



## BALTIMORE HOUSING

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE  
Mayor

PAUL T. GRAZIANO  
Executive Director, HABC  
Commissioner, HCD

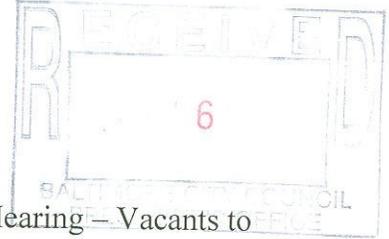
# MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council c/o Karen Randle, Executive Secretary

FROM: Paul T. Graziano  
Housing Commissioner

DATE: June 15, 2011

SUBJECT: City Council Bill 11-0258R Informational Hearing – Vacants to Value Initiative



The Department of Housing and Community Development has reviewed City Council Bill 11-0258R. This Bill invites representatives for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to appear before the Council to discuss the Vacants to Value Initiative, and to establish reporting mechanisms that will allow the City Council, and the public at large, to track and monitor the effectiveness of Vacants to Value at meeting its goals.

*Vacants to Value* (V2V) is the first comprehensive and cost effective strategy to address blight elimination in Baltimore City recognizing market realities. This initiative uses several targeted strategies tailored to specific market conditions. Those strategies are:

- Streamlining the sales process of city inventory from offer to settlement;
- A new streamlined approach to code enforcement that does not rely on litigation;
- New public-private partnerships that facilitate the rehabilitation of entire blocks;
- Targeted incentives to maximize the homeownership potential;
- Continued large-scale redevelopment in severely distressed areas; and
- Strategic demolition, landbanking, and alternative uses for vacant lots.

Fifty years of population and job loss have devastated the housing market in many of Baltimore City's lowest income neighborhoods leading to decades of property abandonment.

The majority of Baltimore's boarded structures - approximately 11,000 - are highly concentrated in severely distressed areas. The remainder of the abandoned properties - approximately 5,000 - are scattered on blocks in generally stable neighborhoods throughout large areas of the city. These blocks have otherwise healthy housing markets that can support the rehabilitation of these vacants.

The challenge was to craft an approach that uses existing resources to maximize outcomes within any given housing market in Baltimore City. Mayor Rawlings



Blake's *V2V* program does just that, and although only recently launched on November 3, 2010, *V2V* is expected to trigger the rehabilitation of more vacant, boarded properties than any program to date – with minimal public subsidies and costs.

The DHCD is committed to accountability and transparency in all aspects of *V2V*. Metrics have been established to assure that each of the components is functioning efficiently and assuring the outcomes that will revitalize Baltimore's communities.

Through the Mayor's Office of CitiStat performance measures were established and are tracked in monthly sessions. Those sessions are open to the public. Additionally, active reports of many of the core operations are available on DHCD's website. Those include Code Enforcement activity regarding citations issues and cases filed as well as Land Resources activity regarding properties listed for sale, with information about applications received and awards made.

The Department of Housing and Community Development supports adoption of City Council Bill 11-0258R.

PTG:JD

cc: Ms. Angela Gibson, Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
Ms. Kaliope Parthemos, Deputy Mayor