




CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council c/o Khalil Zaied
FROM	Khalil Zaied, Acting Director, Dept of Public Works 
DATE	July 15, 2024
SUBJECT	City Council Bill 24-0507 (Study and Report – Infrastructure and Urban Meadows)

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

7/15/24

Position: No Objection

SUMMARY OF POSITION

City Council Bill 24-0507, if enacted, would require the Baltimore City Administrator, the Office of Sustainability and the Commission on Sustainability, to submit a report to the Mayor and City Council that assesses the costs and benefits of installing and maintaining 100 acres of low-maintenance and self-sustaining native plant communities (urban meadows) and mapping vacant lots and existing areas with packed dirt that could be transformed into urban meadows. The report would be due no later than 120 days from the date of the bill's enactment.

Establishing urban meadows on vacant lots with compacted dirt would not be a low maintenance endeavor, would require extensive soil amendment, and could take years to find and sustain the right plant combinations to suit each micro-climate. Community education and acceptance would be critical for the protection and success of these meadows, as would maintenance plans, easements, and other legal protections. City Council Bill 24-0506 would support urban meadow development by amending the Health and Exterior Property Maintenance Codes to allow for managed natural landscapes to be cultivated with certain plants that could exceed the current maximum 8-inch plant heights. This companion bill also recognizes that native plants and plants adapted to the State of Maryland are acceptable for propagation. This distinction is important to consider with climate change beginning to shift plant hardiness zones to the north as the U.S. grows warmer.¹

The Department of Public Works has no objection to the passage of City Council Bill 24-0507 and is willing to contribute any relevant Public Works information and perspective to the report.

¹ <https://www.climatecentral.org/climate-matters/shifting-planting-zones-2023>