Fortunately, others in the 1000 block did the same, and today the block has been saved to become a nice block! Let's bring this type of housing to Baltimore! NOT 25-0066!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Darden Ann Bennett
6111 Ridgeview Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21206-2448
443-388-1184

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Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Middleton, Sharon (City Council)
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 11:21 PM
To: Michael Scott
Cc: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Subject: Re: Testimony

I've sent your testimony to Council Services for bill file 25-0066.

Sharon Middleton

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

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From: Michael Scott <ashburtonboardmember1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 1, 2025 2:28:00 PM
To: Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Testimony

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Sharon,

Please make sure this is entered and counted.

It's my full testimony.

Good work.

Best

Michael

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Michael Scott <ashburtonboardmember1@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 1, 2025, 11:50 AM
Subject: Testimony
To: <Emily.opilo@thebanner.com>

TESTIMONY

Chair, Councilmembers, thank you. My name is Michael Scott. I live in Ashburton, a Black, middle-class neighborhood that has held this city together for generations. I am here to say plainly: this bill is yet another experiment being run on the backs of Black neighborhoods. Baltimore has a long history of piloting its boldest, riskiest, least-tested ideas on the very communities that have already endured redlining, blockbusting, reverse-redlining, and decades of administrative neglect. This legislation continues that pattern.

Let me begin with what everyone knows but very few in this chamber will say aloud. Roland Park, Guilford, Homeland, Cedarcroft, and other covenant communities are functionally insulated from the density, conversions, institutional uses, and speculative pressures this bill unleashes. Their private covenants, architectural boards, and enforcement mechanisms provide a protective shield that my neighborhood—and every Black middle-class neighborhood like it—does not have. They are excluded in practice, even while the bill is marketed as universal.

Meanwhile, neighborhoods like mine, without covenants but rich in culture and intergenerational Black wealth, are positioned to bear 100 percent of the impact. That is how structural racism operates today: not through explicit exclusion, but through policies that pretend universality while producing unequal, racially patterned harm.

I also want to address a deeply manipulative talking point: the claim that residents raising concerns are “anti-renter.” That is gaslighting. Covenant neighborhoods defend their stability and it is celebrated as responsible planning. Black neighborhoods defend stability and we are accused of prejudice. This framing is false, offensive, and designed to avoid confronting the City’s real failures—failure to regulate predatory investors, failure to manage group-home clustering, failure to enforce code, and failure to maintain neighborhood cohesion. Our neighborhoods already include renters, seniors, working families, students, and new arrivals. The concern is not renters. The concern is unmanaged destabilization by a government that has not earned the trust of the communities it is now placing at risk.

I also want to dismantle the “best practices” argument being used as cover. It is the bureaucratic equivalent of a dog-training trick—do something outside the subject’s frame of reference so they assume you have special authority. Invoking Minneapolis or Portland is not evidence; it is sleight-of-hand. Those cities have functional enforcement, coherent permitting, rental inspection systems that work, and no covenant-protected enclaves immune to reform. Baltimore does not share those conditions. A best practice without baseline capacity is not a best practice. It is malpractice.

Flexible, mixed-use models can build wealth and stabilize communities—but only when they operate within a real guardrail system. In Baltimore, some of the most successful paths into property ownership required structure: mandatory homeowner education, income-qualified lending,

inspections, owner-occupancy standards, and mortgage products designed to stabilize both the buyer and the block. That is a regulated, intentional system. This bill removes the guardrails entirely, then pretends the outcomes will match the structured models that have proven successful. That is not planning; that is magical thinking.

The obvious question then becomes: why is there no commission, no task force, no displacement study, no covenant analysis, no investor mapping, no enforcement capacity review? There is no legitimate rationale for the rush except political optics. If the City believed its own rhetoric, it would slow down and evaluate the disparate impacts. The refusal to do so is telling.

If this bill is truly equitable, then apply it fully in Roland Park, Guilford, Homeland, and Cedarcroft. But you cannot, because covenants and residents in those neighborhoods would stop it immediately. That fact alone exposes the core truth: this is not a citywide reform. It is a selective experiment imposed on the communities least protected and most vulnerable to policy failure.

Equity does not mean destabilizing Black neighborhoods while white neighborhoods remain insulated. Equity means equal burden, equal risk, and equal protection. This bill fails that test in every possible way.

Thank you.

APPENDIX: CORE FINDINGS AND SUMMARY ARGUMENTS

1. This bill is an experiment being run on Black neighborhoods.
Baltimore has a pattern of testing unproven reforms on Black middle-class communities while covenant-protected white neighborhoods remain untouched.
2. Covenant communities are functionally exempt.
Roland Park, Guilford, Homeland, and Cedarcroft have private covenants and architectural boards that shield them from the density and institutional uses this bill unleashes.
3. The burden is 100 percent on Black middle-class neighborhoods.
Unequal starting conditions combined with a supposedly universal policy produces racially predictable harm.
4. Calling residents “anti-renter” is gaslighting.
Covenant neighborhoods defend stability and are praised. Black neighborhoods defend stability and are blamed. The real issue is governance failure—code enforcement, group-home oversight, and predatory investors.
5. “Best practices” is a sleight-of-hand trick.
Minneapolis and Portland have functioning systems and no covenant enclaves. Baltimore has neither. Importing their zoning without their capacity is malpractice.
6. Equity means equal burden and equal protection.
If the City cannot apply this bill in covenant neighborhoods, it is not equitable. It is selective risk-shifting onto the least-protected communities.
7. This bill destabilizes the few Black neighborhoods that still retain intergenerational wealth.
You cannot strengthen Baltimore by weakening the communities that have held it together.

ONE-PAGER: BILL 25-0091 — STRUCTURAL INEQUITY, COVENANT IMMUNITY, AND THE TARGETING OF BLACK MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBORHOODS

Summary

Bill 25-0091 is presented as a citywide modernization of Baltimore's zoning code. In reality, it is a structurally inequitable reform whose burdens fall almost exclusively on Black middle-class neighborhoods, while covenant-protected white neighborhoods remain functionally exempt. The bill removes guardrails, invites predatory investor activity, and destabilizes the few Black communities that still retain intergenerational wealth and cohesion.

Key Findings

1. This bill is an experiment being run on Black neighborhoods.
Baltimore has repeatedly tested unproven, high-risk reforms on Black middle-class communities while shielded white neighborhoods remain insulated.
2. Covenant communities are functionally exempt.
Roland Park, Guilford, Homeland, Cedarcroft, and similar neighborhoods have private covenants, architectural boards, and enforcement powers that prevent the density, conversions, and institutional uses this bill enables.
3. The entire burden falls on Black middle-class neighborhoods.
Unequal starting conditions combined with “universal” reforms generate racially predictable impacts. The bill deepens structural inequity rather than reducing it.
4. “Anti-renter” framing is gaslighting.
Black neighborhoods challenging destabilizing policy are labeled prejudiced, while covenant neighborhoods doing the same are praised as responsible planning. The real issue is Baltimore’s inability to regulate group homes, predatory investors, and unsafe conversions—not renters.
5. The “best practices” justification is a sleight-of-hand.
Cities like Minneapolis and Portland have functional enforcement systems, operational permitting, rental inspection capacity, and no covenant enclaves. Baltimore has none of these baseline conditions.
6. Real mixed-use success requires guardrails this bill eliminates.
Successful flexible-use models in Baltimore required homeowner education, income-qualified lending, inspections, owner-occupancy, and stability-oriented mortgage products. Removing these guardrails invites instability.
7. No commission, no study, no analysis.
There has been no displacement study, no covenant analysis, no investor-behavior review, no group-home clustering analysis, and no enforcement capacity audit. The rush is political, not analytical.
8. Equity requires equal burden and equal protection.
If the City cannot implement the bill in Roland Park, Guilford, Homeland, or Cedarcroft, then the reform is not equitable. It is selective burden-shifting.
9. This bill threatens the last remaining centers of Black intergenerational wealth.
Baltimore cannot rebuild itself by destabilizing the communities that have kept it viable.

Conclusion

Bill 25-0091 is not equity, not modernization, and not evidence-based reform. It is a selective, high-risk experiment imposed on Black neighborhoods while covenant-protected white neighborhoods remain untouched. A city committed to equity would not proceed without guardrails, without analysis, and without equal burden-sharing.

REBUTTAL OF BMZA REPORT ON BILL 25-0066

The Agency Report on Bill 25-0066 that was submitted on behalf of the BMZA is erroneous and deficient as follows:

1. The report is based solely on the bill's relaxation of "conversion" regulations. The report fails to take into consideration the creation of 2-4 units on a property via addition or redevelopment (new construction).
2. The claim of "respecting neighborhood character" cannot be made when the bill's facilitation of additions and redevelopment is ignored.
3. The claims on p. 4 that the bill's "dimensional requirements" are sufficiently "restrictive" to "ensure quality outcomes" — and that only a small percentage of properties are even eligible — are erroneous. All properties that meet the bill's minimum lot area requirements are eligible for structural additions or redevelopment to achieve 2-4 units.
4. There is nothing to prevent "conversions" without permits or licensing (as is common today) when the developers know that if and when caught, they will be able to obtain official approval (unlike today). This bill may increase unpermitted "conversions" by removing the disincentive and risk.
5. There is no consideration or even acknowledgement of the impacts of adding density to already-dense areas.
6. There is no consideration or acknowledgment of the new types of Variance requests that will come to the BMZA as a result of the new regulations.
7. The report's observation that "high turnover creates instability" rings true — but how does this bill do anything to prevent or reduce high turnover?
8. The report's author, acting as the current BMZA Executive Director, declared that zoning is an unconstitutional taking on the record at the Nov 20, 2025 City Council hearing.

Joan Floyd
December 1, 2025

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Bob & Claudia Gleason <buffra1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 30, 2025 11:41 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Zoning Bill 25-0066

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Please vote no on this bill.

Robert and Claudia Gleason
814 Cedarcroft Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21212