Baltimore City Council

Legislative Investigations Committee

Bill: 25-0066

Title: Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

Public Testimony

Julian Frost
District 11
Nov 14, 2025
Position: In Favor

Dear Land Use & Transportation Committee,

The Housing Options and Opportunity Act is good policy. Please support it in its present form.

Gentrification and displacement happens when housing demand is pent up due to restricted supply, which can result in overflow of higher-income people into low-income neighborhoods and sudden up-zonings that bring on a lot of change in one small area. In contrast, this bill would distribute a modest amount of development potential throughout the entire city, meaning that no individual area would be subject to upheaval or sacrifice.

Opponents try to represent this bill as somehow being counter to the virtue of homeownership. They are wrong — 25-0066 opens up economic opportunity and flexibility for current homeowners, and makes homeownership feasible for those who aren't there yet. Historically, people have been able to achieve the American Dream of homeownership (I'll leave my critiques of this concept aside) by renting out a unit to help them pay off their mortgage. This kind of heterogeneous, income-mixed dynamic is the true story of urban America. Renters and homeowners in the same neighborhood. Sure, there is a homogenous suburban model where every SFH is just one unit and is occupied by a nuclear family. But we shouldn't continue forcing Baltimoreans into that model.

The status quo is suppressing untold economic opportunity and limiting people's capacity to efficiently deploy their capital. I bet people would complain less about property taxes if the City government allowed them to do what they want with their property.

Four units is truly a modest proposal. First of all, keep in mind that in reality, restrictions on dwelling units/gross floor area ratio make it so that some smaller rowhouse areas are entirely exempted, and others would only accommodate 2 or 3 units at most. Secondly, just think about what a 6-unit building looks like. That's a 3-story building with 2 spacious units per floor, smaller than many existing single-family homes in Baltimore. Such small apartment buildings exist in SFH-majority all over the country and there's no problem.

The HOO is an inherently equitable and progressive piece of legislation because it breaks down exclusivity by allowing smaller and more affordable types of homes in more places. Further, it will help address Baltimore's perennial vacant problem by offering developers a more feasible path to rehabbing these homes (since simply rehabbing a vacant into a for-sale SFH rowhouse will often not fetch enough on the market to justify the investment).

Opponents like to bring up the exemption of Baltimore's covenant neighborhoods (both majority white and Black) as a reason that the bill is somehow inequitable. To that I say — the covenants are inequitable! It doesn't make sense to cite a private exclusivity arrangement in order to defend the public exclusivity arrangement that is single-family zoning.

Please keep 4 units by right, and focus on getting the ADU policy right. Watering the bill down to 3 or 2 units by right would squander immeasurable economic opportunity and quality-of-life for current and future residents of the city. This would not be a minor change.

Best,
Julian Frost

October 26, 2025

Hello, Baltimore City Council, the Mayor's Office, and Mayor Scott,

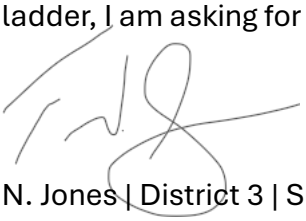
Subject: Official Testimony regarding 25-0064, 25-065, and 25-0066

I want to thank Councilpersons McCray, Conway, Schleifer, Torrance, Porter, and Glover on your votes for 0064 and/or 0065. I hope we can continue to have your support during tomorrow's vote. And I hope we can work together regarding 0066 and in the future the Harford Road Overlay District bill.

For all of Council: I live in District 3 and Councilperson Dorsey paints opposition with a broad and increasingly defamatory brush. Dissent is America's first name and that is why we have been king-free until recently. Like you, as a Federal Public Servant, I also advocate for and protect the public good. I have also been in the affordable housing and community development arena for 20 years+ and have done, if I may say, incredible and creative things to create and preserve affordable housing and strengthen communities. But I will let you in on a shameful secret: fresh out college, full of energy, care, and unknowingly a lack of discernment, I did not use my analytical skills to question my then employer's work in two predominantly Black neighborhoods that had been through slum clearance, decay and demolition of income-based subsidized housing, urban renewal, and divestment. I thought I was performing a service to help residents temporarily relocate and return to a better community while also building self-sufficiency. Well, our HOPE VI developments helped usher in massive and rapid gentrification. I have learned my lesson, especially from the residents who voiced their dissent, and by the implementation of piecemeal public policy, planning, and development that allowed a new unaffordable community that did not represent the residents who anchored and tried to stabilize it during eras of purposeful divestment.

It is certainly not true that as I am already "secure in their housing, [Dorsey] would note - simply do not want this for others." Affordable housing and community development is my bread and butter, and I am its servant. I have experienced all levels of housing security, vulnerability, and insecurity. My mother, with her good Christian and socialist self,

implored upon me when former welfare recipient, Scott Brown, ran for U.S. Senate for Massachusetts on a platform of ending welfare and other safety nets for a “self-sufficient and productive” society to “never roll up the ladder behind you.” I simply want good housing policy, laws, joint ventures, funding, coupled with sound economic policies and growth. I want to ensure that housing is a right, housing becomes truly attainable and affordable, and that gentrification is not a byproduct or intention, curbs speculation, and that Black and lower income residents remain and are not robbed of access to generational wealth. I do not see these needs addressed in 0064, 0065, 0066, the Abundant Housing Act, and the Harford Road Overlay bills take I and II. As Poirot says, my “little gray cells” are firing, I am exercising my First Amendment rights, applying my experience and expertise, and demanding better and comprehensive solutions. Plainly put, these bills are simply not radical nor well-thought out enough to accomplish the goals being stated by the Administration and the bill sponsors (which seem to differ depending on the audience). I am not rolling up the ladder, I am asking for the City to build more ladders that are easier for all to climb.



In Solidarity, Tanisha N. Jones | District 3 | Super Voter

October 16, 2025

Dear Baltimore City Council:

I am writing to express my concerns about 20250064 and 20250065. I do not fully oppose these bills but in my professional opinion, as an affordable housing and community development advocate, these bills are just simply not radical enough to attract new population, build housing, make housing affordable again, and retain long-term legacy. In fact, based upon my professional and personal experience, I think these bills, coupled with the other bills in the housing package and the Harford Road Overlay District bill, are the antithesis of what I hope you are attempting to accomplish. Unless, the speculation is accurate and some on City Council are in the hands of developers or just simply naïve. I give some solutions at the end of this letter, see page 5.

So here are my thoughts:

City Council Bill 25-0064 Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments: Introduced by Councilmember Gray; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Torrence, Blanchard, Bullock, and Porter.

- The bill Increases the lot coverage and reduces yard requirements in all residential zoning districts.
- The changes will reduce the amount of open and green space in all zones by increasing the maximum percentage of lot coverage allowed by 28-40 percent, depending on the existing zoning district, and by reducing the required interior side and corner yard footage in all zones.
    - There is a disproportionate impact upon some already existing high dense neighborhoods, particularly our neighbors in R-6 and R-7, along with R-1A through R-1E.[1]
- Bigger buildings and less yard space will increase the heat island effects experienced in many neighborhoods. Councilmember Dorsey wanted District 3 to reduce its carbon footprint. Without environmental reviews and better ground water infrastructure, it will negatively impact neighborhoods with high water tables.[2]
- In R-1 districts the required side yard is reduced from 20 to 15 feet, which is a 25% reduction in space and in R-3 zones from 10 feet to 5 feet, which is a 50% reduction in yard space.
- In R-8 zones the rear yard can be completely eliminated under certain conditions.
- Reduces the required lot size required for multi-family dwellings in R-5 through R-8 zones.
- Allows for increased density without taking into account the impact on public utilities and services.

[1] Council Bill 25-0064 (first reader)

[2] *Wall Street Journal,* Charleston Floods Are Getting Worse. For These Residents, It's Worth the Risk, September 11, 2025

- Less open and green space will negatively impact air quality and public health. Nationwide this disproportionally impacts lower income and predominantly Black neighborhoods.[3]
- Will negatively impact the visual and aesthetic appeal of the and sense of privacy within the neighborhood.
- Bill 0064 uses a mechanism called "FAR", which is floor area ratio - to calculate building height. FAR is not defined in the bill.

City Council Bill 25-0065 Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements:
Introduced by Councilmember Blanchard; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, and Gray.

- Eliminates a required minimum number of off-street parking spaces for all uses and instead sets a maximum number of spaces allowed. The current code requires at least one parking space per dwelling unit.
- Will greatly increase the competition for on-street parking
- Will place added burden on existing residents and add to parking and street congestion.
- Will relieve developers of the cost of providing adequate off-street parking, while placing added burdens on neighboring residents.
- The law does not take into account the vehicular density or congestion that already exists in a neighborhood.
- There is no proof that the cost savings of not providing off-street parking will be passed along to the renters/residents! Developers, management agents, and real estate software such as RealPage will set rents and sale prices based upon what the market can command unless these parties are non-profits and/or incentivized by City mandates and covenants to make housing more affordable.
- While we recognize that Baltimore City's population decline is leading us back to population levels not seen since 1900-1910, our public transit and school busing services and walkability must be improved before increasing density back to 1950 levels.[4]
- Together, 0064, 0065, and 0066, will negatively impact pre-existing high-density neighborhoods for many in such neighborhoods.
- Parking can be a quality-of-life issue, as memorialized by the members of the city's Residential Permit Parking Advisory Board (RPPAB) in regards to City Council Bill 22-0285, the Abundant Housing Act.
- Parking lots can play an important role in harnessing and protecting nature through infrastructure such as native plants, swales, berms, retention ponds, and daylit streams. Especially, as the City will allow neighborhoods to become denser with larger buildings,

[3] "Weathered: Earth's Extremes" Episode 3: "The Heat is On"
[4] U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

taller buildings, and less private green space. The West Baltimore MARC station is a prime example of such efforts to harness and protect nature in the parking lot environment.

- Parking Authority of Baltimore City (PABC) is in support of 0065 and notes in its testimony that the bill implements "incremental" change. PABC's executive director cites that in 2022 PABC undertook a limited survey of affordable housing developments built in the past decade and noted that parking minimums were overbuilt by at least half. It would have been preferable for PABC to provide additional details, such as number of developments surveyed, location, and walking scores. In addition, PABC notes that they surveyed affordable housing developments, where residents may be less likely to have cars. In addition, there is no guarantee that 0062-0066 will create affordable housing developments. PABC spends much of its written testimony discussing off street parking/parking minimums changes in the city's various commercial districts. Lastly, PABC states: "All of these point the city toward a future that is greener, cleaner and more sustainable by reducing or eliminating parking minimums." This statement ignores that 0062-0066 is a housing package and can work in tandem with each other. 0064 allows for additional building coverage per lot and taller buildings in all residential communities, thereby reducing private greenspace. In addition, these bills do nothing to incentive homegrown residential and commercial development in our neighborhoods that have experienced sustained high vacancy rates and divestment.
- This bill, along with its predecessor, the Abundant Housing Act, failed to acknowledge that in the past 10 years that there were at least two gun violence parking disputes in District 3. At least one such dispute resulted in a homicide.
- While we can concede that parking minimums can be adjusted, we do not believe that there is a one-size-fits-all solution that will increase housing, affordable housing, and community attractiveness for all 300+ of the city's neighborhoods.

Some additional thoughts on 0064 and 0065:

- Council has not disclosed their sources of information that informed them to create such bills. This lack of transparency is troubling.
- These bills do nothing to grow commercial districts other than the hope population growth will sustain and possibly grow business corridors. There is no incentive provided to grow commercial corridors. Food deserts may remain food deserts.
- There is no research provided that these bills will reduce housing costs. The bills more than likely will effectuate a growth of multifamily rentals rather than homeownership market. There are no incentives or subsidies provided to make housing costs truly affordable, based income. There is no research provided that developers or landlords will pass down construction costs savings to residents rather than charging what the market will command.
- If these bills effectuate multifamily housing growth, which is necessary, some communities may see their homeownership rates decline. Per the Baltimore Banner,

Black homeownership rates are plummeting and Black residents are making informed decisions to relocate. The Baltimore Brew recently noted that those protesting 0064 and 0065 before the Land Use and Transportation committee are not your stereotypical NIMBYs but rather largely Black women homeowners from predominantly Black communities.

- In addition, Baltimore's income growth has stagnated. In 2000 our median household income was just over $51,000, adjusted for inflation. 20 years later our median household income is a little bit more than $58,000. This is per the 2025 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment Update published by Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development. The Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership provided this study in support of these bills. If incomes are not growing and 0062-0066 have no mechanism to make housing truly affordable then who stands to benefit from these bills?
- During a recent Planning Commission meeting, some members of Council and the Planning Commission laughed at the importance of the environmental benefits of trees and mocked neighbors concerned about this importance.
- The Planning office compared this initiative to efforts in "comparable" cities like Denver, Seattle, and Virginia Beach. We fail to see the commonalities of Baltimore City to these cities.
- The Planning Commission appears to lack impartiality when it comes to its efforts to assess and effectively challenge these bills, as a city commission is largely chartered to do.
- Bay text credits for increasing pervious surfaces exist. Baltimore city residents pay to remediate Bay pollution, and some residents have recently experienced a 50% increase to their water and sewage bills. We fail to see how these bills will promote the efforts to clean the Bay. And without proper sewage infrastructure, but increased population and density, our efforts and money may literally continue to go down the drain.
- There are no incentives or covenants to mandate housing affordability. And these bills do not preserve existing rental or homeownership stock
- When we talk about neighborhood character, most of us are not dog whistling. We simply want to see our neighborhoods retain their attractiveness and continue to add new residents. While we acknowledge more can be done to rebuild our population, which is important, add viable housing, and truly increase housing affordability, we do not want to sacrifice existing community benefits to accomplish these goals. For instance, several neighborhoods in district 3 are considered historic by either the City, State, and Department of Interior.
- Per a Baltimore Banner May 2025 article, the Mayor promised to engage the community this time regarding 0062-0066. So far, the City has not fulfilled this promise. The Planning Commission has held one listening session during the workday. Otherwise, all community engagement has come in the form of workday hearings on the bills or community associations reaching out to public officials.
- Has the City fixed the permit system yet?

- Because modifying the housing market with disregard to down river impacts more than likely negatively impacts housing affordability for existing and potential new residents, we request:
    - A slow down on vetting and voting these bills until there is true community engagement as the Mayor promised
    - Disclosure of organizations that have lobbied the City to make these changes
    - Disclosure of periodicals, research, organizations, academics, and other sources of information that have informed the City on their decision making, as the City makes a habit of claiming facts without citations
    - Disclosure of any Maryland, Federal, or another jurisdiction‘s regulations/ordinances/laws that have influenced the City to make these decisions
    - An analysis of community needs to truly attract population growth and make housing affordable: public transit, walkability to amenities, and income growth to start and how the City is addressing these quality of life needs
    - An analysis of existing mechanisms to truly make housing affordable such as HUD’s project-based subsidy porting rules, regulations, and appropriations, implementation of income restricted covenants, incentivizing the building, operation, and preservation of various housing types for low to moderate income households
    - An independent analysis on high vacancy neighborhoods (over 7% to 10% vacancy rate) of current programs and funding sources and needed programs and funding sources to put these communities back into full viability and habitability
    - A study with implementation goals to decrease the outflow of Black households
    - A study with implementation goals to ward off gentrification
    - A study to examine current economic factors (job losses, paltry job gains, inflation, income stagnation, loss of federal and federal dependent jobs, and disproportionate impact of the loss of income in Black households since the administration change, and cost of living increases) in relation to how these bills can make housing affordable for current and future Baltimore City residents
    - City incentives to help develop the needed number of rental and homeownership units that are currently and forecasted to be be backlogged over the next 40 years

Respectfully,

Tanisha N. Jones | Super Voter | District 3

Bill: 25-0066

Bill Title: Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

Position: **Favorable**

Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee,

Bill 25-0066 represents an opportunity for Baltimore to implement a no-cost zoning code reform that will help address our city's struggles with housing affordability and economic growth. This bill will allow for the construction of low-density multi-family buildings in neighborhoods where currently only single-family homes are allowed.

Housing flexibility is the phrase that comes to our mind with this bill. The purpose of zoning is prevention. By allowing only single-family detached homes in large areas of the city, we unnecessarily limit housing flexibility available to residents. Single-family detached homes, given their relatively large living areas, are unaffordable to many prospective residents. This bill will allow for the construction of smaller, more affordable homes in Baltimore. It is these starter homes that we need the most.

These smaller homes do sometimes get built today, but only by exception, in limited/inadequate numbers, and only in a few areas. This bill will extend that flexibility to all neighborhoods, city-wide, improving economic mobility and housing options for all.

The recent trend for Baltimore City (over the course of the past 25 years) has been one of population loss, but household gain. Baltimore has been growing in terms of households, but those households have been trending smaller than in the past. There's no reason to believe this trend will reverse. As such, our zoning code needs to adapt to this new reality.

With this bill, existing owners of single-family homes will be able to convert their extra rooms into an accessory apartment, allowing them to maintain a home that they currently cannot afford to repair - or to age in place.

A prime concern that people have with this bill is that it will exacerbate parking contention. When we choose to not build housing because of sensitivity over parking, what we are saying is that we are more sensitive to the pain of trying to find a place to park than we are sensitive to the pain of trying to find a place to live.

An additional concern that people have with this bill is that it will allow for a flood of low-quality conversions by the "We buy houses" contingent. First, there's no reason to believe that this bill,

by itself, will unleash a flood. Both Portland, Oregon and Minneapolis have passed similar zoning code reform and the yield has only been in the range of 30-150 homes gained each year.

Second, by removing zoning hurdles, headaches, and uncertainty, we encourage higher-quality home-building by higher-quality actors who have no interest in building on the edges of the zoning code and in the margins of the balance sheet. They want to do right by their neighborhood and their hometown and this bill will allow them to do that.

There are attractive examples of low-density multi-family homes right here in Baltimore - hiding in plain sight. 4629 Keswick Road in Evergreen [Figure 1], 2942 Huntingdon Avenue in Remington [Figure 2], and 601 E 30th Street in Better Waverly [Figure 3] all fit wonderfully into and enhance the character of their neighborhoods. More of these is what this bill will bring.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of 25-0066**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places
Michael Scepaniak - President
Tyler Crowe - Violetville
Chris Guinnup - Hampden
David Bjorndalen - Beechfield
Mark Braun MD - Federal Hill
Michael Starnes - Riverside
Luke Zeigler - Federal Hill
Mark Treadwell - Riverside
Jesse Saran - Canton
Elliott Wesselborg - Better Waverly
Sabrina Harrison - Canton
David G Phillips - Patterson Park
Julian Frost - Mount Vernon
Anna Wassel, Ph.D. - Park Heights
Andrew Dupuy - Bolton Hill
Philip Lovegren - Bolton Hill
Melanie Scheirer - Mount Clare
Carson Drew - Barclay
Lisa Danaczko - South Baltimore
Al Holland - Midtown Belvedere
Tim Badmington - Upper Fells Point
Noah Tobias - Mount Vernon
Sean Gordon - Otterbein
Maria Pecora - Mount Vernon
Adam T Jones - Mount Vernon
Blake Barnett - Hampden

Charlotte Murphy - Better Waverly
Sean Wu - Washington Hill
Alex Grube - South Baltimore
Jaden Beall - Barclay
Cora Karim - Upper Fells Point
Adnan Barazi - Wyndhurst
Dillon Broadwell - Woodberry
Nick Snider - Remington
Josh Poland - Federal Hill
Keonte Sampson - Glenham-Belford
Thomas Dutkiewicz - Bolton Hill
Kylie Lewis - Ashburton
Ian Wolfe - Greektown
Jonathan Susman - Harlem Park
Yuki Clarke - Woodbourne-McCabe
Teddy Walsh - Canton
Alex Holt - District 5

Figure 1: 4629 Keswick Road in Evergreen

Figure 2: 2942 Huntingdon Avenue in Remington

Figure 3: 601 E 30th Street in Better Waverly

I am writing **in opposition to 25-0066 Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act**.

As you are aware, the bill purports to create housing options by removing restrictions on converting single family homes with greater than 1500 square feet into multi-family units, making such conversions a matter of right and therefore not subject to community input. **The result would make Baltimore neighborhoods prime targets for unscrupulous speculators and absentee landlords.** Given the long and rich history of illegal development schemes in Baltimore that leave communities at the mercy of inexperienced, unethical, or simply negligent entities,[1] **it beggars belief that the City Council is seriously considering a bill that would remove communities' ability to protect their neighborhoods from predatory practices.**

Instead, it would make far more sense to *require* developers to work with communities as a prerequisite to obtaining approval for their projects. This strategy has been successfully used by ReBuild Metro in the Oliver and Johnston Square neighborhoods, the South Baltimore Gateway partnership, and the former Community Review Panel that was eliminated when the Harford Road URP was extended for one year. If developers are interested in contributing to the health and livelihood of the city, they should welcome the opportunity for constructive engagement with the people most affected by their plans.[2]

Furthermore, this radical departure from the current zoning ordinance is not grounded in Baltimore's housing context, would allow the haphazard development of city neighborhoods without community input, and would have a discriminatory impact on historically Black neighborhoods. I believe for the reasons given below that any possible benefit that might arise from the bill is more than outweighed by the damage it would cause to the city and its

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[1] Links to relevant articles on impact of unscrupulous/illegal developers and speculators:
https://www.thebanner.com/community/housing/baltimore-housing-foreclosure-dscr-HFPWHAWCY5HRLPR2VZSUAQWW24/
https://www.thebanner.com/economy/growth-development/baltimore-poppleton-la-cite-HKX4PQLMZVAFFGRCNTQJW3A5WI/
https://www.thebanner.com/economy/growth-development/poppleton-la-cite-development-lawsuit-BCAHADLH7BBTZMNHZNAELKQPBU/

[2] Links to successful community/developer partnerships:
https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2025/04/28/on-baltimores-eastside-rehabbing-not-razing-a-blighted-block/
https://rebuildmetro.com/2025/06/rebuild-metro-releases-new-guidebook-on-community-driven-redevelopment/
https://sbgpartnership.org/baltimore-business-journal-vacant-homes-next-to-400m-south-baltimore-development-poised-for-overhaul/
https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/04/24/historic-markley-hotel-redeveloped-retail-hub/

residents, and that **the only groups to benefit from the legislation would be developers and absentee landlords.**

1. **There is no evidence that this bill would result in abundant housing in Baltimore.**

    - **There is no comparison between Baltimore and other cities considering similar ordinances.**
        - Unlike Los Angeles, Seattle, etc., Baltimore's population is in decline, has lower property costs, and has a large stock of vacant houses. It also already has high-density housing in many neighborhoods. The issues and dilemmas faced by those other cities are simply irrelevant to Baltimore. **We have our own issues, and deserve a solution that is authentically matched to our city's challenges.**
    - **When introducing a previous version of this bill (CCB 22-025) Councilman Dorsey relied on an irrelevant report from Live Baltimore.**
        - The 2020 Live Baltimore publication "An Analysis of Baltimore City's Residential Market Potential" does not support Councilman Dorsey's statements that the bill would help attract new residents from a pool of 5300 potential new renters. There is nothing to indicate that the report is any more relevant now than it was in 2022.

2. **This bill would have an inequitable impact on historically Black neighborhoods.**
    - **Similarly situated white neighborhoods will not be affected by the bill.**
        - The bill targets larger homes with more than 1500 square feet. **Many historically white neighborhoods have covenants or Home Owner Association agreements requiring them to maintain their homes as single-family residences; these are enforceable by State law**. Communities such as Guilford, Roland Park, and Homeland have restrictions on converting single-family homes into multi-family residences. Therefore, these communities would be effectively exempt from the bill, even though, in general, they have larger homes that might be suitable for conversion.[3]

        - In contrast, there are many Black residential neighborhoods with houses that could be converted to multi-family use if this bill passes, but have no covenants or deed restrictions that would protect them from the consequences of this bill.

[3] The recently passed legislation on Auxiliary Dwelling Units prevents covenants and HOA agreements from prohibiting ADUs. However, it is entirely silent on the issue of allowing the conversion of the primary dwelling unit to multi-family homes. At most, if passed, CC 25-0066 would allow the construction of some ADUs under certain circumstances; it would not, however, nullify any covenant prohibiting the conversion of a single-family home to a multi-family home.

- Many such neighborhoods are designated Healthy Neighborhoods, which seek to strengthen undervalued neighborhoods by supporting home ownership. Some of these Healthy Neighborhoods have large rowhouses, such as Reservoir Hill, and others, such as Hilton Park, have detached and semi-detached houses on large lots, which would be highly attractive to unscrupulous developers who have already plagued our city with incomplete/substandard developments, fraudulent investment practices, and precipitous bankruptcies
- Many neighborhoods, like Coldstream Homestead Montebello and Belair Edison, have been battling valiantly to strengthen their neighborhoods by reducing density and encouraging home ownership. However, the bill does nothing to protect these neighborhoods from predatory investors or substandard rental units, while also reducing the housing stock available for home ownership.
- **A better legislative response would be to focus on removing City-imposed barriers to redeveloping vacant properties, with a clear focus on providing single- and multi-family residences that would strengthen neighborhoods, and encourage community engagement in the development process, similar to the initiatives in Johnston Square and Oliver.**

3. **Baltimore's housing problem needs a solution that is appropriate to Baltimore.**

Baltimore is at a crisis point, as evidenced by continuing and dramatic declines in city population overall and home ownership in particular. There are many non-housing factors that contribute to this migration: violent crime, poor city infrastructure and services, the many problems with Baltimore's public school system, higher-than-county tax rates, and the lack of coherent and accessible public transportation are just a few of the issues that convince many Baltimore residents to leave the city. However, the fact remains that the lack of affordable housing for low- and middle- income renters and homeowners has also contributed significantly to this population decline. Preferential tax and zoning treatment for developers of luxury housing, disinvestment in poor neighborhoods across the city, the impact of out-of-state investors on the housing market, insufficient income-based housing, as well as many other factors, have resulted both in fewer homes available for purchase by low- and middle- income families and the highest rent burden in the state. **It is no wonder that so many former residents voted with their feet and moved away.**

Moreover, even though housing is one of many contributing factors in Baltimore's population decline, it is the most important to tackle. **Without the tax revenues generated by a diverse, thriving, and growing populace in secure housing, Baltimore will never have the means to address the other causes of its decline.**

There have been many attempts by the City Council and other stakeholders to address housing in Baltimore, and while these actions have resulted in improvements to some aspects of the housing problem, they have been inadequate to comprehensively address Baltimore's housing

needs. **Rather than continuing to haphazardly apply "band-aids," a comprehensive, data-driven approach is required.** **Tackling such a multi-faceted dilemma requires a holistic approach that looks at and addresses the underlying issues that have landed us in our present quagmire, and avoids the hodge-podge patchwork quilt approach that this bill would actively encourage.** The simplistic approach of creating more rental units while diminishing homeownership opportunities, which would be the end result of the passage of CCB#25-0066, doesn't make any sense.

Consequently, I firmly believe that the city should commission an independent study that provides specific, data-based, and Baltimore City-specific recommendations on addressing our Baltimore housing crisis. Such a study should be consistent with the following parameters:

- **The study needs to be conducted with academic rigor by top experts in their field, preferably in an academic setting.** Morgan State University's Institute for Urban Research, for example, would be a good candidate for this role. One of the nation's outstanding HBCUs, MSU is also local, with a long history of advocating for Baltimore city residents. The Institute for Urban Research specifically has a State mandate to conduct research on issues affecting underrepresented groups. The Institute also has an interdisciplinary approach to research and a history of collaboration with Johns Hopkins University. MSU's Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning would also be a valuable resource for this research project.
- **Unlike CCB 25-0066, which apparently had no input from community groups, the study must provide a mechanism for meaningful community input.** This would include both individuals and community associations, as well as other entities that work with communities throughout Baltimore, such as the Greater Baltimore Urban League, St. Ambrose, BUILD, Healthy Neighborhoods, Civic Works, the Baltimore Family Alliance, Baltimore Renters United, Harbel, the Abell Foundation, et alia. Entities such as these have a long history of working on Baltimore's housing problems, and they can add invaluable insight to the project.
- **City agencies need to cooperate with and contribute to the study.** Planning, Housing, and Zoning all have staff with expertise in their areas. Other agencies, such as Education, Traffic, and Public Safety also have relevant experience and insight into the causes and effects of the housing crisis. However, because this is intended to be a holistic approach, no one agency should lead the study. This is another reason to locate the study in a university with a history of interdisciplinary excellence.

There are many aspects to such a large undertaking that can't be covered in a letter. However, these points should give you a clearer understanding of our position and recommendations. We would be happy to discuss this further with you.

Deborah Mason
2500 Erdman Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21213
masonexpat@duck.com

I am writing to express my opposition to the upcoming hearing on CCB-25-0066 to eliminate Single Family Zoning in Baltimore City. We already have a substantial number of renters within the city, and in my neighborhood, Lauraville/Hamilton, we have seen this increase a lot over the years.

While I understand the need for rental availability, there has just been too much of it in concentrated areas, like mine. Most renters have no investment in the properties where they reside, and don't value the importance of upkeep and noise pollution. This harms our neighborhoods and property values.

This bill will decimate the equity for my property and that of my neighbors, and it must not go through.

This bill also allows landlords and contractors THOUSANDS of DOLLARS in TAX INCENTIVES to bring these buildings to residential areas, which will incentivize investors to purchase properties and convert them to low quality rental units at the expense of neighborhood stability.

We have lived at 3316 Batavia Ave., 21214, for more than 20 years, and have wonderful neighbors. We look out for each other, have gatherings, and keep an eye out for each other's kids.

If this bill passes, you can bet you will lose more city residents. You will also lose mine and MANY other city residents' VOTE next election.

Maureen Kelly

I am a resident of Hampden, and I wanted to share testimony in support of the recent package of housing bills, particularly bill 25-0066.

I appreciate there are many different types of housing options for all of us living in Baltimore, and I think these bills will ensure that remains the case in the future. I moved to Baltimore in 2018 from Silicon Valley, California, where there was an acute housing shortage. The housing available there was almost entirely detached single family homes. In Palo Alto, where I worked, it was nearly impossible to build a new apartment building because of onerous zoning laws -- stringent minimum parking requirements, set-back minimums, and maximum building heights of ~25 feet. Whenever anyone did propose new housing, it felt like a small but vocal minority of residents would testify in opposition at city council meetings, arguing that new housing would change the character of the city. I left a good job at Stanford and moved to Baltimore in 2018, in part because I couldn't afford to live in Silicon Valley and have the quality of life that I wanted. I appreciate that Baltimore has housing options for everyone, not just for the wealthy. It's clear that Baltimore and Silicon Valley are very different places, and Baltimore doesn't have the same acute housing shortage at present. With that said, I would argue that Silicon Valley's housing shortage was decades in the making through a long series of restrictive zoning decisions.

I love that Baltimore is an economically diverse city, and I think the current house bills, particularly bill 25-0066, would help ensure that remains the case by allowing for diverse housing options in the future.

Sincerely,

Scot Miller

Re: Opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066 (Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act)
Dear Members of the Baltimore City Planning Commission,

As a homeowner in Lauraville, I am writing to express my strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066, the Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act. While I recognize the importance of addressing housing needs in Baltimore, I firmly believe that this legislation will be detrimental to the stability and future of our neighborhood.

My concerns include the following:
-- Incentivizing absentee landlords and speculative investors to convert single-family dwellings into multi-family rental units, eroding the character of our community.
-- Driving up the cost of housing by reducing the supply of single-family homes available to prospective homebuyers.
-- Further reducing the rate of homeownership in Baltimore, which has already been in decline for the past two decades.
-- This bill targets stable neighborhoods—such as Lauraville - where Black homeownership is growing and should be supported, not undermined.
-- Conflicting with the City's stated goals of promoting homeownership, preserving single-family neighborhoods, and strengthening the property tax base.
-- Overburdening public utilities and services, such as trash collection, sewer and water systems, and street maintenance.
-- Undermining neighborhood stability by fostering a more transient rental population.
-- Exacerbating traffic and parking congestion in residential areas.

I also find it deeply discouraging that the City Council has not pursued more creative solutions to address the city's abundance of abandoned houses and vacant buildings as a means of expanding rental housing.

It is thoroughly disturbing that policies are being written without adequate time for input by us, the people who are dedicated to this city.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Planning Commission to recommend against advancing this bill. Baltimore's long-term success depends on stable, livable neighborhoods where families and individuals can invest in their homes and communities.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued service to the residents of Baltimore.
Annet Couwenberg

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 6:48 PM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Cc: Mike Kotarba
Subject: Fwd: Bill 25-0066 OPPOSE

Dear Mr. Leva-

Re: OPPOSE Bill 25-0066

Please immediately post our letter of opposition to Bill 25-0066. (Below). We sent it earlier today to make sure you add it to the record well before the November 20 hearing. We do not see it in the public bill file posted on Legistar. We ask that it be posted, distributed and read by the City Council President and Members.

Thank you very much.

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
> **Date:** November 17, 2025 at 11:54:05 AM EST
> **To:** testimony@baltimorecity.gov
> **Cc:** Mike Kotarba <kmkotarba@comcast.net>
> **Subject: Bill 25-0066 OPPOSE**
>
> **PLEASE READ OUR TESTIMONY AND POST ON LEGISTAR. PLEASE ADD TO BILL RECORD.**

Dear Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council:

Re: **Oppose** City Council Bill #25-0066

As Baltimore City residents and homeowners for over four decades, we **strongly oppose** City Council Bill #25-0066. Please read and add this letter to the legislative record for this bill.

We share the same concerns as our many neighbors across the city. Bill #25-0066 is a "top-down" **comprehensive upzoning of all Baltimore City residential properties.** It treats all neighborhoods as though they are the same and have the same needs. It fails to address the existing concerns of inadequate code enforcement and vacant housing. There is no supporting data or fiscal analysis to support such a **drastic comprehensive action**. The loss of green-space and environmental impacts are not addressed. Transportation concerns are not addressed. Perhaps most stunning of all, there has been no direct involvement of communities in the planning process. There are approximately 200,000 owners of residential properties who have not received notice of this legislation.

We also oppose Bill 25-0066 because it lacks vision. There is no roadmap in terms of its substance (how this **comprehensive upzoning will actually work**) or appearance (how Baltimore City will actually look in the future). How will it actually achieve more affordable housing? There is no stated process, there are no guidelines, visual aids, there are no guardrails, there is no recourse. Without a map, without a vision, we will go nowhere.

First, what will Baltimore's neighborhoods look like in the future? We have no idea. At present, single family residential properties with R-7 through R-10 zoning are subject to design review when converting to multi-family use. Bill #25-0066 will end this by removing this section from the Zoning Code. Additionally, single family residential properties with R-1 through R-6 zoning will not be subject to design review when converting. Only the recently expanded bulk and yard requirements will be applied. Design-wise, in the future, anything goes. It will be legislated to be allowed "by right."

This **comprehensive upzoning** offers no pathway to thoughtful design. It deletes existing design guidance from law and relies on numerical dimensions to shape our city. People do not live in boxes or numbers; they live in homes in neighborhoods. Whether one's home is an apartment, rowhouse or detached, everyone benefits from thoughtful design, architectural character and natural beauty!

Second, in terms of substance, how will the **comprehensive upzoning** work? Again, we don't know. We only know that in the future all residential housing will become multi-family by right. With the passage of Bill #25-0066, the Council Members will completely remove themselves from the multi-family conversion process. A quick look at the City Council docket shows a number of current bills that track the Council Member's leadership in the residential conversion process. The Legistar bill record confirms a valuable partnership with Community Associations.

If Council Members vote for the #25-0066 **comprehensive upzoning** they will break their current social contract with their communities. Community leaders and neighbors will miss having the support of their Council Member in the neighborhood development process. Perhaps the Council Members will miss being able to assist their constituents, as well?

We urge you to **oppose Bill # 25-0066.** We ask that you listen to your neighbors from across the city. They have spoken with great eloquence to tell you what matters most to them about living in Baltimore City. Don't you trust them to help shape Baltimore's future?

They are the City's greatest strength. Do not experiment upon them, but engage them in the shared effort of improving this city. Together we can aim higher and achieve a better result.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

Sent from my iPad

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 11:29 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: Mike Kotarba
Subject: Fwd: Oppose City Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066

Please add our testimony below to the legislative files for each bill: #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066. We oppose each bill. Thank you very much!

Kathleen and Mike Kotarba

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Date: July 31, 2025 at 10:57:42 AM EDT
To: Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov
Subject: Oppose City Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066

Dear Honorable Council President Cohen-

Please add our letter (below) to the legislative files for each bill. We checked on legistar and the letters are not yet included. Agency hearings are now proceeding and we want our comments to appear in the record.

Thank you very much.

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba
3021 Iona Terrace
Baltimore MD
21214

Dear Honorable Council President Cohen:

Re: **Oppose** City Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066

As Baltimore residents and homeowners for over four decades, we **strongly oppose** City

Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066. Please include this letter separately in the legislative record for each bill and consider our comments during the legislative process.

Baltimore's citizens are already well served by the recently updated Zoning Code. Homeowners have invested in Baltimore and depend upon residential zoning that protects their neighborhoods. Citizens and communities already count on zoning that:

1- encourages owner occupancy and long term commitment,
2- discourages institutional and absentee investors,
3- provides a reliable and stable tax base.

The three bills in question fail to address the following related concerns:

1- Treats all neighborhoods as though they have the same characteristics and needs. They do not.

2- Creates incentives for "tear downs" that destroy the character and desirability of neighborhoods.

3- Does not address the additional infrastructure requirements of producing additional multi family housing. These include road maintenance and traffic improvements, adequate parking, public transportation needs and funding, public utilities, fire and police services, and water/storm water services.

4- Does not address the additional housing and building inspection staffing requirements. Additional housing units will require additional monitoring and additional City attorneys when legal action is needed.

5- Does not address additional sanitation services.

6- There is no fiscal analysis or data to support this legislation. Does not address fiscal implications for the future, including potential increases to the City budget.

7- Does not address environmental impacts resulting from increased density.

8- Does not address potential difficulty in contacting absentee owners and insuring their accountability when something goes wrong. (Homeowners are typically onsite).

9- If all three bills become law there will be a layering effect. The resulting impacts are unknown and not addressed in the legislation.

In conclusion, these bills represent top down decision making that imposes upon the people of Baltimore. The package of bills, and their combined impact, is an experiment. Baltimoreans did not vote for this and expect better of their elected officials.

Respectfully,

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

3021 Iona Terrace

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mead, Nancy (City Council)
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:32 AM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Subject: FW: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

For the file.

Nancy M. Mead
Interim Director
Office of Council Services

100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
nancy.mead@baltimorecity.gov

OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Office: (410) 446-7962
Mobile: (803) 371-6872

From: Charles Williams <chazwilliamz@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Zac Blanchard <zac@blanchardforbaltimore.com>; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Brenda Allison <bkayeallison@gmail.com>; Joel Kurz <joel@thegardenbaltimore.com>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Jules Dunham Howie <juleshouse@hotmail.com>; Malcolm Lewis <Malcolm.Lewis1130@gmail.com>; JC Peralta <mpjcruz@gmail.com>; Jeff Thompson <jtphil3.8@gmail.com>; Jamaalttaylor86@gmail.com; Rafael McFadden <rafaelmac33@gmail.com>; Eric Brown <mobybrown@aol.com>; William Blackwell <willmarionb1510@verizon.net>; Savarese, Brandy (City Council) <brandy.savarese@baltimorecity.gov>; Torrence, James (City Council) <James.Torrence@baltimorecity.gov>; Charleus, Tyriq (DOP) <Tyriq.Charleus@baltimorecity.gov>; Bolden, Tarek (DOP) <tarek.bolden@baltimorecity.gov>; Al Hathaway <alhathaway@gmail.com>; nnenna ochuba <nnenna.ochuba@gmail.com>; kenihines@gmail.com; Cynthia Ryals <ciciryals@renaissancebc.com>; Fred Tillman <metropropsllc@gmail.com>; Atiba Nkrumah <atiba.nkrumah@gmail.com>; marble hill <marblehillimprovement@gmail.com>; bullock@baltimorecity.gov; Kennedy, Alice (DHCD) <Alice.Kennedy@baltimorecity.gov>; Henson, Brandi (DHCD) <Brandi.Henson@baltimorecity.gov>; yoko.robinson@baltimorecity.gov; Marti Pitrelli <erasmocha@yahoo.com>; Yates, Ericka (DHCD) <Ericka.Yates@baltimorecity.gov>; DHCD MPIA Request <dhcd.mpia@baltimorecity.gov>; Quarles, Chantel (DHCD) <Chantel.Quarles@baltimorecity.gov>; Mead, Nancy (City Council) <Nancy.Mead@baltimorecity.gov>; Wanda Best <wgbest@verizon.net>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; km@kathleenmitchell.com; kweisi.mfume@house.state.md.us; District11 <District11@baltimorecity.gov>; aaronleonardcoleman@gmail.com; info@historicupton.com; Upton@historicupton.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; neighborsforsfzoning@gmail.com; Pierre Wright <wrgpr@aol.com>; stephanhanley@gmail.com; president@mvba.org
Subject: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

Dear Councilmember Blanchard,

I hope this message finds you well.

First, I want to sincerely thank you for attending our Marble Hill community meeting on May 20, 2025. I truly appreciated your presence — especially since this marked your **second visit** with us. Your continued engagement and the insights you shared regarding the Housing Options and Opportunity Act did not go unnoticed and mean a great deal to our community.

I'm reaching out personally to express my strong concern for Zoning Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066.

As a resident of historic Marble Hill, I care deeply about the long-term health, character, and stability of our neighborhood. While I fully understand the importance of promoting affordable and flexible housing options, these particular zoning changes raise serious concerns that I believe would have unintended, yet damaging, consequences for communities like ours.

Here's why:

- **Bill 0066** would allow up to four units to be built on lots currently zoned for single-family homes. This opens the door for increased investor activity and the conversion of homes into multi-unit rentals, making it harder for local families and first-time buyers to compete.
  Just this past April, our community had to actively push back against this exact type of predatory development — where duplexes were improperly being converted into quadruplexes. With support from Commissioner Alice Kennedy and the Department of Housing and Community Development, we were able to intervene and stop it. Adopting this bill now would feel like reversing that victory and signaling that those zoning protections no longer matter.
- **Bill 0065** would remove the requirement for off-street parking. Parking is already scarce in Marble Hill. Removing this requirement would increase congestion and create frustration for residents, particularly in older neighborhoods not designed to absorb that kind of density.
- **Bill 0064** proposes to reduce yard and green space requirements. These spaces are more than aesthetic — they contribute to safety, health, and the historic character that makes our community feel like home. Reducing them would strip away part of what gives Marble Hill its identity.

I'm not opposed to thoughtful growth — but I strongly believe that growth should be equitable and community-centered. The cumulative effect of these three bills would promote investor-driven development while diminishing the quality of life for existing homeowners and long-time residents.

Zack, I'm asking you not just as a constituent, but as someone who is deeply invested in preserving our neighborhood's integrity — please reconsider your support for these bills. I would also appreciate being notified of any upcoming hearings or public comment opportunities so I can continue to make my voice heard.

Thank you again for your time, your accessibility, and your ongoing commitment to public service. Your consistent presence in our community matters, and I trust you'll weigh our lived experience and local history in your decision-making.

Sincerely,
Charles Williams

October 26, 2025

Hello, Baltimore City Council, the Mayor's Office, and Mayor Scott,

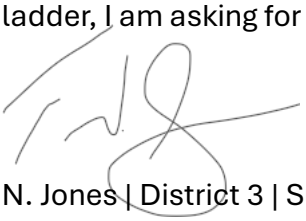
Subject: Official Testimony regarding 25-0064, 25-065, and 25-0066

I want to thank Councilpersons McCray, Conway, Schleifer, Torrance, Porter, and Glover on your votes for 0064 and/or 0065. I hope we can continue to have your support during tomorrow's vote. And I hope we can work together regarding 0066 and in the future the Harford Road Overlay District bill.

For all of Council: I live in District 3 and Councilperson Dorsey paints opposition with a broad and increasingly defamatory brush. Dissent is America's first name and that is why we have been king-free until recently. Like you, as a Federal Public Servant, I also advocate for and protect the public good. I have also been in the affordable housing and community development arena for 20 years+ and have done, if I may say, incredible and creative things to create and preserve affordable housing and strengthen communities. But I will let you in on a shameful secret: fresh out college, full of energy, care, and unknowingly a lack of discernment, I did not use my analytical skills to question my then employer's work in two predominantly Black neighborhoods that had been through slum clearance, decay and demolition of income-based subsidized housing, urban renewal, and divestment. I thought I was performing a service to help residents temporarily relocate and return to a better community while also building self-sufficiency. Well, our HOPE VI developments helped usher in massive and rapid gentrification. I have learned my lesson, especially from the residents who voiced their dissent, and by the implementation of piecemeal public policy, planning, and development that allowed a new unaffordable community that did not represent the residents who anchored and tried to stabilize it during eras of purposeful divestment.

It is certainly not true that as I am already "secure in their housing, [Dorsey] would note - simply do not want this for others." Affordable housing and community development is my bread and butter, and I am its servant. I have experienced all levels of housing security, vulnerability, and insecurity. My mother, with her good Christian and socialist self,

implored upon me when former welfare recipient, Scott Brown, ran for U.S. Senate for Massachusetts on a platform of ending welfare and other safety nets for a “self-sufficient and productive” society to “never roll up the ladder behind you.” I simply want good housing policy, laws, joint ventures, funding, coupled with sound economic policies and growth. I want to ensure that housing is a right, housing becomes truly attainable and affordable, and that gentrification is not a byproduct or intention, curbs speculation, and that Black and lower income residents remain and are not robbed of access to generational wealth. I do not see these needs addressed in 0064, 0065, 0066, the Abundant Housing Act, and the Harford Road Overlay bills take I and II. As Poirot says, my “little gray cells” are firing, I am exercising my First Amendment rights, applying my experience and expertise, and demanding better and comprehensive solutions. Plainly put, these bills are simply not radical nor well-thought out enough to accomplish the goals being stated by the Administration and the bill sponsors (which seem to differ depending on the audience). I am not rolling up the ladder, I am asking for the City to build more ladders that are easier for all to climb.



In Solidarity, Tanisha N. Jones | District 3 | Super Voter

To: Matthew Peters

Re:

1. CCB #25-0064, Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments
2. CCB 25-0065 -Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements and
3. CCB 25-0066 – Housing Options and Opportunities Act

We, the undersigned owners and/or residents of property in Ridgely's Delight are writing in opposition to all three of the proposed bills mentioned above. We have addressed all 3 in one letter since these proposed changes are essentially joined at the hip, having all been included in a single bill in the past, which are meant to work together. We ask that this letter be included as a separate letter of opposition for the record for all 3 bills.

The stated purposes of these bill are to:

1. Promote increased development of low-density, multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts, including North Ridgely's Delight, which is zoned R8, by establishing a new category of "low density, multi-family housing which permits development that would increase density up to 4 dwelling units."
2. To eliminate the current requirement that off-street parking be provided for any additional units.
3. Reduces the amount of yard and greenspace required for properties.

Ridgely's residential properties are zoned R-8. These proposed changes would no longer be permitted as a conditional use only. All required off-street parking requirements would be removed for all residential uses in our neighborhood.

We are opposed to these proposed changes for the following reasons.

1. Impact on infrastructure
    a. The homes in Ridgely's primarily date from the early to late 19th century. The infrastructure is also quite old and we have experienced a lot of problems with it.
        i. We had a flood beneath the 700 block of Dover St. that lasted for almost a week and damaged a number of houses because the water turnoff valve did not work.
        ii. We routinely have flooding in some areas because the storm drains cannot handle the rain water when there is a heavy downpour.
        iii. We have experienced a number of water pipe breaks.
            1. Several years ago, we experienced a major water line break in the center of the 600 block of Portland. The break was at least 6 feet below the street and caused major flooding for days.
    b. Increased development will lead to a reduction in green spaces, with the attendant negative environmental and quality-of-life impacts that come with that. But, this will also have infrastructure impacts. As we reduce the areas that serve to absorb rain water, we put an additional burden on our already overtaxed storm drain system. We already have flooding in heavy down pours because the storm drains cannot handle the demands. Further reduction of green space will only exacerbate this problem.

    c. We have added 84 new dwelling units since 2019 and we are in the process of adding 9 more units right now in North Ridgely's. This is an increase in density of almost 50% and we do not know how the existing infrastructure will be able to handle more increases. We are concerned about further increases in density without the improvements to our sewage, water and storm drain systems that we hope will be coming our way as a result of the agreement with the EPA.
2. Impact of eliminating all parking requirements
    a. As evidenced by a city-run parking survey, there is already not enough parking in our neighborhood. We are a geographic island. Because of this, neighbors have to cross MLK and try to find parking in the deserted commercial areas of Pigtown when we return to the neighborhood at night, which is the only adjacent area with any large amount of parking.
    b. We know the city would like to see residents move towards the use of public transportation, and many of our residents would like to be able to do that, but the current public transportation system is frankly terrible. Until a decent and reliable public transportation system is put in place, it is premature to try to force city residents to give up their cars by failing to plan for adequate parking.
    c. We live in a food desert. For many residents, especially those of us who are older, it is impossible to try to use public transportation to purchase groceries and transport them home. And, while delivery is an option for some, the cost is prohibitive for many residents. The availability of fresh, nutritious food must also be addressed before the city tries to force residents to give up their cars.
3. Impact of an increase in density on the historic nature of the neighborhood.
    a. Ridgely's Delight is an historic neighborhood and much of the historic feel of the neighborhood comes from the current density, which varies between the older, smaller properties in our area of the north and the larger properties with double lots in the south, which are ripe for development if this change passes.
    b. Under current CHAP guidelines, modern in-fill in historic neighborhoods should be clearly non-historic/modern in appearance.
        i. At this time, we have very few modern in-fill properties. But if this bill passes, we should expect that situation to change, thus dramatically reducing both the current spacing and appearance of properties in a manner that reduces the historic nature of the neighborhood.
    c. Over their life-span, a number of larger properties in the neighborhood were split up into multiple apartments. In more recent years, a number of these houses were returned to single-family units in an attempt to respect the historic nature of these houses. This proposed change would encourage breaking these properties up into multiple apartments again, thus also moving to make these properties less historic in nature again.
4. Impact on trash, rats and appearance
    a. The houses that have been divided into multiple apartments in our neighborhood have insufficient city-provided trash cans to handle the amount of trash they are creating and landlords are not paying for either extra cans and/or private pickup. This leads to

overflowing trashcans, dumping of garbage, out-of-control rat populations and the poor/dirty appearance of the city as a whole.

5. Impact of density on housing costs
    a. Underlying this bill is an assumption that increased density will lead to decreased costs and more affordable housing. However, as previously mentioned. We are in the midst of increasing our density of housing by about 50 % and that has NOT led to decreased costs. Most of the new units are tiny (less than 400 sq. ft,) and the proposed costs we have seen are in the $1,400-$1,600 per month range. So, increased density has NOT led to decreased costs in our neighborhood.
6. Impact on property values
    a. Many property owners, particularly owner/occupants buy their properties as an investment.
    b. This proposal is likely to lead to increased purchasing by developers and those interested in rental properties, which will lead to these properties being broken up into multiple apartments, single room rentals and AirBnBs.
    c. You cannot build a neighborhood without a core of owner/occupants and this bill provides significant disincentives for owner/occupants to remain in their homes since it is likely to drive overall property values down.
7. Impact on diversity
    d. A number of older and/or mobility-challenged owner/occupants feel that proposals like this are designed to drive them out of the city.
    e. Those who can drive, need their cars since public transportation is difficult and unreliable for those who have any level of mobility challenges. They are also more likely to be targets of crime, so waiting on city streets for buses is dangerous for them and riding alternative transportation such as bikes and scooters is not possible for many of them.
    f. We invested in our properties as part of our long-term plan for financial security in retirement. But, if the city is going to undertake policies that reduce the value of our investment, the only smart thing to do is to leave the city.

In conclusion, we think a far better way to increase the city's tax base (i.e., population) and provide more affordable housing that becomes an investment for owner/occupants instead of investors would be to develop a program that truly values and promotes racial and spatial equity by developing a city-government program that encourages and supports efforts by residents to buy and develop vacant properties. This should help to stabilize and enhance many communities that are both in need of and deserving of such government support. This would be more consistent with the many equity and justice commitments officially and publicly stated by the city—e.g., by the Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Etc.

We fear that diverting efforts away from addressing how to remedy the overwhelming number of vacant properties throughout the city, many located in communities that have large numbers of African Americans and other people of color living in them, will simply perpetuate and exacerbate the many attendant problems associated with these vacant properties (e.g., higher crime rates, dumping, vandalism, deteriorating property values, rats, etc.), which will lead to further destabilization of these neighborhoods and communities. This, will make things worse, instead of better, for everyone, but

especially for the communities that this bill is designed to help most. We strongly suggest that it would be better to develop such a program than to simply change the zoning rules and hope they lead to the desired outcome.

For all the reasons listed above, we are opposed to the proposed bill. Thank you for considering our unput.

(Note, all addresses below are located in Baltimore, MD, 21230. If the signer's name indicates "owner," it means that the signer owns but does not reside at that address.)

1) Paul Wilder (owner)
   705 Dover St.
2) Michele Vitolo (owner)
   719/721 Dover St.
3) Kate Campbell
   715 Portland.
4) Etty Stern Shterenboim (owner)
   219 Penn St
5) Steve Yannaras
   625 Portland St.
6) Kate Gillespie
   717 Dover St.
7) Patricia Bergeron
   717 Dover St,
8) Nate Hauser (owner)
   210 Penn St.
9) Greg Laub
   728 Dover St.
10) Gerri Salley
    646 Melvin
11) Esther Van Dyke
    717 Portland St.
12) Tania Robalino
    313 S. Fremont St.

13) James Wright
313 S Fremont St.

14) Lillie Hyman
658 Portland St.

15) Rosalie Barret
719 Portland St.

16) Claude Williams
719 Portland St.

17) Farzana Muhib

710 Portland St.

18) Debbie Brain

623 Washington Blvd.

19) Deb O'Neill
208 Penn St.

Testimony October 20, 2025

Council Bills 25-0064, 0065, 0066

Greetings: Mayor Brandon Scott; President City Council Zeke Cohen; Councilmembers Dorsey, Blanchard, Gray, Middleton, Torrence, Bullock, and Porter.

While 25-0066 is "in committee" and not being heard today (Oct. 20th), Parkway is in opposition to all three bills, including 0065 and 0064. I also believe "these bills will have a destabilizing effect on established neighborhoods and homeownership throughout the city."

I am in agreement with comments from both Historic Marble Hill and Hanlon Park, so there is no point in repeating those issues. Specifically the Parkway community consists of an apartment bldg 40 units (Fairview and Leighton Ave), some large detached houses (Liberty Heights), and mostly single-family rowhouses built in the early 1940s. I would like to introduce the concept of stacking as a reason the Parkway community would be in opposition to the bills. **Converting older houses to multi-family units may not be structurally feasible**.

- Single-family homes built during WWII present additional issues that make them unsuited for stacking.

- The materials themselves may have degraded over 80+ years. For example, wood can weaken and concrete can deteriorate over time.

- Structural deficiencies like uneven settling can compromise the foundation.

- Homes built under older buildings codes were not designed for today's standards, which require more robust construction and stronger foundations to handle modern loads.

- Converting these houses to multi-family units would be costly, particularly if the single-family home needs to be gutted.

Research AI assisted

<u>Complaints</u>

- Parkway neighbors who have corner rowhouses complain about vibrations coming from the nearby CSX railway that transports freight.

- A corner rowhouse that has structural problems is leaning despite extensive renovations.

- The belief that building the subway at Mondawmin over 40 yrs ago caused foundational damage in some homes.

- Living next door to a rental property that could potentially become multi-family is causing me angst. Over many years I have observed poor landlord/tenant relations. The property would be out of scale with the other 28 rowhouses on the block. There would be no backyard for children to play or space for trash cans in the yard. The property was recently rented after being unoccupied for more than a year.

We, too, "trust the Council will weigh our lived experiences and history in its decision making."

- Our neighborhood has been stable for decades. Parkway has very few vacants. We are however experiencing unoccupied houses with the passing of longtime residents.

- We have invested three years in Live Baltimore Trolley Tours to promote homeownership.

- Because there are mostly single-family rowhouses in Parkway, stacking (increasing the height on existing rowhouses) would change the character, architecture and history of our neighborhood.

- We enjoy having front porches, backyards, park-like setting with trees, open and green spaces.

- Two streets have parking issues: On Leighton houses were built in 1946/47; Some families have more than one vehicle so parking is already limited. On W. Forest Park houses were built in 1940; Neighbors worry about their vehicles being hit because the street is narrow and vehicles are much larger today than earlier models.

I agree there should be more affordable housing in Baltimore for young families and college students who prefer to live off-campus. Ultimately some will explore homeownership. Converting single-family homes by stacking is an idea that should be studied. It would be more feasible to rebuild vacants into multi-family units from the ground up in neighborhoods that need development. During DHCD workshops on affordable housing, it was recommended to have different styles of housing to accommodate renters and homeowners. Baltimore needs to work on blighted areas with boarded up houses needing renovation.

Definition

The concept of "stacking" single-family homes to multi-family homes involves adding units on an existing structure.

Submitted by:

Carolyn Carey, President
Parkway Community, Inc.

Council Bills

• 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.

• City Council Bill 25-0065 Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements: Introduced by Councilmember Blanchard; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, and Gray. Eliminates a required minimum number of off-street parking spaces for all uses and instead sets a maximum number of spaces allowed. The current code requires at least one parking space per dwelling unit. So, while bill 25-0066 would permit up to 4 dwelling units per property, no off-street parking would be required for the added units if this bill were to pass.

• City Council Bill 25-0064 Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments: Introduced by Councilmember Gray; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Torrence, Blanchard, Bullock, and Porter. Reduces the bulk and yard requirements in all residential zoning districts. The changes will reduce the amount of open and green space required in all zones by increasing the maximum percentage of lot coverage allowed by 30-40 percent, depending on the existing zoning district, and by reducing the required interior side and corner yard footage in all zones. In R-1 districts the required side yard is reduced from 20 to 15 feet, which is a 25% reduction in space and in R-3 zones from 10 feet to 5 feet, which is a 50% reduction in yard space. These are just two examples of zones for single-family detached houses, but all other zoning districts would also see a similar reduction in open space.

1. Undermines Homeownership & Neighborhood Stability

- Makes it easier for investors to outcompete Baltimore homebuyers, especially first-time buyers.
- Investors purchase with cash, waive inspections, and settle quickly — advantages ordinary families simply cannot match.
- Homeownership in Baltimore has already declined to **47%**. This bill accelerates that decline by enabling widespread conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit rentals.

2. Incentivizes Absentee Ownership, Not Community Growth

- Residents are not anti-renter; they are against **absentee landlords** who historically fail to maintain properties.
- Baltimore already struggles with poorly maintained rental units. Increasing investor-owned rentals without improving oversight is reckless.
- Scattered-site rentals are the hardest units to monitor, maintain, and keep in good condition.

3. Weakens Baltimore's Neighborhood Fabric

- Baltimore is a city of distinct neighborhoods — each with its own scale, density, and identity.
- Bill 25-0066 introduces density increases with **no regard for neighborhood character** or resident quality of life.
- Instead of strengthening community stability, the bill invites disinvestment and transiency.

4. Expands Investor Activity Without Strengthening Enforcement

- Housing Code Enforcement is already overwhelmed and inconsistently executed.
- The City's building permit office has a poor performance record, and inspectors struggle with current workloads.
- Adding more conversions will only worsen oversight and open the door to substandard, unsafe renovations.

5. Creates Policy Risk Without Data, Analysis, or Fiscal Review

- The bill lacks a meaningful affordability requirement. It merely assumes that more investor-owned rentals will lower rents — an unsupported claim.
- No credible analysis has been presented on the impact to:
    - Home prices
    - Public services (sanitation, fire, police, water/sewer, roads)
    - Neighborhood infrastructure
- Policy decisions of this magnitude should not be made without data.

6. Undermines Years of City Investment in Homeownership

- Baltimore has invested millions through Live Baltimore, Healthy Neighborhoods, and other programs designed to help families buy and stay in their homes.
- Many affordable, majority-Black homeownership neighborhoods stand to lose equity, stability, and character if the single-family housing stock is eroded.
- This bill works against the very goals the City has spent years promoting.

7. Repeats Past Policy Mistakes That Harmed Communities

- Baltimore has seen "progress-driven" policies destroy neighborhoods before — highway projects that displaced families, mass demolition for high-rises that later failed.
- Bill 25-0066 risks repeating these errors by prioritizing development pressure over resident well-being and long-term neighborhood health.

8. No Protections for Renters

- The bill contains **no safeguards** for tenants.
- Tenants in scattered-site rentals often fear retaliation, eviction, or lease non-renewal if they report unsafe or unhealthy conditions.
- Adding more poorly monitored rentals without tenant protections is deeply irresponsible.

9. Does Not Target Vacants or Promote New Construction

- The bill does not focus on vacant or abandoned properties — where new units are most needed.

- Instead, it encourages splitting stable single-family homes into rentals, reducing the stock available to homebuyers and driving up prices.
- This approach destabilizes existing neighborhoods rather than revitalizing struggling ones.

October 29, 2025

1412 Druid Hill Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21217

Baltimore City Council Members
Office of the President
City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street, Suite 400
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Subject: Testimony – NO to Council Bill 25-0062 25-0064, 25-0065, 25-0066 (Housing Options & Opportunity Act)

Dear Council Members,

The Housing Options & Opportunity Act would have many negative impacts primarily on homeowners and families because developers and investors will exploit zoning changes, leading to negative consequences for residents in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods. This act would not increase affordable housing, it undermines stable communities, worsens existing problems, would create a back log for city services which already lack the capacity to respond to quality of life and safety issues. For example, the house directly in front of mine has had unwanted items dumped by residents in the front, a broken grill, a headboard, footboard, and shoe mold. The items have been there for 4 months. I have called 311, submitted 311 on the app, and escalated the SR to be addressed. The items are still there. This example is just one of the many 311 complaints submitted by residents that either never get resolved or take a significant amount of time and several complaints to resolve because DHCD does not have the capacity to follow-up and resolve these many issues in a timely manner.

The city already has an abundance of problems with:

- **Absentee landlords:** The zoning changes would attract even more absentee property owners whose interest is in collecting rental income while minimally maintaining their properties. This will exasperate poor living conditions for renters and affect the surrounding neighborhood's quality of life.
- **Developers:** Will prioritize profits over community well-being, especially with lax city code enforcement and permitting processes. This can lead to the further destruction of the historical rowhome façade, increase unsafe and unlivable housing conditions for tenants. The city does next to nothing to protect the historical integrity of these iconic historic rowhomes. Developers are allowed to shorten

windows, remove transoms, remove cornices, etc. There should be a strict standard that developers must adhere too.

- **Worsening existing dysfunction:** Without strong standards, rules, enforcement, sufficient inspectors, the developers will have too much free rein to do whatever they want without oversight. It already happens. This act will also worsen issues like property deterioration, overcrowding, and trash accumulation.

  A decline in neighborhood stability and quality of life: For established neighborhoods, multi-unit conversions could alter the existing character and increase strains on infrastructure, increase trash, dumping, safety, overcrowding, parking issues, discord.

- **Undermining homeownership:** The city should work to increase home buying incentives, promote, and educate on homeownership to promote stability for low income and middle-class communities not increase renters who typically neglect to engage and improve the neighborhoods they live in like homeowners often do.

- **Exacerbating inequality:** This act does not help underserved neighborhoods, the conversions will lead to smaller apartments, higher rent prices that will price out residents and attract wealthier individual, create more higher-demand areas, intensifying the segregation that already exist.

- **For developers:** It is clearly apparent that this act is for developers and investors and does not include wealth building opportunities for residents who would greatly benefit and have the desire to build generational wealth.

- **Affordability:** Landlords will be able to charge rents that fall outside affordability for low-income individuals and families. The conversions to more one-bedroom apartments will not accommodate the typical section 8 family of 3 or more creating housing insecurity and pushing groups out of the city to find their housing needs.

For all the reasons stated above, I am submitting this testimony in opposition of the current Council Bill 25-0062 25-0064, 25-0065, 25-0066 (Housing Options & Opportunity Act) and encourage council members to produce a more realistic, caring, less burdensome and better-defined proposal that residents will be more inclined to agree with.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jiri Cruz


2025 Sun 09:07:08

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Murphy, Louisa <lmurphy@1919ic.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 11:24 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Opposition to COUNCIL BILL 25-0066

Dear Planning Commission,

I am a longtime resident of the historic Bellona-Gittings neighborhood, and I am writing to express my **strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066**, which would allow low-density multifamily dwelling units in areas currently zoned for single-family residences. I also oppose the related Bills 25-0064 and 25-0065, which would eliminate off-street parking requirements and reduce bulk and yard standards.

My family and I have lived on Gittings Avenue for 30 years. We chose this neighborhood specifically because of its single-family zoning, which has helped foster a close-knit, community-oriented environment. Bellona-Gittings experiences very low crime rates and maintains high property values compared to more densely zoned areas of the city.

While I recognize the national shortage of multifamily housing, Baltimore's more pressing issue is the lack of well-maintained, desirable single-family homes. The city already has numerous areas zoned for higher density (R-5 to R-10), making further rezoning unnecessary. Additionally, there are many vacant and abandoned properties already zoned for multifamily use that could be rehabilitated. I urge the Council to focus efforts on revitalizing those areas instead.

Is it the Council's intention to eliminate all areas in Baltimore City zoned exclusively for single-family dwellings? If so, what are the anticipated impacts on property values? It would be reasonable to anticipate values in neighborhoods impacted by your Bill to decline due to increased supply without a corresponding rise in demand—unless demand is artificially inflated by zoning changes that attract financial investors or absentee landlords. In that case, short-term price increases could come at the cost of long-term harm to historic neighborhoods and the communities they support.

The homes in my neighborhood are zoned R1-E and if that is changed to allow for greater density, MANY residents will move to the Country in search of less housing density. Please do NOT pass this terrible Bill #25-0066.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Louisa Murphy
102 Gitting Avenue, Baltimore 21212

Louisa Murphy
Business Development Officer
1919 INVESTMENT COUNSEL
Complexity to Clarity
One South Street, Suite 2500
Baltimore, MD 21202
Office:(410) 454-3141
Email: LMurphy@1919ic.com

Visit our website: 1919ic.com
Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Carol Simmons <cdsimmons1@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 9:50 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill #25-0066 Zoning...

City Council Bill # 25-0066--Zoning--Housing Options and Opportunity Act

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

I am opposed to the passage of this bill. I definitely could have a very deterimental effect on my community and many others.
Please vote against.
Thank you.
Carol Simmons

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mari Ross <mbr105@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 5:11 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill# 25-0066

As a resident of Baltimore City I am writing in opposition to City Council Bill #25-0066. If enacted this change would completely undermine the peaceful nature and safety of my single family home neighborhood. We chose this community over more lively chaotic community areas for the reason that it offered 'county' style living with City conveniences and are willing to pay the high taxes to support that decision. Passing this bill would be short term thinking with long term losses.
Sincerely,
Mari B. Ross

Sent from my iPhone

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mead, Nancy (City Council)
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:32 AM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Subject: FW: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

For the file.

Nancy M. Mead
Interim Director
Office of Council Services

100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
nancy.mead@baltimorecity.gov

OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Office: (410) 446-7962
Mobile: (803) 371-6872

From: Charles Williams <chazwilliamz@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Zac Blanchard <zac@blanchardforbaltimore.com>; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Brenda Allison <bkayeallison@gmail.com>; Joel Kurz <joel@thegardenbaltimore.com>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Jules Dunham Howie <juleshouse@hotmail.com>; Malcolm Lewis <Malcolm.Lewis1130@gmail.com>; JC Peralta <mpjcruz@gmail.com>; Jeff Thompson <jtphil3.8@gmail.com>; Jamaalttaylor86@gmail.com; Rafael McFadden <rafaelmac33@gmail.com>; Eric Brown <mobybrown@aol.com>; William Blackwell <willmarionb1510@verizon.net>; Savarese, Brandy (City Council) <brandy.savarese@baltimorecity.gov>; Torrence, James (City Council) <James.Torrence@baltimorecity.gov>; Charleus, Tyriq (DOP) <Tyriq.Charleus@baltimorecity.gov>; Bolden, Tarek (DOP) <tarek.bolden@baltimorecity.gov>; Al Hathaway <alhathaway@gmail.com>; nnenna ochuba <nnenna.ochuba@gmail.com>; kenihines@gmail.com; Cynthia Ryals <ciciryals@renaissancebc.com>; Fred Tillman <metropropsllc@gmail.com>; Atiba Nkrumah <atiba.nkrumah@gmail.com>; marble hill <marblehillimprovement@gmail.com>; bullock@baltimorecity.gov; Kennedy, Alice (DHCD) <Alice.Kennedy@baltimorecity.gov>; Henson, Brandi (DHCD) <Brandi.Henson@baltimorecity.gov>; yoko.robinson@baltimorecity.gov; Marti Pitrelli <erasmocha@yahoo.com>; Yates, Ericka (DHCD) <Ericka.Yates@baltimorecity.gov>; DHCD MPIA Request <dhcd.mpia@baltimorecity.gov>; Quarles, Chantel (DHCD) <Chantel.Quarles@baltimorecity.gov>; Mead, Nancy (City Council) <Nancy.Mead@baltimorecity.gov>; Wanda Best <wgbest@verizon.net>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; km@kathleenmitchell.com; kweisi.mfume@house.state.md.us; District11 <District11@baltimorecity.gov>; aaronleonardcoleman@gmail.com; info@historicupton.com; Upton@historicupton.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; neighborsforsfzoning@gmail.com; Pierre Wright <wrgpr@aol.com>; stephanhanley@gmail.com; president@mvba.org
Subject: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

Dear Councilmember Blanchard,

I hope this message finds you well.

First, I want to sincerely thank you for attending our Marble Hill community meeting on May 20, 2025. I truly appreciated your presence — especially since this marked your **second visit** with us. Your continued engagement and the insights you shared regarding the Housing Options and Opportunity Act did not go unnoticed and mean a great deal to our community.

I'm reaching out personally to express my strong concern for Zoning Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066.

As a resident of historic Marble Hill, I care deeply about the long-term health, character, and stability of our neighborhood. While I fully understand the importance of promoting affordable and flexible housing options, these particular zoning changes raise serious concerns that I believe would have unintended, yet damaging, consequences for communities like ours.

Here's why:

- **Bill 0066** would allow up to four units to be built on lots currently zoned for single-family homes. This opens the door for increased investor activity and the conversion of homes into multi-unit rentals, making it harder for local families and first-time buyers to compete.
  Just this past April, our community had to actively push back against this exact type of predatory development — where duplexes were improperly being converted into quadruplexes. With support from Commissioner Alice Kennedy and the Department of Housing and Community Development, we were able to intervene and stop it. Adopting this bill now would feel like reversing that victory and signaling that those zoning protections no longer matter.
- **Bill 0065** would remove the requirement for off-street parking. Parking is already scarce in Marble Hill. Removing this requirement would increase congestion and create frustration for residents, particularly in older neighborhoods not designed to absorb that kind of density.
- **Bill 0064** proposes to reduce yard and green space requirements. These spaces are more than aesthetic — they contribute to safety, health, and the historic character that makes our community feel like home. Reducing them would strip away part of what gives Marble Hill its identity.

I'm not opposed to thoughtful growth — but I strongly believe that growth should be equitable and community-centered. The cumulative effect of these three bills would promote investor-driven development while diminishing the quality of life for existing homeowners and long-time residents.

Zack, I'm asking you not just as a constituent, but as someone who is deeply invested in preserving our neighborhood's integrity — please reconsider your support for these bills. I would also appreciate being notified of any upcoming hearings or public comment opportunities so I can continue to make my voice heard.

Thank you again for your time, your accessibility, and your ongoing commitment to public service. Your consistent presence in our community matters, and I trust you'll weigh our lived experience and local history in your decision-making.

Sincerely,
Charles Williams

Dear Council President Cohen,
Please support council bills 25-0065 and 25-0066 so that we can devote more of our city to housing people and NOT cars!
Sincerely
Michelle Nicolas, 4007 Keswick Rd

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holiday St.
Baltimore, Md 21202

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Council President
we support two ordinances will help households budgets ... Baltimore: Mayor Scott's Housing Options and Opportunity Act will ... more housing units in ... locations and CM Blanchard's ... to Eliminate off-Street ... minimums. Please enact ... Bills 25-0065 & 25-0066
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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Cncl Prez Cohen
I'm writing in support of Mayor Scott's Housing Options + Opportunities act and CM Blanchard's ordinance to eliminate off street parking (25-0065, 25-0066)
Please do everything you can to enact this critical legislation. Thank You
[illegible]
2730 Guilford Ave
Baltimore MD 21218

BALTIMORE MD 212
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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

... Zeke,
... am asking you support 25-00065 & 25-00066.
... think these are ...eded to make a stronger Baltimore.
...ep up the good work.
Best, Matt [illegible]

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Council President Zeke Cohen,
Hello, My name is Virgil Curry.
Please support two ordinances that will help household budgets in Baltimore.
Please enact Council Bills 25-0065 and 25-0066.
Parking minimums drive up housing costs. Help Baltimore grow!
Sincerely,
2709 Chelsea Terrace
Balto, Md. 21216

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

...r Councilman Cohen
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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Council President Cohen,
I'm just writing to express my support for council bills 25-0065 & 25-0066.
Please work toward their passage.
Sincerely,
Tyler Smith
607 Reservoir St.

BALTIMORE MD 212
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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday St.
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Council President Cohen

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Trane Harrison
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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Please Support Bill

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Zeke Cohen
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Baltimore, MD 21202

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Council President Cohen

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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er Derek More
[illegible] Street

Dear Council President Cohen -

Please support two ordinances
that will help households
in Baltimore.

1. Mayor Scott's Housing Options
and Opportunity Act will allow
more housing units in convenient
locations. CB-25-0066
2. CM Blanchard's ordinance to
Eliminate Off-Street Parking
Requirements. CB 25-0065

Best,
Matt Purdy
[illegible] E Fayette St
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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r Council President Zeke Cohen

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ank you,
irsten Schroeder
x835 Fairview Ave

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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tinydogpress.com

Adrianne Black
1209 Saint Paul St, Apt 305
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Zeke, it's been a long time since
I randomly messaged you on twitter to
Zoom during the pandemic. You changed
offices and I changed names (formerly Perch)
I'm a Mount Vernon resident now but
thankfully you're at large and I get to
keep you as a rep. I'd love to
meet up some time, but I'm writing now
cause I've finished the transit 101
class and wanted to cap it by
asking the group to ask you to vote
for 25-0065 + 25-0066. This city
is close and connected and community
because it is walkable. Our zoning
codes make it impossible to build
[illegible], I'm all for
opening it up! - Adrianne Black

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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r Council President Cohen,

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Please enact Council Bills
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ia Underwood, 4514 Shamrock Ave 21206

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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tinydogpress.com

Dear Council Member Cohen,

Please support Mayor's Housing
Options and Opportunity Act
and CM Blanchard's
ordinance to Eliminate
Off-Street Parking Requirements.
Parking minimums drive up
housing costs and discourages
small businesses. 25-0065
25-0066

Brody Snook
21202-342799
817 S Charles St

BALTIMORE MD 212
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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Council President Cohen

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& CM Blanchards ordinance to Eliminate Off
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-0065 & 25-0066. These
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Sincerely..
Trane Harrison
[illegible] E. Lafayette Ave

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Please Support Bill

25-0065, 66 to support
an improving and growing
Baltimore

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Council President Cohen

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Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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er Derek More
[illegible] Street

Dear Council President Cohen -

Please support two ordinances
that will help households
in Baltimore.

1. Mayor Scott's Housing Options
and Opportunity Act will allow
more housing units in convenient
locations. CB-25-0066
2. CM Blanchard's ordinance to
Eliminate Off-Street Parking
Requirements. CB 25-0065

Best,
Matt Purdy
[illegible] E Fayette St
Baltimore, MD 21202

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100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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r Council President Zeke Cohen

se Support Mayor Scott's Housing
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ordinance to eliminate off street
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minating parking minimums lower
sing costs and allow developers
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rse actions will also reduce
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ank you,
irsten Schroeder
x835 Fairview Ave

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US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Adrianne Black
1209 Saint Paul St, Apt 305
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Zeke, it's been a long time since
I randomly messaged you on twitter to
Zoom during the pandemic. You changed
offices and I changed names (formerly Perch)
I'm a Mount Vernon resident now but
thankfully you're at large and I get to
keep you as a rep. I'd love to
meet up some time, but I'm writing now
cause I've finished the transit 101
class and wanted to cap it by
asking the group to ask you to vote
for 25-0065 + 25-0066. This city
is close and connected and community
because it is walkable. Our zoning
codes make it impossible to build
[illegible], I'm all for
opening it up! - Adrianne Black

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US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Please enact Council Bills
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nk you,
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POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Dear Council Member Cohen,

Please support Mayor's Housing
Options and Opportunity Act
and CM Blanchard's
ordinance to Eliminate
Off-Street Parking Requirements.
Parking minimums drive up
housing costs and discourages
small businesses. 25-0065
25-0066

Brody Snook
21202-342799
817 S Charles St

BALTIMORE MD 212
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US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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Marble Hill Testimony – CCB 25-0066 with Visual Data

Subject: CCB 25-0066 – Zoning: Housing Options and Opportunity — Follow-Up & Community Context

Dear Committee Clerk and Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee,

I respectfully request an update on the October 9, 2025 discussion of CCB 25-0066, including any motions, amendments, or votes; the timeline for posting the video and minutes; and any staff reports or revised bill text presented. If the bill has been held, amended, or scheduled for further review, please share the next date and include me on future notices.

Community Context. Some look at West Baltimore and see a broken city; I see a city full of solutions—if growth comes with accountability. For generations, Black family homeownership has been the ladder to stability, equity-building, neighborhood leadership, and intergenerational wealth. Today, that ladder is being pulled up rung by rung. When "reinvestment" advances without enforcement, it looks less like realignment and more like re■segregation by another name.

I write as a Marble Hill resident in the heart of Baltimore's civil-rights landscape. Across the street from my home, Thurgood Marshall prepared arguments for *Brown v. Board of Education*; Union Baptist Church hosted Mary McLeod Bethune and other leaders; the late Rep. Elijah Cummings represented this corridor; and the Freedom House led by Dr. Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson welcomed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Eleanor Roosevelt when they came to work with local leaders. **This block's significance is beyond dispute.**

Out of twenty-two parcels on the 1200 block of Druid Hill Avenue, only **6** still function as true single-family residences — 1200, 1216, 1220, 1226, 1233, and 1237. The rest are either vacant, condemned, illegally converted, or operating as multi-dwelling, commercial, or institutional structures. That means barely **27%** of this block remains stable, family-scale housing — a stunning decline for a community that once defined Black homeownership and civic leadership.

Why visuals matter here. The 1200 block already shows what happens when conversions outpace enforcement. Three single-family homes (1206, 1208, 1210) were illegally converted and condemned in 2025. A corner store (1204) sits amid repeated public-safety incidents. Multi-dwelling structures are clustered without matching sanitation, curb management, or code-compliance capacity. Legalizing four units "by right" would push this block past the tipping point.

This block already carries its fair share of density as it stands. I urge the Committee to reconsider amending this bill before further destabilizing Marble Hill and other legacy homeownership communities.

Category	Count	Notes
Total parcels	22	1200–1239
SF functioning	6	1200, 1216, 1220, 1226, 1233, 1237
SF vacant	2	
SF condemned	3	1206, 1208, 1210
Multi-dwelling	7	
Commercial	2	
Institutional	2	

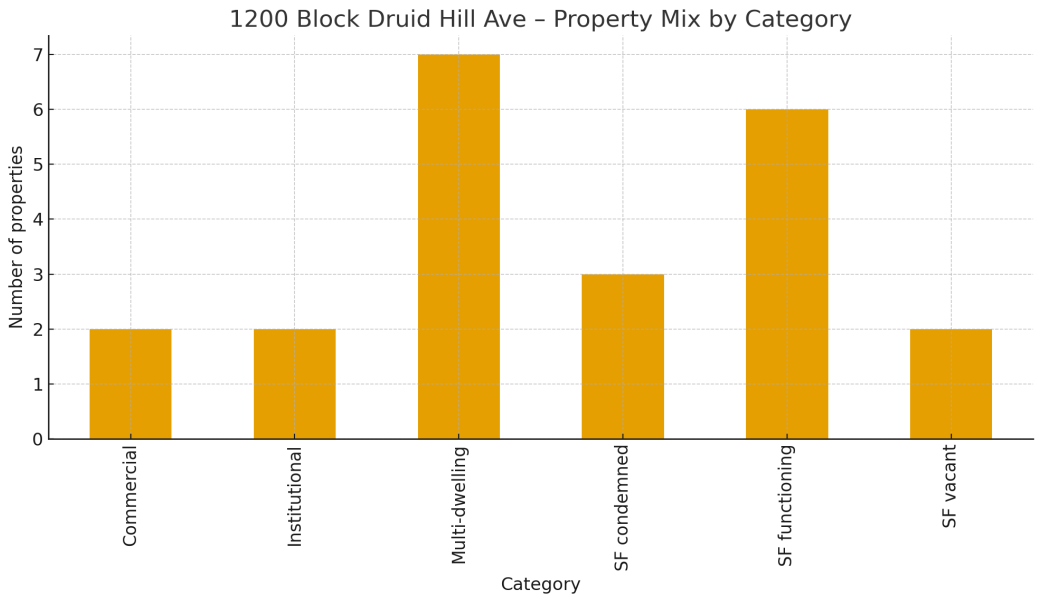


Figure 1. Property mix by category (1200 block, Marble Hill).

Property Inventory — 1200 Block (Current Snapshot)

address	type	status	notes
1200	Single-family	Occupied	
1202	Single-family	Vacant	
1204	Commercial	Open	Corner store; linked to 3 homicides since 2022; loitering & ope
1206	Single-family	Condemned	Illegally converted to quadruplex; no permits/U&O; condemne
1208	Single-family	Condemned	Illegally converted to quadruplex; condemned Apr 2025
1210	Single-family	Condemned	Illegally converted to quadruplex; condemned Apr 2025
1211	Institutional	Open	Union Baptist Church Daycare
1212	Multi-dwelling (5 units)	Open	
1214	Multi-dwelling (5 units)	Open	
1216	Single-family	Occupied	
1218	Multi-dwelling (2 units)	Open	
1219	Institutional	Open	Union Baptist Church
1220	Single-family	Occupied	
1223	Multi-dwelling (units)	Open	User noted 'uniont multi dwelling'
1224	Multi-dwelling (3 units)	Open	
1226	Single-family	Occupied	
1228	Multi-dwelling (2 units)	Open	
1230	Single-family	Vacant	
1233	Single-family	Occupied	
1235	Multi-dwelling (2 units)	Open	
1237	Single-family	Occupied	
1239	Commercial	Renovation	Law office renovation

Recommendations prior to any expansion of by-right density:

1) **Enforcement first.** Publish a coordinated DPW/DOT/BPD schedule for street sweeping, parking, nuisance & liquor, and CDS enforcement.

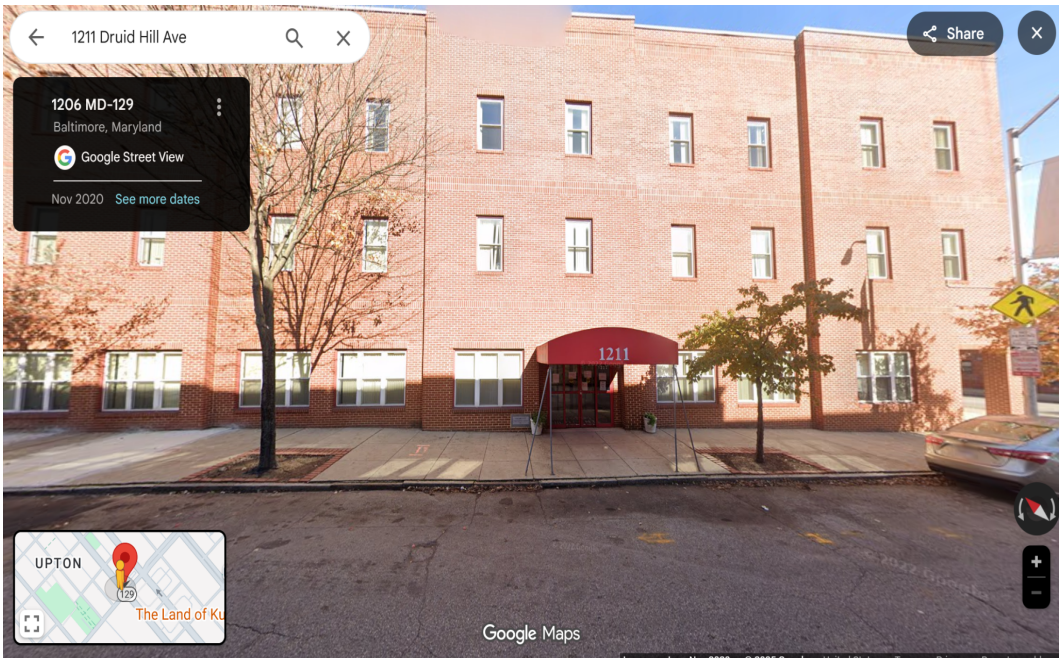
2) **Stabilize ownership.** Create a Marble Hill / West Baltimore Homeownership Protection Overlay for legacy civil-rights blocks.

3) **Targeted conversions only.** Use conditional-use approvals tied to sanitation capacity, curb management, and full code compliance.

4) **Transparency.** Publish citation outcomes for corner stores; suspend licenses upon repeated, unremedied violations.

5) **Infrastructure match.** Require trash storage, accessible egress, and curb-management plans before unit increases.

Block Photos & Context



Closing.
Baltimore is not a monolith; it’s a mosaic. Policy must reflect that diversity. On this single block in Marble Hill, we are already at the breaking point. Had 1206–1210 proceeded as planned, we’d be adding twelve more families into a corridor already strained by **corner-store loitering, constant foot traffic, random cars pulling up, blasting music, and daily trash from patrons**—all in plain view and largely unregulated. That wouldn’t be revitalization; it would be calamity, driving down **quality of life and property values**. We ask you to **revisit and amend these bills** so density follows enforcement and growth stabilizes—rather than destabilizes—our community.

Respectfully,
Charles Williams
Marble Hill Resident • District 11

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Murphy, Louisa <lmurphy@1919ic.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 11:24 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Opposition to COUNCIL BILL 25-0066

Dear Planning Commission,

I am a longtime resident of the historic Bellona-Gittings neighborhood, and I am writing to express my **strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066**, which would allow low-density multifamily dwelling units in areas currently zoned for single-family residences. I also oppose the related Bills 25-0064 and 25-0065, which would eliminate off-street parking requirements and reduce bulk and yard standards.

My family and I have lived on Gittings Avenue for 30 years. We chose this neighborhood specifically because of its single-family zoning, which has helped foster a close-knit, community-oriented environment. Bellona-Gittings experiences very low crime rates and maintains high property values compared to more densely zoned areas of the city.

While I recognize the national shortage of multifamily housing, Baltimore's more pressing issue is the lack of well-maintained, desirable single-family homes. The city already has numerous areas zoned for higher density (R-5 to R-10), making further rezoning unnecessary. Additionally, there are many vacant and abandoned properties already zoned for multifamily use that could be rehabilitated. I urge the Council to focus efforts on revitalizing those areas instead.

Is it the Council's intention to eliminate all areas in Baltimore City zoned exclusively for single-family dwellings? If so, what are the anticipated impacts on property values? It would be reasonable to anticipate values in neighborhoods impacted by your Bill to decline due to increased supply without a corresponding rise in demand—unless demand is artificially inflated by zoning changes that attract financial investors or absentee landlords. In that case, short-term price increases could come at the cost of long-term harm to historic neighborhoods and the communities they support.

The homes in my neighborhood are zoned R1-E and if that is changed to allow for greater density, MANY residents will move to the Country in search of less housing density. Please do NOT pass this terrible Bill #25-0066.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Louisa Murphy
102 Gitting Avenue, Baltimore 21212

Louisa Murphy
Business Development Officer
1919 INVESTMENT COUNSEL
Complexity to Clarity
One South Street, Suite 2500
Baltimore, MD 21202
Office:(410) 454-3141
Email: LMurphy@1919ic.com

Visit our website: 1919ic.com
Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Carol Simmons <cdsimmons1@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 9:50 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill #25-0066 Zoning...

City Council Bill # 25-0066--Zoning--Housing Options and Opportunity Act

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

I am opposed to the passage of this bill. I definitely could have a very deterimental effect on my community and many others.
Please vote against.
Thank you.
Carol Simmons

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mari Ross <mbr105@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 5:11 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill# 25-0066

As a resident of Baltimore City I am writing in opposition to City Council Bill #25-0066. If enacted this change would completely undermine the peaceful nature and safety of my single family home neighborhood. We chose this community over more lively chaotic community areas for the reason that it offered 'county' style living with City conveniences and are willing to pay the high taxes to support that decision. Passing this bill would be short term thinking with long term losses.
Sincerely,
Mari B. Ross

Sent from my iPhone

November 3, 2025

Baltimore City Council
100 N. Holliday Street, Suite 400
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Honorable Council Members:

I'd like to register my support for the passage of **Baltimore City Bill #25-0066.** I attended the open meeting recently with Councilman Dorsey and also listened to the mayor's forum on the legislation. I was on a Zoom call with the Mt. Washington Improvement Association and Councilman Schleifer as well. At MWIA's meeting, I had wanted to speak in support of the bill to tell my own story, but before I realized how the meeting was being organized, the roster of speakers was full. I'm disappointed that many of the perspectives shared by people in these public discussions were largely negative, and I believe an inaccurate perception has developed that doesn't reflect the positive aspects that this legislation could provide Baltimore's neighborhoods. Hence, I'm submitting written testimony to the City Council laying out the reasons why I'm supporting this bill.

My husband and I moved to Baltimore 23 years ago from Boston once I finished graduate school. We were delighted to find a wonderful old bungalow on a double lot. We set about repairing, restoring, painting, and planting a beautiful garden around the house, which is now 105 years old. We're blessed with 150 feet of street frontage that can accommodate parking for at least ten cars, but typically only accommodates two. We also have a parking pad in back. We have about three-quarters of an acre of land and a two-floor house of roughly 3,000 square feet. Interestingly, during the war years in the 1940s and subsequently in the 1950s, the second floor of our house was turned into an apartment to help ease the housing shortages that resulted from an influx of workers to Baltimore's booming factories. An existing bump-out containing stairs to the second floor and separate doorbell buttons still attest to the multi-family history of the house.

We're both getting older, and we'd dearly like to age in place. We love Baltimore, our neighbors, and the historic architecture of our house. The large rooms on the first floor would make for a generous two-bedroom space for us in retirement and allow us to live and more easily move about without needing to climb stairs. The second floor would also be perfect for a two-bedroom apartment; in fact, the original 1940s kitchen is still in place. Subdividing our home into two living units would require minor changes to the interior, and largely no alterations outside or to the footprint of the house. From the street, everything would look the same. We imagine that likely renters may be graduate students or medical residents finishing their programs at any of the city's major universities. We also imagine

that they'd be somewhat older and thus quieter tenants, focused on completing their degrees, then either moving on or staying in place after their studies are completed.

Thus, this bill is ideal for our situation. As I consider the neighborhood immediately around us, I don't know of any other owners who are planning to add tenant units, and I certainly don't know of anyone who would plan four units under one roof. I think those persons who are positing an influx of new neighbors and parking difficulties are weaving a scenario that is unlikely, and unnecessarily fraught. As Baltimore's population continues to decline, I believe it would be helpful to have legislation in place that both encourages new residents to settle here and allows existing residents an affordable option to stay here.

As I said, we're ready to retire, and extra income will be crucial to that goal. Our best retirement would be to avoid diminishing the equity in our home by selling it and buying a smaller (and due to today's interest rates) more expensive home in another neighborhood that would probably not be in Baltimore City. The transaction costs alone would severely eat into the money we've saved for retirement. Neither of us have had high-powered jobs; we've lived comfortably, but modestly. I'm the priest-in-charge of a small parish and have led services and pastoral care activities there for a more than a decade. It's been an immensely rewarding but modestly paid job, particularly in light of the doctoral education I've completed and the hands-on pastoral care I've provided for those seriously ill or near death. My husband is the marketing director for an engineering firm that's been in Baltimore for more than 114 years.

Baltimore City Bill #25-0066 would be the answer to our prayers of how we could frugally age in place during our retirements. The concerns that many people have raised about nightmarish situations of unruly, antisocial new residents just don't seem to me to be a very likely outcome. If this bill becomes law, we and our neighbors will continue to do what we've always done: keep roofs and gutters and downspouts in good repair; coax aging heating plants to keep churning out warmth after years of service; and pay for yard and other maintenance when our do-it-yourself days are over. Most of us are horrified at the increasing cost of utilities, which seem to be getting worse month by month.

Thank you for entering into our world, family history, and aspirations for our future, and for imagining how **Baltimore City Bill #25-0066** will help us and perhaps many other elderly Baltimore City residents remain in the city. I salute all the elected officials of Baltimore City government and how hard you're working to make the city a better place in which to live. You're showing us the way by example of what sterling, friendly, and supportive neighborhoods are all about.

With kindest regards,
The Rev. Dr. Neil O'Farrell
5702 Oakshire Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kate Simms <knbeagle@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2025 3:32 PM
To: 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)
Cc: FPRA; Keane, Timothy (DOP); Hasiuk, Ethan (City Council); Pruitt, Adler (City Council); Winpigler, Shea (City Council); Serrano Portillo, Kony (City Council); Davis, Kirsten A. (City Council); Testimony
Subject: Opposition to Bills 25-0064, 25-0065 and 25-0066

Dear City Council President 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 Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066. Eliminating parking requirements ignores current realities and puts additional burdens on already over saturated streets; additionally, we need to acknowledge that bike transportation is a Privilege not something available to most residents. We need legislation that fosters housing security, community stability, and pathways to ownership, 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 bills. 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 hearing last week, areas all over the city also share these concerns and are in opposition to these bills. If this Council is truly committed 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!

For bill 25-0065, while Baltimore has made progress towards our complete streets program, it also needs to consider that we are a city very far from being vehicle free. Not only, do we need many improvements to our transit system, we need to acknowledge that alternate transit options, such as bikes, are not accessible to all and in fact are a Privilege that many can not access, are far from the norm. Biking in particular is a privileged mode of transportation. One needs to be physically fit to ride a bike, have access to a flexible work schedule (you wouldn't want to bike home at 2am after a bar shift, or at 7am after a night shift in the middle of January), a consistent route which is safe for biking, a safe place and room to store

a bike, and not have either children or elder dependents who rely on them for transportation. Until better overall transportation options exist, there will is a need for parking. Eliminating parking requirements ignores current realities and puts additional burdens on already over saturated streets.

As for 25-0064 and 25-0066, 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. They do nothing to counter the great need for more affordable housing, and only leave 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 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 City Council to listen to your constituents and to vote against 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

> On Oct 20, 2025, at 9:24 AM, Kate Simms <knbeagle@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> Please consider taking a moment to read this article today for additional constituent viewpoints.
>
> https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2025/10/20/the-false-promise-of-zoning-bills-being-pitched-as-a-path-to-affordable-housing/#comments
>
> > On Oct 19, 2025, at 11:17 PM, Kate Simms <knbeagle@gmail.com> wrote:
> >
> > Hello Council President Cohen and members for City Council,

Please see attached letters of opposition to Bills 25-0064 and 25-0065. Both letters have been submitted as official testimony as well.
Not only am I strongly opposed to both bills and the potential negative impacts they could have on my community and many others throughout the city, I am also concerned with the lack of constituent awareness about these proposals that I am encountering while talking to people in various communities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Kate Simms

<Bill 25-0064.pdf>
<Bill 25-0065.pdf>

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Liz A. Bement <lizbement1@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, October 24, 2025 5:26 PM
To: 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); Parker, Mark (City Council)
Cc: Keane, Timothy (DOP); Hasiuk, Ethan (City Council); Pruitt, Adler (City Council); Winpigler, Shea (City Council); Serrano Portillo, Kony (City Council); Davis, Kirsten A. (City Council); Testimony
Subject: Opposition to Bills 25-0064, 25-0065 and 25-0066

Dear Council President Cohen and Members of the Baltimore City Council,

My name is Liz Bement, and I write to you as a resident of Upper Fells Point and an advocate for equitable urban development. I am writing to express my firm opposition to Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066.

These bills, while framed as progressive reforms, fail to address the structural challenges facing Baltimore's neighborhoods. Instead, they risk deepening inequities by removing safeguards that protect residents from speculative development and infrastructure strain.

Parking Is Not a Luxury—It's a Lifeline

Bill 25-0065 seeks to eliminate parking minimums—a proposal that may appear progressive but overlooks the everyday realities of working families. In my neighborhood, and in many others across Baltimore, public transit is unreliable and biking is simply not feasible for a large portion of residents. For many, owning a car is not a luxury—it's a necessity. People rely on personal vehicles to get to medical appointments, navigate shift work, transport children to daycare, commute to jobs in areas with little or no transit access, and respond to emergencies. Seniors and individuals with mobility challenges cannot be expected to bike to the grocery store or doctor's office. Removing parking requirements without first improving transportation infrastructure places an unfair burden on those who depend on cars to meet basic needs--we need investment in transit equity before we dismantle infrastructure that supports mobility for working-class residents.

Zoning Reform Must Be Rooted in Accountability

Bills 25-0064 and 25-0066 offer sweeping zoning changes that, in theory, could increase housing supply. But in practice, they open the door to unregulated development with little regard for affordability, ownership, or neighborhood character. The absence of meaningful guardrails means developers can reshape communities without input or accountability.

Baltimore's housing crisis is not due to a lack of buildable land—it's due to a lack of enforcement, a lack of ownership pathways, and a lack of trust. We have thousands of vacant properties that could be rehabilitated and transferred to residents through land trusts, co-ops, or community development corporations. These bills do not address that. Instead, they incentivize absentee landlords and short-term profit models.

We Need a People-First Approach

True reform would start with code enforcement, permit transparency, and community-led planning. It would prioritize affordability tied to income, not market rate. It would protect legacy residents from displacement and ensure that new development serves those who already live here—not just those who might move in.

I urge the Council to reconsider these bills and engage in deeper dialogue with residents across the city. We are not opposed to change—we are opposed to change that leaves us behind.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Liz Bement

Resident, Upper Fells Point

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Keondra Prier <president@reservoirhillassociation.org>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 9:42 AM
To: Jones, Jermaine (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council)
Cc: Torrence, James (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); McCray, Danielle (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Moore, Dana P (Mayor's Office); Testimony
Subject: Vote No on Bills 25-0064 or 25-0065

Dear Councilmembers Jones, Bullock, Glover, Porter, and Gray,

Passing the Housing Options and Opportunity Act bills will accelerate displacement and strip power from the longtime residents who built your districts. I expect you to protect our community, not enable developers.

If you vote for Bills 25-0064 or 25-0065 on Monday, it will be seen as a direct betrayal of the people who put you in office. We are organized, watching closely, and prepared to mobilize our neighbors to hold you accountable.

Councilman Dorsey doesn't represent or engage Black neighborhoods, yet the impact of these bills will fall hardest on the Black Butterfly. Standing against that takes genuine courage. We expect you to be brave enough to do what's right for your constituents.

Here is why this doesn't work:

- **Handouts to developers without guardrails is no path to affordable housing.**
  We are entering into a housing emergency and need radical change for affordable housing now. Proponents are using research that claims that a housing boom in wealthier neighborhoods will create affordable housing here. We call BS. It's no time for half measures!

- **This is an attack on the Black Butterfly.**
  We want to keep our neighbors in our communities. This type of zoning package has shown to displace Black communities (see: New York and Washington, D.C.)

- **Options Opportunities: Big Developers v Neighbors**
  We are being pushed against the wall. Our taxes are financing big developers who use our money to make decisions that work for them. All take no give. Instead we want to see actions like cooperative housing and rent stabilization that have shown to keep our neighbors in place.

Sincerely,

Keondra Prier
District 7 Resident

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: cofarrell@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 6:09 PM
To: Testimony; Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov.
Subject: Testimony in support of Baltimore City Bill #25-0066

Dear Baltimore City Council Members:

I want to include my support for the passage of Baltimore City Bill #25-0066. I attended the open meeting last week with Councilman Ryan Dorsey and also listened this week to the mayor's forum on the legislation. I also on this week's Zoom call with the Mt. Washington Improvement Association and Councilman Schleifer as well. At MWIA's meeting, I had wanted to speak in support of the bill to tell my own story, but before I realized how the meeting was being organized, the roster of speakers was full. I'm disappointed that the only perspectives shared by people in that public discussion were largely negative, and I believe an inaccurate perception has developed that doesn't reflect the positive aspects that this legislation could provide to the neighborhood.

My husband Stephen and I moved to Baltimore 23 years ago from Boston once I finished graduate school. Mt. Washington was the only neighborhood we looked at, and we were delighted to find a wonderful old bungalow on Oakshire Road on a double lot. We set about repairing, restoring, painting, and planting a beautiful garden around the house. We are blessed with 150 feet of street frontage that can accommodate parking, and also have a parking pad in back for two cars. We have about three-quarters of an acre of land, and a two-floor house of roughly 3,000 square feet. Interestingly, during the war years in the 1940s and subsequently in the 1950s, the second floor of our house was turned into an apartment to help ease the housing shortages that resulted from an influx of workers to Baltimore's booming factories. A bump-out

containing stairs to the second floor and separate doorbell buttons still attest to the multi-family history of the house.

Stephen and I are getting older, and we would like to age in place. We love Mt. Washington, our neighbors, and the historic architecture of our house. The large rooms on the first floor would make for a generous two-bedroom space for us in retirement and allow us to live and more easily move about without needing to climb stairs. The second floor would also be perfect for a two-bedroom apartment; in fact, the original 1940s kitchen is still in place. Subdividing our home into two living units would require minor changes to the interior, and nearly no alterations outside or to the footprint of the house. From the street, everything would look the same. We are interested in focusing on renters who would be graduate students or medical residents finishing their programs at Hopkins or any of the city's other major universities. The apartment would be rented furnished. We envision somewhat older tenants, focused on completing their degrees, then either moving on or staying in place when their studies are completed.

Thus, the bill being considered by the city council is ideal for our situation. As I consider the neighborhood immediately around us, I don't know of any other owners who are planning to add tenant units, and I certainly don't know of anyone who would plan four units under one roof. I think those persons who are positing an influx of new neighbors and parking difficulties are weaving a scenario that is unlikely, and unnecessarily fraught. We and our closest neighbors are enthusiastic about the number of young families that are rearing children, and we have noticed with great fondness how many of those children have been peeling away to college and getting started with their own careers, families, and lives. Perhaps they'll return to Mt. Washington one day and buy their own homes here if that's still affordable.

As I said, Stephen and I are ready to retire and travel and garden and age in place. Extra income will be crucial to that goal. Happily, we're lucky to have some equity in the home where we've lived for years. Our best retirement would be to stay where we are and avoid diminishing that equity by selling our house and buying a smaller, and due to today's interest rates, more expensive home in another neighborhood. The transaction costs would severely eat into our equity. Neither of us have had high-powered jobs. We've lived

comfortably, but modestly. I'm the priest-in-charge of St. John's Mt. Washington and have led services and pastoral care activities at Springwell Senior Living for a more than a decade. It's been a modestly paid job, particularly in light of the doctoral education I've completed in theology and philosophy and the hands-on pastoral care I've provided for those seriously ill or near death. Stephen is the marketing director for an engineering firm that's been in Baltimore for more than 114 years.

Baltimore City Bill #25-0066 would be the answer to our prayers of how we could frugally age in place during our retirements. The concerns that many people have raised about nightmare situations of unruly, antisocial new residents just don't seem to me to be a very likely outcome. The owners of the houses that surround us will do what we've learned to do so well: keeping roofs and gutters and downspouts in good repair; eking aging heating plants to keep churning out warmth after years of service; replacing sump pumps after this summer's deluges; and paying for yard maintenance when our lawn mowing days are over. Most of us are horrified at the increasing cost of utilities, which seem to be getting worse month by month.

Thank you for entering into our world, family history, and aspirations for our future, and for imagining how Baltimore City Bill #25-0066 will help us have good retirements. I salute all the elected officials of Baltimore City government and how hard you're working to make the city a better place in which to live. You're showing us the way by example of what sterling, friendly, and supportive neighborhoods are all about.

With kindest regards,

The Rev. Dr. Neil O'Farrell
5702 Oakshire Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Gregory Friedman <gfriedman@agmcommercial.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 6, 2025 3:36 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: concerns about the zoning measure under consideration allowign houses to be demised.

To the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore -

I am writing today to express my grave concern about the bill pending before the council that would allow homes in single family neighborhoods to be subdivided based on the square footage. We have a house on the very northern edge of the city near Boys Latin on a street called Wilmary Lane. Its a quiet 9 house cul-de-sac of 3200 foot homes built in the 60s. We have a mix of retirees (Judge Joseph Caplan was a neighbor) all the way down to families with young kids.

Yitzy, you may recall my reaching out to you about a house just outside of our street which was purchased for the intent of housing 6 unrelated post graduate students. It was done under the guise of the fact that all were members of the same church. I can testify to the impact after those students moved in - we immediately saw that all parking on the street was taken (6 cars plus a few extras). We also saw cars going very fast down our 100 yard long street to turn around in the cul-de-sac. Of course, at any time, one of the kids could have come out from between two of the now parked cars and been injured. All of this stemmed from JUST ONE HOUSE!! Personally, i dont really care what people do inside their house or how many people stay there. The critical issue is dealing with the ancillary impacts that occur. Parking is primary, but it also leads to food wrappers, empty water bottles, etc. And these were very nice people that lived there!!

I ask you to deeply consider ways to mitigate the impacts that the bill under consideration would have on neighborhoods such as ours if it were to proceed. If I may offer a suggestion (and I come at this as an advocate for finding ways to increase the housing supply):

1. Create a restricition for houses that are subdivided in single family zones such that there are 2 parking spots per unit
2. Create a restricition for houses that are subdivided in single family zones so that each "unit" must have its own bathroom and kitchen
3. Create a restricition for houses that are subdivided in single family zones so that each "unit" must have two seperate means of non-overlapping eagress.

I'm sure there are smarter people that can suggest other items, but my hope is that if a bill such as the one under consideration were to be passed, it would at least make it so that anyone subdiving is truly making an investment and creating seperate units instead of simply calling a bedroom a unit and overcrowding a neighborhood.

I would be excited to support you guys in your continued public service if these measures were considered and included. I cannot express our concern strongly enough.

Thank you as always for your time and consideration.

Gregory Friedman
AGM Commercial Real Estate Advisors
5900 Wilmary Lane
Baltimore, MD 21210
M - 410-294-7277
gfriedman@agmcommercial.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Jeri delambo <jerinick@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:01 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: CCB 25-0066

I oppose CB 25-0066. This bill will reduce homeownership opportunities throughout the City and has the potential to greatly increase population densities in all neighborhoods. It will incentivize investors to purchase properties and convert them to low quality rental units at the expense of neighborhood stability and it will rob homeowners of the equity they have accrued in their homes.

Jeri Delambo

Sent from my iPhone

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mary peacock <mpeacock243@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:14 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Oppisition to ccb 25-0066

Dear to whom it may concern.
I would like to express my opposition to
CCB 25-0066.
There is a tremendous need for better business investors in the area but i do not think increased population would help. The houses would be divided up , yards neglected, parking affected. and most personal to me, my proper Value would decrease.
There are beautiful houses in yhis neighborhood but every ine thats turned unto a multi unit rental is neglected and butchered.
Thank you for our consideration ,
Mary Peacock
3417 Glenmore Ave 21214

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: kmills25 <kmills25@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:38 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Opposition to Bill 25-0066

I just wanted you to be aware of my oppositionn to Bill 25-0066, the multi-unit housing bill that will severely damage our communities, reduce homeowner occupied housing, snarl our neighborhood streets with traffic and insufficient parking, stress our infrastructure system of schools, utilities, roads and public safety. There is little doubt that the controls needed to review plans, inspect construction, provide code enforcement and maintain cleanliness will be challenged well beyond capacities today and in the future.

Ken Mills
Lauraville

CCB 25-0066

Here are a few talking points in opposition to the Bill.

- It incentivizes investors and absentee landlords to convert single family dwellings to multi-family rental units
- Greatly increases the population and vehicular density in neighborhoods.
- Will increase the cost of housing by reducing the inventory of single family houses available to homebuyers.
- Increases the burden on public utilities, such as streets, trash collection, sewer and water services, etc.
- Undermine neighborhood stability by increasing the transient rental population.
- Will Increase traffic and parking congestion in neighborhoods
- Further Reduce the rate of homeownership in the city, which has been on the decline for the past two decades.
- Conflicts with the City's effort to promote homeownership and maintain single family neighborhoods and the City tax base.

Baltimore City Council Land Use & Transportation Committee
November 16, 2025

RE: Personal Testimony on Bill 25-0066

Among Baltimore's varied housing stock, my living situation is unconventional. I'm the owner of a three-unit row home in District 7, where I live in one dwelling unit and rent the other two units. But **I would not want to see more multi-unit row houses across the city**, which would be a direct effect of city council bill 25-0066 if it becomes law. In its current form, this bill does not redress Baltimore's housing challenges and instead would exacerbate the inequities that negatively affect Baltimore's row house neighborhoods.

Baltimore does not have the demand for more housing to justify making it easier to add multiple apartments to row homes. Usually, population pressures motivate increases in density in a city. The row home where I live was subdivided during Baltimore's population boom of the mid-twentieth century, when there was high demand for labor to power the city's industrial base and before the modern zoning code. At its apex, Baltimore's population was more than 1,000,000 people and since then has halved. It was good news this year when Baltimore's population increased for the first time in a decade according to the latest Census numbers, yet the growth amounted to less than 1,000 people, well below 1 percent of the population. If there truly were demand for more housing, Baltimore would not have upwards of 10,000 chronically vacant row houses.

Row houses already are dense housing stock. Single-family row homes were designed to be dense city living. Legacy multi-unit row homes like mine already add even more density to their blocks, and unfortunately their renters tend to rent from absentee property owners who minimally care for their properties. The row house on one side of where I live is another multi-unit property owned by someone who lives outside of Baltimore. I've had to work with him and the residents of the building to ensure the trash and recycling bins are regularly set out on the right days. I convinced him to make his property look better by planting up his front patch of open soil myself. He only visits the property when there is a serious issue, like when he came out this summer to remediate a roach infestation.

Weaker housing markets already have an abundance of multi-unit housing. So many row houses in weaker housing markets are in a state of divestment today from the reverberations of redlining and blockbusting. For years, investors and developers have targeted row houses that are in rough shape in divested neighborhoods for conversion into multi-unit properties for their own profit, often without proper permitting and licensing, and precisely where there is not demand for more housing. Bill 25-0066 would exacerbate these trends while eliminating more single-family row homes for families to live, send their children to local public schools, and build generational wealth. The row house on the other side of where I live was previously a multi-unit property that fell into serious disrepair. After years of vacancy, the conditions in the immediate housing market were right for a developer to convert it back to a single-family home, and now the home is cared for and I routinely talk with my neighbors there. Weaker housing markets do not favor converting multi-unit properties back to single-family housing, even though it would bring needed stability to their neighborhoods.

Owner-occupants are the key to making row house neighborhoods flourish. Particularly in weaker housing markets, promoting policies and programs for people to live in the row homes they own brings stability to row house neighborhoods. Owner-occupants take care of their home and the block around it in ways that redound to the good of the surrounding community. Over the years, I've seen the block and nearby park where I live grow more lively and public safety improve as more owner-occupants have taken the initiative to care for the place where they live.

More apartments does not automatically make them more affordable. Apartments already vary in affordability depending on where they're located in Baltimore, regardless of how many are available for rent. Bill 25-0066 does nothing to ensure that apartments in stronger housing markets like mine are just as affordable as apartments in weaker housing markets, nor does it strengthen renter protections for safe, stable housing.

Baltimore already has row homes of all sizes that can meet residents' varied housing needs, such as mine. In contrast to bill 25-0066, the following ideas would strengthen Baltimore's row house neighborhoods:

- Through mutually reinforcing city laws, regulations, and rules, focus on ensuring all row house neighborhoods have vibrant communities, which depend on having a healthy base of owner-occupants, particularly families.

- Promote existing resources that make rental housing and homeownership opportunities more affordable and, where needed, create new programs for affordable housing, especially with rehabilitating chronically vacant row houses.

- Allow adding a second dwelling unit to larger row houses by right, as recommended by the Planning Commission in 2023, to make them more affordable for owner-occupants and provide more housing for renters.

- Target housing growth in areas in Baltimore with the right conditions to increase density, such as constructing more housing near transportation hubs or repurposing larger buildings for residential use.

Row houses and their distinct neighborhoods are one of the defining features of Charm City. Changes to the zoning code should strengthen their vitality for the good of everyone who lives in Baltimore.

David Nyweide
1833 Bolton St.
District 7

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: anna brown <goodwood28@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 16, 2025 5:04 PM
To: Brandon M Scott; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); rdorsey; Testimony
Subject: City Council Hearing on CCB 25-0066 to eliminate Single Family Zoning In Baltimore City

As a longtime Baltimore resident and homeowner, I am strongly opposed to this bill that threatens the character and charm of our city's neighborhoods. The elimination of existing zoning laws in order to build four story apartment buildings next to homes and convert single family dwellings to multiple occupancy housing goes against everything we've understood about creating healthy neighborhoods. This bill will reduce homeownership opportunities throughout the City and has the potential to greatly increase population densities in all neighborhoods. It will incentivize investors to purchase properties and convert them to low quality rental units at the expense of neighborhood stability and it will rob homeowners of the equity they have accrued in their homes. Additionally, making no provision for parking for the increased numbers and prohibiting curb cuts for parking pads for homeowners sets up predictable stress and distress.

Please, abandon this plan. Those of us who have supported Baltimore with our property taxes for decades will be driven out, leaving you with folks who will, for the most part, be just passing through accelerating Baltimore's further decline.

Sincerely,

Anna Brown
Lauraville

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council)
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 6:17 AM
To: James Prost; billhamilton@mail.com
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; rdorsey; Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Brandon M Scott
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

Bill,

I disagree with your argument that "There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors."

I would assume most members of the council, and of the public, would disagree as well.

That being said, regarding the concerns that you, Jim, Kevin, David, Charlie, and other members of BHCA have brought up regarding the actual impact this package will have on housing cost and affordability in Baltimore, I can assure you that I support the Planning Commission's proposed legislative amendment that:

"Within three years of the effective date of this Ordinance, and within every three years thereafter, the Director of Planning and Planning Commission shall conduct and present to the Mayor and City Council an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Ordinance and recommend its continuance, modification, or termination. The evaluation report shall include, but need not be limited to, the number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance, the number of dwelling units each structure contains, the gross floor area of each dwelling unit, the zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located, and affordability of these units. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning shall ensure that such data is collected to permit production and delivery of the required report."

You and I are operating on different predictions of what impact the 25-0066 (and it's companion bills) will have on the City. I fully support requiring the impact to be publicly studied and evaluated on a mandatory recurring basis.

Zac Blanchard
Councilmember, District 11
Office: (410) 396-4816

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2025 1:51 PM
To: billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com>
Cc: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council) <Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

Very well said.

On Sat, Nov 15, 2025 at 11:34 AM billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com> wrote:

Hello Zac,

I write to unerscore my opposition to Bill 25-0066, which would make it easier to subdivide large row houses into four units.

This is by far the more ill-conceived of these bills whose sponsors wrongheadly claim will make owning and renting residential property in the city cheaper and easier for ordinary citizens. It is particularly harmful for my neighborhood in your district. For old and stable neighborhoods like ours, passage of this bill is an open invitation for out-of-town speculators and real estate flippers to buy and cut up the remaining historic single and two-unit rowhouses that are the soul of Bolton Hill.

The prices for these homes, for the most part already beyond $500,000 apiece, will go up, not down, as investors compete to acquire them and chop them up, pricing out residential buyers. As you were told (in my presence) by a longtime realtor in our neighborhood, she regularly hears *already* from affluent parents of incoming students at MICA and other colleges who like the idea of buying a big residence and making it available through individual rental agreements to students as tax-advantaged,informal dormitories. Where this has happened in the past, the city has done nothing to enforce existing zoning and rental requirements. To this market you will now be adding in new investor groups and corporations from other states who can pay these prices and profit by dividing up the properties they acquire and then neglecting their upkeep.

There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors. We also have a growing list of ill-managed and poorly maintained properties owned by absentee landlords. The city does not enforce existing standards. This bill inevitably will make that neglected property list longer.

I urge you to rethink your support for this proposal.

Bill Hamilton
248 W Lafayette Ave

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 10:11 AM
To: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Laria, Jon (DOP)
Cc: billhamilton@mail.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; rdorsey; Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Torrence, James (City Council); dnyweide@yahoo.com; Lee Tawney; D. Druckman; Charlie Duff; Charles Williams
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

Zack,

We will have to respectfully disagree on the current real estate conditions in Bolton Hill and the unanticipated unintended negative consequences of the cumulative impact of the three bills (eliminating parking minimums, reducing site coverage and by right allowing conversion of single family homes to up to four rental units.I would urge you to speak to real estate brokers active in Bolton Hill.

I would also suggest that at a MINIMUM any impact evaluation can NOT wait three years. It must be begin immediately ,establishing in detail ,EXISTING housing supply and characteristics in EACH ot City's neighborhoods ; and continuously MONITOR the changes taking place , the likely factors causing these changes; and evaluate the impact on housing AFFORDABILITY both by neighborhood and City wide.A detailed before and after impact STUDY DESIGN should be in place BEFORE THE LEGISLATION IS APPROVED. The impact evaluation must include a robust and fully involved citizen advisory committee. I would be delighted to participate in a citizen advisor committee to address these important impact issues

BEFORE SUCH DRAMATIC CHANGES
ARE MADE TO THE CITY'S ZONING CODE A MUCH MORE ROBUST AND SIGNIFICANT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS MUST TAKE PLACE !!

James L Prost AICP
205 W. Lanvale Street
Baltimore MD 21217
Jprostmd@gmail.com
410-212-8222

On Mon, Nov 17, 2025 at 6:17 AM Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov> wrote:
Bill,

I disagree with your argument that "There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors."

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Zac Blanchard
Councilmember, District 11
Office: (410) 396-4816

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2025 1:51 PM
To: billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com>
Cc: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council)

<John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council) <Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

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The prices for these homes, for the most part already beyond $500,000 apiece, will go up, not down, as investors compete to acquire them and chop them up, pricing out residential buyers. As you were told (in my presence) by a longtime realtor in our neighborhood, she regularly hears *already* from affluent parents of incoming students at MICA and other colleges who like the idea of buying a big residence and making it available through individual rental agreements to students as tax-advantaged,informal dormitories. Where this has happened in the past, the city has done nothing to enforce existing zoning and rental requirements. To this market you will now be adding in new investor groups and corporations from other states who can pay these prices and profit by dividing up the properties they acquire and then neglecting their upkeep.

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I urge you to rethink your support for this proposal.

Bill Hamilton
248 W Lafayette Ave

billhamilton@mail.com
202 641-0350

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Avendui Lacovara <avendui@monumentsothebysrealty.com>
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 12:58 PM
To: billhamilton@mail.com
Cc: Charlie Duff; David Nyweide; Kevin Cross; Lee Tawney; Dolph Druckman; James Prost; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; rdorsey; Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Brandon M Scott
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

Good afternoon Zac,

Could you please provide the data to support your position that there is not a shortage and let us know what increase of density would then trigger a reconsideration of the current policy? Per your email:

"Within three years of the effective date of this Ordinance, and within every three years thereafter, the Director of Planning and Planning Commission shall conduct and present to the Mayor and City Council an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Ordinance and recommend its continuance, modification, or termination. The evaluation report shall include, but need not be limited to, the number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance, the number of dwelling units each structure contains, the gross floor area of each dwelling unit, the zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located, and affordability of these units. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning shall ensure that such data is collected to permit production and delivery of the required report."

For example, is the goal to add an additional 400 households to the Bolton Hill neighborhood? If so, then this cannot be achieved by subdivision of existing properties alone. What mix of rental to homeownership is the target?

Could you point me to the current figures for Bolton Hill?

I am assuming you must have data in hand so that you can compare to the data collected in three years time. If the data is not currently in hand, would it not be better to have the data in hand, analyze it and then pass bills accordingly with guardrails in place if the figures change drastically within the first two years of implementation?

If the info is only collected and presented in three years after the bill is passed we will miss our first opportunity to assess the impact from years 1-3
.

Thank you for advance for any information you can provide.

All my best,
Avendui

Avendui Lacovara, Realtor
Senior Vice President
Monument Sotheby's International Realty
443-326-8674 direct/text
Avendui@MonumentSothebysRealty.com

On Mon, Nov 17, 2025 at 10:53 AM billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com> wrote:
I'm sharing this since some of you are mentioned and apparently not copied. Feel free to pass it on to others.

Bill Hamilton
billhamilton@mail.com
202 641-0350

> **Sent:** Monday, November 17, 2025 at 6:17 AM
> **From:** "Blanchard, Zachary (City Council)" <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
> **To:** "James Prost" <jprostmd@gmail.com>, "billhamilton@mail.com" <billhamilton@mail.com>
> **Cc:** "Cohen, Zeke (City Council)" <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>, "Testimony" <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>, "rdorsey" <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>, "Middleton, Sharon (City Council)" <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>, "Parker, Mark (City Council)" <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>, "Gray, Paris (City Council)" <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>, "Bullock, John (City Council)" <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>, "Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council)" <Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>, "Brandon M Scott" <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>
> **Subject:** Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066
>
> Bill,
>
> I disagree with your argument that "There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors."

I would assume most members of the council, and of the public, would disagree as well.

That being said, regarding the concerns that you, Jim, Kevin, David, Charlie, and other members of BHCA have brought up regarding the actual impact this package will have on housing cost and affordability in Baltimore, I can assure you that I support the Planning Commission's proposed legislative amendment that:

"Within three years of the effective date of this Ordinance, and within every three years thereafter, the Director of Planning and Planning Commission shall conduct and present to the Mayor and City Council an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Ordinance and recommend its continuance, modification, or termination. The evaluation report shall include, but need not be limited to, the number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance, the number of dwelling units each structure contains, the gross floor area of each dwelling unit, the zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located, and affordability of these units. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning shall ensure that such data is collected to permit production and delivery of the required report."

You and I are operating on different predictions of what impact the 25-0066 (and it's companion bills) will have on the City. I fully support requiring the impact to be publicly studied and evaluated on a mandatory recurring basis.

Zac Blanchard
Councilmember, District 11
Office: (410) 396-4816

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2025 1:51 PM
To: billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com>
Cc: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council) <Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

Very well said.

On Sat, Nov 15, 2025 at 11:34 AM billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com> wrote:

Hello Zac,

I write to unerscore my opposition to Bill 25-0066, which would make it easier to subdivide large row houses into four units.

This is by far the more ill-conceived of these bills whose sponsors wrongheadly claim will make owning and renting residential property in the city cheaper and easier for ordinary citizens. It is particularly harmful for my neighborhood in your district. For old and stable neighborhoods like ours, passage of this bill is an open invitation for out-of-town speculators and real estate flippers to buy and cut up the remaining historic single and two-unit rowhouses that are the soul of Bolton Hill.

The prices for these homes, for the most part already beyond $500,000 apiece, will go up, not down, as investors compete to acquire them and chop them up, pricing out residential buyers. As you were told (in my presence) by a longtime realtor in our neighborhood, she regularly hears *already* from affluent parents of incoming students at MICA and other colleges who like the idea of buying a big residence and making it available through individual rental agreements to students as tax-advantaged,informal dormitories. Where this has happened in the past, the city has done nothing to enforce existing zoning and rental requirements. To this market you will now be adding in new investor groups and corporations from other states who can pay these prices and profit by dividing up the properties they acquire and then neglecting their upkeep.

There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors. We also have a growing list of ill-managed and poorly maintained properties owned by absentee landlords. The city does not enforce existing standards. This bill inevitably will make that neglected property list longer.

I urge you to rethink your support for this proposal.

Bill Hamilton
248 W Lafayette Ave

billhamilton@mail.com
202 641-0350

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

Please accept this email as written testimony regarding Bill 25-0066.

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to respectfully but firmly voice my opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066.

I write from the perspective of a homeowner in Historic Marble Hill, a legacy Black neighborhood that has fought for decades to regain stability, preserve historic properties, and protect longtime residents from displacement and speculation. My concern is not with the idea of adding housing options, but with the way this particular bill would land on fragile blocks like mine.

The Mayor's Own Words About Homeownership

In a 2023 video about purchasing his own home in Baltimore, Mayor Brandon Scott spoke movingly about what homeownership means to him and to this city. He talked about:

- Dreaming of owning a home since childhood,
- Seeing homeownership as a way to build legacy and generational wealth,
- Wanting to plant roots and build memories with neighbors,
- Believing that every Baltimorean should have the chance to purchase a home, and
- Emphasizing that when residents are able to buy homes, we strengthen the entire city.

Those sentiments resonate deeply with many of us in West Baltimore who have worked hard to buy, maintain, and stabilize homes on blocks that were once written off.

Bill 25-0066, however, moves policy in a very different direction.

How Bill 25-0066 Undercuts Those Goals

Allowing by-right subdivision of rowhouses into up to four units may be framed as "gentle density," but in neighborhoods like Marble Hill, Upton, Madison Park, and Druid Heights, the most immediate impact will not be increased opportunity for families to purchase homes. Instead, it will be:

- Increased speculative investment,
- More cash buyers outbidding first-time homebuyers,
- Faster conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit rentals, and

- A rise in absentee ownership and instability.

For over two decades, Baltimore has invested millions of dollars to encourage homeownership and stabilize legacy communities, particularly for Black residents. Bill 25-0066 risks reversing that progress by making our already-vulnerable blocks even more attractive to investors and less accessible to families who want to plant roots.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Baltimore is a city of very different neighborhoods and block conditions. On some blocks, added density may be appropriate and even welcome. On others—where there are already high vacancies, historic properties, weak code enforcement, and limited infrastructure—blanket upzoning without safeguards can do real harm.

On my block alone, churches, child-care centers, community anchors, and longtime homeowners share the same short stretch of rowhouses. Our concern is not about "keeping people out," but about maintaining a balance that allows existing residents to stay, new homeowners to buy in, and historic character to survive.

Enforcement, Infrastructure, and Reality on the Ground

Baltimore already struggles with:

- Code enforcement backlogs,
- Illegal or unsafe conversions,
- Parking and infrastructure strain, and
- Limited capacity to monitor the effects of zoning changes.

Layering new by-right density on top of these existing challenges, without a clear enforcement and monitoring plan, is not responsible policy—especially in communities that have repeatedly asked for targeted, thoughtful, block-sensitive approaches rather than blanket changes.

A Better Path Forward

I fully agree that Baltimore needs more housing options. But we can pursue that goal in ways that:

- Protect and expand homeownership opportunities,
- Prioritize legacy residents and first-time buyers,
- Respect neighborhood history and current conditions, and

- Include real community participation in shaping zoning changes.

That vision is completely aligned with what the Mayor described in his own homeownership story—building legacy, planting roots, and giving every Baltimorean a fair chance to own.

Closing

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Land Use & Transportation Committee to vote NO on Bill 25-0066 in its current form, or at minimum, to pause and redesign this legislation with neighborhood-specific safeguards, a robust enforcement plan, and explicit protections for homeownership in vulnerable communities.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of residents like me who are simply asking that our hard-won stability not be put at risk.

Sincerely,

Charles Williams

Historic Marble Hill Resident

Baltimore, Maryland

To: Matthew Peters

Re:

1. CCB #25-0064, Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments
2. CCB 25-0065 -Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements and
3. CCB 25-0066 – Housing Options and Opportunities Act

We, the undersigned owners and/or residents of property in Ridgely's Delight are writing in opposition to all three of the proposed bills mentioned above. We have addressed all 3 in one letter since these proposed changes are essentially joined at the hip, having all been included in a single bill in the past, which are meant to work together. We ask that this letter be included as a separate letter of opposition for the record for all 3 bills.

The stated purposes of these bill are to:

1. Promote increased development of low-density, multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts, including North Ridgely's Delight, which is zoned R8, by establishing a new category of "low density, multi-family housing which permits development that would increase density up to 4 dwelling units."
2. To eliminate the current requirement that off-street parking be provided for any additional units.
3. Reduces the amount of yard and greenspace required for properties.

Ridgely's residential properties are zoned R-8. These proposed changes would no longer be permitted as a conditional use only. All required off-street parking requirements would be removed for all residential uses in our neighborhood.

We are opposed to these proposed changes for the following reasons.

1. Impact on infrastructure
    a. The homes in Ridgely's primarily date from the early to late 19th century. The infrastructure is also quite old and we have experienced a lot of problems with it.
        i. We had a flood beneath the 700 block of Dover St. that lasted for almost a week and damaged a number of houses because the water turnoff valve did not work.
        ii. We routinely have flooding in some areas because the storm drains cannot handle the rain water when there is a heavy downpour.
        iii. We have experienced a number of water pipe breaks.
            1. Several years ago, we experienced a major water line break in the center of the 600 block of Portland. The break was at least 6 feet below the street and caused major flooding for days.

b. Increased development will lead to a reduction in green spaces, with the attendant negative environmental and quality-of-life impacts that come with that. But, this will also have infrastructure impacts. As we reduce the areas that serve to absorb rain water, we put an additional burden on our already overtaxed storm drain system. We already have flooding in heavy down pours because the storm drains cannot handle the demands. Further reduction of green space will only exacerbate this problem.
c. We have added 84 new dwelling units since 2019 and we are in the process of adding 9 more units right now in North Ridgely's. This is an increase in density of almost 50% and we do not know how the existing infrastructure will be able to handle more increases. We are concerned about further increases in density without the improvements to our sewage, water and storm drain systems that we hope will be coming our way as a result of the agreement with the EPA.

2. Impact of eliminating all parking requirements
    a. As evidenced by a city-run parking survey, there is already not enough parking in our neighborhood. We are a geographic island. Because of this, neighbors have to cross MLK and try to find parking in the deserted commercial areas of Pigtown when we return to the neighborhood at night, which is the only adjacent area with any large amount of parking.
    b. We know the city would like to see residents move towards the use of public transportation, and many of our residents would like to be able to do that, but the current public transportation system is frankly terrible. Until a decent and reliable public transportation system is put in place, it is premature to try to force city residents to give up their cars by failing to plan for adequate parking.
    c. We live in a food desert. For many residents, especially those of us who are older, it is impossible to try to use public transportation to purchase groceries and transport them home. And, while delivery is an option for some, the cost is prohibitive for many residents. The availability of fresh, nutritious food must also be addressed before the city tries to force residents to give up their cars.
3. Impact of an increase in density on the historic nature of the neighborhood.
    a. Ridgely's Delight is an historic neighborhood and much of the historic feel of the neighborhood comes from the current density, which varies between the older, smaller properties in our area of the north and the larger properties with double lots in the south, which are ripe for development if this change passes.
    b. Under current CHAP guidelines, modern in-fill in historic neighborhoods should be clearly non-historic/modern in appearance.

        i. At this time, we have very few modern in-fill properties. But if this bill passes, we should expect that situation to change, thus dramatically reducing both the current spacing and appearance of properties in a manner that reduces the historic nature of the neighborhood.
    c. Over their life-span, a number of larger properties in the neighborhood were split up into multiple apartments. In more recent years, a number of these houses were returned to single-family units in an attempt to respect the historic nature of these houses. This proposed change would encourage breaking these properties up into multiple apartments again, thus also moving to make these properties less historic in nature again.
4. Impact on trash, rats and appearance
    a. The houses that have been divided into multiple apartments in our neighborhood have insufficient city-provided trash cans to handle the amount of trash they are creating and landlords are not paying for either extra cans and/or private pickup. This leads to overflowing trashcans, dumping of garbage, out-of-control rat populations and the poor/dirty appearance of the city as a whole.
5. Impact of density on housing costs
    a. Underlying this bill is an assumption that increased density will lead to decreased costs and more affordable housing. However, as previously mentioned. We are in the midst of increasing our density of housing by about 50 % and that has NOT led to decreased costs. Most of the new units are tiny (less than 400 sq. ft,) and the proposed costs we have seen are in the $1,400-$1,600 per month range. So, increased density has NOT led to decreased costs in our neighborhood.
6. Impact on property values
    a. Many property owners, particularly owner/occupants buy their properties as an investment.
    b. This proposal is likely to lead to increased purchasing by developers and those interested in rental properties, which will lead to these properties being broken up into multiple apartments, single room rentals and AirBnBs.
    c. You cannot build a neighborhood without a core of owner/occupants and this bill provides significant disincentives for owner/occupants to remain in their homes since it is likely to drive overall property values down.
7. Impact on diversity
    d. A number of older and/or mobility-challenged owner/occupants feel that proposals like this are designed to drive them out of the city.
    e. Those who can drive, need their cars since public transportation is difficult and unreliable for those who have any level of mobility challenges. They are also more likely to be targets of crime, so waiting on city streets for buses is

dangerous for them and riding alternative transportation such as bikes and scooters is not possible for many of them.

f. We invested in our properties as part of our long-term plan for financial security in retirement. But, if the city is going to undertake policies that reduce the value of our investment, the only smart thing to do is to leave the city.

In conclusion, we think a far better way to increase the city's tax base (i.e., population) and provide more affordable housing that becomes an investment for owner/occupants instead of investors would be to develop a program that truly values and promotes racial and spatial equity by developing a city-government program that encourages and supports efforts by residents to buy and develop vacant properties. This should help to stabilize and enhance many communities that are both in need of and deserving of such government support. This would be more consistent with the many equity and justice commitments officially and publicly stated by the city—e.g., by the Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Etc.

We fear that diverting efforts away from addressing how to remedy the overwhelming number of vacant properties throughout the city, many located in communities that have large numbers of African Americans and other people of color living in them, will simply perpetuate and exacerbate the many attendant problems associated with these vacant properties (e.g., higher crime rates, dumping, vandalism, deteriorating property values, rats, etc.), which will lead to further destabilization of these neighborhoods and communities. This, will make things worse, instead of better, for everyone, but especially for the communities that this bill is designed to help most. We strongly suggest that it would be better to develop such a program than to simply change the zoning rules and hope they lead to the desired outcome.

For all the reasons listed above, we are opposed to the proposed bill. Thank you for considering our unput.

(Note, all addresses below are located in Baltimore, MD, 21230. If the signer's name indicates "owner," it means that the signer owns but does not reside at that address.)

1) Paul Wilder
(owner)
705 Dover St.

2) Michele Vitolo
(owner)
719/721 Dover St.

3) Kate Campbell
715 Portland.

4) Etty Stern Shterenboim
(owner)
219 Penn St

5) Steve Yannaras
625 Portland St.

6) Kate Gillespie
717 Dover St.

7) Patricia Bergeron
717 Dover St,

8) Nate Hauser
(owner)
210 Penn St.

9) Greg Laub
728 Dover St.

10) Gerri Salley

646 Melvin

11) Esther Van Dyke
717 Portland St.

12) Tania Robalino
313 S. Fremont St.

13) James Wright
313 S Fremont St.

14) Lillie Hyman
658 Portland St.

15) Rosalie Barret
719 Portland St.

16) Claude Williams
719 Portland St.

17) Farzana Muhib
710 Portland St.

18) Debbie Brain
623 Washington Blvd.

19) Deb O'Neill
208 Penn St.

Dear Councilman Dorsey and members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

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 Committee members to 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

November 19, 2025

Dear City Officials;

I respectfully oppose Bill 25-0066 and urge your consideration in voting against its passage for the following reasons:

- Inadequate community notification regarding the bill's significant impact on housing, zoning, the economy, and quality of life (social determinants of health).
- Insufficient engagement and outreach conducted in a meaningful and systematic manner across all communities.
- Limited time provided to evaluate information from city agencies.
- Discrepancies in the public process, including inconsistencies in protocols for testimony at public hearings.
- Non-compliance with the Equity Ordinance's requirements for impact analysis on present and future operations, capital budgets, and equity reports by City agencies. This is especially relevant to 311 services, water and wastewater, solid waste operations, housing permits and inspections, and public safety/first responder services.
- Absence of a stratified equity analysis evaluating impacts across demographic groups and neighborhoods, including health and environmental assessments—particularly important given proposals to increase density in communities already facing adverse indicators.
- Reliance on comparisons to cities not analogous to Baltimore's circumstances.
- Failure to address the cumulative effect of Bill 25-0066 alongside Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and "Complete Streets."
- Lack of identification of alternatives that would achieve similar objectives with less burden on families and neighborhoods.
- Potential erosion of neighborhoods and families as well as creation of new concerns regarding displacement, gentrification, and perceived "flight."
- Insufficient data demonstrating increased homeownership opportunities for middle- and low-income families, especially those contending with rising taxes, utilities, and living expenses, along with inadequate incentives or protections for economically disadvantaged prospective homeowners.
- Perceived prioritization of investors and developers over local residents.

- Lack of evidence showing how communities have been uplifted or economically advanced despite prior funding for urban challenges, such as the aftermath of Freddie Gray's death and the "Highway to Nowhere."
- Amidst neighborhood deterioration—including the closure of schools, pharmacies, markets, and businesses—no strategic assessment has been undertaken at the neighborhood level to determine requirements for successful implementation of this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide feedback on Bill 25-0066. The bill does not meet the criteria for effective and equitable policymaking. Accordingly, I reiterate my request that you vote against its enactment.

Linda Batts

Ignores the Voices of Baltimore's Communities

By Janet Allen, President, Heritage Crossing Resident Association

Heritage Crossing does not stand alone. From Northwest Baltimore to Union Square, Bolton Hill to Hillsdale, Hamilton to Harlem Park—residents across our city are united in opposition to HB 25-0066O.

This bill proposes more multi-unit rental housing in neighborhoods already saturated with poverty and disinvestment. It ignores our calls for homeownership, equity, and meaningful investment. It fails to address the real needs of our communities: safe streets, quality schools, access to supermarkets and pharmacies, and a future our children can inherit.

I oppose the Bill 25-0066 -Housing Options and Opportunity due to concerns over lack of enforcement on construction on new and existing properties. How is it not a fire hazard to only have one stairwell and exit? Who will ensure that properties meet the codes and that rent is set at affordable rates? There will be less available parking spaces, and an increase in traffic and trash. This will become a problem for smaller neighborhoods that cannot handle an unexpected increase in residents. I am also concerned that homeowners may see a decrease in property value. We are already stretched thin with high taxes, which are the highest in the state. This bill will forever change the landscape in our small neighborhoods. This bill written as is allows for profitability not affordability.

Alaysia Phillips

November 19, 2025

Baltimore City Council
Land Use and Transportation Committee
SENT VIA EMAIL

Chair Dorsey and Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

Bikemore and the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance are **writing in support of Council Bill #25-0066** Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity.

This bill will allow construction of gentle density, multi-family buildings in neighborhoods where currently only single-family homes are allowed, improving housing affordability and access to opportunity for Baltimoreans.

Baltimore is the birthplace of racist zoning policy. In response to fears from white neighbors in Madison Park and Bolton Hill when a Black Yale-educated lawyer chose to buy in their neighborhood, Baltimore City Council passed Ordinance 610, which stated no Black resident could move on to a block where more than half of the residents were white. When this ordinance was struck down, the city tried again and again to craft legislation that would wall off certain neighborhoods from certain people.

In the 1920s, Baltimore City Council, lenders, and community groups were finally successful in constructing that wall, and continued to build it through zoning maps, red-lining, and covenants designed to prevent Black and lower-income residents from accessing housing in certain neighborhoods.

The explicit goal of single-family zoning is to maintain inequity. We have seen that exposed in testimony at the Planning Commission, where community members from the very neighborhoods that originally advocated for racist zoning policy testified about renters and people living in smaller units as being undesirable neighbors who do not contribute to the community.

For that explicit goal of inequity alone, we should aim to undo single-family zoning. But there are many other reasons to allow housing flexibility in all zoning districts across the city.

Baltimore's population is stagnant or shrinking. We were a city of nearly one million in 1950, and our infrastructure and neighborhoods were built to support that level of density. Today, houses that used to host a family of five or six are hosting families of two or three. So all of our neighborhoods do have the capacity to welcome more neighbors, expanding our tax base to help support the city's infrastructure that is crumbling as a result of its design for that nearly one million people.

But we are making welcoming new neighbors impossible. We're gatekeeping an entire generation of people who want to live in, and raise their families in a thriving city. A recent Gensler report[1] surveying 65 cities across the world showed only 50% of respondents feel "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with Baltimore as a place to live, leaving it at 64th place. Only Athens, Greece ranked worse. Over 60% of young adults surveyed said they are likely to leave Baltimore, with only Delhi, India seeing a higher percentage.

Respondents, especially young adults, prioritize cost of living in their decisions to locate and stay in cities. The report concludes that cities must focus on affordability, connecting community across income, and increasing compact, walkable development.

[1] https://www.gensler.com/gri/city-pulse-2025

Single-family zoning limits the number of potential units that can be built, increasing housing costs. It prevents rehabilitation and subdivision of larger vacant housing stock and infill construction of new diverse types of housing stock that better reflect the needs of young people. It's no wonder they want to leave when they can't find the housing they want to live in.

Cities that have passed legislation that legalizes multi-family development in all zoning categories fare far better in the Gensler report, including Minneapolis, which ranks 55th on the list of cities people are likely to move out of, compared to Baltimore at 2nd.

Maryland is facing a housing crisis. Comptroller Lierman's October 2025 Housing & the Economy[2] report shows that Maryland is seeing a massive loss of residents to other states, specifically states with less regulated and lower-cost housing. Maryland has a shortage of nearly 100,000 housing units, and will need to build nearly 600,000 new housing units by 2045 to meet projected growth. To lessen this crisis, to reduce the number of residents leaving Baltimore to seek a more affordable cost of living, we must take action through zoning reform like permitting housing flexibility in all zoning districts.

Overwhelmingly, Baltimoreans want this. In February 2024, YouGov polling from Greater Greater Washington[3] showed 75% of Baltimore City respondents believe we should "allow townhomes, duplexes, and apartments in areas zoned for single-family homes."

The Baltimore City Council has an opportunity here to undo a racist, inequitable wrong while improving housing flexibility in a housing crisis. The results will reduce housing costs, increase the city tax base, make communities more walkable, and bring the slight density increase necessary to help support more frequent, reliable public transportation.

We urge you to vote favorably on Council Bill #25-0066.

Sincerely,

Brian O'Malley
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Jed Weeks
Bikemore

[2] https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/research/housing-economy-print.pdf
[3] http://www.ggwash.org/files/HEAApollslidedeck.pdf

BHN
BREWERS HILL NEIGHBORS

November 19th, 2025

Dear Mayor Scott, Council President Cohen, and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the **Brewers Hill Neighbors (BHN) Neighborhood Association**, we write to express our strong opposition to Baltimore City Council Bill 25-0066, *Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity*.

BHN fully supports the goal of increasing safe, affordable, and high-quality housing throughout Baltimore. However, Bill 25-0066—by eliminating single-family zoning citywide, allowing up to four units on a residential lot by right, and removing long-standing residential conversion standards—poses significant risks to Baltimore's most vulnerable communities and does not contain the safeguards needed to achieve its stated goals responsibly.

1. Removal of essential protections invites speculative pressure

Bill 25-0066 repeals existing "Residential Conversions" standards, enabling by-right 2–4 unit conversions with minimal review. This change invites speculative acquisition of properties, especially in neighborhoods historically targeted by absentee investors. The absence of conversion standards makes it more likely that rowhomes will be subdivided with inadequate oversight, leading to increased strain on aging infrastructure and diminished quality-of-life for surrounding residents.

2. Research from other cities shows upzoning alone fails to improve affordability

Evidence from major U.S. cities makes clear that **upzoning, on its own, does not create affordability**:

- Chicago's upzoning study found that land and property values **rose sharply** while affordable housing production remained flat.
- Brookings Institution analysis warns that broad upzoning can **fuel speculation and raise prices**, particularly in lower-income areas.
- Academic research from UCLA, NYU Furman Center, and other institutions shows that without affordability mandates, upzoning often produces **market-rate units aimed at higher-income households**, not working-class families.

These outcomes run counter to the bill's intent and disproportionately impact cities with histories of redlining and uneven development—Baltimore included.

3. Blanket zoning changes typically harm low-income and Black communities first

Experiences in New York City, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Los Angeles reveal a consistent pattern: when single-family zoning is lifted without strong affordability and anti-displacement measures, redevelopment often accelerates **first** in neighborhoods with:

- Lower land values,
- Higher concentrations of renters, and
- Less political power to resist predatory development.

These are typically predominantly Black or low-income communities. Displacement pressures increase, taxes go up, speculative flipping becomes more profitable, and long-time residents bear the brunt.

Baltimore cannot afford to repeat these patterns. Our city's vulnerable communities have already endured decades of disinvestment, redlining, and predatory lending. Removing zoning safeguards without meaningful protections will magnify—not solve—those inequities.

4. Risks to Baltimore residents if Bill 25-0066 passes as written

BHN is concerned about several predictable negative outcomes:

A. Displacement of renters and legacy homeowners

Land values will rise due to new redevelopment potential. Landlords may clear out long-term, lower-rent tenants to convert units or raise prices. Older homeowners—especially those on fixed incomes—may feel pressured to sell.

B. Overconcentration of multi-unit conversions in already-burdened neighborhoods

Wealthier neighborhoods often have stronger tools (HOAs, covenants, organized advocacy) to discourage speculative redevelopment. As a result, the majority of conversions will likely occur in lower-income neighborhoods, worsening structural inequity.

C. No guarantee of deeply affordable housing

The bill lacks requirements for:

- income-targeted units,
- long-term affordability covenants, or
- dedicated protections for extremely low-income residents.

Upzoning without affordability mandates almost always results in **market-rate** units first.

5. More equitable and effective ways to add housing

Brewers Hill Neighbors strongly supports expanding housing options, but it must be done **responsibly and equitably**. We encourage the Council to prioritize:

- Development of vacant lots and city-owned properties first;
- Targeted, corridor-based upzoning where infrastructure can support added density;\
- Strong anti-displacement and anti-harassment protections;\
- Inclusionary housing requirements tied to any new density;\
- Community-driven planning processes that give neighborhoods a meaningful voice.

These approaches expand housing supply while safeguarding Baltimore's most vulnerable residents.

6. BHN's request

For these reasons, the Brewers Hill Neighbors (BHN) Neighborhood Association respectfully urges the Council to **vote NO on Bill 25-0066** in its current form.

We ask the Council to revisit zoning reform through a more collaborative, equity-centered process that:

- Prevents displacement,
- Protects legacy residents,
- Requires affordability, and
- Ensures that growth strengthens—rather than destabilizes—Baltimore communities.

We value your commitment to Baltimore's future and hope you will take a careful, community-driven approach to any zoning changes that reshape our city for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Brant Fisher

President, Brewers Hill Neighbors Association

BHNBoard@BrewersHillNeighbors.Org

HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
Baltimore City Council Bill #25-0066 – Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act

Baltimore City Council
Land Use and Transportation Committee
November 20, 2025

Health Care for the Homeless strongly supports Council Bill #25-0066 – Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity, which would amend certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts. The bill would, among other things, create a new housing category to expand where 2 to 4 unit homes are allowed and ends the outdated process that restricts converting single-family homes into multi-family ones. By allowing for the creation of more critically needed affordable housing, Council Bill 25-0066 will tangibly prevent and end homelessness in Baltimore City. We support this bill as part of the broader housing affordability and development package known as The Housing Options & Opportunity Package, which Health Care for the Homeless strongly supports. 25-0066, along with the housing package in its entirety, will increase housing density, lower housing costs, and have tremendous benefits to the community and future residents of our city.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland's leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver integrated medical care, behavioral health services, dental care and harm reduction interventions for more than 11,000 people annually at multiple clinic sites in Baltimore City, including through a Mobile Clinic and a Street Medicine team. We also support more than 800 highly vulnerable Baltimoreans in more than 550 units of permanent supportive housing.

Housing Solves Homelessness

After operating for 40 years, we know what works to end and prevent homelessness: **housing ends homelessness.** With a dire housing shortage, Council Bill 25-006 puts into action an evidence-based approach that we know works to end homelessness.

We believe that everyone deserves a home they can afford in a stable and healthy community, but most renters in Baltimore pay more than they can afford on their housing. In response, Health Care for the Homeless formed a subsidiary non-profit organization known as HCH Real Estate Company, Inc. HCH Real Estate Co, Inc. develops affordable and supportive multifamily rental housing in Baltimore. Our projects are designed to be community-centered, environmentally sustainable and deeply affordable. Our affordable housing development work is in direct response to the fact that there is simply not enough housing in Baltimore.

In 2022, we opened Sojourner Place at Oliver, a 70-unit affordable apartment building in the historic Oliver neighborhood in Baltimore City with co-developer and co-owner Episcopal Housing Corporation. We have a number of subsequent projects in various stages, all with a focus on developing rental housing for people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. While the deficit in available housing is the large for any income level, it is particularly felt for people making 30% or less of Area Median Income. Council Bill 25-0066 will undoubtedly help address Baltimore City's pressing need for quality, affordable housing, particularly for households with extremely low incomes.

Homelessness and Health are Inextricably Linked

Homelessness is a housing and health crisis. Homelessness creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones. Where someone who is stably housed could easily manage something like diabetes or hypertension, our providers see every day that homelessness makes caring for these things exponentially harder and sometimes impossible. Studies across the country confirm what we see in Baltimore City, that when people without homes are provided a safe and stable place to live, at a price they can afford, costly ED visits and hospitalizations reduce,[1] encounters with the criminal justice system reduce, and positive indicators or stability and health increase, particularly when the housing is accompanied with voluntary access to supportive health services. The ability to create more housing, as this legislation would do, will not only lead to more stably housed people, but can also lead to greater health outcomes for residents throughout the City. Simply put, **housing is health care**.

Only housing solves homelessness. Council Bill 25-0066 makes critical and long-overdue reforms that will tangibly lead to more housing. We fully support this bill as a necessary step to solve homelessness in Baltimore and we strongly urge this Committee's support.

For more information about our agency, visit www.hchmd.org and www.hchreco.org.

Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.
Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.

[1] See, for instance, the outcomes of the Maryland Medicaid supportive housing waiver program, known as Assistance in Community Integration Services (ACIS), which showed "[s]tatistically significant decline in the average number of ED visits, avoidable ED visits, and inpatient admissions for ACIS participants in the year following enrollment in the program." The Hilltop Institute UMBC, *Summary Report: Assistance in Community Integration Services (ACIS) Program Assessment, CY 2018 to CY 2021* (Sept. 15, 2023), *available at* Summary Report: ACIS Program Assessment (hilltopinstitute.org). The ACIS pilot and recent expansion was only possible, in large part, because of Mayor Scott and his administration.