

# Waltherson Improvement Association

---



Waltherson Improvement Association  
5807 Harford Road  
Baltimore MD 21214

9/5/24

To: Ways & Means Committee

RE: To Oppose the Harford Road Overlay District Proposal - Council Bill 24-0544

Dear Chairman Costello & and Committee Members

Waltherson Improvement Association has followed the information provided for this Bill by both Councilman Dorsey and entities within the Greater Neighborhoods, and therefore opposes the Bill in its entirety. One of our Waltherson Board members is our CRP representative for the Lauraville URP, who has helped discuss this Bill within our neighborhood. Waltherson consists of over 2,500 homes in the NE District, and is a community included in the Lauraville URP territory. We add our voice to the letter of opposition the CRP has sent listing specific concerns. We ask you to please refer to their letter and that of our CRP representative but offer some additional thoughts here.

We are taken aback at the radical nature of this Bill yet understand the intent behind it. Progress can begin with change. However, we must be mindful before approving such extensive changes, which could prove to have a negative result instead. We want to encourage others to enjoy city life, and we welcome businesses to thrive in our neighborhoods, but drastic measures prevail us nothing.

We have expressed our direct concerns to the Bill's sponsor, Councilman Dorsey, however we were basically dismissed. Chairman Costello, and Committee Members, we have always partnered together with the City with the neighborhood's best interests in mind. We ask your help to see constituent wishes are considered and to consider if this is the time and place for what seems to the community to be extreme measures, when other measures can and should be utilized to support our Main Street growth.

Recently we have learned of the breakneck speed in which the Bill is getting to City Council for passage.

We understand that no recommendations have been given by Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Dept. of Transportation (DOT) or Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), only by the departments that worked with Councilman Dorsey – the Planning and Law Departments. We also understand that the Zoning Permit Department is not even aware of the bill, making this timing feel premature.

This Bill, and its process, has not been a collective decision within our neighborhoods, we have not been asked to collaborate or even give input prior to its introduction. There has been insufficient outreach by the Councilman & 3rd District staff to the many communities and residences impacted in this 3 mile long, 1000+ foot wide swath for, as in the words of the Planning Commission, this "visionary" plan". What is the justification for why we should be the "test" neighborhood, when there are many other Baltimore business districts with much more need for residents & businesses.

We ask that you do not support it.

Thank you,

Waltherson Improvement Association