



**BILL SYNOPSIS**

**Committee: Equity and Structure**

**Bill 20-0492**

**Charter Amendment – City Council – Reduction in Size**

**Sponsor:** *Councilmember Bill Henry*

**Introduced:** *February 10, 2020*

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of reducing the size of the City Council; providing for certain members to be elected at large; requiring that the President of the City Council, the Council Vice-President, and the Council’s representative to the Planning Commission be at-large members of the Council; clarifying, correcting, and conforming certain language; and submitting this amendment to the qualified voters of the City for adoption or rejection.

**Effective:** Upon the approval of the legal and qualified voters of Baltimore City.

**Bill 20-0504**

**Charter Amendment – City Council – Composition**

**Sponsor:** *Councilmember Ryan Dorsey*

**Introduced:** *February 24, 2020*

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of increasing the size of the City Council to 15 members elected from districts; requiring that the City Council President be elected by the City Council from among its members every 2 years; clarifying the terms and the manner of election for the Council Vice President and the Council representative to the Planning Commission; allowing for the City Council to remove a member from the position of President; specifying that the City Council elect an individual to fulfill a mayoral vacancy; conforming and clarifying related provisions; and submitting this amendment to the qualified voters of the City for adoption or rejection.

**Effective:** Upon the approval of the legal and qualified voters of Baltimore City.

**Agency Reports**

	<b>20-0492</b>	<b>20-0504</b>
Department of Law	No Objection	No Objection
Department of Finance		
Planning Commission		

## Analysis

### Background

Since 1922, the Baltimore City Council had consisted of 18 council members, with three members elected from each of the six districts. In November 2002, voters of Baltimore City approved a Charter Amendment to create a new structure for the Baltimore City Council. The restructured Council consist of 14 council members, each elected from a single-member district.

<b>Current Language</b>	<b>Proposed Language – 20-0492</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council shall consist of 14 members in addition to the President.</li> <li>• There shall be 14 districts with one member elected from each district.</li> <li>• At the same time that they elect the members, the voters shall elect from Baltimore City at large, a person to be the President of the City Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council consist of 9 members to be elected as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 1 member from each of 6 districts; and</li> <li>➤ 3 members from the city at large.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The City Council shall, by a majority vote of its members, appoint from the at-large members:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Council President;</li> <li>➤ Council Vice President;</li> <li>➤ Planning Commission representative.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above.</li> </ul>	<b>Proposed Language – 20-0504</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council shall consist of 15 members. There shall be 15 districts with one member elected from each district.</li> <li>• President – At its first regular session in each even-numbers calendar year, the City Council shall, by majority vote of its members, appoint from its members a President who shall preside over the City Council, vote on all questions, and perform other duties as prescribed by law.</li> <li>• Vice President – Process shall be the same as it is for President.</li> <li>• Planning Commission member – Process shall be the same as it is for President.</li> </ul>

**Local Jurisdiction Comparison Chart**

	<b>Baltimore City</b>	<b>Baltimore County</b>	<b>Anne Arundel County</b>	<b>Prince Georges County</b>
<b>Council Structure</b>	1 Council President  14 Single member Districts	1 Council Chair  7 Single member Districts	1 Council Chair  1 Council Vice Chair  7 Council Districts	2 At-Large Seats  9 Council Districts
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	Approx. 602,495 (2018)	Approx. 828,431 (2018)	Approx. 576,031 (2018)	Approx. 909,308 (2018)

**National Comparison Chart**

	<b>Baltimore City</b>	<b>Los Angeles, California</b>	<b>Atlanta, Georgia</b>	<b>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</b>
<b>Council Structure</b>	1 Council President  14 Single member Districts	1 Council President  1 President Pro Tempore ( <i>both selected from the existing body</i> )  15 Single member Districts	1 Council President  12 Single member Districts  3 At-Large members	The Council President is elected by the members of the council.  10 Single member Districts  7 At-Large Council members
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	Approx. 602,495 (2018)	Approx. 3,990,456 (2018)	Approx. 1,345,047 (2018)	Approx. 1,584,138 (2018)

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**Additional Information**

**Fiscal Note:** Not Available

**Information Source(s):** Baltimore City Charter, Agency Reports

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