



## MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the City Council  
c/o Shamoyia Gardiner, Deputy Chief of Staff, Council President's Office

From: KC Kelleher, Deputy Chief of Staff, Comptroller's Office  
J Hardy, Community & Legislative Affairs Coordinator

Date: April 13, 2026

Re: 26-0172– Charter Amendment - Charter Committee Recommendations

---

### **Position: Favorable with Amendments**

The Office of the Comptroller (OTC) is responding to the request for a report on 26-0172– Charter Amendment - Charter Committee Recommendations.

### **Budget Structure**

The Office of the Comptroller is supportive of provisions that expand the City Council's power to deliberate over the budget. Enhancing the Council's deliberative role strengthens accountability and ensures that those representatives have the time necessary to conduct thorough fiscal oversight on behalf of Baltimore residents.

If the current budget structure remains unchanged—specifically, if responsibility for drafting the budget does not revert back to the Comptroller and the composition of the Board is not modified—it is not necessary for the Board of Estimates to receive the budget.

### **Minor Privileges**

Regarding restructuring minor privileges, future legislation should incorporate a clear and accessible public appeals process. Minor privilege applications constitute real property transactions that permit private use of the public right-of-way. As such, the Baltimore City Board of Estimates has historically provided a public forum through which proposed uses may be reviewed, protested, and, where appropriate, modified. These real property uses, fees and processes should have codified protection and transparent processes especially as it relates to commercial uses of the public right of way.

## **Amendments**

If the Council chooses to maintain the current budget structure, the OTC suggests:

On p. 5 lines 7-10 Strike in its entirety, “Thereafter, the Board MAY hold public hearings at which members of the City Council, heads of municipal agencies, and citizens shall have the opportunity to appear before the Board to speak for or against the inclusion of any appropriation in the proposed Ordinance of Estimates.”

REASON: “May” is ambiguous. If a member of the public does wish to speak to the Board directly, there are procedures in place set by the Board of Estimates for them to do so. Otherwise, the Charter lays out ample opportunity for taxpayers to engage in lobbying the elected officials that actually have power over changing the budget – the City Council. Retaining this permissive language risks public confusion without providing meaningful additional access.

On p. 22, line 18, strike “May” and insert “shall”.

REASON: The Board of Estimates must be the governing body of city procurement and capital contracts and thus must have the duty & responsibility of promulgating regulations that take in the needs of all city agencies. Stronger language will ensure a comprehensive approach is taken. Under the current permissive language, individual agencies could develop their own ad hoc regulations, undermining consistency, accountability, and the Board’s central oversight function.

**The Office of the Comptroller requests a favorable report on City Council Bill 26-0172– Charter Amendment - Charter Committee Recommendations.**