

## Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

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**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

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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)

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**From:** Michael Kotarba <kmkotarba@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 26, 2024 10:40 AM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Cc:** Michael Kotarba; Kathleen Kotarba  
**Subject:** FW: Harford Road Overlay - OPPOSED - Michael and Kathleen Kotarba

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November 25, 2024  
The Honorable President and Members  
Of the Baltimore City Council  
Attn: Natawna B. Austin, Executive Secretary  
Room 409, City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Honorable President and City Council Members:

Re: City Council Bill 24-0544 – Zoning – Harford Road Overlay District – **OPPOSE**

We are homeowners who have lived in the Arcadia neighborhood for over 42 years. We treasure our community, as well as the adjacent Harford Road commercial corridor. During the last four decades we have seen its vitality improve and we have welcomed many new neighbors. We add our voices to those of the many (and growing) voices who are **OPPOSED** to this legislation.

The property owners along the Harford Road Corridor and in the adjacent neighborhoods can plan for the future from a position of strength. We already offer great diversity, variety and opportunity to residents and businesses. There is significant existing character of design, as well as a long and rich history to share. Successful businesses and home ownership are our current assets. The area is not a blank slate in need of a broad-brush “do over.”

We know that you have received an outpouring of **OPPOSITION**, so we will be succinct in our reasons to **OPPOSE**. They are as follows:

1. **Property Owner Notification and Community Involvement** – In reviewing the records for this legislation we did not see evidence of notifying the individual property owners of the proposed material changes affecting them. (All properties within the “blue” boundaries on the map). Isn’t this a standard courtesy, if not a requirement of City statute? The proposed legislation favors theoretical

developers of speculative high density housing over the current property owners. Are the tax-paying current owners even aware of this legislation? They have the right to be notified.

2. **The legislation is unclear and incomplete** – What are the applicable and existing circumstances that justify the proposed high density and taller development along the entire corridor, including intrusions into the residential side streets? What is the problem to be solved and is this the best way to solve it? Case in point: There are two recent Harford Road developments that are higher density, taller residential structures. Since the current Zoning did not prevent their construction, what is the problem we need to solve?

The legislation and the presentation (found online) do not include visual design studies, graphics of potential building heights and massing, traffic studies (current and projected), real estate market studies and other data essential to foster good decision making. At the least, the legislation should be tabled and perhaps revisited at a time when the necessary visuals and data become available.

3. **Lack of Design Planning and Guidelines** – Other than the overlay map, there is no visual content associated with the legislation. There is no content indicating that there will be a design review process or guidelines for existing and new construction along the corridor. The proposed zoning changes support dense, taller construction that is out of character with the historic development pattern of Harford Road. Currently, we have a variety of designs from different time periods, offering different sizes and spaces. In the future, we may have tall, dense construction that fills existing land parcels to the maximum. What would that look like and is that what we want? Also, in the future the community may see developers assemble blocks of buildings to build even larger characterless structures. We need to see a complete vision of the future, not an opportunistic one without design considerations.
4. **No Plan for Green Spaces** – There is no content, requirement or guidelines for green space. Additional trees and green spaces are a long-desired goal of the City and its residents. Why isn't tree planting, landscaping, etc. a required element of new dense, tall development? It should be.
5. **Failure to address Equity Needs** – There is no content in the legislation to address the mobility needs of the elderly and disabled. Not everyone will be able to walk, bike or take mass transit to establishments along the Harford Road Corridor. Instead, the legislation eliminates parking requirements and curb cuts. As a community we are all responsible for providing complete access to public spaces, including for those who rely on the automobile for mobility. We want our community to be welcoming and available to all!

In closing, we respectfully ask that you **OPPOSE** for the reasons stated above, and for those stated in the testimony included in the City Council's records for the legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Michael and Kathleen Kotarba  
Arcadia Community Residents

