



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Mission Statement

On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the Land Use & Transportation Committee is committed to shaping a reliable, equitable, and sustainable future for Baltimore's land use and transportation systems. Through operational oversight and legislative action, the committee aims to develop and support lasting solutions grounded in principles of good governance.

**The Honorable Ryan Dorsey
CHAIR**

PUBLIC HEARING

11/20/2025

9:00 AM

CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Bill: 25-0066

Title: Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity



Meeting: Bill Hearing

Committee: Land Use & Transportation

Bill # 25-0066

Title: Housing Options & Opportunity

Purpose: FOR the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts; striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard standards; and defining certain terms.

REPORTING AGENCIES

Agency	Report
Department of Law	Approve for form & sufficiency
Department of Planning	Approved with Amendments
Board of Municipal & Zoning Appeals	
Department of Transportation	
Department of Housing & Community Development	
Department of Finance	Does not oppose

BACKGROUND

Housing in Baltimore City

Baltimore is a city where many residents rent. According to the US Census Bureau, the population of Baltimore is approximately 568,271 residents (as of March 2025)¹ according to the Housing Indicator Tool website, approximately 52% (as of 2023) of that population rents their living accommodation.² Renters tend to be younger, as the national average age of a 1st time home buyer is 40 years old.³

As a state, Maryland needs more housing units for renters, particularly for low-income residents – according to the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment, the State is missing 85,000

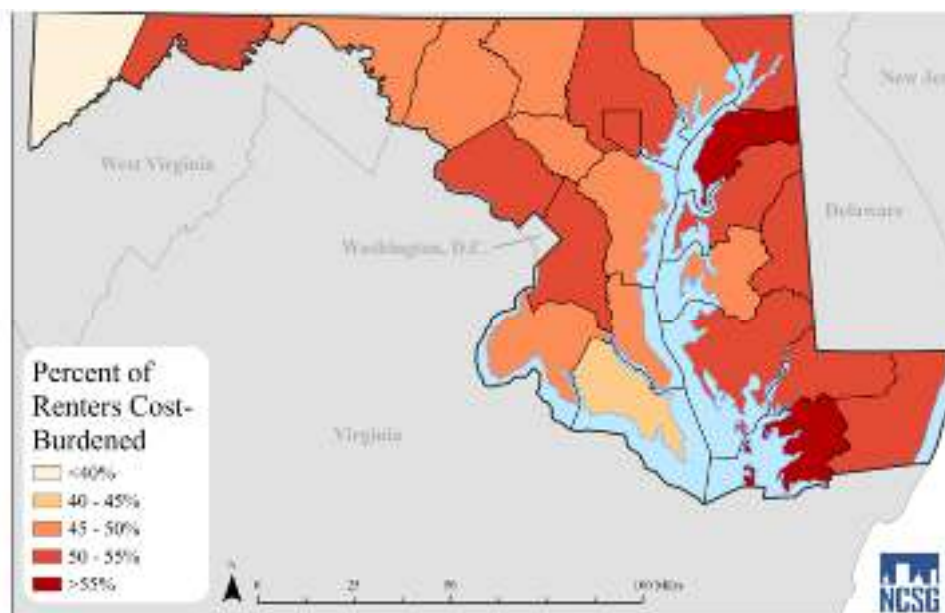
¹ Mayoral Announcement

² Housing Indicator Tool (based on 2023 US Census Data)

³ NPR

rental housing units for renters at 0-30% of AMI, and over 30,000 housing units for renters at 0-50% of AMI.⁴

Rent can account for a substantial portion of an individual's or family's income. According to reporting in the Baltimore Banner, 4 out of 10 Baltimore residents who rent are spending 35% or more of their income on housing. A person is considered cost-burdened if they pay 30% or more of their income on housing.⁵ This is confirmed by the 2025 update to the 2020 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment, which also concluded that a significant number of Baltimore residents who rent are cost-burdened. That same study also found that the average income of renters has declined by 1.1% across the state and that the most cost-burdened groups broke out across racial groups, with Black & Pacific Islander Marylanders being the most cost-burdened groups in the City.⁶



History of conversions

According to the Planning Department's report, the prohibition on converting single-family dwellings into multifamily dwelling units was enacted in 1999 for R6 and less-dense residential areas. It also required approval by the BMZA for conversions in more dense areas of the City. The process has changed over the years, allowing for conversions to happen by ordinance instead of board approval⁷.

⁴ 2025 Maryland Housing Assessment Update

⁵ Baltimore Banner

⁶ 2025 Maryland Housing Assessment Update

⁷ Planning Dept Report

Overview of 25-0066

This bill, if enacted, would:

- Create a new definition for Dwelling: Multi-family (Low Density). Allowed in all residential districts in Table 8-301
 - A dwelling that contains at least 2 but no more than 4 dwelling units (except as provided in the subsection in the zoning code)
 - Includes common facilities for residents, such as laundry rooms
- Table 8-401 describes the bulk and yard requirements for detached and semi-detached dwellings, and 25-0066 would include Dwelling multifamily low-density to those requirements, meaning that in areas where a detached or semi-detached dwelling would be permitted, then the multifamily low-density would be as well by right.
 - Under the current provisions of the zoning code, converting a single-family unit is restricted to those residential districts such as R7, & R8 and requires an ordinance.
- Table 8-401 would also include gross floor area requirements for this definition. This may not include any basement area
 - 2 units – 1500 SQ FT
 - 3 units – 2,250 SQ FT
 - 4 units – 3,000 SQ FT
- Table 9-301 would show dwelling multifamily low-density as permitted uses for R5-R8 zones for Rowhouse & Multi-Family Residential Districts
- Table 9-401 describes the bulk and yard regulations for Rowhouse & Multi-Family Residential Districts and
 - Describes the lot area for the dwelling multifamily low-density use in these areas
 - Gross floor areas (same as the ones for detached or semi-detached dwellings)
- Detached Dwelling - means a dwelling that contains a single dwelling unit and is not attached to any other dwelling.
- Semi-detached Dwelling - means 1 of 2 buildings, each of which contains a single dwelling unit used for residential occupancy, with each building having its own private entrance and being joined to the other by a party or shared wall and not otherwise attached to any other dwelling
- Rowhouse - means 1 of 3 or more buildings, each of which contains a single dwelling unit used for residential occupancy, with each building having its own private entrance and being joined to the others by a party or shared wall.
- Multi-Family Dwelling - means a dwelling that contains 2 or more dwelling units.

Both the Departments of Planning and Finance note that with the passage of other bills such as 25-0065 (Zoning – Eliminating Off Street Parking Regulations), & 25-0064 (Zoning – Bulk & Yard Requirements – Amendments) 25-0065 would allow those wishing to convert their

homes into multifamily properties to do so without many of the needed variances that often accompany a conversion i.e. a bulk & yard variance or an off street parking variance. The Planning Commission, in its memo, notes the need for an amendment to gather data regarding the implementation of Council Bill 25-0066, including:

- The number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance
- The number of dwelling units each structure contains
- The gross floor area of each dwelling unit
- The zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located,
- The affordability of these units.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Note:

The Department of Finance, in its report, notes limited short-term gains in terms of revenue for the City. However, the department also notes that the long-term benefits of the flexibility of housing types that 25-0066 offers would be substantial. Its study looked mostly at properties in disinvested communities on the west side of the City. The Department of Finance expects that the primary driver of short-term revenue would be property taxes, which would be the result of increased value from properties converted due to physical improvements.

As noted in the Department of Finance's report, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the potential revenue generated long-term from diversifying the housing stock of the City. However, there are numerous benefits – including reducing housing cost, shortening timelines to bring new units online, and making more efficient use of the City's existing infrastructure.

Beyond these noted potential long-term benefits, if the population of the City were to realize additional gains, there may be additional benefits from a larger population living in the City, supporting businesses, and taking advantage of services in Baltimore. These benefits are not possible to quantify without knowing more about potential incoming residents and what their needs and habits might be.

Information Source(s):

- Council Bill 25-0066 1st reader & agency reports
- 2025 Update – Maryland Housing Needs Assessment
<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Documents/Research/Housing-Needs-Assessment/Report-2-v0627-SHNA-2025.pdf>

- Baltimore Banner *"Rent is guzzling Baltimore paychecks. The poorest feel it the most."*
<https://www.thebanner.com/community/housing/baltimore-rent-housing-costs-census-IAPXOCULORGDLAMAMULBE3PYLIU/>
 - NPR *"Many would-be buyers are frozen out of the housing market"*.
<https://www.npr.org/2025/11/09/nx-s1-5600733/many-would-be-buyers-are-frozen-out-of-the-housing-market>
 - *Mayor Scott on New Census Projections Showing Stabilizing Population*
<https://mayor.baltimorecity.gov/news/press-releases/2025-03-13-mayor-scott-new-census-projections-showing-stabilizing-population>
 - Housing Indicator Tool (supported by Urban Institute & HAND)
<https://hit.housingand.org/jurisdictions/baltimorecity>
-

Analysis by: Tony Leva
Analysis Date: 11/14/2025

Direct Inquiries to: Anthony.Leva@BaltimoreCity.Gov

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 25-0066
(First Reader)

Introduced by: The Council President
Cosponsored by: Councilmembers Dorsey, Gray, and Blanchard
At the request of: The Administration
Introduced and read first time: May 12, 2025
Assigned to: Land Use and Transportation Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Department of Housing and Community Development, Planning Commission, Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, Department of Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity**

3 FOR the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote
4 increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts;
5 striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family
6 dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard
7 standards; and defining certain terms.

8 BY repealing and reordaining, with amendments

9 Article 32 - Zoning
10 Section 8-201, Table 8-301, Table 8-401, Table 9-301, Table 9-401, and
11 Table 12-301
12 Baltimore City Code
13 (Edition 2000)

14 BY adding

15 Article 32 - Zoning
16 Sections 1-305(r) and 1-309(i)
17 Baltimore City Code
18 (Edition 2000)

19 BY re-numbering current

20 Article 32 - Zoning
21 Sections 1-305(r) through (cc), respectively, to be Sections 1-305(s) through (dd),
22 respectively, Sections 1-309(i) through v), respectively, to be Sections 1-309(j) through
23 1-309(w), respectively, and Sections 4-405(a)(6) through 4-405(a)(16), respectively, to be
24 Sections 4-405(a)(5) through 4-405(a)(15), respectively
25 Baltimore City Code
26 (Edition 2000)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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BY repealing
Article 32 - Zoning
Sections 4-405(a)(5), 9-701 through 9-703, the subtitle designation,
“Subtitle 7. Residential Conversions”, and Sections 10-609 and 12-303(i)
Baltimore City Code
(Edition 2000)

SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That
Sections 9-701 through 9-703, the subtitle designation, “Subtitle 7. Residential Conversions”,
and Sections 10-609 and 12-303(i) of Article 32 – Zoning of the Baltimore City Code be
repealed.

SECTION 2. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the
Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

Baltimore City Code

Article 32. Zoning

Title 1. General Provisions

Subtitle 3. Definitions

§ 1-305. “Day-care home: Adult” to “Electric substation: Outdoor”.

(R) *DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)*.

(1) *IN GENERAL*.

“DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” MEANS A DWELLING THAT
CONTAINS AT LEAST 2 BUT NO MORE THAN 4 DWELLING UNITS, EXCEPT AS
OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(2) *INCLUSIONS*.

“DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” INCLUDES COMMON FACILITIES FOR
RESIDENTS, SUCH AS LAUNDRY ROOMS.

§ 1-309. “Lot line” to “Motel”.

(I) *LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING*.

SEE “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)”.

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Title 4. Development Reviews

Subtitle 4. Design Review

§ 4-405. Applicability.

(a) In general.

Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, design review is required for the following types of development:

[(5) when exterior modifications are proposed for residential conversion in the R-7, R-8, R-9, and R-10 Districts;]

...

Title 8. Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts

Subtitle 2. District Descriptions

§ 8-201. Common standards.

[(a) Residential development.]

In the districts described in this subtitle, residential development is limited to EITHER 1 single-family dwelling unit per lot OR 1 LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING.

[(b) Residential conversions.]

[In any of the districts subject to this title, the conversion of a single-family dwelling to a multi-family dwelling is prohibited.]

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Zoning Tables

***Table 8-301: Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses***

Uses	Districts									Use Standards
	R-1A	R-1B	R-1C	R-1D	R-1E	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	
Residential										
...										
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
...										

***Table 8-401: Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts –
Bulk and Yard Regulations***

Categories	Specifications (Per District)								
	R-1A	R-1B	R-1C	R-1D	R-1E	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4
Minimum Lot Area									
...									
Dwelling: Detached, [or] Semi- Detached, OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2 acres	1 acre	21,780 sq. ft.	14,520 sq. ft.	9,000 sq. ft.	7,300 sq.ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	3,000 sq. ft.
...									

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MINIMUM ENCLOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA ³

DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.
	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.
	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.
...									

³ GROSS FLOOR AREA MAY NOT INCLUDE ANY BASEMENT AREA.

**Table 9-301: Rowhouse and Multi-Family Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses**

Uses	Districts						Use Standards
	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10	
Residential							
...							
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	P	P	P			
...							

**Table 9-401: Rowhouse and Multi-Family Residential Districts –
Bulk and Yard Regulations**

Categories	Specifications (Per District)					
	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
Minimum Lot Area						
...						
Dwelling: Rowhouse OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2,500 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft.	1,100 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	500 sq. ft.

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		R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
1	...						
2	MINIMUM ENCLOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA ⁸						
3	DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2-UNIT: 1,500	2-UNIT: 1,500	2-UNIT: 1,500	2-UNIT: 1,500		
4		SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.		
5							
6		3-UNIT: 2,250	3-UNIT: 2,250	3-UNIT: 2,250	3-UNIT: 2,250		
7		SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.		
8		4-UNIT: 3,000	4-UNIT: 3,000	4-UNIT: 3,000	4-UNIT: 3,000		
9		SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.	SQ. FT.		
10	Maximum Bldg Height						
11	...						
12	Dwelling: Multi-	35 or 45 feet ²	35 or 45 feet ²	35 or 45 feet ²	45 or 60 feet ³	3.0 FAR	6.0 FAR
13	Family OR						
14	MULTI-FAMILY						
15	(LOW DENSITY)						
16	...						
17	Maximum Lot Coverage						
18	...						
19	Dwelling: Multi-	40%	45%	70%	80%	40%	80%
20	Family OR						
21	MULTI-FAMILY						
22	(LOW DENSITY)						
23	...						
24	Maximum Impervious Surface						
25	Dwelling:	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
26	Detached [or],						
27	Semi-Detached,						
28	OR MULTI-						
29	FAMILY (LOW						
30	DENSITY)						
31	...						
32	Minimum Front Yard						
33	...						
34	Dwelling: Multi-	25 feet	20 feet	10 feet	None	45 or 65 feet ⁶	None
35	Family OR						
36	MULTI-FAMILY						
37	(LOW DENSITY)						
38	...						

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	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
Minimum Interior-Side Yard						
...						
Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	15 feet	15 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet
...						
Minimum Corner-Side Yard						
...						
Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	20 feet	20 feet	15 feet	None	25 feet	None
...						
Minimum Rear Yard						
...						
Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	10 feet	10 feet
...						
...						
² For a structure located on an interior lot, the maximum height is 35 feet. For a structure located on a corner lot at which each of the adjoining street rights-of-way are at least 30 feet wide, the maximum height is 45 feet.						
³ For a structure located on an interior lot, the maximum height is 45 feet. For a structure located on a corner lot at which each of the adjoining street rights-of-way are at least 30 feet wide, the Zoning Board may allow a height of up to 60 feet as a conditional use.						
...						
⁶ For a structure that comprises 6 or fewer stories, the minimum front-yard requirement is 45 feet. For a structure that comprises 7 or more stories, the minimum front-yard requirement is 65 feet. However, a structure designed with a courtyard is allowed a reduction of the minimum front-yard requirement, as provided in § 9-403 {"Setback reduction for courtyard design"}.						
...						
⁸ GROSS FLOOR AREA MAY NOT INCLUDE ANY BASEMENT AREA.						

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***Table 12-301: Office-Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses***

Uses	Districts	Use Standards
	OR	
Residential		
Bed and Breakfast	CB	
Day-Care Home: Adult or Child	P	Per § 14-310
Dwelling: Detached	P	
Dwelling: Semi-Detached	P	
Dwelling: Multi-Family	P	Per § 14-327
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	
Dwelling: Rowhouse	P	
Fraternity or Sorority House	CO	Per § 14-313
Residential-Care Facility (16 or Fewer Residents)	P	Per § 14-334
Residential-Care Facility (17 or More Residents)	CO	Per § 14-334
Rooming House	CO	

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day after the date it is enacted.

Baltimore City Council



Land Use & Transportation Committee

Bill: 25-0066

**Title: Zoning – Housing Options &
Opportunities**

Amendments

**AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL BILL 25-0066
(1st Reader Copy)**

By: Councilmember Parker
{To be offered to the Land Use and Transportation Committee}

Amendment No. 1

On page 4, in line 8, in columns 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, in each instance, strike “P” and substitute “P³, CB⁴”; and, on that same page, after line 9, insert:

...
<u>³ APPLIES TO A PROPERTY WITH 2 DWELLING UNITS.</u>
<u>⁴ APPLIES TO A PROPERTY WITH 3 OR 4 DWELLING UNITS.</u>

and, on page 5, in line 19, in columns 2, 3, 4, and 5, in each instance strike “P” and substitute “P³, CB⁴”; and, on that same page, after line 21, insert:

...
<u>³ APPLIES TO A PROPERTY WITH 2 DWELLING UNITS.</u>
<u>⁴ APPLIES TO A PROPERTY WITH 3 OR 4 DWELLING UNITS.</u>

Amendment No. 2

On page 6, in line 2, strike “⁸” and substitute “¹⁰”; and, on that same page, in line 19, in columns 2 and 3, respectively, strike “40%” and “45%”, respectively, and substitute “50%” and “60%”, respectively; and, on that same page, in that same line, in column 5, after “80%” insert “or 100%⁴”; and, on page 7, strike lines 3 through 6 in their entirety and substitute:

Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	<u>10 feet or none⁸</u>	<u>10 feet or none⁸</u>	<u>5 feet or none⁸</u>	<u>5 feet or none⁸</u>	<u>5 feet or none⁸</u>	<u>5 feet or none⁸</u>
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and, on that same page, strike lines 10 through 13 in their entireties and substitute:

<u>Dwelling: Multi-Family</u> <u>OR MULTI-FAMILY</u> <u>(LOW DENSITY)</u>	<u>10 feet</u>	<u>10 feet</u>	<u>5 feet</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>15 feet</u>	<u>None</u>
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and, on that same page, strike lines 17 through 20 in their entireties and substitute:

<u>Dwelling: Multi-Family</u> <u>OR MULTI-FAMILY</u> <u>(LOW DENSITY)</u>	<u>25 feet</u>	<u>25 feet</u>	<u>25 feet</u>	<u>16 feet</u> <u>or none</u> ⁹	<u>10 feet</u>	<u>10 feet</u>
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and, on that same page, in line 34, strike “8” and substitute “10”.

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Land Use & Transportation Committee

Bill:25-0066

**Title: Zoning – Housing Options and
Opportunity**

Agency Reports

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Eric W. Tiso,  Director of Development Oversight and Project Support	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Planning 8 th Floor, 417 East Fayette Street		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #25-0066 / Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity		

TO The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: November 4, 2025

At its regular meeting of October 30, 2025, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0066, for the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts; striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard standards; and defining certain terms.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #25-0066 and adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, adopts the findings and equity analysis outlined in the staff report, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #25-0066 be **amended and approved** by the City Council, with the following amendment:

Within three years of the effective date of this Ordinance, and within every three years thereafter, the Director of Planning and Planning Commission shall conduct and present to the Mayor and City Council an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Ordinance and recommend its continuance, modification, or termination. The evaluation report shall include, but need not be limited to, the number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance, the number of dwelling units each structure contains, the gross floor area of each dwelling unit, the zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located, and affordability of these units. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning shall ensure that such data is collected to permit production and delivery of the required report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at eric.tiso@baltimorecity.gov or by phone at 410-396-8358.

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
The Honorable John Bullock, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Mr. Justin Williams, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administrator
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
Ms. Hilary Ruley, Law Dept.
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
Mr. Luciano Diaz, DOT
Ms. Nancy Mead, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Tim Keane
Director

October 30, 2025

LEGISLATION: City Council Bill #25-0066/ Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity:
For the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts; striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard standards; and defining certain terms.

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: This bill is an amendment to Article 32 – *Zoning* that will create and defines “*Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)*” as a new land use, adds that new use to Use Tables 8-301, 9-301, and 12-301, and adds the new use to Bulk and Yard Tables 8-401 and 9-401). Finally, the bill removes conversions of dwellings as a process.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Eric Tiso

INTRODUCED BY: The Council President (on behalf of the Administration)

OWNER: Multiple

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

HISTORY

- Elements of this concept were included in CCB #22-0285 - Abundant Housing Act, which was not adopted in the last Council session.
- Companion bills include:
 - CCB #25-0062 – Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy
 - CCB #25-0063 – Zoning Administrator – Transfer to Department of Planning
 - CCB #25-0064 – Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements – Amendments
 - CCB #25-0065 – Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore was enacted by Ordinance #24-426, dated December 2, 2024. This bill will support the Plan’s goals for Equitable Housing, by creating the option to create additional dwelling units that are not currently available, and have a higher likelihood of being affordable, relative to existing residential developments.

APPLICANT'S PROPOSAL AND CODE CONTEXT:

The Administration requested introduction of this bill to lower the cost of housing in Baltimore by expanding access to multi-family homes. By creating a new land use category of “*Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)*,” it will be possible to build multi-family housing that the zoning code has previously prohibited in certain districts, thereby expanding housing options in those existing lower-density neighborhoods. This bill has companion bills including CCB #25-0064, and CCB #25-0065 that will potentially impact development options as a result of this bill.

PROPOSED USE:

This bill creates a new land use of “*Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)*” by inserting a new § 1-305(r), and then re-numbering the current § 1-305(r) through (cc), respectively. The new definition is proposed as:

§ 1-305. "Day-care home: Adult" to "Electric substation: Outdoor".

...

(R) DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY).

(1) IN GENERAL.

“DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” MEANS A DWELLING THAT CONTAINS AT LEAST 2 BUT NO MORE THAN 4 DWELLING UNITS, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(2) INCLUSIONS.

“DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” INCLUDES COMMON FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS, SUCH AS LAUNDRY ROOMS.

For convenience, the bill adds a new cross-reference to aid the reader in finding this newly created use. The new § 1-309(i) is proposed as:

§ 1-309. “Lot line” to “Motel”.

(I) LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING.

SEE “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)”.

The District Descriptions in Title 8, Subtitle 2 are amended as shown below to describe the lowest-density residential districts (R-1A through R-4) as intended for either a single-family dwelling, or for one *Low-Density Multi-Family Dwelling*. This bill also strikes paragraph (b) that currently prohibits conversions of dwellings. Staff notes that multi-family dwellings (i.e. those with more than four dwelling units) are not allowed in these zones, as they’re not included in Table 8-301, so only single-family dwellings or the new *Low-Density Multi-Family Dwellings* will be generally allowed.

§ 8-201. Common standards.

[(a) Residential development.]

In the districts described in this subtitle, residential development is limited to EITHER 1 single-family dwelling unit per lot OR 1 LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING.

[(b) Residential conversions.]

[In any of the districts subject to this title, the conversion of a single-family dwelling to a multi-family dwelling is prohibited.]

AMENDMENTS TO TABLES:

This bill amends Table 8-301 by adding *Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)* to the table as a permitted use (i.e. by-right) in each of the zones R-1A through R-4. Table 8-401 is amended to

add “, OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” to the Dwelling: Detached, or Semi-Detached line, which assigns the same lot area requirement for the new *Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)* as for Dwelling: Detached, or Semi-Detached units. The table is further amended to add a new line entry for “Minimum Enclosed Gross Floor Area” that will set interior floor space requirements for two-, three-, and four-unit dwellings, as the case may be. A new footnote 3 to the table notes that gross floor area calculation for the proposed number of units may not include any basement area.

Similarly, Table 9-301 is amended to add a line for *Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)*, as permitted (*i.e.* by-right) in the R-5 through R-8 zones, but not including the R-9 and R-10 zones. Table 9-401 is amended to add “OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” to the Dwelling: Rowhouse line, which assigns the same lot area requirement for the new Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density) as for Dwelling: Rowhouse. The table is further amended to add a new line entry for “Minimum Enclosed Gross Floor Area” that will set interior floor space requirements for two-, three-, and four-unit dwellings, for the R-5 through R-8 zones. A new footnote 8 is included that notes that gross floor area calculation for the proposed number of units may not include any basement area. The lines for Maximum building height, Maximum Lot Coverage, Maximum Impervious Surface, and each of the lines for required yards are amended to add “OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” to each line, treating them the same as for Dwelling: Multi-Family in the existing table.

Table 12-301 is amended to add a line for Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density), as permitted (*i.e.* by-right) in the Office-Residential Districts (OR). Staff notes that a matching amendment to Table 12-302 is not necessary, as the new use will be included with the existing lines for “All Other Uses”.

CONVERSIONS OF DWELLINGS:

A Brief History: The Zoning Code for the City was created in 1931 and has had relatively few major revisions since that time. There was a major reform in 1971 that converted the Zoning Code into a more modern Euclidean-style code. A 1999 reformatting of the Zoning Code was done to change the code’s format, but didn’t affect the contents of the code significantly. Then, most recently in 2017 (TransForm Baltimore), the Zoning Code was completely re-written to include tables, improve readability to the average citizen, included general land uses, and worked to “right size” the bulk and yard requirements to current needs.

- Ordinance #99-425, adopted May 24, 1999 changed the Zoning Code of the time to prohibit the conversion of dwellings in the R-6 and less dense zones, and to require a conditional use approval through the BMZA in the more dense residential zones. The recitals of the Ordinance provided the rationale of that time for why this change was being made:

“The City’s stated purpose in establishing its residential zoning districts is to “meet the housing needs of the city’s present and future population and to promote the stability and desirability of residential areas”.

The conversion of single- and two-family dwellings contributes to the destabilization of a neighborhood, however, by bringing in more people, increasing congestion and raising the demand for parking.

Because the City’s population has been declining, no demand for additional dwellings exists, and the creation of additional dwellings in one neighborhood will create vacancies in other neighborhoods.

Prohibiting the conversion of dwellings in the lower density residential districts will contribute to the stability of those districts and to the stability of all of the City's neighborhoods.”

Staff sees that the Council of that time took notice of the declining population in the City, but it is clear that the belief was that there would be no (or negligible) net in-migration to the City, and so any conversions approved could only have a parasitic effect on the housing market within the City – meaning that those choosing to move into a newly converted unit would not then be moving into a regular single-family dwelling elsewhere in the City, thereby leaving a vacant unit. With the benefit of hindsight, we don’t believe those assumptions were necessarily correct. That Ordinance appears to overlook the need for affordable housing, and it doesn’t recognize the cost difference between a single-family dwelling compared to a newly converted unit in a multi-family building.

- Ordinance #11-525, adopted November 22, 2011, changed the approval path for conversions in the R-8 zone from the BMZA to an Ordinance process, requiring a legislative authorization instead.
- Ordinance #12-040, adopted June 26, 2012, changed the approval path for conversions in the R-7 zone to an Ordinance process, to match what was done for R-8 zones the year before.
- Ordinance #14-219, adopted May 7, 2014, clarified the Council’s intent that conversions should only be permitted where additional dwelling or efficiency units in the R-7 or R-8 districts may be authorized only by a conditional-use ordinance and only as long as the number of dwelling and efficiency units to be allowed conforms with the applicable principal permitted-use bulk regulations for the district in which the building is located. As a practical matter, this did not prohibit conversions that required variances, and the Council continued approving them after this amendment was enacted.
- Upon adoption of a new Article 32 – *Zoning* in 2017, the need for conditional use conversions were included in § 9-701, and only approved by Ordinance in R-7 and R-8 zones, and by the BMZA in R-9 and R-10 zones. The new Zoning Code maintained the conversion practice without change, but simplified the language to remove the unnecessary Council’s self-limitation on only approving conversions that met the bulk requirements (*i.e.* without variances) that were not followed.

Bill Proposal: This bill seeks to repeal Sections 9-701 through 9-703, the subtitle designation, “Subtitle 7. Residential Conversions”, and Sections 10-609 and 12-303(i) of Article 32 – *Zoning* of the Baltimore City Code. This will remove the requirement for conditional use approval - either by the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA), or by a legislative authorization for all conversions, making them permitted by-right provided the property can meet other relevant requirements in the code such as bulk and yard requirements. Staff notes that vehicle parking requirements will apply to the fourth dwelling unit unless CCB #25-0065 is adopted. The most recent amendment to Article 32 – *Zoning* exempted vehicle parking for up to three dwelling units earlier this year (*cf.* § 16-601 (b)(1)).

As residential conversions will be removed from Article 32 – *Zoning*, the bill removes a reference to conversions in § 4-405, which describes what applications require Design Review, that will no longer be needed.

§ 4-405. Applicability.

(a) In general.

Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, design review is required for the following types of development:

- [(5) when exterior modifications are proposed for residential conversion in the R-7, R-8, R-9, and R-10 Districts;]

Staff notes that § 4-405(a)(1) requires Design Review for new construction of dwellings, so functionally nothing will change.

STATE POLICY FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

A recent State law change to the Land Use Article was implemented via SB891 and took effect at the start of October. This bill entitled “Land Use and Real Property – Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements and Prohibitions” and is intended to encourage Charter Counties (the City of Baltimore is one of those) to accept Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) where single-family detached homes are allowed. The relevant portions are as follows:

SUBTITLE 5. ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS.

4-501.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) (1) “ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT” MEANS A SECONDARY DWELLING UNIT THAT IS:

- (I) ON THE SAME LOT, PARCEL, OR TRACT AS A PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT ;
- AND

- (II) NOT GREATER THAN 75% OF THE SIZE OF AND SUBORDINATE IN USE TO THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT.

(2) “ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT” INCLUDES A STRUCTURE THAT IS:

- (I) SEPARATE FROM THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT; OR
- (II) ATTACHED AS AN ADDITION TO THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT.

(C) (1) “DWELLING UNIT” MEANS A SINGLE UNIT PROVIDING COMPLETE LIVING FACILITIES FOR AT LEAST ONE INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING, AT A MINIMUM, PROVISIONS FOR SANITATION, COOKING, EATING, AND SLEEPING.

(2) “DWELLING UNIT” DOES NOT INCLUDE A UNIT IN A MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING.

...

4-502.

THIS SUBTITLE APPLIES ONLY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ON LAND WITH A SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT AS THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT.

4-503.

(A) IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ON LAND WITH A SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT AS THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT IN ORDER TO MEET THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS OF MARYLAND.

(B) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN THIS SUBTITLE AND SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THIS SUBTITLE DOES NOT ALTER OR ABROGATE ANY ZONING POWER OR RELATED AUTHORITY GRANTED TO A LOCAL JURISDICTION UNDER THIS TITLE.

(2) LOCAL JURISDICTIONS SHALL ESTABLISH POLICIES THAT FURTHER THE INTENT OF THIS SUBTITLE.

4-504.

(A) (1) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2026, EACH LEGISLATIVE BODY SHALL ADOPT A LOCAL LAW AUTHORIZING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION.

(2) A LEGISLATIVE BODY MAY ADOPT A LOCAL LAW THAT:

- (I) ESTABLISHES STANDARDS FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT SAFETY; AND

- (II) PROHIBITS THE FULL OR PARTIAL CONVERSION OF AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE AS AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT IF THE ONLY VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE IS FROM AN ALLEY.

...

ANALYSIS OF BILL:

As the purpose of this bill is to allow for greater variety of housing types and increased density options in the lower-density residential zones in the City, this bill will allow for up to four dwelling units to exist anywhere that a single-family dwelling can now exist, provided it meets the gross floor area, bulk, and parking requirements (unless CCB #25-0065 is adopted). As proposed, the bill will essentially out-perform the State's policy intent, where allowing 2-4 dwelling units on lots where only one unit is now allowed will increase density and options beyond what was expected by the State.

Attached at the end of this report is a GIS study of residential zones by percentage of the City's land area, as well as percentage share of residential zones for each individual zone.

EQUITY:

Staff understands the concerns expressed in the letters received, where some neighbors may be alarmed at the potential for overcrowding. We do not believe that there will be massive adoption of this potential, but recognize that many property owners may be concerned more about the property immediately adjacent to them rather than future citywide trends. The intent of the bill is to provide additional options for affordable housing in places that do not now allow it through increased density.

NOTIFICATION: This hearing was advertised to approximately 17,000 subscribers to the GovDelivery service.

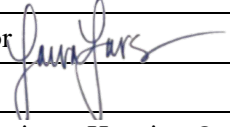


Tim Keane
Director

Zoning District	Area (Acres)	% of City	% of Residential Land
R-1	1,837.79	3.53%	7.56%
R-1-A	88.83	0.17%	0.37%
R-1-C	1,233.29	2.37%	5.07%
R-1-D	723.28	1.39%	2.97%
R-1-E	1,123.10	2.16%	4.62%
R-2	66.56	0.13%	0.27%
R-3	3,986.17	7.66%	16.40%
R-3/HR	2.06	0.00%	0.01%
R-4	1,607.02	3.09%	6.61%
R-4/D-MU	20.19	0.04%	0.08%
R-4/HR	14.34	0.03%	0.06%
R-5	3,837.51	7.38%	15.79%
R-5/HR	1.21	0.00%	0.00%
R-6	6,155.98	11.84%	25.30%
R-6/HR	1.87	0.00%	0.01%
R-6/R-MU	1.08	0.00%	0.00%
R-7	1,261.04	2.43%	5.19%
R-7/HR	1.18	0.00%	0.00%
R-7/R-MU	1.6	0.00%	0.01%
R-8	2,600.51	5.00%	10.69%
R-9	1,038.13	2.00%	4.27%
R-10	1,232.10	2.37%	5.07%



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Laura Larsen, Budget Director 
DATE	September 5 th , 2025
SUBJECT	City Council Bill 25-0066, Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

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

Position: Does Not oppose

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 25-0066, Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity, the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts; striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard standards; and defining certain terms

Background

Council Bill 25-0066 seeks to address Baltimore’s housing affordability and availability challenges by amending the city’s zoning code. The bill proposes to allow the development of low-density multi-family housing—structures with 2 to 4 units—in a broader range of residential neighborhoods than previously permitted.

Council Bill 25-0066 creates a new housing category in the zoning code, expands permitted uses, repeals conversion rules, and establishes development standards for this new category. Specifically, it introduces a new residential use: “Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density),” defined as a building containing 2 to 4 units. This new housing type would be permitted by right in nearly all residential zoning districts (R-1 through R-10), as well as in office-residential zones.

The legislation sets development standards for the new housing category, including requirements for bulk, yard size, floor area, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and impervious surfaces. It also eliminates prior restrictions and prohibitions on converting single-family homes into multi-family units and removes certain design review requirements.

Residential unit production trends

The intent of Council Bill 25-0066 is to increase the production of low density multifamily residential buildings, specifically duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes. This is commonly referred to as the “missing middle,” in housing policy. Over the last 10 years, Baltimore has not produced units of the missing middle in comparison to single family homes and 5+ unit apartment buildings. The table below is drawn from data from the Census Bureau, via the Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data Systems – Building Permits, a database that contains data on permits for residential construction issued by

nearly 20,000 jurisdictions collected in the Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey. This table presents this HUD data on residential building permits issued in Baltimore from 2013 to 2024. It breaks down the number of permitted single-family and multi-family housing units by year, providing insight into the city's construction trends over the past decade.

Annual Residential Building Permits in Baltimore by Number of Units, SOCDS ¹												
Unit Types	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Single Family	220	241	219	267	169	99	130	101	191	118	92	165
2-Unit multi-family	8	4	10	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	4
3 & 4-Unit Multi-family	48	4	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
5+ Unit Multi-family	981	572	1,064	672	269	1,448	360	1,520	1,366	1,537	1,749	1,104
All multi-family	1,037	580	1,074	676	269	1,448	380	1,520	1,366	1,539	1,751	1,108
Total Buildings	1,257	821	1,293	943	438	1,547	510	1,621	1,557	1,657	1,843	1,273

Since 2018, most of Baltimore's new housing production has come from large multi-family buildings, while single-family home construction has declined. Meanwhile, 2–4-unit buildings—the “missing middle” housing—have been absent, despite their potential to offer more affordable, moderate-density options.

Council Bill 25-0066 seeks to address this gap by reducing barriers to construct units that fall into the missing middle housing types. While the data shows a trend toward higher-density construction, this legislation ensures that smaller-scale multi-family housing can also contribute to meeting the city's housing needs.

Anne Arundel County

The Anne Arundel County Council passed the Housing Attainability Act of 2024 (Bill 72-24), in September of 2024. The legislation contained a number of provisions including amendments to bulk and yard requirements. The councilmembers who introduced the Housing Attainability Act stated that the goals of this legislation were to allow for more efficient land use to increase attainable housing units across Anne Arundel County, creativity in site layout, and create better opportunities to achieve allowable density. The goal of these reforms is to allow for the construction of triplexes, fourplexes, multiplexes, and townhomes. By adding flexibility of dwelling types into the Code, the reforms allow for development sites to be reimaged with a mix of house scale structures. These house scale buildings provide solutions along a spectrum of attainability, or the “missing middle”.

¹ [State of the Cities Data Systems \(SOCDS\) - Building Permits | HUD USER](#)

Maryland Housing Needs Assessment

The State of Maryland commissioned the “2020 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10-Year Strategic Plan”, via Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MD DHCD). The MD DHCD issued a follow up report in 2025 with updated numbers and revised policy recommendations. The report’s intent is to assess Maryland’s current and future housing needs and outline strategies to address them over the next decade. Its goals include identifying housing challenges, projecting future demand, and recommending policies to ensure all Maryland residents have access to safe, affordable, and appropriate housing. It also aims to guide state and local decision-makers in prioritizing investments, aligning resources, and coordinating efforts to meet diverse housing needs. The report discussed 70 actions designed to address priority needs by region in the state.

By integrating low-density multifamily housing into the base zoning code, Council Bill 25-0066, directly addresses a core barrier to housing choice: the fact that much of Baltimore’s residential land only allows one housing unit per lot. This change means that modestly scaled apartment buildings, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes could be built without special approvals—reducing development costs, shortening timelines, and making more efficient use of the city’s existing infrastructure.

In the broader context of Maryland’s housing pressures—where many communities face rising demand but maintain low-intensity zoning—the multifamily zoning reform aligns with other efforts like upzoning, small-lot development, and bulk-and-yard requirement reductions. Together, these changes expand the range of housing types available, increase by-right development opportunities, and help diversify neighborhoods while still ensuring appropriate building scale and design standards. This reform would bring Baltimore closer to a zoning framework that supports growth, affordability, and a mix of housing options in every part of the city.

Fiscal Impacts

Currently, converting a single-family home into a multi-family dwelling is only permitted in the R-7, R-8, R-9, and R-10 zoning districts. In the R-7 and R-8 districts, such conversions require conditional-use approval by ordinance, creating a barrier to small-scale housing diversification.

To estimate the fiscal impact of Council Bill 25-0066, the Department of Finance analyzed a limited sample of 63 properties that received variances from the City Council for residential conversions from single unit to multi-unit dwellings within residential zoning districts.

If Council Bill 25-0066 were enacted, property owners in these cases would most likely no longer need a variance to make similar changes. It is assumed that a portion of these and other property owners would take advantage of the new by-right process.

The primary fiscal impact is expected to be on property taxes, as the assessed value of a property increases with physical improvements. To assess this, the Department of Finance compared the FY2019 and FY2025 assessed values of the 63 properties. A present value adjustment was applied to the FY2025 assessments to account for inflation and assessment increases.

FY 2019 Assessment	FY 2025 Assessment	Present Value calculation
\$5,708,199	\$6,840,734	\$5,542,187

During this same period the average annual assessment grew at a rate of 4.3% (not the triannual assessment which combines three years of assessments) annually. For the control value, the Department calculated a present value (utilizing the average annual assessment rate increase) of \$5,542,187 for FY2025 assessments, representing a real decrease of approximately \$166,012 (or –2.9%) compared to the FY2019 assessments. The reason for this is mainly due to geographic clustering of the properties in the

limited sample. The 63 properties analyzed are primarily clustered on the city's west side, with 46 located in historically disinvested neighborhoods that have a low score in Baltimore's Housing Market Typology.

Due to the by right nature of parts of the law, there will be a reduction in the number of property owners that seek variances. This will have the operational effective of a decreased volume of work. There are other operational efficiencies within the BMZA and Planning that will occur due to the passage of 25-0064, however it is unlikely that these will result in savings.

The 'Missing Middle' Elsewhere

The University of California, Berkeley's Othering and Belonging Institute maintains a database of American cities that have considered zoning reform over the past 17 years. During this time, 108 cities have reviewed 162 zoning initiatives. The database identifies four broad reform categories:

- **ADU Reform:** Accessory Dwelling Units, Granny Flats, Secondary Units
- **Plex Reform:** Duplexes, Triplexes, Fourplexes, 2–4 unit multi-family housing
- **TOD Reform:** Transit-Oriented Development, Transit-Specific Density Bonuses
- **Other Reform:** Form-Based Codes, Parking Reform, Non-Transit-Based Inclusionary Zoning

Council Bill 25-0066 most closely aligns with Plex Reform, which includes small-scale multi-family housing types. Seventeen cities have introduced plex reform independently, with 15 successfully passing it. An additional 51 cities introduced plex reform alongside other zoning reforms, with 42 of those efforts also being approved.

Conclusion

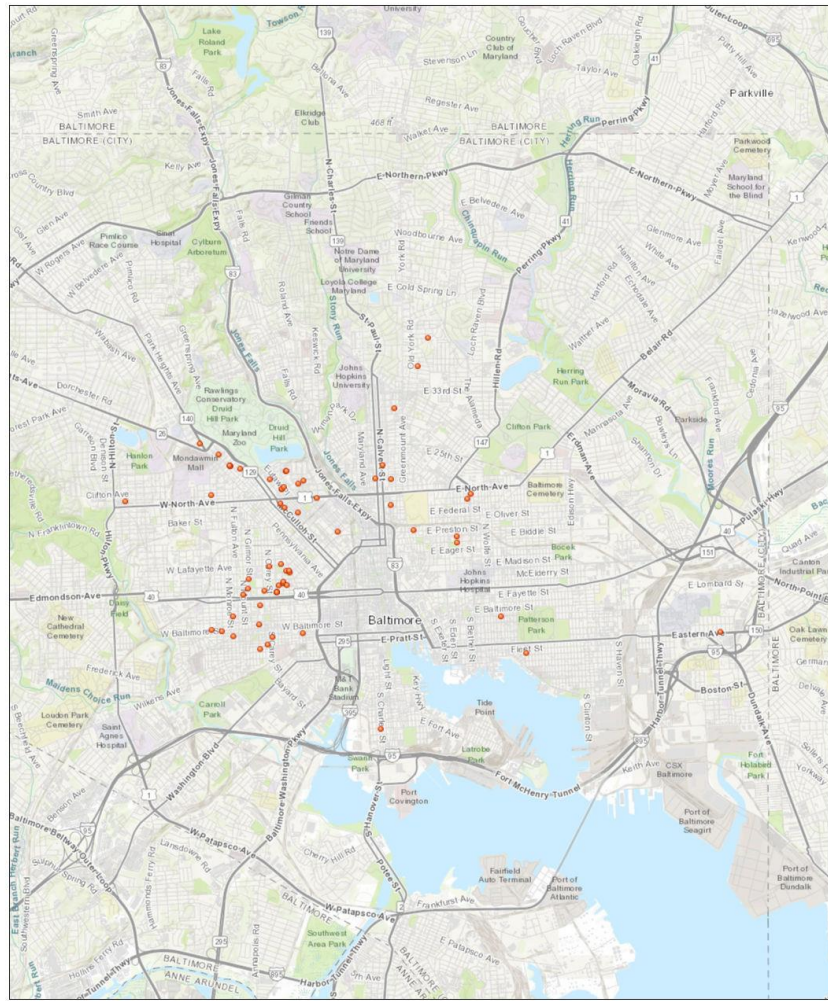
Council Bill 25-0066 presents a targeted and timely approach to address Baltimore's ongoing housing affordability and availability challenges. By legalizing small-scale multi-family housing in more residential neighborhoods, the legislation fills a critical gap in the city's housing stock—what is often referred to as the “missing middle.” Historical permit data shows that 2–4 unit housing has been virtually absent from new residential construction in recent years, even as demand for moderate-density, more affordable housing options continues to grow.

The bill aligns with national trends in zoning reform, as seen in dozens of peer cities that have adopted similar plex reforms. It also streamlines the development process by reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers and expanding by-right development options, which could lead to more equitable and geographically diverse housing production across Baltimore. While the fiscal analysis indicates that short-term revenue gains may be limited, the long-term benefits of housing diversification, neighborhood reinvestment, and broader housing access are substantial.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance supports City Council Bill 25-0066.

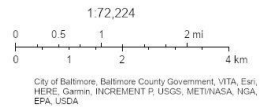
cc: Michael Mocksten
Nina Themelis

Baltimore City CoDeMap



7/8/2025, 9:54:19 AM

● Residential Conversions geocode



CHCD
City of Baltimore, Baltimore County Government, VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, NGA, EPA, USDA

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW

EBONY THOMPSON
CITY SOLICITOR
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET
SUITE 101, CITY HALL
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

November 12, 2025

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 25-0066 – Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 25-0066 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill would create a new multi-family dwelling category as “Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)”, meaning a dwelling containing no fewer than two and no more than four dwelling units. The bill would permit these multi-family dwellings by right in the current detached and semi-detached single-family residential districts (R-1 through R-4) and remove the prohibition on converting single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings in those districts.

The bill would also permit these multi-family dwellings by right in certain rowhouse and multi-family residential districts (R-5 through R-8), as well as in the office residential district (OR). Additionally, the bill would repeal restrictions on residential conversions in the R-7 through R-10 districts, commercial districts, and office residential districts, including eliminating design review when exterior modifications are proposed for residential conversions in the R-7 through R-10 districts. Finally, the bill would add the new multi-family dwelling category to various bulk and yard regulations in the relevant zoning tables and establish minimum enclosed gross floor area regulations for those dwellings.

The City’s planning and zoning powers have been delegated to it by the General Assembly. *See, e.g., Cnty. Council of Prince George's Cnty. v. Robin Dale Land LLC*, 491 Md. 105, 116 (2025); *County Council of Prince George's County v. Zimmer Dev. Co.*, 444 Md. 490, 504 (2015) (“Under Maryland's constitutional scheme, a local government's authority to regulate land use may emanate only from enabling legislation of the General Assembly.”). In relevant part, the General Assembly has granted the City the power to regulate “the location and use of buildings, signs, structures, and land” in order to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. Md. Code, Land Use (“LU”) § 10-202(6).

Typically, in Maryland, “Euclidean zoning laws are applied to properties located in zoning districts through three legislative zoning processes: 1) original zoning; 2) comprehensive rezoning; and 3) piecemeal rezoning.” *Robin Dale Land LLC*, 491 Md. at 117-18 (internal quotation marks

and citation removed). “An essential feature of a comprehensive rezoning is that it typically results in some affected properties being upzoned or downzoned—that is, placed in a different zone that permits entirely different land uses, *or the same types of uses but at higher or lower intensities.*” *Id.* at 118 (emphasis added). “[I]t is unsurprising that substantive changes in zoning reclassifications occur during a comprehensive rezoning because the process is preceded by a period of study involving a substantial area, which considers current and future land use needs and the public interest.” *Id.*

This bill, in effect, upzones the R-1 through R-4 residential districts by increasing the permitted density. Although the bill does not rezone these districts *per se*, it nonetheless enacts a text amendment to the zoning code that substantially increases the intensity of the permitted uses within them—from single-family dwellings to multi-family dwellings with up to four units. This type of substantial change to the underlying districts resembles those that might result from a comprehensive rezoning, but no such rezoning has occurred here. *See, e.g., Mayor & Council of Rockville v. Rylyns Enters., Inc.*, 372 Md. 514, 535 (2002) (setting forth the requirements of comprehensive rezoning, including: that it cover a substantial area; be the product of careful study; accord with present and planned future conditions, consistent with the public interest; and regulate all permitted land uses in a substantial portion of the political subdivision, though it need not result in substantial rezoning).

If challenged, it is possible a court could view this kind of text amendment as effecting a change to underlying zoning districts that is more appropriate for comprehensive rezoning, including its more substantial notice requirements. *See* City Code, Art. 32, § 5-601(b)(3) (requiring notice by posting in conspicuous places within and around the subject area or district(s), as well as by first-class mailing to each property owner in the subject district(s)). However, there does not appear to be any authority directly on point that would clearly prohibit a text change like this, so the bill is not facially illegal.

Procedural Requirements

The City Council must consider the following when evaluating changes to the text of the City’s Zoning Code:

- (1) the amendment’s consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan;
- (2) whether the amendment would promote the public health, safety, and welfare;
- (3) the amendment’s consistency with the intent and general regulations of this Code;
- (4) whether the amendment would correct an error or omission, clarify existing requirements, or effect a change in policy; and
- (5) the extent to which the amendment would create nonconformities.

City Code, Art. 32, § 5-508(c).

Any bill that authorizes a change in the text of the Zoning Code is a “legislative authorization,” which requires that certain procedures be followed in the bill’s passage, including a public hearing. City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-501; 5-507; 5-601(a). Certain notice requirements apply to the bill. Baltimore City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-601(b)(1), (c), (e). The bill must be referred to

certain City agencies, which are obligated to review the bill in a specified manner. City Code, Art. 32, §§ 5-504, 5-506. Finally, certain limitations on the City Council's ability to amend the bill apply. City Code, Art. 32, § 5-507(c).

Assuming all procedural requirements are followed, the Law Department can approve the bill for form and legal sufficiency. However, the sponsors may wish to consider the following for purposes of clarity and consistency:

- On page 2, beginning in line 21 with the word "except" and continuing to the end of line 25: It is unclear why "common facilities for residents" needs to be added as an inclusion to the definition, or why that inclusion in paragraph (2) is called an exception to paragraph (1).
- Consider updating the relevant descriptions of detached and semi-detached residential districts in Subtitle 2 of Title 8 of Article 32. Currently, those districts refer only to buildings that contain single dwelling units, but if this bill passes, those districts will now permit low density multi-family dwellings.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Hochstetler
Chief Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson, Acting City Solicitor
Ty'lor Schnella, Mayor's Office of Government Relations
Hilary Ruley, Chief Solicitor, General Counsel Division
Ashlea Brown, Chief Solicitor
Michelle Toth, Assistant Solicitor
Desireé Luckey, Assistant Solicitor



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Alice Kennedy, Commissioner, Housing and Community Development
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	November 19, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0066 Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 25-0066 Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity for the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts; striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard standards; and defining certain terms.

If enacted, City Council Bill 25-0066 would establish a new land use category; *Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)* and permit its use, by right, in residential districts R-1-A through R-8. This new permitted use would allow for multi-family dwellings of up to 4 units when all other requirements, such as minimum enclosed gross floor area, have been met. This Bill would also permit, by right, conversions of already existing single-family homes into multi-family homes of up to 4 units, with the applicable number of units determined by the interior square footage of the building. If approved, this Bill will take effect on the 30th day following its enactment.

BACKGROUND

Housing instability is a major problem for Baltimore City residents, many of whom are cost-burdened and potentially subject to eviction and foreclosure. An estimated 54% of City residents cannot comfortably afford the average \$1500 1-bedroom apartment and 30% of homeowner households also experience housing cost burdens. These financial challenges contribute to Baltimore having an eviction rate 1.7 times higher than the Maryland average and 2.3 times higher than the national average. The gap between wages and the cost of housing is particularly stark for some of our most essential workers. For example, according to data provided by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, half of Baltimore's retail and food service workers cannot afford a 1-

bedroom apartment within the City. That figure drops to 40% for secretaries or administrators and only 35% of maintenance and repair workers can handle those costs without being unduly burdened. Similar figures are shared with other critical workforce areas. When adjusted for the average \$1700 2-bedroom apartment, even fewer can manage.

It is important to note that these figures rely on HUD data that includes not just Baltimore City, but the six surrounding counties that make up the Baltimore-Towson-Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area: Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties. Drawing from that much broader region results in an 80% Area Median Household Income of \$104,200, which is the amount required to qualify for “Affordable” housing. In comparison, Baltimore City’s actual Area Median Household Income is just \$59,579. This results in nearly 3 out of 4 Baltimore City households being unable to afford even HUD-designated low-income housing.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

City Council Bill 25-0066 *Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity* seeks to increase the supply of affordable housing in Baltimore City by ending single-family zoning and permitting the conversion of single-family homes into multi-family homes of up to 4 units in residential zoning districts R-1-A through R-8. Currently, multi-family housing is permitted in districts R-5 through R-10, with this Bill expanding that option to the lower density R-1-A through R-4 districts. Conditional Use Conversions of existing single-family homes into multi-unit homes is currently permitted in districts R-7 through R-10, with R-7 and R-8 requiring a City Council ordinance. These restrictions on conversions first began in 1999 with Ordinance #99-425, which changed the Zoning Code of the time to outright prohibit the conversion of single-family homes in the R-6 and less dense zones, and to require a conditional use approval through the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals in the denser residential zones. Successive City Council Ordinances continued to place further restrictions on such conversions until the comprehensive City-wide rezoning of 2017.

Removing these barriers to both new, lower density multi-family housing and the conversion of appropriately sized, existing single-family homes into multi-family housing could provide Baltimore with more naturally occurring affordable housing options. This would be made possible through increased density and the development of the often discussed “missing middle” of housing types that fall between detached single-family homes and larger apartment buildings with at least 5 (and often many more) units. This “missing middle,” exemplified by the *Multi-Family (Low Density)* category that this Bill creates, could offer greater affordability while maintaining both walkability and a more intimate setting than what can be offered by the highest density designations. This flexibility could also support greater homeownership and homeowner retention. For example, having a second, rental income generating unit can help an applicant qualify for a mortgage. Retention could be increased by giving homeowners the option of renovating and renting out space that is no longer needed. Greater possibilities for elder parents or grandparents to “age in place” with dignity and near family would also be made available.

Similar reform efforts are beginning to gain momentum across the Country. Announced in 2018 and fully implemented in 2020, Minneapolis Minnesota became the first major American City to

eliminate exclusively single-family zoning. When considered with other reform efforts, such as their elimination of parking minimums, data collected by Pew showed that from 2017 to 2022 Minneapolis increased its housing stock by 12% while rents grew by just 1%. Over the same period, the rest of Minnesota added only 4% to its housing stock while rents went up by 14%. Both Minneapolis and the rest of the state experienced population and household growth but despite increased demand, Minneapolis was able to limit rent growth by building more housing.

DHCD applauds the efforts of this administration to establish policies that support the creation of greater housing availability and affordability throughout the City. On its own, this Bill has the potential to help alleviate the significant shortage of attainable housing options suited for Baltimore's residents. When synergistically applied with the other, recently signed Bills within Mayor Scott's legislative housing package (such as the elimination of parking minimums, bulk and yard updates, and permitting "single stair" housing options) their combined efficacy could have an even greater effect to that end, mutually supporting their individual reform efforts. Furthermore, allowing more multi-family construction and conversions of already existing homes in a greater diversity of communities could help supply our workforce with the housing that they need and at a price point that works for them and their families.

DHCD already supports nearly all Conditional Use Conversions that come before the Council as part of the current Ordinance based approval process required within the R-7 and R-8 districts. We encourage such efforts so long as they are in the public interest and have not been deemed detrimental to public health, safety, or welfare. This Bill would help facilitate those projects without the time, money, and bureaucratic navigation required by the current system. Removing such barriers could increase the likelihood of returning presently vacant structures back to productive use and offering new housing options to communities throughout the City. These potential benefits would be felt in areas our agency already focuses on such as our Community Development Zones and Impact investment areas. For these reasons and more, DHCD requests a favorable report on City Council Bill 25-0066 *Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity*.

FISCAL IMPACT

As drafted, this Bill would have minimal fiscal or administrative impact on DHCD.

AMENDMENTS

DHCD does not seek any amendments to this Bill at this time.

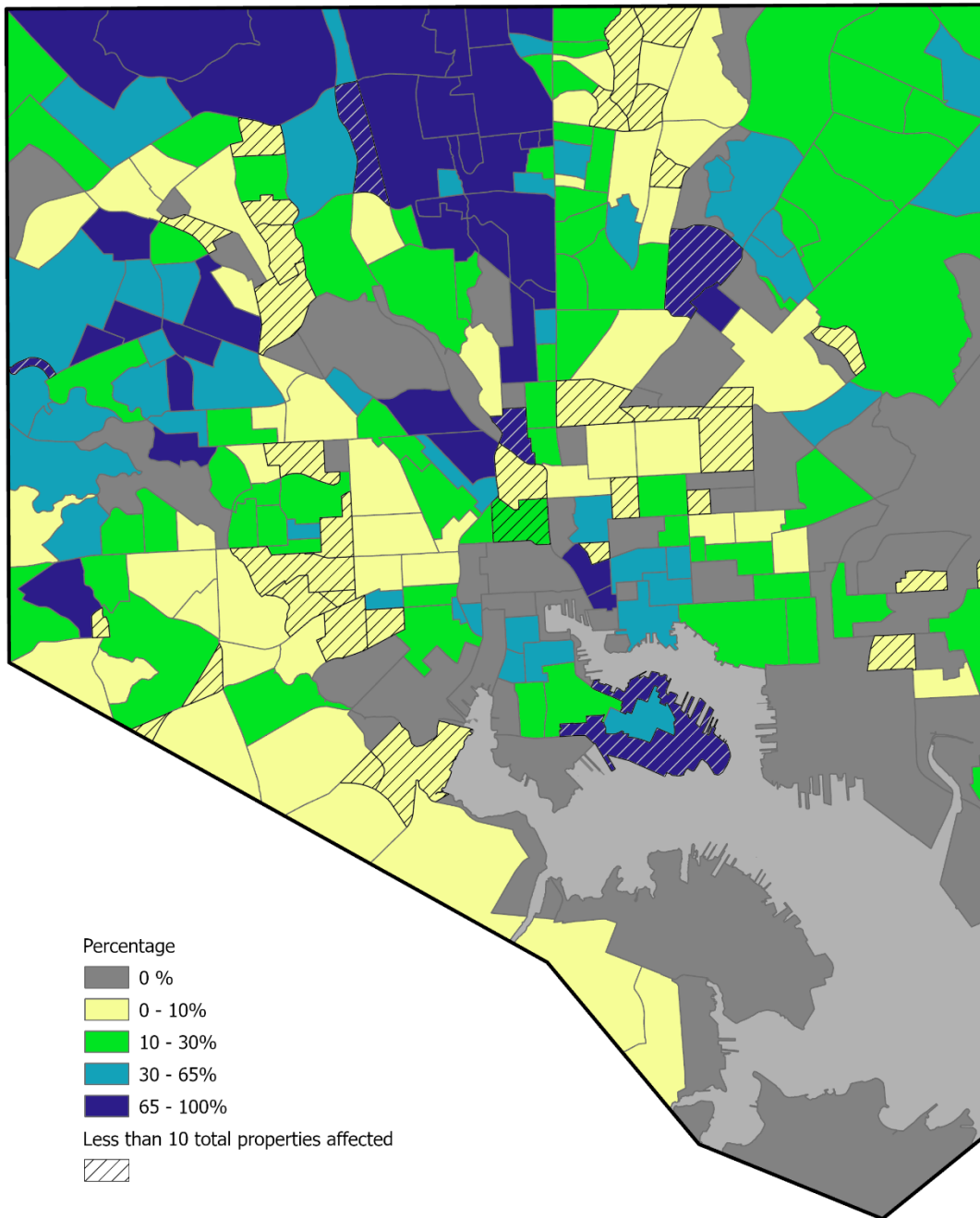
APPENDIX

DHCD has included below three maps of Baltimore City. These maps are broken down into recognized neighborhoods and show what percentage of their housing stock (in the R-1-A through R-8 designation) could potentially be applicable for 2, 3, and 4-unit conversions, based on qualifying minimum enclosed gross floor area. We have also included diagonal line shading to indicate neighborhoods wherein less than 10 individual homes would likely be impacted by the changes proposed within this legislation.

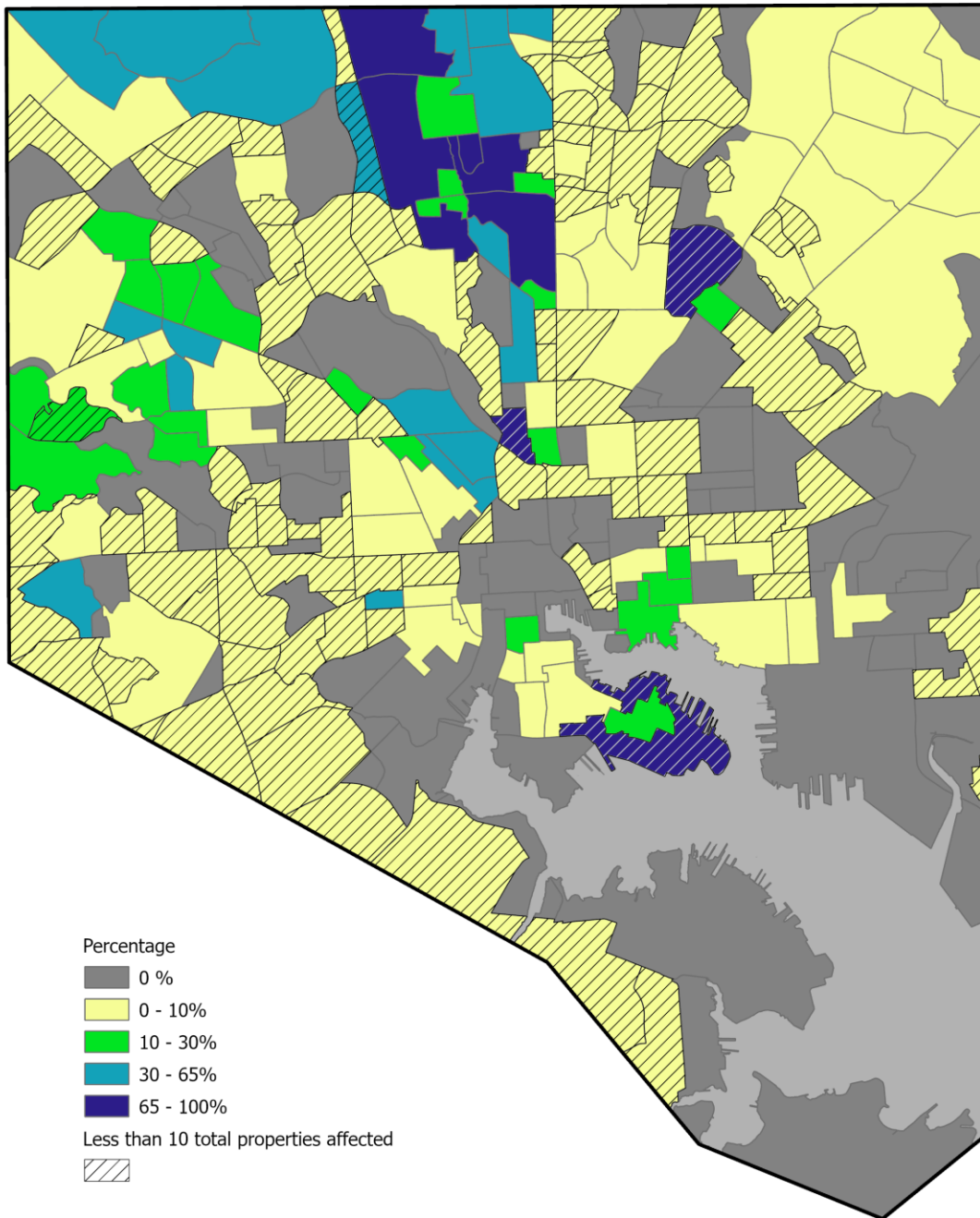
Note on data: There are geographic concentrations of properties where we do not get square footage from SDAT. DHCD used the following steps to generate estimates for missing square footage:

1. Gathered all properties in Zones R-1-A through R-8 with a DHCD use code that means a single-family dwelling.
2. For properties from #1 where structure area in SDAT data was null or zero, we then calculated the median value for all properties with data on the same block that also meet the criteria in #1 *OR* that have use codes designating them as multi-family residential but have a dwelling unit value of only 2 (strong likelihood of being a normal sized rowhouse that was subdivided and not a purpose built apartment that might be larger).
3. For properties that still have no area after #2 because nothing else on their block does either, we calculated median size for whole neighborhood but otherwise remained with same stipulations as in #2.
4. 2 entire neighborhoods were identified where properties still had no area after #3 (Langston Hughes and Darley Park). After consulting with a Neighborhood Development Officer, we used the median for the Pimlico Good Neighbors neighborhood for Langston Hughes, and the median for the 3100 block of Ravenwood Avenue in Four By Four for Darley Park due to comparable housing stock.

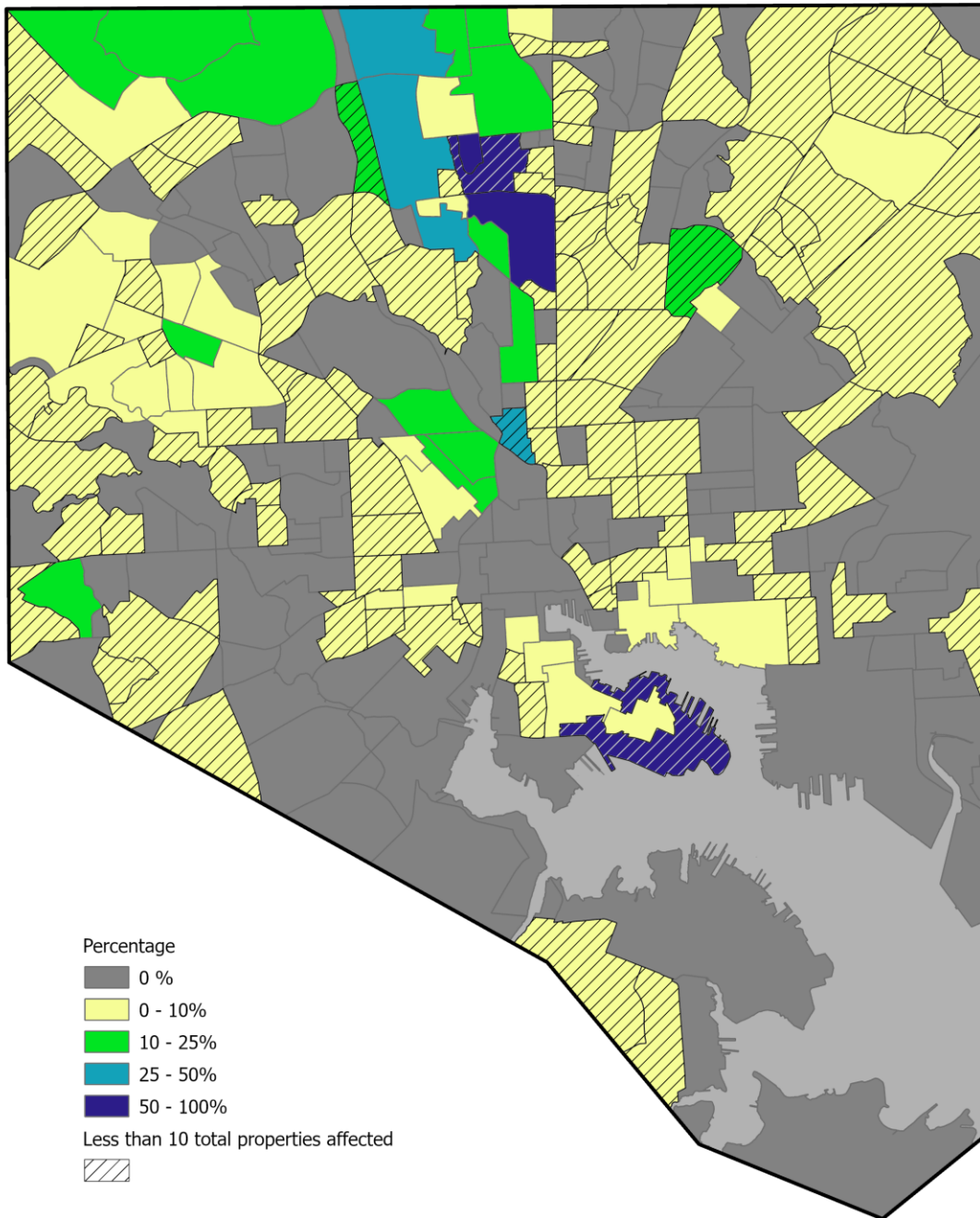
Percent of current single family residential dwellings
that will be eligible for conversion to 2 units in R-1 to R-8 zones, by neighborhood



Percent of current single family residential dwellings
that will be eligible for conversion to 3 units in R-1 to R-8 zones, by neighborhood

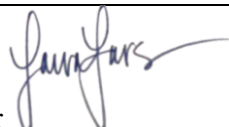


Percent of current single family residential dwellings
that will be eligible for conversion to 4 units in R-1 to R-8 zones, by neighborhood





CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	 Laura Larsen, Budget Director
DATE	September 5 th , 2025
SUBJECT	City Council Bill 25-0066, Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

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

Position: Favorable

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 25-0066, Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity, the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts; striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard standards; and defining certain terms

Background

Council Bill 25-0066 seeks to address Baltimore’s housing affordability and availability challenges by amending the city’s zoning code. The bill proposes to allow the development of low-density multi-family housing—structures with 2 to 4 units—in a broader range of residential neighborhoods than previously permitted.

Council Bill 25-0066 creates a new housing category in the zoning code, expands permitted uses, repeals conversion rules, and establishes development standards for this new category. Specifically, it introduces a new residential use: “Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density),” defined as a building containing 2 to 4 units. This new housing type would be permitted by right in nearly all residential zoning districts (R-1 through R-10), as well as in office-residential zones.

The legislation sets development standards for the new housing category, including requirements for bulk, yard size, floor area, height, setbacks, lot coverage, and impervious surfaces. It also eliminates prior restrictions and prohibitions on converting single-family homes into multi-family units and removes certain design review requirements.

Residential unit production trends

The intent of Council Bill 25-0066 is to increase the production of low density multifamily residential buildings, specifically duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes. This is commonly referred to as the “missing middle,” in housing policy. Over the last 10 years, Baltimore has not produced units of the missing middle

in comparison to single family homes and 5+ unit apartment buildings. The table below is drawn from data from the Census Bureau, via the Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data Systems – Building Permits, a database that contains data on permits for residential construction issued by nearly 20,000 jurisdictions collected in the Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey. This table presents this HUD data on residential building permits issued in Baltimore from 2013 to 2024. It breaks down the number of permitted single-family and multi-family housing units by year, providing insight into the city's construction trends over the past decade.

Annual Residential Building Permits in Baltimore by Number of Units, SOCDS ¹												
Unit Types	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Single Family	220	241	219	267	169	99	130	101	191	118	92	165
2-Unit multifamily	8	4	10	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	4
3 & 4-Unit Multifamily	48	4	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	0
5+ Unit Multifamily	981	572	1,064	672	269	1,448	360	1,520	1,366	1,537	1,749	1,104
All multifamily	1,037	580	1,074	676	269	1,448	380	1,520	1,366	1,539	1,751	1,108
Total Buildings	1,257	821	1,293	943	438	1,547	510	1,621	1,557	1,657	1,843	1,273

Since 2018, most of Baltimore's new housing production has come from large multi-family buildings, while single-family home construction has declined. Meanwhile, 2–4-unit buildings—the “missing middle” housing—have been absent, despite their potential to offer more affordable, moderate-density options.

Council Bill 25-0066 seeks to address this gap by reducing barriers to construct units that fall into the missing middle housing types. While the data shows a trend toward higher-density construction, this legislation ensures that smaller-scale multi-family housing can also contribute to meeting the city's housing needs.

Anne Arundel County

The Anne Arundel County Council passed the Housing Attainability Act of 2024 (Bill 72-24), in September of 2024. The legislation contained a number of provisions including amendments to bulk and yard requirements. The councilmembers who introduced the Housing Attainability Act stated that the goals of this legislation were to allow for more efficient land use to increase attainable housing units across Anne Arundel County, creativity in site layout, and create better opportunities to achieve allowable density. The goal of these reforms is to allow for the construction of triplexes, fourplexes, multiplexes, and townhomes. By adding flexibility of dwelling types into the Code, the reforms allow for development

¹ [State of the Cities Data Systems \(SOCDS\) - Building Permits | HUD USER](#)

sites to be reimagined with a mix of house scale structures. These house scale buildings provide solutions along a spectrum of attainability, or the “missing middle”.

Maryland Housing Needs Assessment

The State of Maryland commissioned the “2020 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10-Year Strategic Plan”, via Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MD DHCD). The MD DHCD issued a follow up report in 2025 with updated numbers and revised policy recommendations. The report’s intent is to assess Maryland’s current and future housing needs and outline strategies to address them over the next decade. Its goals include identifying housing challenges, projecting future demand, and recommending policies to ensure all Maryland residents have access to safe, affordable, and appropriate housing. It also aims to guide state and local decision-makers in prioritizing investments, aligning resources, and coordinating efforts to meet diverse housing needs. The report discussed 70 actions designed to address priority needs by region in the state.

By integrating low-density multifamily housing into the base zoning code, Council Bill 25-0066, directly addresses a core barrier to housing choice: the fact that much of Baltimore’s residential land only allows one housing unit per lot. This change means that modestly scaled apartment buildings, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes could be built without special approvals—reducing development costs, shortening timelines, and making more efficient use of the city’s existing infrastructure.

In the broader context of Maryland’s housing pressures—where many communities face rising demand but maintain low-intensity zoning—the multifamily zoning reform aligns with other efforts like upzoning, small-lot development, and bulk-and-yard requirement reductions. Together, these changes expand the range of housing types available, increase by-right development opportunities, and help diversify neighborhoods while still ensuring appropriate building scale and design standards. This reform would bring Baltimore closer to a zoning framework that supports growth, affordability, and a mix of housing options in every part of the city.

Fiscal Impacts

Currently, converting a single-family home into a multi-family dwelling is only permitted in the R-7, R-8, R-9, and R-10 zoning districts. In the R-7 and R-8 districts, such conversions require conditional-use approval by ordinance, creating a barrier to small-scale housing diversification.

To estimate the fiscal impact of Council Bill 25-0066, the Department of Finance analyzed a limited sample of 63 properties that received variances from the City Council for residential conversions from single unit to multi-unit dwellings within residential zoning districts.

If Council Bill 25-0066 were enacted, property owners in these cases would most likely no longer need a variance to make similar changes. It is assumed that a portion of these and other property owners would take advantage of the new by-right process.

The primary fiscal impact is expected to be on property taxes, as the assessed value of a property increases with physical improvements. To assess this, the Department of Finance compared the FY2019 and FY2025 assessed values of the 63 properties. A present value adjustment was applied to the FY2025 assessments to account for inflation and assessment increases.

FY 2019 Assessment	FY 2025 Assessment	Present Value calculation
\$5,708,199	\$6,840,734	\$5,542,187

During this same period the average annual assessment grew at a rate of 4.3% (not the triannual assessment which combines three years of assessments) annually. For the control value, the Department

calculated a present value (utilizing the average annual assessment rate increase) of \$5,542,187 for FY2025 assessments, representing a real decrease of approximately \$166,012 (or –2.9%) compared to the FY2019 assessments. The reason for this is mainly due to geographic clustering of the properties in the limited sample. The 63 properties analyzed are primarily clustered on the city’s west side, with 46 located in historically disinvested neighborhoods that have a low score in Baltimore’s Housing Market Typology.

Due to the by right nature of parts of the law, there will be a reduction in the number of property owners that seek variances. This will have the operational effective of a decreased volume of work. There are other operational efficiencies within the BMZA and Planning that will occur due to the passage of 250064, however it is unlikely that these will result in savings.

The ‘Missing Middle’ Elsewhere

The University of California, Berkeley’s Othering and Belonging Institute maintains a database of American cities that have considered zoning reform over the past 17 years. During this time, 108 cities have reviewed 162 zoning initiatives. The database identifies four broad reform categories:

- **ADU Reform:** Accessory Dwelling Units, Granny Flats, Secondary Units
- **Plex Reform:** Duplexes, Triplexes, Fourplexes, 2–4 unit multi-family housing
- **TOD Reform:** Transit-Oriented Development, Transit-Specific Density Bonuses
- **Other Reform:** Form-Based Codes, Parking Reform, Non-Transit-Based Inclusionary Zoning

Council Bill 25-0066 most closely aligns with Plex Reform, which includes small-scale multi-family housing types. Seventeen cities have introduced plex reform independently, with 15 successfully passing it. An additional 51 cities introduced plex reform alongside other zoning reforms, with 42 of those efforts also being approved.

Conclusion

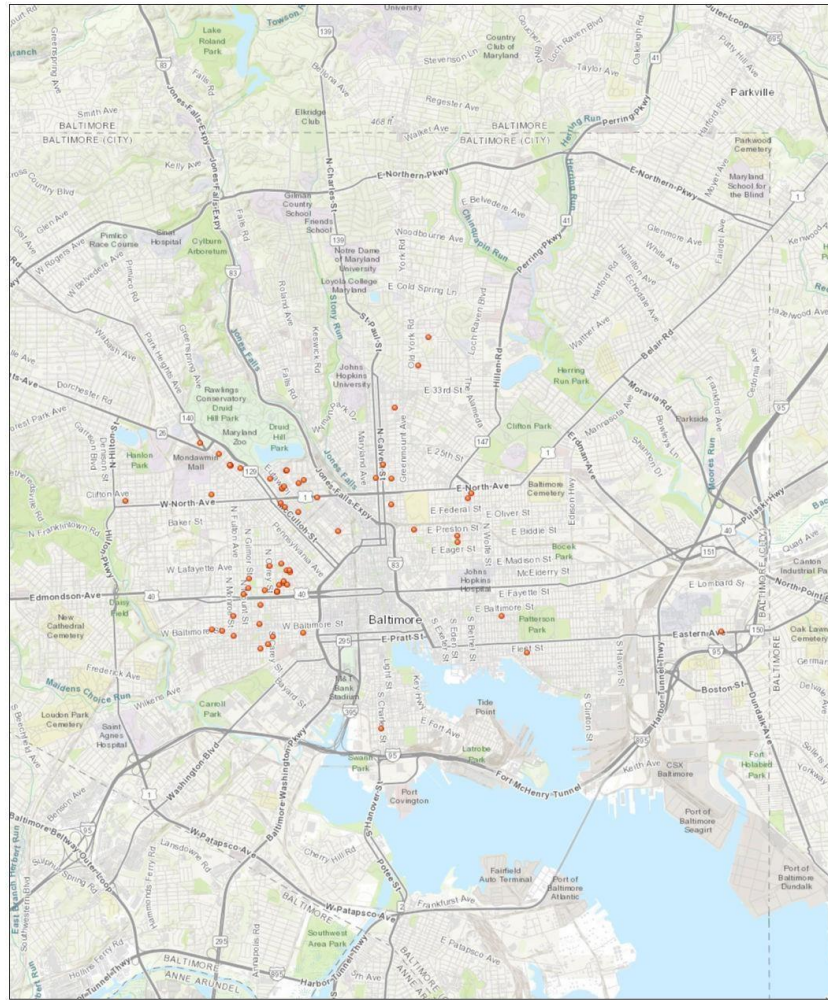
Council Bill 25-0066 presents a targeted and timely approach to address Baltimore’s ongoing housing affordability and availability challenges. By legalizing small-scale multi-family housing in more residential neighborhoods, the legislation fills a critical gap in the city’s housing stock—what is often referred to as the “missing middle.” Historical permit data shows that 2–4 unit housing has been virtually absent from new residential construction in recent years, even as demand for moderate-density, more affordable housing options continues to grow.

The bill aligns with national trends in zoning reform, as seen in dozens of peer cities that have adopted similar plex reforms. It also streamlines the development process by reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers and expanding by-right development options, which could lead to more equitable and geographically diverse housing production across Baltimore. While the fiscal analysis indicates that shortterm revenue gains may be limited, the long-term benefits of housing diversification, neighborhood reinvestment, and broader housing access are substantial.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance supports City Council Bill 25-0066.

cc: Michael Mocksten
Nina Themelis

Baltimore City CoDeMap



CHCD
City of Baltimore, Baltimore County Government, VITA, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, NGA, EPA, USDA



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Veronica P. McBeth, Director, Department of Transportation
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	November 17, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0066 • Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

Council Bill 25-0066 defines a low-density multi-family dwelling as a property consisting of two to four residential units. Under current law, converting a single-family house into a multi-family dwelling typically requires an ordinance. The bill would streamline the process for creating multi-family housing in various residential zoning districts by permitting these new low-density multi-family dwellings in most residential zoning districts. The bill also outlines minimum space requirements for the creation of new units, thereby discouraging untenable overcrowding or poor living conditions in this new residential property type.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

DOT has reviewed the proposed legislation and does not anticipate any immediate fiscal or operational impact resulting from the changes. DOT will continue to monitor potential long-term impacts on traffic patterns, congestion, and parking enforcement needs arising from a potential densification of neighborhoods. DOT respectfully requests a favorable report on Council Bill 25-0066.



**BALTIMORE CITY
BOARD OF MUNICIPAL
AND ZONING APPEALS**

Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Justin A. Williams
Interim Executive Director

Members
Leland Shelton
Chair

Victor Clark
Liz Cornish
David Marcozzi

417 E. Fayette St., Ste. 922
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 396-4301
zoning.baltimorecity.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee
From: Justin A. Williams, Interim Executive Director
CC: Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administrator
Date: November 19, 2025
Re: Council Bill No. 25-0066 – Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity
Position: Recommend Approval

NOTE: This report has been prepared by the staff of the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals following discussion with the Board at its general meeting on November 18, 2025. The Board did not have an opportunity to review this final report prior to submission.

The Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) has reviewed City Council Bill #25-0066 and recommends its approval. This legislation offers Baltimore a practical, proven pathway to address the City's housing challenges while respecting neighborhood character. The bill removes bureaucratic barriers that currently prevent sensible, quality housing development across the City.

Overview of Proposed Legislation

This bill makes a straightforward but transformative change to the City's Zoning Code. It allows property owners to convert single-family homes into two, three, or four units without requiring a lengthy conditional use hearing. The legislation accomplishes this by creating a new use category titled "Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)" and making it permitted by right in Residential Districts R-1A through R-8 and Office-Residential Districts.

Currently, the Zoning Code provides no viable pathway for a homeowner who wishes to convert a large rowhouse into a duplex. The Board is prohibited from approving such conversions in most residential districts. Some property owners file applications anyway, only to receive denials based on jurisdictional limitations rather than project merit. Alternatively, property owners can pursue approval via City Council ordinance, but this process requires legal representation, public hearings, and significant expense - barriers that tend to be prohibitive for most individual homeowners and small local developers. This bill corrects this systemic deficiency, allowing conversions administratively provided they meet strict new size and quality standards.

This change will expand housing options for Baltimore families, facilitate the rehabilitation of vacant homes, reduce bureaucratic processes, and provide greater certainty for small property owners seeking to improve their properties.

Eliminating Inefficient Administrative Procedures

The current regulatory system places the Board in an untenable position. The Board regularly hears appeals for modest residential conversions that it is statutorily prohibited from approving. Property owners expend time and financial resources preparing applications. Neighbors

attend hearings. Board members deliberate. The Board must then deny the request, not because the proposed project is poorly designed or because neighbors object, but solely because the Zoning Code deprives the Board of authority to grant approval.

A brief review of the Board’s recent case history illustrates this jurisdictional impediment. In Appeal Nos. **2024-262** (15 E. West St.), **2024-155** (815 E 33rd St), **2024-022** (2709 Jefferson St), and **2020-163** (1612 Ashburton St), the Board was compelled to deny requests for modest multi-family conversions (e.g., 2 units). None of these denials were based on project quality, design deficiencies, or community opposition. They resulted purely from jurisdictional limitations imposed by the existing Zoning Code. The law gave the Board no choice.

More significantly, numerous other property owners never file applications because they are correctly advised that the Board lacks jurisdiction to approve their proposals. These applicants include individuals who wish to rehabilitate vacant homes, create affordable rental units, or generate supplemental income by adding residential units to their properties. However, they abandon these plans because the existing process offers no viable path to approval. This bill corrects that systemic deficiency.

Analysis and Supporting Evidence

The Board supports this legislation because empirical evidence from Baltimore’s own experience and from peer cities nationwide demonstrates that it will meaningfully improve housing affordability, neighborhood stability, and quality of life.

1. Creating Affordable Housing Through Increased Supply

Baltimore requires additional housing options that families can afford. The “missing middle” housing typology, which includes duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, fills the gap between expensive single-family homes and large apartment buildings. When cities permit this housing type, market prices stabilize and affordability improves. The following peer cities provide compelling evidence:

- **Portland, Oregon:** After legalizing up to four units on residential lots, new middle housing units sold for \$250,000 to \$300,000 less than new detached single-family homes in the same zones.¹ This price differential represents the difference between homeownership remaining aspirational versus becoming accessible for working families, teachers, nurses, and first-time buyers.
- **Minneapolis, Minnesota:** Following the 2018 “Minneapolis 2040” plan, which eliminated single-family zoning, the city increased its housing stock by 12% between 2017 and 2022. Consequently, rents in Minneapolis grew by just 1%, compared to a 14% increase in the remainder of Minnesota where housing supply remained constrained.² While other communities experienced significant rent inflation that displaced residents, Minneapolis maintained housing accessibility.
- **New Rochelle, New York:** After implementing zoning reforms to streamline approvals and increase density, New Rochelle added approximately 4,500 new units. While national

rents surged by double digits following 2020, median rents in New Rochelle actually declined by 2% between 2020 and 2023 because robust supply effectively absorbed demand.³

These outcomes demonstrate a consistent pattern. When cities remove regulatory barriers to building modest-scale housing, affordability improves. This represents documented evidence from jurisdictions that have implemented policies similar to those proposed in this bill.

2. Facilitating Vacant Property Rehabilitation and Neighborhood Stabilization

Baltimore confronts a persistent challenge with over 12,000 vacant buildings. This crisis diminishes neighborhood quality, undermines property values, and drains public resources. Many of these properties are large, historic rowhouses where renovation as a single-family home is economically infeasible. When a property requires \$200,000 in renovations but the completed single-family home would only appraise for \$150,000, the economics do not support investment. Consequently, the property remains vacant and continues to deteriorate.

This bill fundamentally alters that economic calculus. By permitting two to four units, a developer or homeowner can generate sufficient rental income to justify the renovation investment. A neighborhood liability becomes quality housing stock, often without requiring city subsidy. The Board has observed this dynamic locally. Properties that could not attract investment as single-family homes have been successfully rehabilitated when conversion to multiple units became feasible.

This mechanism is particularly effective in neighborhoods with strong historic character but weaker market fundamentals. The bill does not subsidize gentrification. Rather, it enables organic, small-scale investment that respects existing neighborhood context while returning buildings to productive use.

3. Promoting Stable Communities Through Quality Housing Options

Some stakeholders have expressed concern regarding the perceived instability of renter-occupied housing. However, empirical research challenges the “renter vs. homeowner” dichotomy that suggests only ownership leads to stability.

- **Tenure Length is Key:** Studies indicate that neighborhood stability and social trust are correlated with residential tenure length (how long a resident stays in a community), not whether they own or rent the property. For instance, seminal research in the *Journal of Urban Economics* found that a significant portion of the social capital often attributed to homeownership is actually driven by the duration of residence.⁴ Further research confirms that long-term residents, regardless of tenure status, act as the primary drivers of social cohesion and local support networks.⁵
- **Combating Turnover:** High turnover creates instability. By increasing the supply of quality, code-compliant rental and condo options, we reduce the scarcity that drives displacement and turnover. Secure, high-quality rentals allow residents to stay in their neighborhoods longer, fostering the social connections and civic participation that define stable communities.

4. Improving Housing Quality Through Market Competition

The City's current rental market is constrained by limited supply in areas of opportunity. When tenants have few housing options, landlords have reduced incentive to invest in property improvements. This bill alters that dynamic by legalizing additional housing options, thereby creating market competition that naturally drives quality improvements.

When renters can choose among multiple well-maintained properties, landlords must compete by offering superior conditions, responsive management, and modern amenities. Properties that are not adequately maintained lose tenants to competitors. This market pressure, in combination with regulatory enforcement, drives continuous improvement in housing stock quality over time.

Response to Community Concerns and Existing Regulatory Protections

The Board is aware of concerns raised by community members during the public input process. These concerns warrant direct and thorough response. However, it is critical to view this bill within the context of Baltimore's existing protective policies, which provide a safety net against the concerns raised.

Concern #1: Potential for Speculative Development and Substandard Housing Conversions

Response: The bill contains dimensional requirements that prevent the creation of substandard housing units:

- To convert a property to four units, the structure must contain at least 3,000 square feet of enclosed floor area. Basement space does not count toward this minimum requirement.
- Data presented at the Planning Commission hearing demonstrates the restrictive nature of this standard: Of the 213,600 properties in R-1 through R-8 districts, only ~3.5% possess sufficient floor area to accommodate four units under these dimensional requirements.

The bill's dimensional standards ensure quality outcomes by requiring substantial floor area regardless of the number of units created. Even at the two-unit threshold of 1,500 square feet, the bill mandates significantly more space than would be required for two typical studio apartments or efficiency units. These standards prevent the economically marginal conversions that typically result in substandard housing conditions. Properties that barely meet the minimum thresholds offer limited financial return for the substantial renovation investment required, naturally discouraging low-quality speculative conversions. The bill's standards effectively channel conversion activity toward properties where the existing building size and configuration support quality, family-appropriate dwelling units.

Concern #2: Potential for Displacement and Housing Unaffordability

Response: Baltimore maintains comprehensive protections for residents against displacement and unaffordable tax increases. This zoning change operates in conjunction with, rather than in opposition to, these existing programs:

- **Homestead Tax Credit:** State law caps annual taxable assessment increases at 4% for owner-occupied homes, ensuring long-term homeowners are not displaced due to neighborhood appreciation.⁶
- **Homeowners' Property Tax Credit:** This income-based program limits property taxes to amounts that households can reasonably afford, regardless of assessment changes.⁷
- **Senior Citizen Tax Credit:** Enhanced city credits specifically protect seniors on fixed incomes, enabling them to age in place.⁸
- **Maryland Renters' Tax Credit:** This program recognizes that renters bear property tax burdens through rent payments and provides direct financial relief to eligible renters.⁹
- **Inclusionary Housing Requirements:** Large developments must set aside affordable units, ensuring new growth includes options for lower-income residents.¹⁰
- **Community Land Trusts:** The City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund supports permanent affordability through community-owned land that is removed from speculative markets.¹¹
- **Tenant Opportunity to Purchase:** State law provides tenants with first rights to purchase their buildings when sold, protecting against sudden displacement.¹²
- **Historic Preservation Tax Credits (CHAP):** The 10-year CHAP credit incentivizes high-quality rehabilitation that preserves neighborhood character while making renovation economically viable.¹³

The actual displacement risk derives from maintaining the status quo. When housing scarcity drives up prices and young families cannot locate affordable homes, they depart Baltimore entirely. When vacant properties deteriorate because renovation is not economically feasible, surrounding property values decline and long-term residents suffer harm. This bill addresses these genuine displacement pressures by expanding housing options and enabling vacant property rehabilitation.

Conclusion

City Council Bill #25-0066 represents sound, evidence-based land use policy. It removes bureaucratic barriers that currently compel the Board to deny reasonable housing proposals. It aligns Baltimore with national best practices demonstrated in jurisdictions such as Portland, Minneapolis, and New Rochelle. The legislation operates within the City's existing framework of affordability protections and historic preservation tools.

This bill does not represent radical experimentation. Rather, it implements policies proven effective in peer cities. Other jurisdictions have demonstrated that allowing modest density in residential areas increases affordability, reduces vacancy, and strengthens neighborhoods without sacrificing character or displacing existing residents.

The question before the Committee is not whether to embrace fundamental transformation. It is whether to remove an outdated regulatory barrier that currently prevents organic, small-scale housing development that Baltimore urgently requires.

For any questions regarding this report or to discuss these concerns further, please contact **Justin Williams** at justin.williams@baltimorecity.gov or **(410) 396-4301**.

Endnotes:

1. City of Portland Bureau of Plan. & Sustainability, *Portland Sees Significant Production in Middle Housing Resulting from Recently Adopted Zoning Changes* (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/rip2/news/2025/2/4/portland-sees-significant-production-middle-housing-resulting>
2. Alex Horowitz et al., *Minneapolis Land Use Reforms Offer a Blueprint for Housing Affordability*, Pew Charitable Trs. (Jan. 4, 2024), <https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2024/01/04/minneapolis-land-use-reforms-offer-a-blueprint-for-housing-affordability>
3. *How More Housing Revitalized a Suburban Downtown*, Pew Charitable Trs. (Nov. 13, 2024), <https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2024/11/13/how-more-housing-revitalized-a-suburban-downtown>
4. Denise DiPasquale & Edward L. Glaeser, *Incentives and Social Capital: Are Homeowners Better Citizens?*, 45 J. Urb. Econ. 354 (1999).
5. Danya E. Keene et al., *Length of Residence and Social Integration: The Contingent Effects of Neighborhood Poverty*, 24 Health & Place 1 (2013); see also, Judith L. Perrigo, et al., *Community Social Cohesion During a Large Public Housing and Neighborhood Redevelopment: A Mixed Methods Study*. SOCIETIES 15.5 (2025): 140 (finding trust correlates with tenure length).
6. Md. Code Ann, Tax-Prop. § 9-105; Baltimore City Code, Art. 28, § 10-1.
7. Md. Code Ann, Tax-Prop. § 9-104.
8. Baltimore City Code, Art. 28, § 10-20 (City Supplement to Homeowners' Tax Credit Program).
9. Md. Code Ann, Tax-Prop. § 9-102.
10. Baltimore City Code, Art. 13, Subtitle 2B (Inclusionary Housing Program).
11. See e.g., Balt. City Dep't of Hous. & Cmty. Dev., *Community Land Trust Program Homeownership NOFA* (Aug. 15, 2025).
12. See Maryland Renters' Rights and Stabilization Act (effective Oct. 1, 2024), preempting The Baltimore City Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act.
13. Baltimore City Code, Art. 28, § 10-8.

Baltimore City Council



Land Use & Transportation

Committee

Bill:25-0066

**Title: Zoning – Housing Options and
Opportunity**

Additional Materials



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

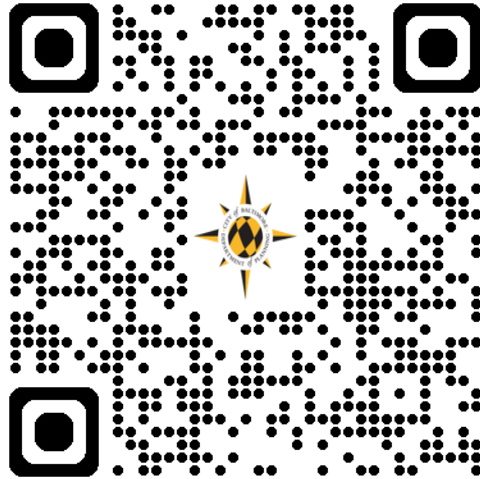
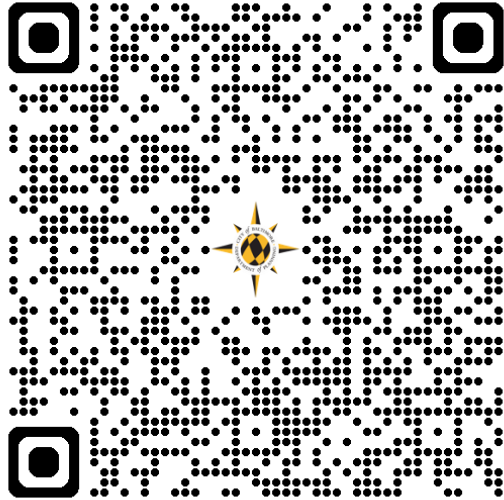
Land Use and Transportation Committee

Housing Options & Opportunity Act

PREPARED BY
Department of Planning

November 20, 2025

Follow Along



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Mayor

What Does this Bill Do?

Introduces a New Housing Use

“Dwelling: Multi-Family (Low Density)”, defined as any home with 2 to 4 units.

Expands Where 2–4 Unit Homes Are Allowed

Permitted by-right in:

- R-1-A to R-4 (Detached & Semi-Detached zones)
- R-5 to R-8 (Rowhouse & Multi-Family zones)
- Office-Residential (OR) Districts

Not permitted in R-9 and R-10, already reserved for high-density development.

Eliminates Outdated “Residential Conversion” Rules

- Ends the outdated process that restricts converting single-family homes into multi-family ones.



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What Does this Bill Do

Ties Housing to Structure Size, Not Lot Size

Units allowed based on gross floor area (excluding basements, garages, attics):

- 1,500 sq. ft. = 2 units
- 2,250 sq. ft. = 3 units
- 3,000 sq. ft. = 4 units

Aligns Standards for Consistency

- Updates zoning tables and bulk requirements so 2 to 4-unit homes follow the same rules as existing detached or rowhomes.



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Technical Overview

History of Conversion of Dwellings in Baltimore

- **1931** - Zoning Code for the City was created.
- **1971** - Major reform in 1971 that converted the Zoning Code into a more modern Euclidean-style code.
- **1999** - Reformatting of the Zoning Code, no major changes to content.
- **1999** - Ord. #99-425, prohibited conversions R-6 and lower density. Required Conditional Use for higher-density zones by BMZA in R-7 through R-10.
- **2011** - Ord. #11-525, Changed approval for R-8 to require a Conditional Use Ord.
- **2012** - Ord. #12-040, Changed approval for R-7 to require a Conditional Use Ord.
- **2014** - Ord. #14-219, Required conversions to meet bulk standards per the zone.
- **2017** - TransForm Baltimore, entire Zoning Code re-write. Conversions allowed in R-7 and R-8 by Ordinance, R-9 and R-10 by BMZA.



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Mayor

13 **Baltimore City Code**

14 **Article 32. Zoning**

15 **Title 1. General Provisions**

16 ***Subtitle 3. Definitions***

17 **§ 1-305. “Day-care home: Adult” to “Electric substation: Outdoor”.**

18 (R) *DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY).*

19 (1) *IN GENERAL.*

20 “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” MEANS A DWELLING THAT
21 CONTAINS AT LEAST 2 BUT NO MORE THAN 4 DWELLING UNITS, EXCEPT AS
22 OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

23 (2) *INCLUSIONS.*

24 “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)” INCLUDES COMMON FACILITIES FOR
25 RESIDENTS, SUCH AS LAUNDRY ROOMS.

26 **§ 1-309. “Lot line” to “Motel”.**

27 (I) *LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING.*

28 *SEE “DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)”.*



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Mayor

1 **Title 4. Development Reviews**

2 ***Subtitle 4. Design Review***

3 **§ 4-405. Applicability.**

4 (a) *In general.*

5 Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, design review is required for the
6 following types of development:

7 [(5) when exterior modifications are proposed for residential conversion in the R-7,
8 R-8, R-9, and R-10 Districts;]



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Mayor

10 **Title 8. Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts**

11 ***Subtitle 2. District Descriptions***

12 **§ 8-201. Common standards.**

13 [(a) *Residential development.*]

14 In the districts described in this subtitle, residential development is limited to EITHER 1
15 single-family dwelling unit per lot OR 1 LOW-DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING.

16 [(b) *Residential conversions.*]

17 [In any of the districts subject to this title, the conversion of a single-family dwelling to a
18 multi-family dwelling is prohibited.]



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Mayor

Zoning Tables

**Table 8-301: Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses**

Uses	Districts									Use Standards
	R-1A	R-1B	R-1C	R-1D	R-1E	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	
Residential										
...										
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
...										



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Mayor

Table 8-401: Detached and Semi-Detached Residential Districts – Bulk and Yard Regulations

Categories	Specifications (Per District)								
	R-1A	R-1B	R-1C	R-1D	R-1E	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4
Minimum Lot Area									
...									
Dwelling: Detached, [or] Semi- Detached, OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2 acres	1 acre	21,780 sq. ft.	14,520 sq. ft.	9,000 sq. ft.	7,300 sq.ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.	3,000 sq. ft.
...									



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MINIMUM ENCLOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA ³

DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.
	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.
	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.
...									

³ GROSS FLOOR AREA MAY NOT INCLUDE ANY BASEMENT AREA.



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Mayor

***Table 9-301: Rowhouse and Multi-Family Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses***

Uses	Districts						Use Standards
	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10	
Residential							
...							
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	P	P	P			
...							



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Mayor

***Table 9-401: Rowhouse and Multi-Family Residential Districts –
Bulk and Yard Regulations***

Categories	Specifications (Per District)					
	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
Minimum Lot Area						
...						
Dwelling: Rowhouse OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2,500 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft.	1,100 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	750 sq. ft.	500 sq. ft.



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	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
...						
MINIMUM ENCLOSED GROSS FLOOR AREA ⁸						
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.	2-UNIT: 1,500 SQ. FT.		
	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.	3-UNIT: 2,250 SQ. FT.		
	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.	4-UNIT: 3,000 SQ. FT.		
Maximum Bldg Height						
...						
Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	35 or 45 feet ²	35 or 45 feet ²	35 or 45 feet ²	45 or 60 feet ³	3.0 FAR	6.0 FAR
...						



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17	Maximum Lot Coverage					
18	...					
19	Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	40%	45%	70%	80%	40%
20						80%
21						
22						
23	...					
24	Maximum Impervious Surface					
25	Dwelling: Detached [or], Semi-Detached, OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
26						
27						
28						
29						
30						
31	...					
32	Minimum Front Yard					
33	...					
34	Dwelling: Multi-Family OR MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	25 feet	20 feet	10 feet	None	45 or 65 feet ⁶
35						None
36						
37						
38	...					



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		R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10
1	Minimum Interior-Side Yard						
2	...						
3	Dwelling: Multi-	15 feet	15 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet
4	Family OR						
5	MULTI-FAMILY						
6	(LOW DENSITY)						
7	...						
8	Minimum Corner-Side Yard						
9	...						
10	Dwelling: Multi-	20 feet	20 feet	15 feet	None	25 feet	None
11	Family OR						
12	MULTI-FAMILY						
13	(LOW DENSITY)						
14	...						
15	Minimum Rear Yard						
16	...						
17	Dwelling: Multi-	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	25 feet	10 feet	10 feet
18	Family OR						
19	MULTI-FAMILY						
20	(LOW DENSITY)						
21	...						



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22 . . .

23 ² For a structure located on an interior lot, the maximum height is 35 feet. For a structure located on a corner lot at which each
24 of the adjoining street rights-of-way are at least 30 feet wide, the maximum height is 45 feet.

25 ³ For a structure located on an interior lot, the maximum height is 45 feet. For a structure located on a corner lot at which each
26 of the adjoining street rights-of-way are at least 30 feet wide, the Zoning Board may allow a height of up to 60 feet as a
27 conditional use.

28 . . .

29 ⁶ For a structure that comprises 6 or fewer stories, the minimum front-yard requirement is 45 feet. For a structure that
30 comprises 7 or more stories, the minimum front-yard requirement is 65 feet. However, a structure designed with a courtyard is
31 allowed a reduction of the minimum front-yard requirement, as provided in § 9-403 {"Setback reduction for courtyard
32 design"}.

33 . . .

34 ⁸ GROSS FLOOR AREA MAY NOT INCLUDE ANY BASEMENT AREA.



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**Table 12-301: Office-Residential Districts –
Permitted and Conditional Uses**

Uses	Districts	Use Standards
	OR	
Residential		
Bed and Breakfast	CB	
Day-Care Home: Adult or Child	P	Per §14-310
Dwelling: Detached	P	
Dwelling: Semi-Detached	P	
Dwelling: Multi-Family	P	Per § 14-327
DWELLING: MULTI-FAMILY (LOW DENSITY)	P	
Dwelling: Rowhouse	P	
Fraternity or Sorority House	CO	Per § 14-313
Residential-Care Facility (16 or Fewer Residents)	P	Per § 14-334
Residential-Care Facility (17 or More Residents)	CO	Per § 14-334
Rooming House	CO	



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Interaction with Housing Package

Interaction with Other Rules

- CCB #25-0064 – Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements – Amendments (Ord. #25-063)
- CCB #25-0065 – Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements (Ord. #25-064)
- History of Conversions of Dwellings
- State of Maryland – Policy on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), (SB0891/HB1466)



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

State of Maryland Policy on ADUs

A recent State law change to the Land Use Article was implemented via SB0891/HB1466 and took effect at the start of October.

This bill entitled “Land Use and Real Property – Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements and Prohibitions” and is intended to encourage Charter Counties (the City of Baltimore is one of those) to accept Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) where single-family detached homes are allowed.



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Mayor

State of Maryland Policy on ADUs

SUBTITLE 5. ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS.

4-501.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) (1) “ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT” MEANS A SECONDARY DWELLING UNIT THAT IS:

(I) ON THE SAME LOT, PARCEL, OR TRACT AS A PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT ;
AND

(II) NOT GREATER THAN 75% OF THE SIZE OF AND SUBORDINATE IN USE TO THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT.

(2) “ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT” INCLUDES A STRUCTURE THAT IS:

(I) SEPARATE FROM THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT; OR

(II) ATTACHED AS AN ADDITION TO THE PRIMARY SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT.

(C) (1) “DWELLING UNIT” MEANS A SINGLE UNIT PROVIDING COMPLETE LIVING FACILITIES FOR AT LEAST ONE INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING, AT A MINIMUM, PROVISIONS FOR SANITATION, COOKING, EATING, AND SLEEPING.

(2) “DWELLING UNIT” DOES NOT INCLUDE A UNIT IN A MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING.

...

4-502.

THIS SUBTITLE APPLIES ONLY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ON LAND WITH A SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT AS THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT.



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

State of Maryland Policy on ADUs

4-503.

- (A) IT IS THE POLICY OF THE STATE TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS ON LAND WITH A SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLING UNIT AS THE PRIMARY DWELLING UNIT IN ORDER TO MEET THE HOUSING NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS OF MARYLAND.
- (B) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN THIS SUBTITLE AND SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THIS SUBTITLE DOES NOT ALTER OR ABROGATE ANY ZONING POWER OR RELATED AUTHORITY GRANTED TO A LOCAL JURISDICTION UNDER THIS TITLE.
- (2) LOCAL JURISDICTIONS SHALL ESTABLISH POLICIES THAT FURTHER THE INTENT OF THIS SUBTITLE.

4-504.

- (A) (1) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2026, EACH LEGISLATIVE BODY SHALL ADOPT A LOCAL LAW AUTHORIZING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION.
- (2) A LEGISLATIVE BODY MAY ADOPT A LOCAL LAW THAT:
 - (i) ESTABLISHES STANDARDS FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT SAFETY; AND
 - (ii) PROHIBITS THE FULL OR PARTIAL CONVERSION OF AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE AS AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT IF THE ONLY VEHICULAR ACCESS TO THE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE IS FROM AN ALLEY.

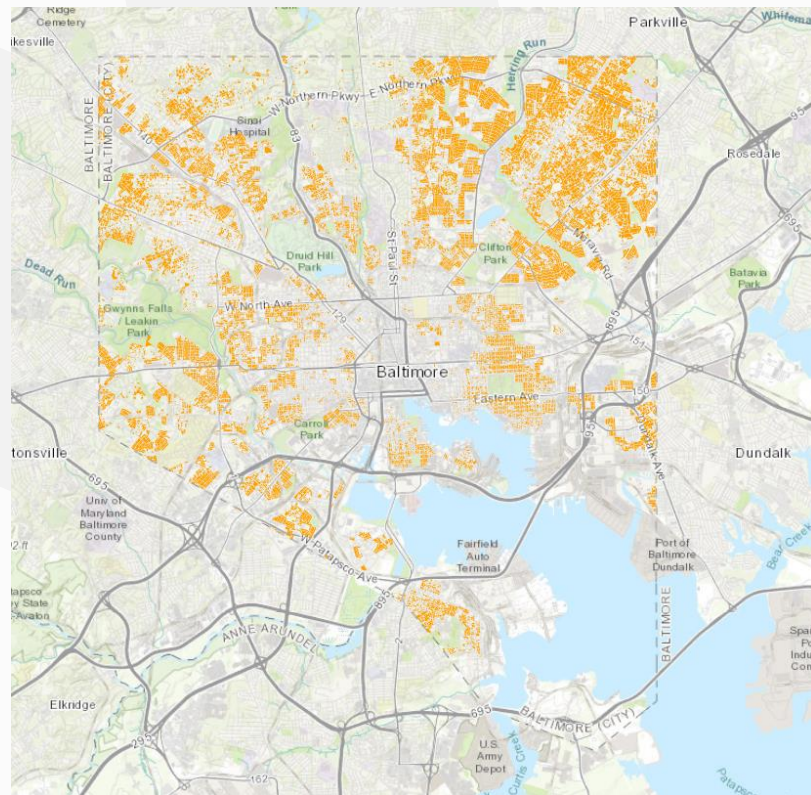
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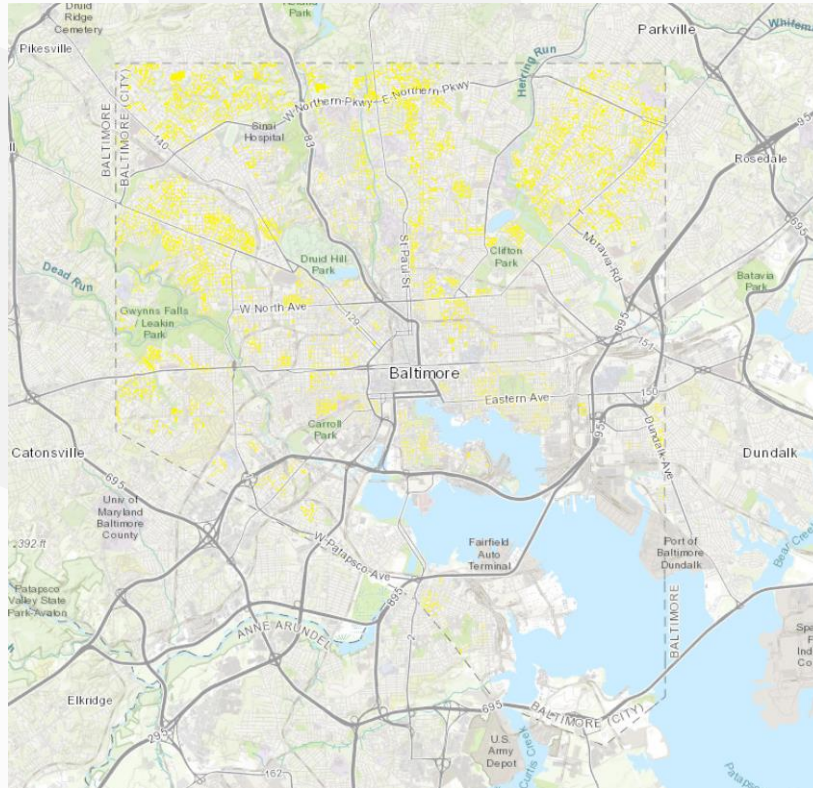
Applicability

100%



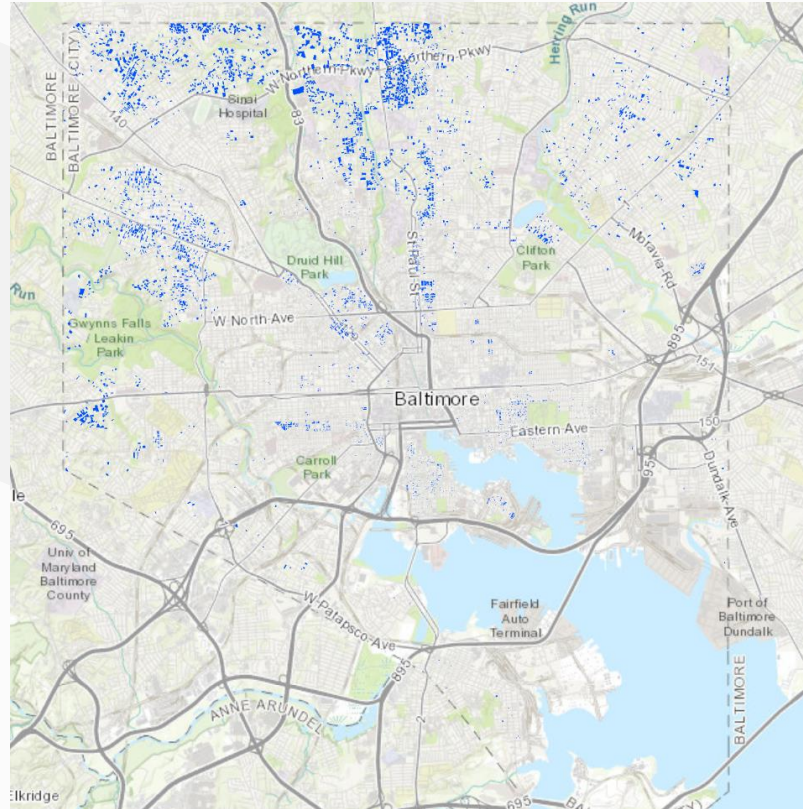
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1,500 – 2,249 Sq. Ft. (up to 2 units by right)



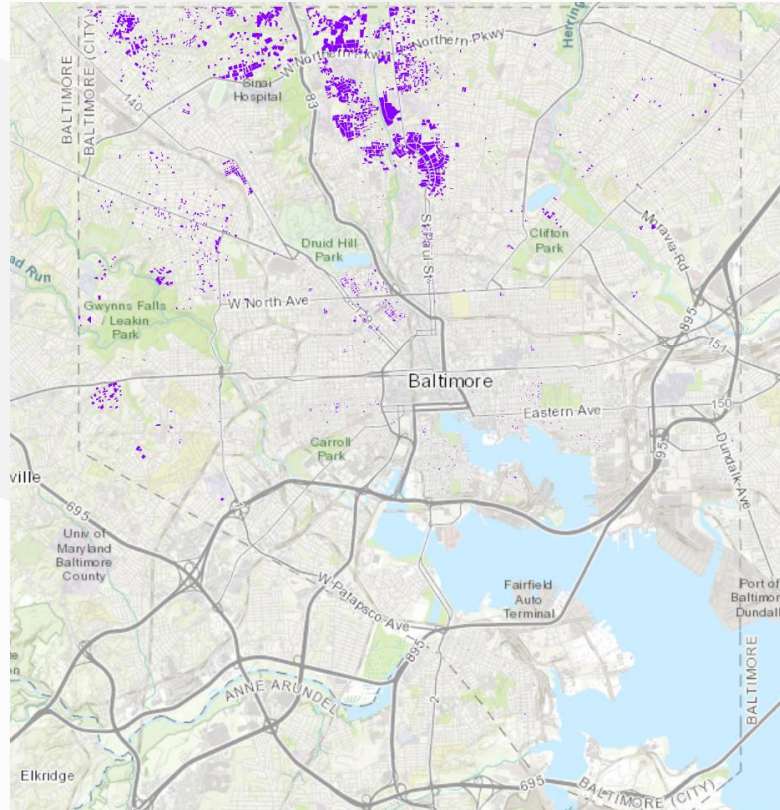
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2,250 – 2,999 Sq. Ft. (up to 3 units by right)



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3,000+ Sq. Ft. (up to 4 units by right)



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Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Area (Acres)	% of City	% of Residential Land
R-1A	88.83	0.15%	0.33%
R-1B	296.88	0.50%	1.09%
R-1C	1233.29	2.09%	4.55%
R-1D	723.28	1.22%	2.67%
R-1E	1123.1	1.90%	4.14%
R-1	1837.79	3.11%	6.77%
R-2	66.56	0.11%	0.25%
R-3	3986.17	6.75%	14.69%
R-3/HR	2.06	0.00%	0.01%
R-4	1607.02	2.72%	5.92%
R-4/D-MU	20.19	0.03%	0.07%
R-4/HR	14.34	0.02%	0.05%
R-5	3837.51	6.50%	14.14%
R-5/HR	1.21	0.00%	0.00%
R-6	6155.98	10.42%	22.69%
R-6/HR	1.87	0.00%	0.01%
R-6/R-MU	1.08	0.00%	0.00%
R-7	1261.04	2.14%	4.65%
R-7/HR	1.18	0.00%	0.00%
R-7/R-MU	1.6	0.00%	0.01%
R-8	2600.51	4.40%	9.58%
R-9	1038.13	1.76%	3.83%
R-10	1232.1	2.09%	4.54%
Totals	27131.72	46%	100%



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**This bill does not
require conversion, it
provides the option**

Examples of Multi-Family Conversion



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Mayor

THANK YOU!



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Mayor

Maryland The Daily Record
200 St. Paul Place
Baltimore, MD, 21202
Phone: 4435248100

MARYLAND

THE DAILY RECORD

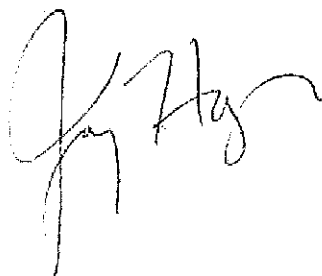
Affidavit of Publication

To: Office of Council Services - Nancy Mead
100 Holliday St
Baltimore, MD, 21202

Re: Legal Notice 4108619,
PUBLIC HEARING ON BILL NO. 25-0066

We hereby certify that the annexed advertisement was published in Maryland The Daily Record, a Daily newspaper published in the State of Maryland 1 time(s) on the following date(s): 11/05/2025

By



Joy Hough
Authorized Designee of the Publisher

Baltimore City

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING ON BILL NO. 25-0066

The Committee on Land Use & Transportation of the Baltimore City Council will conduct a public hearing on City Council Bill No. 25-0066 on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 9:00 AM in the Clarence "Du" Burns Chamber, City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street, 4th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202. Information on how the public can participate in the hearing virtually, via Webex, will be available at <https://baltimore.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Zoning - Housing Options and Opportunity

FOR the purpose of amending certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts; striking residential conversion standards for single-family dwellings into multi-family dwellings; amending certain permitted and conditional uses; amending certain bulk and yard standards; and defining certain terms.

Applicant: The Mayor & City Council of Baltimore City

For more information, contact committee staff at (410) 396-1001.

NOTE: This bill is subject to amendment by the Baltimore City Council.

RYAN DORSEY
Chair

n5 4108619

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Affidavit Reference: PUBLIC HEARING ON BILL NO. 25-0066

Subtotal	\$145.58
Tax	\$0.00
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Baltimore City Council



Legislative Investigations

Committee

Bill: 25-0066

**Title: Zoning – Housing Options and
Opportunity**

Public Testimony

Julian Frost
District 11
Nov 14, 2025
Position: In Favor

Dear Land Use & Transportation Committee,

The Housing Options and Opportunity Act is good policy. Please support it in its present form.

Gentrification and displacement happens when housing demand is pent up due to restricted supply, which can result in overflow of higher-income people into low-income neighborhoods and sudden up-zonings that bring on a lot of change in one small area. In contrast, this bill would distribute a modest amount of development potential throughout the entire city, meaning that no individual area would be subject to upheaval or sacrifice.

Opponents try to represent this bill as somehow being counter to the virtue of homeownership. They are wrong — 25-0066 opens up economic opportunity and flexibility for current homeowners, and makes homeownership feasible for those who aren't there yet. Historically, people have been able to achieve the American Dream of homeownership (I'll leave my critiques of this concept aside) by renting out a unit to help them pay off their mortgage. This kind of heterogeneous, income-mixed dynamic is the true story of urban America. Renters and homeowners in the same neighborhood. Sure, there is a homogenous suburban model where every SFH is just one unit and is occupied by a nuclear family. But we shouldn't continue forcing Baltimoreans into that model.

The status quo is suppressing untold economic opportunity and limiting people's capacity to efficiently deploy their capital. I bet people would complain less about property taxes if the City government allowed them to do what they want with their property.

Four units is truly a modest proposal. First of all, keep in mind that in reality, restrictions on dwelling units/gross floor area ratio make it so that some smaller rowhouse areas are entirely exempted, and others would only accommodate 2 or 3 units at most. Secondly, just think about what a 6-unit building looks like. That's a 3-story building with 2 spacious units per floor, smaller than many existing single-family homes in Baltimore. Such small apartment buildings exist in SFH-majority all over the country and there's no problem.

The HOO is an inherently equitable and progressive piece of legislation because it breaks down exclusivity by allowing smaller and more affordable types of homes in more places. Further, it will help address Baltimore's perennial vacant problem by offering developers a more feasible path to rehabbing these homes (since simply rehabbing a vacant into a for-sale SFH rowhouse will often not fetch enough on the market to justify the investment).

Opponents like to bring up the exemption of Baltimore's covenant neighborhoods (both majority white and Black) as a reason that the bill is somehow inequitable. To that I say — the covenants are inequitable! It doesn't make sense to cite a private exclusivity arrangement in order to defend the public exclusivity arrangement that is single-family zoning.

Please keep 4 units by right, and focus on getting the ADU policy right. Watering the bill down to 3 or 2 units by right would squander immeasurable economic opportunity and quality-of-life for current and future residents of the city. This would not be a minor change.

Best,
Julian Frost

October 26, 2025

Hello, Baltimore City Council, the Mayor's Office, and Mayor Scott,

Subject: Official Testimony regarding 25-0064, 25-065, and 25-0066

I want to thank Councilpersons McCray, Conway, Schleifer, Torrance, Porter, and Glover on your votes for 0064 and/or 0065. I hope we can continue to have your support during tomorrow's vote. And I hope we can work together regarding 0066 and in the future the Harford Road Overlay District bill.

For all of Council: I live in District 3 and Councilperson Dorsey paints opposition with a broad and increasingly defamatory brush. Dissent is America's first name and that is why we have been king-free until recently. Like you, as a Federal Public Servant, I also advocate for and protect the public good. I have also been in the affordable housing and community development arena for 20 years+ and have done, if I may say, incredible and creative things to create and preserve affordable housing and strengthen communities. But I will let you in on a shameful secret: fresh out college, full of energy, care, and unknowingly a lack of discernment, I did not use my analytical skills to question my then employer's work in two predominantly Black neighborhoods that had been through slum clearance, decay and demolition of income-based subsidized housing, urban renewal, and divestment. I thought I was performing a service to help residents temporarily relocate and return to a better community while also building self-sufficiency. Well, our HOPE VI developments helped usher in massive and rapid gentrification. I have learned my lesson, especially from the residents who voiced their dissent, and by the implementation of piecemeal public policy, planning, and development that allowed a new unaffordable community that did not represent the residents who anchored and tried to stabilize it during eras of purposeful divestment.

It is certainly not true that as I am already "secure in their housing, [Dorsey] would note - simply do not want this for others." Affordable housing and community development is my bread and butter, and I am its servant. I have experienced all levels of housing security, vulnerability, and insecurity. My mother, with her good Christian and socialist self,

implored upon me when former welfare recipient, Scott Brown, ran for U.S. Senate for Massachusetts on a platform of ending welfare and other safety nets for a “self-sufficient and productive” society to “never roll up the ladder behind you.” I simply want good housing policy, laws, joint ventures, funding, coupled with sound economic policies and growth. I want to ensure that housing is a right, housing becomes truly attainable and affordable, and that gentrification is not a byproduct or intention, curbs speculation, and that Black and lower income residents remain and are not robbed of access to generational wealth. I do not see these needs addressed in 0064, 0065, 0066, the Abundant Housing Act, and the Harford Road Overlay bills take I and II. As Poirot says, my “little gray cells” are firing, I am exercising my First Amendment rights, applying my experience and expertise, and demanding better and comprehensive solutions. Plainly put, these bills are simply not radical nor well-thought out enough to accomplish the goals being stated by the Administration and the bill sponsors (which seem to differ depending on the audience). I am not rolling up the ladder, I am asking for the City to build more ladders that are easier for all to climb.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Jones', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

In Solidarity, Tanisha N. Jones | District 3 | Super Voter

October 16, 2025

Dear Baltimore City Council:

I am writing to express my concerns about 20250064 and 20250065. I do not fully oppose these bills but in my professional opinion, as an affordable housing and community development advocate, these bills are just simply not radical enough to attract new population, build housing, make housing affordable again, and retain long-term legacy. In fact, based upon my professional and personal experience, I think these bills, coupled with the other bills in the housing package and the Harford Road Overlay District bill, are the antithesis of what I hope you are attempting to accomplish. Unless, the speculation is accurate and some on City Council are in the hands of developers or just simply naïve. I give some solutions at the end of this letter, see page 5.

So here are my thoughts:

City Council Bill 25-0064 Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments: Introduced by Councilmember Gray; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Torrence, Blanchard, Bullock, and Porter.

- The bill Increases the lot coverage and reduces yard requirements in all residential zoning districts.
- The changes will reduce the amount of open and green space in all zones by increasing the maximum percentage of lot coverage allowed by 28-40 percent, depending on the existing zoning district, and by reducing the required interior side and corner yard footage in all zones.
 - There is a disproportionate impact upon some already existing high dense neighborhoods, particularly our neighbors in R-6 and R-7, along with R-1A through R-1E.¹
- Bigger buildings and less yard space will increase the heat island effects experienced in many neighborhoods. Councilmember Dorsey wanted District 3 to reduce its carbon footprint. Without environmental reviews and better ground water infrastructure, it will negatively impact neighborhoods with high water tables.²
- In R-1 districts the required side yard is reduced from 20 to 15 feet, which is a 25% reduction in space and in R-3 zones from 10 feet to 5 feet, which is a 50% reduction in yard space.
- In R-8 zones the rear yard can be completely eliminated under certain conditions.
- Reduces the required lot size required for multi-family dwellings in R-5 through R-8 zones.
- Allows for increased density without taking into account the impact on public utilities and services.

¹ Council Bill 25-0064 (first reader)

² *Wall Street Journal*, Charleston Floods Are Getting Worse. For These Residents, It's Worth the Risk, September 11, 2025

- Less open and green space will negatively impact air quality and public health. Nationwide this disproportionately impacts lower income and predominantly Black neighborhoods.³
- Will negatively impact the visual and aesthetic appeal of the and sense of privacy within the neighborhood.
- Bill 0064 uses a mechanism called “FAR”, which is floor area ratio - to calculate building height. FAR is not defined in the bill.

City Council Bill [25-0065](#) Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements:

Introduced by Councilmember Blanchard; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, and Gray.

- Eliminates a required minimum number of off-street parking spaces for all uses and instead sets a maximum number of spaces allowed. The current code requires at least one parking space per dwelling unit.
- Will greatly increase the competition for on-street parking
- Will place added burden on existing residents and add to parking and street congestion.
- Will relieve developers of the cost of providing adequate off-street parking, while placing added burdens on neighboring residents.
- The law does not take into account the vehicular density or congestion that already exists in a neighborhood.
- There is no proof that the cost savings of not providing off-street parking will be passed along to the renters/residents! Developers, management agents, and real estate software such as RealPage will set rents and sale prices based upon what the market can command unless these parties are non-profits and/or incentivized by City mandates and covenants to make housing more affordable.
- While we recognize that Baltimore City’s population decline is leading us back to population levels not seen since 1900-1910, our public transit and school busing services and walkability must be improved before increasing density back to 1950 levels.⁴
- Together, 0064, 0065, and 0066, will negatively impact pre-existing high-density neighborhoods for many in such neighborhoods.
- Parking can be a quality-of-life issue, as memorialized by the members of the city’s Residential Permit Parking Advisory Board (RPPAB) in regards to City Council Bill 22-0285, the Abundant Housing Act.
- Parking lots can play an important role in harnessing and protecting nature through infrastructure such as native plants, swales, berms, retention ponds, and daylit streams. Especially, as the City will allow neighborhoods to become denser with larger buildings,

³ “Weathered: Earth’s Extremes” Episode 3: “The Heat is On”

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau and Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

taller buildings, and less private green space. The West Baltimore MARC station is a prime example of such efforts to harness and protect nature in the parking lot environment.

- Parking Authority of Baltimore City (PABC) is in support of 0065 and notes in its testimony that the bill implements “incremental” change. PABC’s executive director cites that in 2022 PABC undertook a limited survey of affordable housing developments built in the past decade and noted that parking minimums were overbuilt by at least half. It would have been preferable for PABC to provide additional details, such as number of developments surveyed, location, and walking scores. In addition, PABC notes that they surveyed affordable housing developments, where residents may be less likely to have cars. In addition, there is no guarantee that 0062-0066 will create affordable housing developments. PABC spends much of its written testimony discussing off street parking/parking minimums changes in the city’s various commercial districts. Lastly, PABC states: “All of these point the city toward a future that is greener, cleaner and more sustainable by reducing or eliminating parking minimums.” This statement ignores that 0062-0066 is a housing package and can work in tandem with each other. 0064 allows for additional building coverage per lot and taller buildings in all residential communities, thereby reducing private greenspace. In addition, these bills do nothing to incentive homegrown residential and commercial development in our neighborhoods that have experienced sustained high vacancy rates and divestment.
- This bill, along with its predecessor, the Abundant Housing Act, failed to acknowledge that in the past 10 years that there were at least two gun violence parking disputes in District 3. At least one such dispute resulted in a homicide.
- While we can concede that parking minimums can be adjusted, we do not believe that there is a one-size-fits-all solution that will increase housing, affordable housing, and community attractiveness for all 300+ of the city’s neighborhoods.

Some additional thoughts on 0064 and 0065:

- Council has not disclosed their sources of information that informed them to create such bills. This lack of transparency is troubling.
- These bills do nothing to grow commercial districts other than the hope population growth will sustain and possibly grow business corridors. There is no incentive provided to grow commercial corridors. Food deserts may remain food deserts.
- There is no research provided that these bills will reduce housing costs. The bills more than likely will effectuate a growth of multifamily rentals rather than homeownership market. There are no incentives or subsidies provided to make housing costs truly affordable, based income. There is no research provided that developers or landlords will pass down construction costs savings to residents rather than charging what the market will command.
- If these bills effectuate multifamily housing growth, which is necessary, some communities may see their homeownership rates decline. Per the Baltimore Banner,

Black homeownership rates are plummeting and Black residents are making informed decisions to relocate. The Baltimore Brew recently noted that those protesting 0064 and 0065 before the Land Use and Transportation committee are not your stereotypical NIMBYs but rather largely Black women homeowners from predominantly Black communities.

- In addition, Baltimore's income growth has stagnated. In 2000 our median household income was just over \$51,000, adjusted for inflation. 20 years later our median household income is a little bit more than \$58,000. This is per the 2025 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment Update published by Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development. The Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership provided this study in support of these bills. If incomes are not growing and 0062-0066 have no mechanism to make housing truly affordable then who stands to benefit from these bills?
- During a recent Planning Commission meeting, some members of Council and the Planning Commission laughed at the importance of the environmental benefits of trees and mocked neighbors concerned about this importance.
- The Planning office compared this initiative to efforts in "comparable" cities like Denver, Seattle, and Virginia Beach. We fail to see the commonalities of Baltimore City to these cities.
- The Planning Commission appears to lack impartiality when it comes to its efforts to assess and effectively challenge these bills, as a city commission is largely chartered to do.
- Bay text credits for increasing pervious surfaces exist. Baltimore city residents pay to remediate Bay pollution, and some residents have recently experienced a 50% increase to their water and sewage bills. We fail to see how these bills will promote the efforts to clean the Bay. And without proper sewage infrastructure, but increased population and density, our efforts and money may literally continue to go down the drain.
- There are no incentives or covenants to mandate housing affordability. And these bills do not preserve existing rental or homeownership stock
- When we talk about neighborhood character, most of us are not dog whistling. We simply want to see our neighborhoods retain their attractiveness and continue to add new residents. While we acknowledge more can be done to rebuild our population, which is important, add viable housing, and truly increase housing affordability, we do not want to sacrifice existing community benefits to accomplish these goals. For instance, several neighborhoods in district 3 are considered historic by either the City, State, and Department of Interior.
- Per a Baltimore Banner May 2025 article, the Mayor promised to engage the community this time regarding 0062-0066. So far, the City has not fulfilled this promise. The Planning Commission has held one listening session during the workday. Otherwise, all community engagement has come in the form of workday hearings on the bills or community associations reaching out to public officials.
- Has the City fixed the permit system yet?

- Because modifying the housing market with disregard to down river impacts more than likely negatively impacts housing affordability for existing and potential new residents, we request:
 - A slow down on vetting and voting these bills until there is true community engagement as the Mayor promised
 - Disclosure of organizations that have lobbied the City to make these changes
 - Disclosure of periodicals, research, organizations, academics, and other sources of information that have informed the City on their decision making, as the City makes a habit of claiming facts without citations
 - Disclosure of any Maryland, Federal, or another jurisdiction's regulations/ordinances/laws that have influenced the City to make these decisions
 - An analysis of community needs to truly attract population growth and make housing affordable: public transit, walkability to amenities, and income growth to start and how the City is addressing these quality of life needs
 - An analysis of existing mechanisms to truly make housing affordable such as HUD's project-based subsidy porting rules, regulations, and appropriations, implementation of income restricted covenants, incentivizing the building, operation, and preservation of various housing types for low to moderate income households
 - An independent analysis on high vacancy neighborhoods (over 7% to 10% vacancy rate) of current programs and funding sources and needed programs and funding sources to put these communities back into full viability and habitability
 - A study with implementation goals to decrease the outflow of Black households
 - A study with implementation goals to ward off gentrification
 - A study to examine current economic factors (job losses, paltry job gains, inflation, income stagnation, loss of federal and federal dependent jobs, and disproportionate impact of the loss of income in Black households since the administration change, and cost of living increases) in relation to how these bills can make housing affordable for current and future Baltimore City residents
 - City incentives to help develop the needed number of rental and homeownership units that are currently and forecasted to be backlogged over the next 40 years

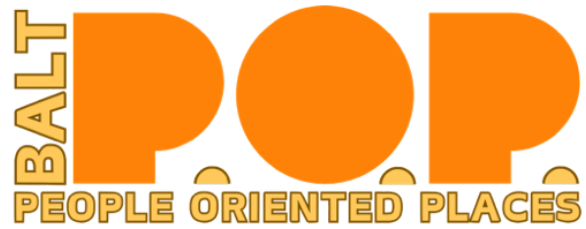
Respectfully,

Tanisha N. Jones | Super Voter | District 3

Bill: 25-0066

Bill Title: Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee,

Bill 25-0066 represents an opportunity for Baltimore to implement a no-cost zoning code reform that will help address our city's struggles with housing affordability and economic growth. This bill will allow for the construction of low-density multi-family buildings in neighborhoods where currently only single-family homes are allowed.

Housing flexibility is the phrase that comes to our mind with this bill. The purpose of zoning is prevention. By allowing only single-family detached homes in large areas of the city, we unnecessarily limit housing flexibility available to residents. Single-family detached homes, given their relatively large living areas, are unaffordable to many prospective residents. This bill will allow for the construction of smaller, more affordable homes in Baltimore. It is these starter homes that we need the most.

These smaller homes do sometimes get built today, but only by exception, in limited/inadequate numbers, and only in a few areas. This bill will extend that flexibility to all neighborhoods, city-wide, improving economic mobility and housing options for all.

The recent trend for Baltimore City (over the course of the past 25 years) has been one of population loss, but household gain. Baltimore has been growing in terms of households, but those households have been trending smaller than in the past. There's no reason to believe this trend will reverse. As such, our zoning code needs to adapt to this new reality.

With this bill, existing owners of single-family homes will be able to convert their extra rooms into an accessory apartment, allowing them to maintain a home that they currently cannot afford to repair - or to age in place.

A prime concern that people have with this bill is that it will exacerbate parking contention. When we choose to not build housing because of sensitivity over parking, what we are saying is that we are more sensitive to the pain of trying to find a place to park than we are sensitive to the pain of trying to find a place to live.

An additional concern that people have with this bill is that it will allow for a flood of low-quality conversions by the "We buy houses" contingent. First, there's no reason to believe that this bill,

by itself, will unleash a flood. Both Portland, Oregon and Minneapolis have passed similar zoning code reform and the yield has only been in the range of 30-150 homes gained each year.

Second, by removing zoning hurdles, headaches, and uncertainty, we encourage higher-quality home-building by higher-quality actors who have no interest in building on the edges of the zoning code and in the margins of the balance sheet. They want to do right by their neighborhood and their hometown and this bill will allow them to do that.

There are attractive examples of low-density multi-family homes right here in Baltimore - hiding in plain sight. 4629 Keswick Road in Evergreen [Figure 1], 2942 Huntingdon Avenue in Remington [Figure 2], and 601 E 30th Street in Better Waverly [Figure 3] all fit wonderfully into and enhance the character of their neighborhoods. More of these is what this bill will bring.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of 25-0066**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

Michael Scepaniak - President

Tyler Crowe - Violetville

Chris Guinnup - Hampden

David Bjorndalen - Beechfield

Mark Braun MD - Federal Hill

Michael Starnes - Riverside

Luke Zeigler - Federal Hill

Mark Treadwell - Riverside

Jesse Saran - Canton

Elliott Wesselborg - Better Waverly

Sabrina Harrison - Canton

David G Phillips - Patterson Park

Julian Frost - Mount Vernon

Anna Wassel, Ph.D. - Park Heights

Andrew Dupuy - Bolton Hill

Philip Lovegren - Bolton Hill

Melanie Scheirer - Mount Clare

Carson Drew - Barclay

Lisa Danaczko - South Baltimore

Al Holland - Midtown Belvedere

Tim Badmington - Upper Fells Point

Noah Tobias - Mount Vernon

Sean Gordon - Otterbein

Maria Pecora - Mount Vernon

Adam T Jones - Mount Vernon

Blake Barnett - Hampden

Charlotte Murphy - Better Waverly
Sean Wu - Washington Hill
Alex Grube - South Baltimore
Jaden Beall - Barclay
Cora Karim - Upper Fells Point
Adnan Barazi - Wyndhurst
Dillon Broadwell - Woodberry
Nick Snider - Remington
Josh Poland - Federal Hill
Keonte Sampson - Glenham-Belford
Thomas Dutkiewicz - Bolton Hill
Kylie Lewis - Ashburton
Ian Wolfe - Greektown
Jonathan Susman - Harlem Park
Yuki Clarke - Woodbourne-McCabe
Teddy Walsh - Canton
Alex Holt - District 5



Figure 1: 4629 Keswick Road in Evergreen



Figure 2: 2942 Huntingdon Avenue in Remington



Figure 3: 601 E 30th Street in Better Waverly

I am writing **in opposition to 25-0066 Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act.**

As you are aware, the bill purports to create housing options by removing restrictions on converting single family homes with greater than 1500 square feet into multi-family units, **making such conversions a matter of right and therefore not subject to community input. The result would make Baltimore neighborhoods prime targets for unscrupulous speculators and absentee landlords.** Given the long and rich history of illegal development schemes in Baltimore that leave communities at the mercy of inexperienced, unethical, or simply negligent entities,¹ **it beggars belief that the City Council is seriously considering a bill that would remove communities' ability to protect their neighborhoods from predatory practices.**

Instead, it would make far more sense to *require* developers to work with communities as a prerequisite to obtaining approval for their projects. This strategy has been successfully used by ReBuild Metro in the Oliver and Johnston Square neighborhoods, the South Baltimore Gateway partnership, and the former Community Review Panel that was eliminated when the Harford Road URP was extended for one year. If developers are interested in contributing to the health and livelihood of the city, they should welcome the opportunity for constructive engagement with the people most affected by their plans.²

Furthermore, this radical departure from the current zoning ordinance is not grounded in Baltimore's housing context, would allow the haphazard development of city neighborhoods without community input, and would have a discriminatory impact on historically Black neighborhoods. I believe for the reasons given below that any possible benefit that might arise from the bill is more than outweighed by the damage it would cause to the city and its

¹ Links to relevant articles on impact of unscrupulous/illegal developers and speculators:

<https://www.thebanner.com/community/housing/baltimore-housing-foreclosure-dscr-HFPWHAWCY5HRLPR2VZSUAQWW24/>

<https://www.thebanner.com/economy/growth-development/baltimore-poppleton-la-cite-HKX4PQLMZVAFFGRCNTQJW3A5WI/>

<https://www.thebanner.com/economy/growth-development/poppleton-la-cite-development-lawsuit-BCAHADLH7BBTZMNHZNAELKQPBU/>

² Links to successful community/developer partnerships:

<https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2025/04/28/on-baltimores-eastside-rehabbing-not-razing-a-blighted-block/>

<https://rebuildmetro.com/2025/06/rebuild-metro-releases-new-guidebook-on-community-driven-redevelopment/>

<https://sbgpartnership.org/baltimore-business-journal-vacant-homes-next-to-400m-south-baltimore-development-poised-for-overhaul/>

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/04/24/historic-markley-hotel-redeveloped-retail-hub/>

residents, and that the only groups to benefit from the legislation would be developers and absentee landlords.

1. **There is no evidence that this bill would result in abundant housing in Baltimore.**

- **There is no comparison between Baltimore and other cities considering similar ordinances.**
 - Unlike Los Angeles, Seattle, etc., Baltimore’s population is in decline, has lower property costs, and has a large stock of vacant houses. It also already has high-density housing in many neighborhoods. The issues and dilemmas faced by those other cities are simply irrelevant to Baltimore. **We have our own issues, and deserve a solution that is authentically matched to our city’s challenges.**
- **When introducing a previous version of this bill (CCB 22-025) Councilman Dorsey relied on an irrelevant report from Live Baltimore.**
 - The 2020 Live Baltimore publication “An Analysis of Baltimore City’s Residential Market Potential” does not support Councilman Dorsey’s statements that the bill would help attract new residents from a pool of 5300 potential new renters. There is nothing to indicate that the report is any more relevant now than it was in 2022.

2. **This bill would have an inequitable impact on historically Black neighborhoods.**

- **Similarly situated white neighborhoods will not be affected by the bill.**
 - The bill targets larger homes with more than 1500 square feet. **Many historically white neighborhoods have covenants or Home Owner Association agreements requiring them to maintain their homes as single-family residences; these are enforceable by State law.** Communities such as Guilford, Roland Park, and Homeland have restrictions on converting single-family homes into multi-family residences. Therefore, these communities would be effectively exempt from the bill, even though, in general, they have larger homes that might be suitable for conversion.³
 - In contrast, there are many Black residential neighborhoods with houses that could be converted to multi-family use if this bill passes, but have no covenants or deed restrictions that would protect them from the consequences of this bill.

³ The recently passed legislation on Auxiliary Dwelling Units prevents covenants and HOA agreements from prohibiting ADUs. However, it is entirely silent on the issue of allowing the conversion of the primary dwelling unit to multi-family homes. At most, if passed, CC 25-0066 would allow the construction of some ADUs under certain circumstances; it would not, however, nullify any covenant prohibiting the conversion of a single-family home to a multi-family home.

- Many such neighborhoods are designated Healthy Neighborhoods, which seek to strengthen undervalued neighborhoods by supporting home ownership. Some of these Healthy Neighborhoods have large rowhouses, such as Reservoir Hill, and others, such as Hilton Park, have detached and semi-detached houses on large lots, which would be highly attractive to unscrupulous developers who have already plagued our city with incomplete/substandard developments, fraudulent investment practices, and precipitous bankruptcies
- Many neighborhoods, like Coldstream Homestead Montebello and Belair Edison, have been battling valiantly to strengthen their neighborhoods by reducing density and encouraging home ownership. However, the bill does nothing to protect these neighborhoods from predatory investors or substandard rental units, while also reducing the housing stock available for home ownership.
- **A better legislative response would be to focus on removing City-imposed barriers to redeveloping vacant properties, with a clear focus on providing single- and multi-family residences that would strengthen neighborhoods, and encourage community engagement in the development process, similar to the initiatives in Johnston Square and Oliver.**

3. Baltimore's housing problem needs a solution that is appropriate to Baltimore.

Baltimore is at a crisis point, as evidenced by continuing and dramatic declines in city population overall and home ownership in particular. There are many non-housing factors that contribute to this migration: violent crime, poor city infrastructure and services, the many problems with Baltimore's public school system, higher-than-county tax rates, and the lack of coherent and accessible public transportation are just a few of the issues that convince many Baltimore residents to leave the city. However, the fact remains that the lack of affordable housing for low- and middle- income renters and homeowners has also contributed significantly to this population decline. Preferential tax and zoning treatment for developers of luxury housing, disinvestment in poor neighborhoods across the city, the impact of out-of-state investors on the housing market, insufficient income-based housing, as well as many other factors, have resulted both in fewer homes available for purchase by low- and middle- income families and the highest rent burden in the state. **It is no wonder that so many former residents voted with their feet and moved away.**

Moreover, even though housing is one of many contributing factors in Baltimore's population decline, it is the most important to tackle. **Without the tax revenues generated by a diverse, thriving, and growing populace in secure housing, Baltimore will never have the means to address the other causes of its decline.**

There have been many attempts by the City Council and other stakeholders to address housing in Baltimore, and while these actions have resulted in improvements to some aspects of the housing problem, they have been inadequate to comprehensively address Baltimore's housing

needs. **Rather than continuing to haphazardly apply "band-aids," a comprehensive, data-driven approach is required. Tackling such a multi-faceted dilemma requires a holistic approach that looks at and addresses the underlying issues that have landed us in our present quagmire, and avoids the hodge-podge patchwork quilt approach that this bill would actively encourage.** The simplistic approach of creating more rental units while diminishing homeownership opportunities, which would be the end result of the passage of CCB#25-0066, doesn't make any sense.

Consequently, I firmly believe that the city should commission an independent study that provides specific, data-based, and Baltimore City-specific recommendations on addressing our Baltimore housing crisis. Such a study should be consistent with the following parameters:

- **The study needs to be conducted with academic rigor by top experts in their field, preferably in an academic setting.** Morgan State University's Institute for Urban Research, for example, would be a good candidate for this role. One of the nation's outstanding HBCUs, MSU is also local, with a long history of advocating for Baltimore city residents. The Institute for Urban Research specifically has a State mandate to conduct research on issues affecting underrepresented groups. The Institute also has an interdisciplinary approach to research and a history of collaboration with Johns Hopkins University. MSU's Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning would also be a valuable resource for this research project.
- **Unlike CCB 25-0066, which apparently had no input from community groups, the study must provide a mechanism for meaningful community input.** This would include both individuals and community associations, as well as other entities that work with communities throughout Baltimore, such as the Greater Baltimore Urban League, St. Ambrose, BUILD, Healthy Neighborhoods, Civic Works, the Baltimore Family Alliance, Baltimore Renters United, Harbel, the Abell Foundation, et alia. Entities such as these have a long history of working on Baltimore's housing problems, and they can add invaluable insight to the project.
- **City agencies need to cooperate with and contribute to the study.** Planning, Housing, and Zoning all have staff with expertise in their areas. Other agencies, such as Education, Traffic, and Public Safety also have relevant experience and insight into the causes and effects of the housing crisis. However, because this is intended to be a holistic approach, no one agency should lead the study. This is another reason to locate the study in a university with a history of interdisciplinary excellence.

There are many aspects to such a large undertaking that can't be covered in a letter. However, these points should give you a clearer understanding of our position and recommendations. We would be happy to discuss this further with you.

Deborah Mason
2500 Erdman Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21213
masonexpat@duck.com

I am writing to express my opposition to the upcoming hearing on CCB-25-0066 to eliminate Single Family Zoning in Baltimore City. We already have a substantial number of renters within the city, and in my neighborhood, Lauraville/Hamilton, we have seen this increase a lot over the years.

While I understand the need for rental availability, there has just been too much of it in concentrated areas, like mine. Most renters have no investment in the properties where they reside, and don't value the importance of upkeep and noise pollution. This harms our neighborhoods and property values.

This bill will decimate the equity for my property and that of my neighbors, and it must not go through.

This bill also allows landlords and contractors THOUSANDS of DOLLARS in TAX INCENTIVES to bring these buildings to residential areas, which will incentivize investors to purchase properties and convert them to low quality rental units at the expense of neighborhood stability.

We have lived at 3316 Batavia Ave., 21214, for more than 20 years, and have wonderful neighbors. We look out for each other, have gatherings, and keep an eye out for each other's kids.

If this bill passes, you can bet you will lose more city residents. You will also lose mine and MANY other city residents' VOTE next election.

Maureen Kelly

I am a resident of Hampden, and I wanted to share testimony in support of the recent package of housing bills, particularly bill 25-0066.

I appreciate there are many different types of housing options for all of us living in Baltimore, and I think these bills will ensure that remains the case in the future. I moved to Baltimore in 2018 from Silicon Valley, California, where there was an acute housing shortage. The housing available there was almost entirely detached single family homes. In Palo Alto, where I worked, it was nearly impossible to build a new apartment building because of onerous zoning laws -- stringent minimum parking requirements, set-back minimums, and maximum building heights of ~25 feet. Whenever anyone did propose new housing, it felt like a small but vocal minority of residents would testify in opposition at city council meetings, arguing that new housing would change the character of the city. I left a good job at Stanford and moved to Baltimore in 2018, in part because I couldn't afford to live in Silicon Valley and have the quality of life that I wanted. I appreciate that Baltimore has housing options for everyone, not just for the wealthy. It's clear that Baltimore and Silicon Valley are very different places, and Baltimore doesn't have the same acute housing shortage at present. With that said, I would argue that Silicon Valley's housing shortage was decades in the making through a long series of restrictive zoning decisions.

I love that Baltimore is an economically diverse city, and I think the current house bills, particularly bill 25-0066, would help ensure that remains the case by allowing for diverse housing options in the future.

Sincerely,

Scot Miller

Re: Opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066 (Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act)

Dear Members of the Baltimore City Planning Commission,

As a homeowner in Lauraville, I am writing to express my strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066, the Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act. While I recognize the importance of addressing housing needs in Baltimore, I firmly believe that this legislation will be detrimental to the stability and future of our neighborhood.

My concerns include the following:

- Incentivizing absentee landlords and speculative investors to convert single-family dwellings into multi-family rental units, eroding the character of our community.
- Driving up the cost of housing by reducing the supply of single-family homes available to prospective homebuyers.
- Further reducing the rate of homeownership in Baltimore, which has already been in decline for the past two decades.
- This bill targets stable neighborhoods—such as Lauraville - where Black homeownership is growing and should be supported, not undermined.
- Conflicting with the City's stated goals of promoting homeownership, preserving single-family neighborhoods, and strengthening the property tax base.
- Overburdening public utilities and services, such as trash collection, sewer and water systems, and street maintenance.
- Undermining neighborhood stability by fostering a more transient rental population.
- Exacerbating traffic and parking congestion in residential areas.

I also find it deeply discouraging that the City Council has not pursued more creative solutions to address the city's abundance of abandoned houses and vacant buildings as a means of expanding rental housing.

It is thoroughly disturbing that policies are being written without adequate time for input by us, the people who are dedicated to this city.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Planning Commission to recommend against advancing this bill. Baltimore's long-term success depends on stable, livable neighborhoods where families and individuals can invest in their homes and communities.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued service to the residents of Baltimore.

Annet Couwenberg

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 6:48 PM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Cc: Mike Kotarba
Subject: Fwd: Bill 25-0066 OPPOSE

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Dear Mr. Leva-

Re: OPPOSE Bill 25-0066

Please immediately post our letter of opposition to Bill 25-0066. (Below). We sent it earlier today to make sure you add it to the record well before the November 20 hearing. We do not see it in the public bill file posted on Legistar. We ask that it be posted, distributed and read by the City Council President and Members.

Thank you very much.

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Date: November 17, 2025 at 11:54:05 AM EST
To: testimony@baltimorecity.gov
Cc: Mike Kotarba <kmkotarba@comcast.net>
Subject: Bill 25-0066 OPPOSE

PLEASE READ OUR TESTIMONY AND POST ON LEGISTAR. PLEASE ADD TO BILL RECORD.

Dear Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council:

Re: **Oppose** City Council Bill #25-0066

As Baltimore City residents and homeowners for over four decades, we **strongly oppose** City Council Bill #25-0066. Please read and add this letter to the legislative record for this bill.

We share the same concerns as our many neighbors across the city. Bill #25-0066 is a “top-down” **comprehensive upzoning of all Baltimore City residential properties**. It treats all neighborhoods as though they are the same and have the same needs. It fails to address the existing concerns of inadequate code enforcement and vacant housing. There is no supporting data or fiscal analysis to support such a **drastic comprehensive action**. The loss of green-space and environmental impacts are not addressed. Transportation concerns are not addressed. Perhaps most stunning of all, there has been no direct involvement of communities in the planning process. There are approximately 200,000 owners of residential properties who have not received notice of this legislation.

We also oppose Bill 25-0066 because it lacks vision. There is no roadmap in terms of its substance (how this **comprehensive upzoning will actually work**) or appearance (how Baltimore City will actually look in the future). How will it actually achieve more affordable housing? There is no stated process, there are no guidelines, visual aids, there are no guardrails, there is no recourse. Without a map, without a vision, we will go nowhere.

First, what will Baltimore’s neighborhoods look like in the future? We have no idea. At present, single family residential properties with R-7 through R-10 zoning are subject to design review when converting to multi-family use. Bill #25-0066 will end this by removing this section from the Zoning Code. Additionally, single family residential properties with R-1 through R-6 zoning will not be subject to design review when converting. Only the recently expanded bulk and yard requirements will be applied. Design-wise, in the future, anything goes. It will be legislated to be allowed “by right.”

This **comprehensive upzoning** offers no pathway to thoughtful design. It deletes existing design guidance from law and relies on numerical dimensions to shape our city. People do not live in boxes or numbers; they live in homes in neighborhoods. Whether one’s home is an apartment, rowhouse or detached, everyone benefits from thoughtful design, architectural character and natural beauty!

Second, in terms of substance, how will the **comprehensive upzoning** work? Again, we don’t know. We only know that in the future all residential housing will become multi-family by right. With the passage of Bill #25-0066, the Council Members will completely remove themselves from the multi-family conversion process. A quick look at the City Council docket shows a number of current bills that track the Council Member’s leadership in the residential conversion process. The Legistar bill record confirms a valuable partnership with Community Associations.

If Council Members vote for the #25-0066 **comprehensive upzoning** they will break their current social contract with their communities. Community leaders and neighbors will miss having the support of their Council Member in the neighborhood development process. Perhaps the Council Members will miss being able to assist their constituents, as well?

We urge you to **oppose Bill # 25-0066**. We ask that you listen to your neighbors from across the city. They have spoken with great eloquence to tell you what matters most to them about living in Baltimore City. Don’t you trust them to help shape Baltimore’s future?

They are the City's greatest strength. Do not experiment upon them, but engage them in the shared effort of improving this city. Together we can aim higher and achieve a better result.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

Sent from my iPad

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 31, 2025 11:29 AM
To: Testimony
Cc: Mike Kotarba
Subject: Fwd: Oppose City Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066

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Please add our testimony below to the legislative files for each bill: #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066. We oppose each bill. Thank you very much!

Kathleen and Mike Kotarba

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Date: July 31, 2025 at 10:57:42 AM EDT
To: Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov
Subject: **Oppose City Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066**

Dear Honorable Council President Cohen-

Please add our letter (below) to the legislative files for each bill. We checked on legistar and the letters are not yet included. Agency hearings are now proceeding and we want our comments to appear in the record.

Thank you very much.

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba
3021 Iona Terrace
Baltimore MD
21214

Dear Honorable Council President
Cohen:

Re: **Oppose** City Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066

As Baltimore residents and homeowners for over four decades, we **strongly oppose** City

Council Bills #25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066. Please include this letter separately in the legislative record for each bill and consider our comments during the legislative process.

Baltimore's citizens are already well served by the recently updated Zoning Code. Homeowners have invested in Baltimore and depend upon residential zoning that protects their neighborhoods. Citizens and communities already count on zoning that:

- 1- encourages owner occupancy and long term commitment,
- 2- discourages institutional and absentee investors,
- 3- provides a reliable and stable tax base.

The three bills in question fail to address the following related concerns:

1- Treats all neighborhoods as though they have the same characteristics and needs. They do not.

2- Creates incentives for "tear downs" that destroy the character and desirability of neighborhoods.

3- Does not address the additional infrastructure requirements of producing additional multi family housing. These include road maintenance and traffic improvements, adequate parking, public transportation needs and funding, public utilities, fire and police services, and water/storm water services.

4- Does not address the additional housing and building inspection staffing requirements. Additional housing units will require additional monitoring and additional City attorneys when legal action is needed.

5- Does not address additional sanitation services.

6- There is no fiscal analysis or data to support this legislation. Does not address fiscal implications for the future, including potential increases to the City budget.

7- Does not address environmental impacts resulting from increased density.

8- Does not address potential difficulty in contacting absentee owners and insuring their accountability when something goes wrong. (Homeowners are typically onsite).

9- If all three bills become law there will be a layering effect. The resulting impacts are unknown and not addressed in the legislation.

In conclusion, these bills represent top down decision making that imposes upon the people of Baltimore. The package of bills, and their combined impact, is an experiment. Baltimoreans did not vote for this and expect better of their elected officials.

Respectfully,

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

3021 Iona Terrace

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mead, Nancy (City Council)
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:32 AM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Subject: FW: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

For the file.



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Nancy M. Mead
Interim Director
Office of Council Services

100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
nancy.mead@baltimorecity.gov

Office: (410) 446-7962
Mobile: (803) 371-6872

From: Charles Williams <chazwilliamz@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Zac Blanchard <zac@blanchardforbaltimore.com>; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Brenda Allison <bkayeallison@gmail.com>; Joel Kurz <joe@thegardenbaltimore.com>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Jules Dunham Howie <juleshouse@hotmail.com>; Malcolm Lewis <Malcolm.Lewis1130@gmail.com>; JC Peralta <mpjcruz@gmail.com>; Jeff Thompson <jtphil3.8@gmail.com>; Jamaalttaylor86@gmail.com; Rafael McFadden <rafaelmac33@gmail.com>; Eric Brown <mobybrown@aol.com>; William Blackwell <willmarionb1510@verizon.net>; Savarese, Brandy (City Council) <brandy.savarese@baltimorecity.gov>; Torrence, James (City Council) <James.Torrence@baltimorecity.gov>; Charleus, Tyriq (DOP) <Tyriq.Charleus@baltimorecity.gov>; Bolden, Tarek (DOP) <tarek.bolden@baltimorecity.gov>; Al Hathaway <alhathaway@gmail.com>; nnenna ochuba <nnenna.ochuba@gmail.com>; keni hines@gmail.com; Cynthia Ryals <cicirials@renaissancebc.com>; Fred Tillman <metropropsllc@gmail.com>; Atiba Nkrumah <atiba.nkrumah@gmail.com>; marble hill <marblehillimprovement@gmail.com>; bullock@baltimorecity.gov; Kennedy, Alice (DHCD) <Alice.Kennedy@baltimorecity.gov>; Henson, Brandi (DHCD) <Brandi.Henson@baltimorecity.gov>; yoko.robinson@baltimorecity.gov; Marti Pitrelli <erasmocho@yahoo.com>; Yates, Ericka (DHCD) <Ericka.Yates@baltimorecity.gov>; DHCD MPIA Request <dhcd.mpia@baltimorecity.gov>; Quarles, Chantel (DHCD) <Chantel.Quarles@baltimorecity.gov>; Mead, Nancy (City Council) <Nancy.Mead@baltimorecity.gov>; Wanda Best <wgbest@verizon.net>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; km@kathleenmitchell.com; kweisi.mfume@house.state.md.us; District11 <District11@baltimorecity.gov>; aaronleonardcoleman@gmail.com; info@historicopton.com; Upton@historicopton.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; neighborsforsfzoning@gmail.com; Pierre Wright <wrgpr@aol.com>; stephanhanley@gmail.com; president@mvba.org
Subject: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

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Dear Councilmember Blanchard,

I hope this message finds you well.

First, I want to sincerely thank you for attending our Marble Hill community meeting on May 20, 2025. I truly appreciated your presence — especially since this marked your **second visit** with us. Your continued engagement and the insights you shared regarding the Housing Options and Opportunity Act did not go unnoticed and mean a great deal to our community.

I'm reaching out personally to express my strong concern for Zoning Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066.

As a resident of historic Marble Hill, I care deeply about the long-term health, character, and stability of our neighborhood. While I fully understand the importance of promoting affordable and flexible housing options, these particular zoning changes raise serious concerns that I believe would have unintended, yet damaging, consequences for communities like ours.

Here's why:

- **Bill 0066** would allow up to four units to be built on lots currently zoned for single-family homes. This opens the door for increased investor activity and the conversion of homes into multi-unit rentals, making it harder for local families and first-time buyers to compete. Just this past April, our community had to actively push back against this exact type of predatory development — where duplexes were improperly being converted into quadruplexes. With support from Commissioner Alice Kennedy and the Department of Housing and Community Development, we were able to intervene and stop it. Adopting this bill now would feel like reversing that victory and signaling that those zoning protections no longer matter.
- **Bill 0065** would remove the requirement for off-street parking. Parking is already scarce in Marble Hill. Removing this requirement would increase congestion and create frustration for residents, particularly in older neighborhoods not designed to absorb that kind of density.
- **Bill 0064** proposes to reduce yard and green space requirements. These spaces are more than aesthetic — they contribute to safety, health, and the historic character that makes our community feel like home. Reducing them would strip away part of what gives Marble Hill its identity.

I'm not opposed to thoughtful growth — but I strongly believe that growth should be equitable and community-centered. The cumulative effect of these three bills would promote investor-driven development while diminishing the quality of life for existing homeowners and long-time residents.

Zack, I'm asking you not just as a constituent, but as someone who is deeply invested in preserving our neighborhood's integrity — please reconsider your support for these bills. I would also appreciate being notified of any upcoming hearings or public comment opportunities so I can continue to make my voice heard.

Thank you again for your time, your accessibility, and your ongoing commitment to public service. Your consistent presence in our community matters, and I trust you'll weigh our lived experience and local history in your decision-making.

Sincerely,
Charles Williams

October 26, 2025

Hello, Baltimore City Council, the Mayor's Office, and Mayor Scott,

Subject: Official Testimony regarding 25-0064, 25-065, and 25-0066

I want to thank Councilpersons McCray, Conway, Schleifer, Torrance, Porter, and Glover on your votes for 0064 and/or 0065. I hope we can continue to have your support during tomorrow's vote. And I hope we can work together regarding 0066 and in the future the Harford Road Overlay District bill.

For all of Council: I live in District 3 and Councilperson Dorsey paints opposition with a broad and increasingly defamatory brush. Dissent is America's first name and that is why we have been king-free until recently. Like you, as a Federal Public Servant, I also advocate for and protect the public good. I have also been in the affordable housing and community development arena for 20 years+ and have done, if I may say, incredible and creative things to create and preserve affordable housing and strengthen communities. But I will let you in on a shameful secret: fresh out college, full of energy, care, and unknowingly a lack of discernment, I did not use my analytical skills to question my then employer's work in two predominantly Black neighborhoods that had been through slum clearance, decay and demolition of income-based subsidized housing, urban renewal, and divestment. I thought I was performing a service to help residents temporarily relocate and return to a better community while also building self-sufficiency. Well, our HOPE VI developments helped usher in massive and rapid gentrification. I have learned my lesson, especially from the residents who voiced their dissent, and by the implementation of piecemeal public policy, planning, and development that allowed a new unaffordable community that did not represent the residents who anchored and tried to stabilize it during eras of purposeful divestment.

It is certainly not true that as I am already "secure in their housing, [Dorsey] would note - simply do not want this for others." Affordable housing and community development is my bread and butter, and I am its servant. I have experienced all levels of housing security, vulnerability, and insecurity. My mother, with her good Christian and socialist self,

implored upon me when former welfare recipient, Scott Brown, ran for U.S. Senate for Massachusetts on a platform of ending welfare and other safety nets for a “self-sufficient and productive” society to “never roll up the ladder behind you.” I simply want good housing policy, laws, joint ventures, funding, coupled with sound economic policies and growth. I want to ensure that housing is a right, housing becomes truly attainable and affordable, and that gentrification is not a byproduct or intention, curbs speculation, and that Black and lower income residents remain and are not robbed of access to generational wealth. I do not see these needs addressed in 0064, 0065, 0066, the Abundant Housing Act, and the Harford Road Overlay bills take I and II. As Poirot says, my “little gray cells” are firing, I am exercising my First Amendment rights, applying my experience and expertise, and demanding better and comprehensive solutions. Plainly put, these bills are simply not radical nor well-thought out enough to accomplish the goals being stated by the Administration and the bill sponsors (which seem to differ depending on the audience). I am not rolling up the ladder, I am asking for the City to build more ladders that are easier for all to climb.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Jones', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

In Solidarity, Tanisha N. Jones | District 3 | Super Voter

To: Matthew Peters

Re:

1. CCB #25-0064, Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments
2. CCB 25-0065 -Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements and
3. CCB 25-0066 – Housing Options and Opportunities Act

We, the undersigned owners and/or residents of property in Ridgely's Delight are writing in opposition to all three of the proposed bills mentioned above. We have addressed all 3 in one letter since these proposed changes are essentially joined at the hip, having all been included in a single bill in the past, which are meant to work together. We ask that this letter be included as a separate letter of opposition for the record for all 3 bills.

The stated purposes of these bill are to:

1. Promote increased development of low-density, multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts, including North Ridgely's Delight, which is zoned R8, by establishing a new category of "low density, multi-family housing which permits development that would increase density up to 4 dwelling units."
2. To eliminate the current requirement that off-street parking be provided for any additional units.
3. Reduces the amount of yard and greenspace required for properties.

Ridgely's residential properties are zoned R-8. These proposed changes would no longer be permitted as a conditional use only. All required off-street parking requirements would be removed for all residential uses in our neighborhood.

We are opposed to these proposed changes for the following reasons.

1. Impact on infrastructure
 - a. The homes in Ridgely's primarily date from the early to late 19th century. The infrastructure is also quite old and we have experienced a lot of problems with it.
 - i. We had a flood beneath the 700 block of Dover St. that lasted for almost a week and damaged a number of houses because the water turnoff valve did not work.
 - ii. We routinely have flooding in some areas because the storm drains cannot handle the rain water when there is a heavy downpour.
 - iii. We have experienced a number of water pipe breaks.
 1. Several years ago, we experienced a major water line break in the center of the 600 block of Portland. The break was at least 6 feet below the street and caused major flooding for days.
 - b. Increased development will lead to a reduction in green spaces, with the attendant negative environmental and quality-of-life impacts that come with that. But, this will also have infrastructure impacts. As we reduce the areas that serve to absorb rain water, we put an additional burden on our already overtaxed storm drain system. We already have flooding in heavy down pours because the storm drains cannot handle the demands. Further reduction of green space will only exacerbate this problem.

- c. We have added 84 new dwelling units since 2019 and we are in the process of adding 9 more units right now in North Ridgely's. This is an increase in density of almost 50% and we do not know how the existing infrastructure will be able to handle more increases. We are concerned about further increases in density without the improvements to our sewage, water and storm drain systems that we hope will be coming our way as a result of the agreement with the EPA.
- 2. Impact of eliminating all parking requirements
 - a. As evidenced by a city-run parking survey, there is already not enough parking in our neighborhood. We are a geographic island. Because of this, neighbors have to cross MLK and try to find parking in the deserted commercial areas of Pigtown when we return to the neighborhood at night, which is the only adjacent area with any large amount of parking.
 - b. We know the city would like to see residents move towards the use of public transportation, and many of our residents would like to be able to do that, but the current public transportation system is frankly terrible. Until a decent and reliable public transportation system is put in place, it is premature to try to force city residents to give up their cars by failing to plan for adequate parking.
 - c. We live in a food desert. For many residents, especially those of us who are older, it is impossible to try to use public transportation to purchase groceries and transport them home. And, while delivery is an option for some, the cost is prohibitive for many residents. The availability of fresh, nutritious food must also be addressed before the city tries to force residents to give up their cars.
- 3. Impact of an increase in density on the historic nature of the neighborhood.
 - a. Ridgely's Delight is an historic neighborhood and much of the historic feel of the neighborhood comes from the current density, which varies between the older, smaller properties in our area of the north and the larger properties with double lots in the south, which are ripe for development if this change passes.
 - b. Under current CHAP guidelines, modern in-fill in historic neighborhoods should be clearly non-historic/modern in appearance.
 - i. At this time, we have very few modern in-fill properties. But if this bill passes, we should expect that situation to change, thus dramatically reducing both the current spacing and appearance of properties in a manner that reduces the historic nature of the neighborhood.
 - c. Over their life-span, a number of larger properties in the neighborhood were split up into multiple apartments. In more recent years, a number of these houses were returned to single-family units in an attempt to respect the historic nature of these houses. This proposed change would encourage breaking these properties up into multiple apartments again, thus also moving to make these properties less historic in nature again.
- 4. Impact on trash, rats and appearance
 - a. The houses that have been divided into multiple apartments in our neighborhood have insufficient city-provided trash cans to handle the amount of trash they are creating and landlords are not paying for either extra cans and/or private pickup. This leads to

overflowing trashcans, dumping of garbage, out-of-control rat populations and the poor/dirty appearance of the city as a whole.

5. Impact of density on housing costs
 - a. Underlying this bill is an assumption that increased density will lead to decreased costs and more affordable housing. However, as previously mentioned. We are in the midst of increasing our density of housing by about 50 % and that has NOT led to decreased costs. Most of the new units are tiny (less than 400 sq. ft,) and the proposed costs we have seen are in the \$1,400-\$1,600 per month range. So, increased density has NOT led to decreased costs in our neighborhood.
6. Impact on property values
 - a. Many property owners, particularly owner/occupants buy their properties as an investment.
 - b. This proposal is likely to lead to increased purchasing by developers and those interested in rental properties, which will lead to these properties being broken up into multiple apartments, single room rentals and AirBnBs.
 - c. You cannot build a neighborhood without a core of owner/occupants and this bill provides significant disincentives for owner/occupants to remain in their homes since it is likely to drive overall property values down.
7. Impact on diversity
 - d. A number of older and/or mobility-challenged owner/occupants feel that proposals like this are designed to drive them out of the city.
 - e. Those who can drive, need their cars since public transportation is difficult and unreliable for those who have any level of mobility challenges. They are also more likely to be targets of crime, so waiting on city streets for buses is dangerous for them and riding alternative transportation such as bikes and scooters is not possible for many of them.
 - f. We invested in our properties as part of our long-term plan for financial security in retirement. But, if the city is going to undertake policies that reduce the value of our investment, the only smart thing to do is to leave the city.

In conclusion, we think a far better way to increase the city's tax base (i.e., population) and provide more affordable housing that becomes an investment for owner/occupants instead of investors would be to develop a program that truly values and promotes racial and spatial equity by developing a city-government program that encourages and supports efforts by residents to buy and develop vacant properties. This should help to stabilize and enhance many communities that are both in need of and deserving of such government support. This would be more consistent with the many equity and justice commitments officially and publicly stated by the city—e.g., by the Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Etc.

We fear that diverting efforts away from addressing how to remedy the overwhelming number of vacant properties throughout the city, many located in communities that have large numbers of African Americans and other people of color living in them, will simply perpetuate and exacerbate the many attendant problems associated with these vacant properties (e.g., higher crime rates, dumping, vandalism, deteriorating property values, rats, etc.), which will lead to further destabilization of these neighborhoods and communities. This, will make things worse, instead of better, for everyone, but

especially for the communities that this bill is designed to help most. We strongly suggest that it would be better to develop such a program than to simply change the zoning rules and hope they lead to the desired outcome.

For all the reasons listed above, we are opposed to the proposed bill. Thank you for considering our input.

(Note, all addresses below are located in Baltimore, MD, 21230. If the signer's name indicates "owner," it means that the signer owns but does not reside at that address.)

- 1) Paul Wilder (owner)
705 Dover St.
- 2) Michele Vitolo (owner)
719/721 Dover St.
- 3) Kate Campbell
715 Portland.
- 4) Etty Stern Shterenboim (owner)
219 Penn St
- 5) Steve Yannaras
625 Portland St.
- 6) Kate Gillespie
717 Dover St.
- 7) Patricia Bergeron
717 Dover St,
- 8) Nate Hauser (owner)
210 Penn St.
- 9) Greg Laub
728 Dover St.
- 10) Gerri Salley
646 Melvin
- 11) Esther Van Dyke
717 Portland St.
- 12) Tania Robalino
313 S. Fremont St.

- 13) James Wright
313 S Fremont St.
- 14) Lillie Hyman
658 Portland St.
- 15) Rosalie Barret
719 Portland St.
- 16) Claude Williams
719 Portland St.
- 17) Farzana Muhib
710 Portland St.
- 18) Debbie Brain
623 Washington Blvd.
- 19) Deb O'Neill
208 Penn St.

Testimony October 20, 2025

Council Bills 25-0064, 0065, 0066

Greetings: Mayor Brandon Scott; President City Council Zeke Cohen; Councilmembers Dorsey, Blanchard, Gray, Middleton, Torrence, Bullock, and Porter.

While 25-0066 is "in committee" and not being heard today (Oct. 20th), Parkway is in opposition to all three bills, including 0065 and 0064. I also believe "these bills will have a destabilizing effect on established neighborhoods and homeownership throughout the city."

I am in agreement with comments from both Historic Marble Hill and Hanlon Park, so there is no point in repeating those issues. Specifically the Parkway community consists of an apartment bldg 40 units (Fairview and Leighton Ave), some large detached houses (Liberty Heights), and mostly single-family rowhouses built in the early 1940s. I would like to introduce the concept of stacking as a reason the Parkway community would be in opposition to the bills. **Converting older houses to multi-family units may not be structurally feasible.**

- Single-family homes built during WWII present additional issues that make them unsuited for stacking.
- The materials themselves may have degraded over 80+ years. For example, wood can weaken and concrete can deteriorate over time.
- Structural deficiencies like uneven settling can compromise the foundation.
- Homes built under older buildings codes were not designed for today's standards, which require more robust construction and stronger foundations to handle modern loads.
- Converting these houses to multi-family units would be costly, particularly if the single-family home needs to be gutted.

Research AI assisted

Complaints

- Parkway neighbors who have corner rowhouses complain about vibrations coming from the nearby CSX railway that transports freight.
- A corner rowhouse that has structural problems is leaning despite extensive renovations.
- The belief that building the subway at Mondawmin over 40 yrs ago caused foundational damage in some homes.

- Living next door to a rental property that could potentially become multi-family is causing me angst. Over many years I have observed poor landlord/tenant relations. The property would be out of scale with the other 28 rowhouses on the block. There would be no backyard for children to play or space for trash cans in the yard. The property was recently rented after being unoccupied for more than a year.

We, too, “trust the Council will weigh our lived experiences and history in its decision making.”

- Our neighborhood has been stable for decades. Parkway has very few vacants. We are however experiencing unoccupied houses with the passing of longtime residents.
- We have invested three years in Live Baltimore Trolley Tours to promote homeownership.
- Because there are mostly single-family rowhouses in Parkway, stacking (increasing the height on existing rowhouses) would change the character, architecture and history of our neighborhood.
- We enjoy having front porches, backyards, park-like setting with trees, open and green spaces.
- Two streets have parking issues: On Leighton houses were built in 1946/47; Some families have more than one vehicle so parking is already limited. On W. Forest Park houses were built in 1940; Neighbors worry about their vehicles being hit because the street is narrow and vehicles are much larger today than earlier models.

I agree there should be more affordable housing in Baltimore for young families and college students who prefer to live off-campus. Ultimately some will explore homeownership. Converting single-family homes by stacking is an idea that should be studied. It would be more feasible to rebuild vacants into multi-family units from the ground up in neighborhoods that need development. During DHCD workshops on affordable housing, it was recommended to have different styles of housing to accommodate renters and homeowners. Baltimore needs to work on blighted areas with boarded up houses needing renovation.

Definition

The concept of "stacking" single-family homes to multi-family homes involves adding units on an existing structure.

Submitted by:

Carolyn Carey, President
Parkway Community, Inc.

Council Bills

- City Council Bill 25-0066 Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act: Introduced by the Council President Cohen on behalf of the Administration, cosponsored by Councilmember Dorsey. This bill removes the existing prohibition on converting single-family dwellings to multi-family dwellings and permits up to 4 dwelling units on a single lot. The bill establishes a new category of "low-density, multi-family housing" which permits up to 4 dwelling units in all residential zoning districts R-1 through R-8, even if the existing underlying zoning is categorized as single-family detached dwellings.

- City Council Bill 25-0065 Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements: Introduced by Councilmember Blanchard; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, and Gray. Eliminates a required minimum number of off-street parking spaces for all uses and instead sets a maximum number of spaces allowed. The current code requires at least one parking space per dwelling unit. So, while bill 25-0066 would permit up to 4 dwelling units per property, no off-street parking would be required for the added units if this bill were to pass.

- City Council Bill 25-0064 Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments: Introduced by Councilmember Gray; Cosponsored by: President Cohen, and Councilmembers Dorsey, Middleton, Torrence, Blanchard, Bullock, and Porter. Reduces the bulk and yard requirements in all residential zoning districts. The changes will reduce the amount of open and green space required in all zones by increasing the maximum percentage of lot coverage allowed by 30-40 percent, depending on the existing zoning district, and by reducing the required interior side and corner yard footage in all zones. In R-1 districts the required side yard is reduced from 20 to 15 feet, which is a 25% reduction in space and in R-3 zones from 10 feet to 5 feet, which is a 50% reduction in yard space. These are just two examples of zones for single-family detached houses, but all other zoning districts would also see a similar reduction in open space.

1. Undermines Homeownership & Neighborhood Stability

- Makes it easier for investors to outcompete Baltimore homebuyers, especially first-time buyers.
- Investors purchase with cash, waive inspections, and settle quickly — advantages ordinary families simply cannot match.
- Homeownership in Baltimore has already declined to **47%**. This bill accelerates that decline by enabling widespread conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit rentals.

2. Incentivizes Absentee Ownership, Not Community Growth

- Residents are not anti-renter; they are against **absentee landlords** who historically fail to maintain properties.
- Baltimore already struggles with poorly maintained rental units. Increasing investor-owned rentals without improving oversight is reckless.
- Scattered-site rentals are the hardest units to monitor, maintain, and keep in good condition.

3. Weakens Baltimore's Neighborhood Fabric

- Baltimore is a city of distinct neighborhoods — each with its own scale, density, and identity.
- Bill 25-0066 introduces density increases with **no regard for neighborhood character** or resident quality of life.
- Instead of strengthening community stability, the bill invites disinvestment and transiency.

4. Expands Investor Activity Without Strengthening Enforcement

- Housing Code Enforcement is already overwhelmed and inconsistently executed.
- The City's building permit office has a poor performance record, and inspectors struggle with current workloads.
- Adding more conversions will only worsen oversight and open the door to substandard, unsafe renovations.

5. Creates Policy Risk Without Data, Analysis, or Fiscal Review

- The bill lacks a meaningful affordability requirement. It merely assumes that more investor-owned rentals will lower rents — an unsupported claim.
- No credible analysis has been presented on the impact to:
 - Home prices
 - Public services (sanitation, fire, police, water/sewer, roads)
 - Neighborhood infrastructure
- Policy decisions of this magnitude should not be made without data.

6. Undermines Years of City Investment in Homeownership

- Baltimore has invested millions through Live Baltimore, Healthy Neighborhoods, and other programs designed to help families buy and stay in their homes.
- Many affordable, majority-Black homeownership neighborhoods stand to lose equity, stability, and character if the single-family housing stock is eroded.
- This bill works against the very goals the City has spent years promoting.

7. Repeats Past Policy Mistakes That Harmed Communities

- Baltimore has seen “progress-driven” policies destroy neighborhoods before — highway projects that displaced families, mass demolition for high-rises that later failed.
- Bill 25-0066 risks repeating these errors by prioritizing development pressure over resident well-being and long-term neighborhood health.

8. No Protections for Renters

- The bill contains **no safeguards** for tenants.
- Tenants in scattered-site rentals often fear retaliation, eviction, or lease non-renewal if they report unsafe or unhealthy conditions.
- Adding more poorly monitored rentals without tenant protections is deeply irresponsible.

9. Does Not Target Vacants or Promote New Construction

- The bill does not focus on vacant or abandoned properties — where new units are most needed.

- Instead, it encourages splitting stable single-family homes into rentals, reducing the stock available to homebuyers and driving up prices.
- This approach destabilizes existing neighborhoods rather than revitalizing struggling ones.

October 29, 2025

1412 Druid Hill Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21217

Baltimore City Council Members
Office of the President
City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street, Suite 400
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Subject: Testimony – NO to Council Bill 25-0062 25-0064, 25-0065, 25-0066 (Housing Options & Opportunity Act)

Dear Council Members,

The Housing Options & Opportunity Act would have many negative impacts primarily on homeowners and families because developers and investors will exploit zoning changes, leading to negative consequences for residents in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods. This act would not increase affordable housing, it undermines stable communities, worsens existing problems, would create a back log for city services which already lack the capacity to respond to quality of life and safety issues. For example, the house directly in front of mine has had unwanted items dumped by residents in the front, a broken grill, a headboard, footboard, and shoe mold. The items have been there for 4 months. I have called 311, submitted 311 on the app, and escalated the SR to be addressed. The items are still there. This example is just one of the many 311 complaints submitted by residents that either never get resolved or take a significant amount of time and several complaints to resolve because DHCD does not have the capacity to follow-up and resolve these many issues in a timely manner.

The city already has an abundance of problems with:

- **Absentee landlords:** The zoning changes would attract even more absentee property owners whose interest is in collecting rental income while minimally maintaining their properties. This will exasperate poor living conditions for renters and affect the surrounding neighborhood's quality of life.
- **Developers:** Will prioritize profits over community well-being, especially with lax city code enforcement and permitting processes. This can lead to the further destruction of the historical rowhome façade, increase unsafe and unlivable housing conditions for tenants. The city does next to nothing to protect the historical integrity of these iconic historic rowhomes. Developers are allowed to shorten

windows, remove transoms, remove cornices, etc. There should be a strict standard that developers must adhere too.

- **Worsening existing dysfunction:** Without strong standards, rules, enforcement, sufficient inspectors, the developers will have too much free rein to do whatever they want without oversight. It already happens. This act will also worsen issues like property deterioration, overcrowding, and trash accumulation.

A decline in neighborhood stability and quality of life: For established neighborhoods, multi-unit conversions could alter the existing character and increase strains on infrastructure, increase trash, dumping, safety, overcrowding, parking issues, discord.

- **Undermining homeownership:** The city should work to increase home buying incentives, promote, and educate on homeownership to promote stability for low income and middle-class communities not increase renters who typically neglect to engage and improve the neighborhoods they live in like homeowners often do.
- **Exacerbating inequality:** This act does not help underserved neighborhoods, the conversions will lead to smaller apartments, higher rent prices that will price out residents and attract wealthier individual, create more higher-demand areas, intensifying the segregation that already exist.
- **For developers:** It is clearly apparent that this act is for developers and investors and does not include wealth building opportunities for residents who would greatly benefit and have the desire to build generational wealth.
- **Affordability:** Landlords will be able to charge rents that fall outside affordability for low-income individuals and families. The conversions to more one-bedroom apartments will not accommodate the typical section 8 family of 3 or more creating housing insecurity and pushing groups out of the city to find their housing needs.

For all the reasons stated above, I am submitting this testimony in opposition of the current Council Bill 25-0062 25-0064, 25-0065, 25-0066 (Housing Options & Opportunity Act) and encourage council members to produce a more realistic, caring, less burdensome and better-defined proposal that residents will be more inclined to agree with.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jiri Cruz

2025 Sun 09:08



Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Murphy, Louisa <lmurphy@1919ic.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 11:24 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Opposition to COUNCIL BILL 25-0066

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Dear Planning Commission,

I am a longtime resident of the historic Bellona-Gittings neighborhood, and I am writing to express my **strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066**, which would allow low-density multifamily dwelling units in areas currently zoned for single-family residences. I also oppose the related Bills 25-0064 and 25-0065, which would eliminate off-street parking requirements and reduce bulk and yard standards.

My family and I have lived on Gittings Avenue for 30 years. We chose this neighborhood specifically because of its single-family zoning, which has helped foster a close-knit, community-oriented environment. Bellona-Gittings experiences very low crime rates and maintains high property values compared to more densely zoned areas of the city.

While I recognize the national shortage of multifamily housing, Baltimore's more pressing issue is the lack of well-maintained, desirable single-family homes. The city already has numerous areas zoned for higher density (R-5 to R-10), making further rezoning unnecessary. Additionally, there are many vacant and abandoned properties already zoned for multifamily use that could be rehabilitated. I urge the Council to focus efforts on revitalizing those areas instead.

Is it the Council's intention to eliminate all areas in Baltimore City zoned exclusively for single-family dwellings? If so, what are the anticipated impacts on property values? It would be reasonable to anticipate values in neighborhoods impacted by your Bill to decline due to increased supply without a corresponding rise in demand—unless demand is artificially inflated by zoning changes that attract financial investors or absentee landlords. In that case, short-term price increases could come at the cost of long-term harm to historic neighborhoods and the communities they support.

The homes in my neighborhood are zoned R1-E and if that is changed to allow for greater density, MANY residents will move to the Country in search of less housing density. Please do NOT pass this terrible Bill #25-0066.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Louisa Murphy
102 Gitting Avenue, Baltimore 21212

Louisa Murphy
Business Development Officer



One South Street, Suite 2500
Baltimore, MD 21202
Office:(410) 454-3141
Email: LMurphy@1919ic.com

Visit our 1919ic.com
website:

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Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Carol Simmons <cdsimmons1@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 9:50 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill #25-0066 Zoning...

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City Council Bill # 25-0066--Zoning--Housing Options and Opportunity Act

This bill removes the existing prohibition on converting single family dwellings to multi-family dwellings and permits up to 4 dwelling units on a single lot

I am opposed to the passage of this bill. I definitely could have a very detrimental effect on my community and many others.

Please vote against.

Thank you.

Carol Simmons

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mari Ross <mbr105@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 5:11 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill# 25-0066

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As a resident of Baltimore City I am writing in opposition to City Council Bill #25-0066. If enacted this change would completely undermine the peaceful nature and safety of my single family home neighborhood. We chose this community over more lively chaotic community areas for the reason that it offered 'county' style living with City conveniences and are willing to pay the high taxes to support that decision. Passing this bill would be short term thinking with long term losses.

Sincerely,
Mari B. Ross

Sent from my iPhone

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mead, Nancy (City Council)
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:32 AM
To: Leva, Anthony F (City Council)
Subject: FW: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

For the file.



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

Nancy M. Mead
Interim Director
Office of Council Services

100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
nancy.mead@baltimorecity.gov

Office: (410) 446-7962
Mobile: (803) 371-6872

From: Charles Williams <chazwilliamz@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 3, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Zac Blanchard <zac@blanchardforbaltimore.com>; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Brenda Allison <bkayeallison@gmail.com>; Joel Kurz <joe@thegardenbaltimore.com>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Jules Dunham Howie <juleshouse@hotmail.com>; Malcolm Lewis <Malcolm.Lewis1130@gmail.com>; JC Peralta <mpjcruz@gmail.com>; Jeff Thompson <jtphil3.8@gmail.com>; Jamaalttaylor86@gmail.com; Rafael McFadden <rafaelmac33@gmail.com>; Eric Brown <mobybrown@aol.com>; William Blackwell <willmarionb1510@verizon.net>; Savarese, Brandy (City Council) <brandy.savarese@baltimorecity.gov>; Torrence, James (City Council) <James.Torrence@baltimorecity.gov>; Charleus, Tyriq (DOP) <Tyriq.Charleus@baltimorecity.gov>; Bolden, Tarek (DOP) <tarek.bolden@baltimorecity.gov>; Al Hathaway <alhathaway@gmail.com>; nnenna ochuba <nnenna.ochuba@gmail.com>; kenihines@gmail.com; Cynthia Ryals <ciciryls@renaissancebc.com>; Fred Tillman <metropropsllc@gmail.com>; Atiba Nkrumah <atiba.nkrumah@gmail.com>; marble hill <marblehillimprovement@gmail.com>; bullock@baltimorecity.gov; Kennedy, Alice (DHCD) <Alice.Kennedy@baltimorecity.gov>; Henson, Brandi (DHCD) <Brandi.Henson@baltimorecity.gov>; yoko.robinson@baltimorecity.gov; Marti Pitrelli <erasmocho@yahoo.com>; Yates, Ericka (DHCD) <Ericka.Yates@baltimorecity.gov>; DHCD MPIA Request <dhcd.mpia@baltimorecity.gov>; Quarles, Chantel (DHCD) <Chantel.Quarles@baltimorecity.gov>; Mead, Nancy (City Council) <Nancy.Mead@baltimorecity.gov>; Wanda Best <wgbest@verizon.net>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; km@kathleenmitchell.com; kweisi.mfume@house.state.md.us; District11 <District11@baltimorecity.gov>; aaronleonardcoleman@gmail.com; info@historicopton.com; Upton@historicopton.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; neighborsforsfzoning@gmail.com; Pierre Wright <wrgpr@aol.com>; stephanhanley@gmail.com; president@mvba.org
Subject: Personal Opposition to Zoning Bills 0064,0065 and 0066

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Dear Councilmember Blanchard,

I hope this message finds you well.

First, I want to sincerely thank you for attending our Marble Hill community meeting on May 20, 2025. I truly appreciated your presence — especially since this marked your **second visit** with us. Your continued engagement and the insights you shared regarding the Housing Options and Opportunity Act did not go unnoticed and mean a great deal to our community.

I'm reaching out personally to express my strong concern for Zoning Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066.

As a resident of historic Marble Hill, I care deeply about the long-term health, character, and stability of our neighborhood. While I fully understand the importance of promoting affordable and flexible housing options, these particular zoning changes raise serious concerns that I believe would have unintended, yet damaging, consequences for communities like ours.

Here's why:

- **Bill 0066** would allow up to four units to be built on lots currently zoned for single-family homes. This opens the door for increased investor activity and the conversion of homes into multi-unit rentals, making it harder for local families and first-time buyers to compete. Just this past April, our community had to actively push back against this exact type of predatory development — where duplexes were improperly being converted into quadruplexes. With support from Commissioner Alice Kennedy and the Department of Housing and Community Development, we were able to intervene and stop it. Adopting this bill now would feel like reversing that victory and signaling that those zoning protections no longer matter.
- **Bill 0065** would remove the requirement for off-street parking. Parking is already scarce in Marble Hill. Removing this requirement would increase congestion and create frustration for residents, particularly in older neighborhoods not designed to absorb that kind of density.
- **Bill 0064** proposes to reduce yard and green space requirements. These spaces are more than aesthetic — they contribute to safety, health, and the historic character that makes our community feel like home. Reducing them would strip away part of what gives Marble Hill its identity.

I'm not opposed to thoughtful growth — but I strongly believe that growth should be equitable and community-centered. The cumulative effect of these three bills would promote investor-driven development while diminishing the quality of life for existing homeowners and long-time residents.

Zack, I'm asking you not just as a constituent, but as someone who is deeply invested in preserving our neighborhood's integrity — please reconsider your support for these bills. I would also appreciate being notified of any upcoming hearings or public comment opportunities so I can continue to make my voice heard.

Thank you again for your time, your accessibility, and your ongoing commitment to public service. Your consistent presence in our community matters, and I trust you'll weigh our lived experience and local history in your decision-making.

Sincerely,
Charles Williams

Dear Council President Cohen,
Please support Council
bills 25-0065 and
25-0066 so that
we can devote more
of our city to
housing people and
NOT cars!

Sincerely,
Michelle Nicolas, 4007 Keswick Rd

BALTIMORE MD 212

14 JUN 2025 PM 4

quadiant

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

IMI

\$000.69

06/12/2025 ZIP 21202
043M31249606

US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holiday St.
Baltimore, Md 21202

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tinydogpress.com

21202-342799

Council President

I support two ordinances
will help household budgets
Macon: Mayor Scott's Housing
and Opportunity Act will
more housing units in
rental homes and CM Blanchard's
order to Eliminate off-street
parking minimums. Please enact
Bill 25-0065 & 25-0066

Anthony Walker
636 S Macon St

BALTIMORE MD 212

14 JUN 2025 PM 4

quadiant

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

IMI

\$000.69

06/12/2025 ZIP 21202
043M31249606

US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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21202-342799

Dear Council President Cohen

I'm writing in support of
Mayor Scott's Housing Options
+ Opportunities act and
CM Blanchard's ordinance
to eliminate off street
parking (25-0065, 25-0066)
Please do everything you
can to enact this critical
legislation. Thank You

D. 2730 Guilford Rd
Baltimore MD 21218

BALTIMORE MD 212

14 JUN 2025 PM 4

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FIRST-CLASS MAIL

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\$000.69

06/12/2025 ZIP 21202
043M31249606

US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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tinydogpress.com

21202-342799

Zeke,

I am asking you
Support 25-0065 &
25-0066.

Think these are
needed to make a
stronger Baltimore.

Let up the good work.

Best, Matt Beckner

BALTIMORE MD 212

17 JUN 2025 PM 1

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\$000.69

06/14/2025 ZIP 21202
043M31249606

US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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21202-342799

Dear Council President Zeke Cohen,

Hello, My name is Virgil Curry.
Please support two ordinances
that will help household
budgets in Baltimore.
Please enact Council Bills
25-0065 and 25-0066,
Parking minimums drive
up housing costs. Help
Baltimore grow!

Sincerely,

21202-342799
270 S Chelsea Terrace
Baltimore, Md. 21216

BALTIMORE MD 212

14 JUN 2025 PM 4

quadiant

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

IMI

\$000.69

06/12/2025 ZIP 21202
043M31249606

US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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21202-342799

Dear Councilman Cohen

I'm writing to ask you
support Council
bills 25-0065 and
25-0066.

These will help
Baltimore grow more
affordable + livable.

Thank-you

in Sinner's

Park Ave

Baltimore 21201

BALTIMORE MD 212

14 JUN 2025 PM 4

quadiant

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

IMI

\$000.69

06/12/2025 ZIP 21202
043M31249606

US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

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tinydogpress.com

21202-342799

Dear Council President Cohen,

I'm just writing to express
my support for council
bills 25-0065 & 25-0066.
Please work toward their
passage.

Sincerely,

Tyler Smith

127 Reservoir St.

BALTIMORE MD 212

14 JUN 2025 PM 4

quadiant

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

IMI

\$000.69

06/12/2025 ZIP 21202
043M31249606

US POSTAGE

Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday St.
Baltimore MD 21202

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tinydogpress.com

21202-342799

Council President Cohen
se support ~~two~~ three bills
t will help Baltimore
idents - Mayor Scott's Housing Options and Opportunity
3 CM Blanchard's Ordinance to Eliminate Off-Street
et Parking requirements. Please enact Bills
-0065 & 25-0066. These
need help Baltimore grow
up address the housing
crisis. Sincerely,
Tiane Harrison
406 E. Lafayette St
2-342799



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

BALTIMORE MD 212
Please Support Bill
25-0065, 66 to support
an improving and growing
Baltimore



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Council President Cohen
2 enact Council bills
0065 & 25-0066



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Council President Cohen -
Please support ~~two~~ three bills
that will help households in Baltimore.
1. Mayor Scott's Housing Options
and Opportunity Act will allow
more housing units in convenient
locations. CB-25-0066
2. CM Blanchard's ordinance to
Eliminate off-street Parking
Requirements. CB 25-0065
Best,
Matt Purdy
316 E. Federal St
Baltimore, MD 21202



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Council President Zeke Cohen
se Support Mayor Scott's Housing
Options and Opportunity Act as well as a
ordinance to eliminate off street
parking.
eliminating parking minimums lower
ing costs and allow developers
create more livable cities.
ese actions will also reduce
sting costs by encouraging more
living.
Thank you,
Kristen Schroeder
833 Camden Ave



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Adrienne Black
1209 Saint Paul St, Apt 305
Baltimore, MD 21202
Dear Zeke, it's been a long time
I randomly messaged you on twitter to
Zoom during the pandemic. You changed
offices and I changed names (formerly Derek)
I'm a mount vernon resident now but
thankfully you're at large and I got to
keep you as a rep. I'd love to
meet up some time, but I'm writing now
cause I've finished the transit 101
class and wanted to cap it by
joining the group to ask you to vote
for 25-0065 + 25-0066. This city
is close and connected and communal
because it is walkable. Our zoning
codes make it impossible to build
affordable housing. I hope you'll
help it up. - Adrienne Black



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Council President Cohen,
ase support ~~two~~ three bills
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Baltimore.
Please enact Council Bills
25-0065 and 25-0066.
ether, these bills can
crease Transit-Driented-
velopment and density in
runt neighborhoods.
Thank you,
Mia Underwood, 4514 Shamrock Ave 21202



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Council Member Cohen,
Please support Mayor's Housing
Options and Opportunity Act
and CM Blanchard's
ordinance to Eliminate
Off-Street Parking Requirements.
Parking minimums drive up
housing costs and discourages
small businesses.
25-0065
25-0066
Brody Snook
817 S Charles St



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Council President Cohen
Please support Mayor Scott's Housing Options and Opportunity Act
It will help Baltimore residents - Mayor Scott's Housing Options and Opportunity Act
CM Blanchard's Ordinance to Eliminate Off-Street Parking requirements. Please enact Bills
25-0065 & 25-0066. These need help Baltimore grow up address the housing shortage.
Sincerely,
Tiane Harrison
406 E. Lafayette St
21202-342799



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Please Support Bill
25-0065, 66 to support an improving and growing Baltimore



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Council President Cohen
Please enact Council bills 25-0065 & 25-0066



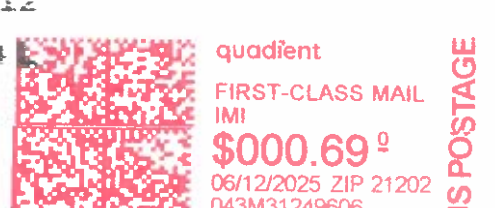
Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Council President Cohen -
Please support two ordinances that will help households in Baltimore.
1. Mayor Scott's Housing Options and Opportunity Act will allow more housing units in convenient locations. CB-25-0066
2. CM Blanchard's ordinance to Eliminate off-street Parking Requirements. CB 25-0065
Best,
Matt Purdy
316 E Federal St
Baltimore, MD 21202



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Council President Zeke Cohen
Please support Mayor Scott's Housing Options and Opportunity Act as well as a ordinance to eliminate off street parking.
eliminating parking minimums lowering costs and allow developers create more livable cities.
these actions will also reduce street costs by encouraging walking.
Thank you,
Kristen Schroeder
833 Camden Ave
21202-342799



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Adrienne Black
1209 Saint Paul St, Apt 305
Baltimore, MD 21202
Dear Zeke, it's been a long time. I randomly messaged you on twitter to Zoom during the pandemic. You changed offices and I changed names (formerly Derek). I'm a Mount Vernon resident now but thankful you're at large and I got to keep you as a rep. I'd love to meet up some time, but I'm writing now cause I've finished the transit 101 class and wanted to cap it by joining the group to ask you to vote for 25-0065 + 25-0066. This city is close and connected and communal because it is walkable. Our zoning codes make it impossible to build more affordable housing. Please help us get it up. - Adrienne Black



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Council President Cohen,
Please support two ordinances that will help households in Baltimore:
Please enact Council Bills 25-0065 and 25-0066. Together, these bills can increase Transit-Directed Development and density in urban neighborhoods.
Thank you,
Mia Underwood
4514 Shamrock Ave 21206



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Council Member Cohen,
Please support Mayor's Housing Options and Opportunity Act and CM Blanchard's ordinance to Eliminate Off-Street Parking Requirements. Parking minimums drive up housing costs and discourages small businesses.
25-0065
25-0066
Brody Snook
817 S Charles St
21202-342799



Zeke Cohen
100 Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Marble Hill Testimony – CCB 25-0066 with Visual Data

Subject: CCB 25-0066 – Zoning: Housing Options and Opportunity — Follow-Up & Community Context

Dear Committee Clerk and Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee,

I respectfully request an update on the October 9, 2025 discussion of CCB 25-0066, including any motions, amendments, or votes; the timeline for posting the video and minutes; and any staff reports or revised bill text presented. If the bill has been held, amended, or scheduled for further review, please share the next date and include me on future notices.

Community Context. Some look at West Baltimore and see a broken city; I see a city full of solutions—if growth comes with accountability. For generations, Black family homeownership has been the ladder to stability, equity-building, neighborhood leadership, and intergenerational wealth. Today, that ladder is being pulled up rung by rung. When “reinvestment” advances without enforcement, it looks less like realignment and more like re■segregation by another name.

I write as a Marble Hill resident in the heart of Baltimore’s civil-rights landscape. Across the street from my home, Thurgood Marshall prepared arguments for *Brown v. Board of Education*; Union Baptist Church hosted Mary McLeod Bethune and other leaders; the late Rep. Elijah Cummings represented this corridor; and the Freedom House led by Dr. Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson welcomed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Eleanor Roosevelt when they came to work with local leaders. **This block’s significance is beyond dispute.**

Out of twenty-two parcels on the 1200 block of Druid Hill Avenue, only 6 still function as true single-family residences — 1200, 1216, 1220, 1226, 1233, and 1237. The rest are either vacant, condemned, illegally converted, or operating as multi-dwelling, commercial, or institutional structures. That means barely **27%** of this block remains stable, family-scale housing — a stunning decline for a community that once defined Black homeownership and civic leadership.

Why visuals matter here. The 1200 block already shows what happens when conversions outpace enforcement. Three single-family homes (1206, 1208, 1210) were illegally converted and condemned in 2025. A corner store (1204) sits amid repeated public-safety incidents. Multi-dwelling structures are clustered without matching sanitation, curb management, or code-compliance capacity. Legalizing four units “by right” would push this block past the tipping point.

This block already carries its fair share of density as it stands. I urge the Committee to reconsider amending this bill before further destabilizing Marble Hill and other legacy homeownership communities.

Category	Count	Notes
Total parcels	22	1200–1239
SF functioning	6	1200, 1216, 1220, 1226, 1233, 1237
SF vacant	2	
SF condemned	3	1206, 1208, 1210
Multi-dwelling	7	
Commercial	2	
Institutional	2	

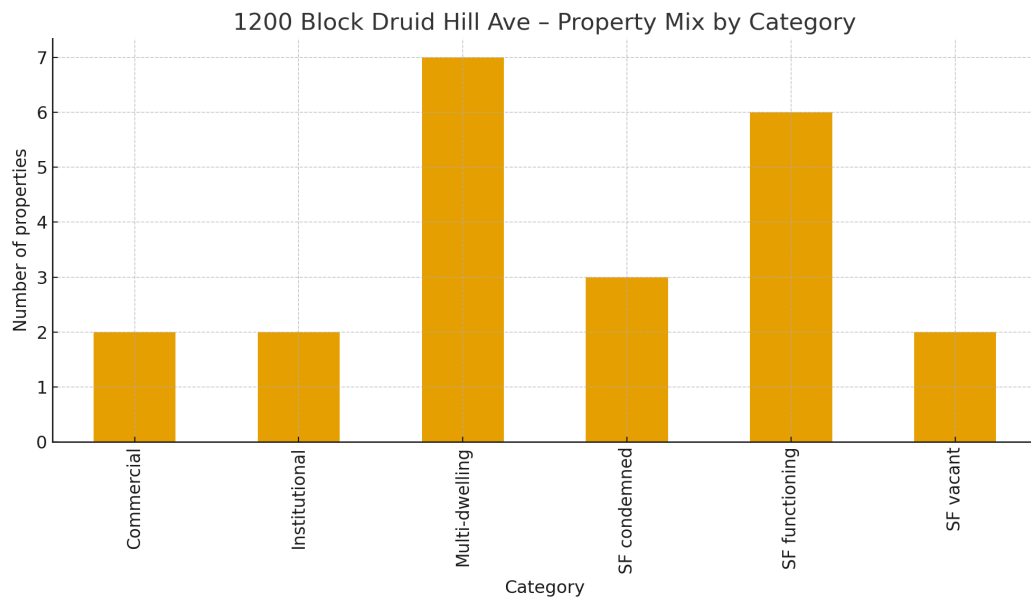


Figure 1. Property mix by category (1200 block, Marble Hill).

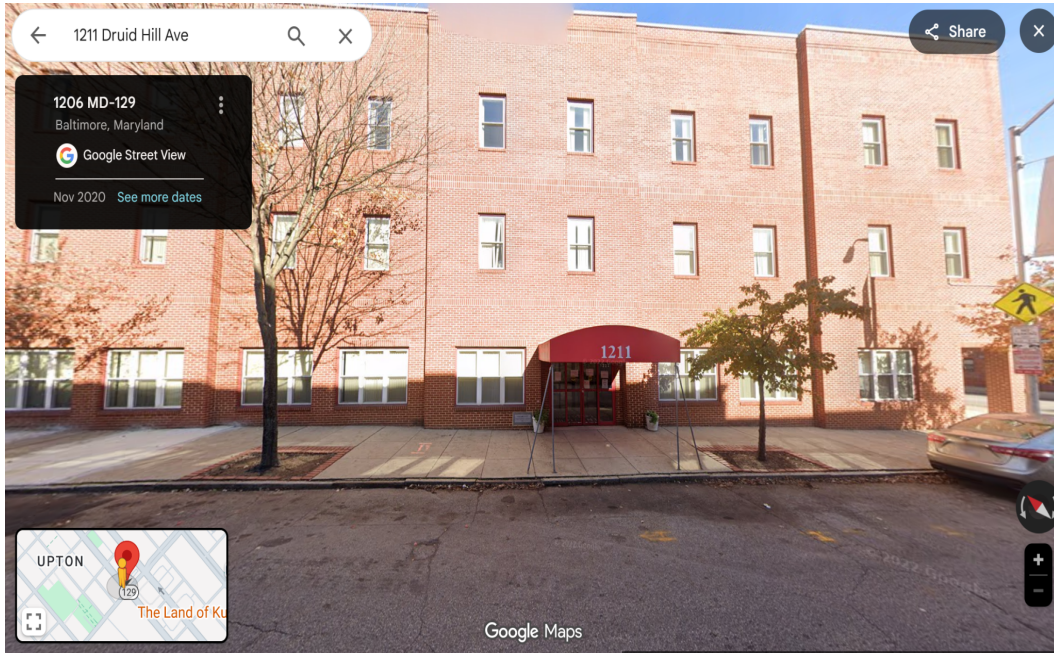
Property Inventory — 1200 Block (Current Snapshot)

address	type	status	notes
1200	Single-family	Occupied	
1202	Single-family	Vacant	
1204	Commercial	Open	Corner store; linked to 3 homicides since 2022; loitering & open
1206	Single-family	Condemned	Illegally converted to quadruplex; no permits/U&O; condemned
1208	Single-family	Condemned	Illegally converted to quadruplex; condemned Apr 2025
1210	Single-family	Condemned	Illegally converted to quadruplex; condemned Apr 2025
1211	Institutional	Open	Union Baptist Church Daycare
1212	Multi-dwelling (5 units)	Open	
1214	Multi-dwelling (5 units)	Open	
1216	Single-family	Occupied	
1218	Multi-dwelling (2 units)	Open	
1219	Institutional	Open	Union Baptist Church
1220	Single-family	Occupied	
1223	Multi-dwelling (units)	Open	User noted 'uniont multi dwelling'
1224	Multi-dwelling (3 units)	Open	
1226	Single-family	Occupied	
1228	Multi-dwelling (2 units)	Open	
1230	Single-family	Vacant	
1233	Single-family	Occupied	
1235	Multi-dwelling (2 units)	Open	
1237	Single-family	Occupied	
1239	Commercial	Renovation	Law office renovation

Recommendations prior to any expansion of by-right density:

- 1) **Enforcement first.** Publish a coordinated DPW/DOT/BPD schedule for street sweeping, parking, nuisance & liquor, and CDS enforcement.
- 2) **Stabilize ownership.** Create a Marble Hill / West Baltimore Homeownership Protection Overlay for legacy civil-rights blocks.
- 3) **Targeted conversions only.** Use conditional-use approvals tied to sanitation capacity, curb management, and full code compliance.
- 4) **Transparency.** Publish citation outcomes for corner stores; suspend licenses upon repeated, unremedied violations.
- 5) **Infrastructure match.** Require trash storage, accessible egress, and curb-management plans before unit increases.

Block Photos & Context







Closing.

Baltimore is not a monolith; it's a mosaic. Policy must reflect that diversity. On this single block in Marble Hill, we are already at the breaking point. Had 1206–1210 proceeded as planned, we'd be adding twelve more families into a corridor already strained by **corner-store loitering, constant foot traffic, random cars pulling up, blasting music, and daily trash from patrons**—all in plain view and largely unregulated. That wouldn't be revitalization; it would be calamity, driving down **quality of life and property values**. We ask you to **revisit and amend these bills** so density follows enforcement and growth stabilizes—rather than destabilizes—our community.

Respectfully,

Charles Williams

Marble Hill Resident • District 11

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Murphy, Louisa <lmurphy@1919ic.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 11:24 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Opposition to COUNCIL BILL 25-0066

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Dear Planning Commission,

I am a longtime resident of the historic Bellona-Gittings neighborhood, and I am writing to express my **strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066**, which would allow low-density multifamily dwelling units in areas currently zoned for single-family residences. I also oppose the related Bills 25-0064 and 25-0065, which would eliminate off-street parking requirements and reduce bulk and yard standards.

My family and I have lived on Gittings Avenue for 30 years. We chose this neighborhood specifically because of its single-family zoning, which has helped foster a close-knit, community-oriented environment. Bellona-Gittings experiences very low crime rates and maintains high property values compared to more densely zoned areas of the city.

While I recognize the national shortage of multifamily housing, Baltimore's more pressing issue is the lack of well-maintained, desirable single-family homes. The city already has numerous areas zoned for higher density (R-5 to R-10), making further rezoning unnecessary. Additionally, there are many vacant and abandoned properties already zoned for multifamily use that could be rehabilitated. I urge the Council to focus efforts on revitalizing those areas instead.

Is it the Council's intention to eliminate all areas in Baltimore City zoned exclusively for single-family dwellings? If so, what are the anticipated impacts on property values? It would be reasonable to anticipate values in neighborhoods impacted by your Bill to decline due to increased supply without a corresponding rise in demand—unless demand is artificially inflated by zoning changes that attract financial investors or absentee landlords. In that case, short-term price increases could come at the cost of long-term harm to historic neighborhoods and the communities they support.

The homes in my neighborhood are zoned R1-E and if that is changed to allow for greater density, MANY residents will move to the Country in search of less housing density. Please do NOT pass this terrible Bill #25-0066.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Louisa Murphy
102 Gitting Avenue, Baltimore 21212

Louisa Murphy
Business Development Officer



One South Street, Suite 2500
Baltimore, MD 21202
Office:(410) 454-3141
Email: LMurphy@1919ic.com

Visit our 1919ic.com
website:

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Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Carol Simmons <cdsimmons1@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 9:50 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill #25-0066 Zoning...

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City Council Bill # 25-0066--Zoning--Housing Options and Opportunity Act

This bill removes the existing prohibition on converting single family dwellings to multi-family dwellings and permits up to 4 dwelling units on a single lot

I am opposed to the passage of this bill. I definitely could have a very detrimental effect on my community and many others.

Please vote against.

Thank you.

Carol Simmons

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mari Ross <mbr105@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, August 25, 2025 5:11 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill# 25-0066

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As a resident of Baltimore City I am writing in opposition to City Council Bill #25-0066. If enacted this change would completely undermine the peaceful nature and safety of my single family home neighborhood. We chose this community over more lively chaotic community areas for the reason that it offered 'county' style living with City conveniences and are willing to pay the high taxes to support that decision. Passing this bill would be short term thinking with long term losses.

Sincerely,
Mari B. Ross

Sent from my iPhone

November 3, 2025

Baltimore City Council
100 N. Holliday Street, Suite 400
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Honorable Council Members:

I'd like to register my support for the passage of **Baltimore City Bill #25-0066**. I attended the open meeting recently with Councilman Dorsey and also listened to the mayor's forum on the legislation. I was on a Zoom call with the Mt. Washington Improvement Association and Councilman Schleifer as well. At MWIA's meeting, I had wanted to speak in support of the bill to tell my own story, but before I realized how the meeting was being organized, the roster of speakers was full. I'm disappointed that many of the perspectives shared by people in these public discussions were largely negative, and I believe an inaccurate perception has developed that doesn't reflect the positive aspects that this legislation could provide Baltimore's neighborhoods. Hence, I'm submitting written testimony to the City Council laying out the reasons why I'm supporting this bill.

My husband and I moved to Baltimore 23 years ago from Boston once I finished graduate school. We were delighted to find a wonderful old bungalow on a double lot. We set about repairing, restoring, painting, and planting a beautiful garden around the house, which is now 105 years old. We're blessed with 150 feet of street frontage that can accommodate parking for at least ten cars, but typically only accommodates two. We also have a parking pad in back. We have about three-quarters of an acre of land and a two-floor house of roughly 3,000 square feet. Interestingly, during the war years in the 1940s and subsequently in the 1950s, the second floor of our house was turned into an apartment to help ease the housing shortages that resulted from an influx of workers to Baltimore's booming factories. An existing bump-out containing stairs to the second floor and separate doorbell buttons still attest to the multi-family history of the house.

We're both getting older, and we'd dearly like to age in place. We love Baltimore, our neighbors, and the historic architecture of our house. The large rooms on the first floor would make for a generous two-bedroom space for us in retirement and allow us to live and more easily move about without needing to climb stairs. The second floor would also be perfect for a two-bedroom apartment; in fact, the original 1940s kitchen is still in place. Subdividing our home into two living units would require minor changes to the interior, and largely no alterations outside or to the footprint of the house. From the street, everything would look the same. We imagine that likely renters may be graduate students or medical residents finishing their programs at any of the city's major universities. We also imagine

that they'd be somewhat older and thus quieter tenants, focused on completing their degrees, then either moving on or staying in place after their studies are completed.

Thus, this bill is ideal for our situation. As I consider the neighborhood immediately around us, I don't know of any other owners who are planning to add tenant units, and I certainly don't know of anyone who would plan four units under one roof. I think those persons who are positing an influx of new neighbors and parking difficulties are weaving a scenario that is unlikely, and unnecessarily fraught. As Baltimore's population continues to decline, I believe it would be helpful to have legislation in place that both encourages new residents to settle here and allows existing residents an affordable option to stay here.

As I said, we're ready to retire, and extra income will be crucial to that goal. Our best retirement would be to avoid diminishing the equity in our home by selling it and buying a smaller (and due to today's interest rates) more expensive home in another neighborhood that would probably not be in Baltimore City. The transaction costs alone would severely eat into the money we've saved for retirement. Neither of us have had high-powered jobs; we've lived comfortably, but modestly. I'm the priest-in-charge of a small parish and have led services and pastoral care activities there for a more than a decade. It's been an immensely rewarding but modestly paid job, particularly in light of the doctoral education I've completed and the hands-on pastoral care I've provided for those seriously ill or near death. My husband is the marketing director for an engineering firm that's been in Baltimore for more than 114 years.

Baltimore City Bill #25-0066 would be the answer to our prayers of how we could frugally age in place during our retirements. The concerns that many people have raised about nightmarish situations of unruly, antisocial new residents just don't seem to me to be a very likely outcome. If this bill becomes law, we and our neighbors will continue to do what we've always done: keep roofs and gutters and downspouts in good repair; coax aging heating plants to keep churning out warmth after years of service; and pay for yard and other maintenance when our do-it-yourself days are over. Most of us are horrified at the increasing cost of utilities, which seem to be getting worse month by month.

Thank you for entering into our world, family history, and aspirations for our future, and for imagining how **Baltimore City Bill #25-0066** will help us and perhaps many other elderly Baltimore City residents remain in the city. I salute all the elected officials of Baltimore City government and how hard you're working to make the city a better place in which to live. You're showing us the way by example of what sterling, friendly, and supportive neighborhoods are all about.

With kindest regards,
The Rev. Dr. Neil O'Farrell
5702 Oakshire Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kate Simms <knbeagle@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2025 3:32 PM
To: Parker, Mark (City Council); Jones, Jermaine (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council); Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Ramos, Odette (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Torrence, James (City Council); Schleifer, Isaac (City Council); McCray, Danielle (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council)
Cc: FPRA; Keane, Timothy (DOP); Hasiuk, Ethan (City Council); Pruitt, Adler (City Council); Winpigler, Shea (City Council); Serrano Portillo, Kony (City Council); Davis, Kirsten A. (City Council); Testimony
Subject: Opposition to Bills 25-0064, 25-0065 and 25-0066

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Dear City Council President and Members of City Council,

My name is Kate Simms, and I'm writing as a life long resident of Baltimore to express my strong opposition to City Council Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066. Eliminating parking requirements ignores current realities and puts additional burdens on already over saturated streets; additionally, we need to acknowledge that bike transportation is a Privilege not something available to most residents. We need legislation that fosters housing security, community stability, and pathways to ownership, not a deregulated free-for-all that accelerates displacement and degrades quality of life.

I would like to make one more plea to please consider the concerns and sentiments of your constituents regarding this bills. Over the last few weeks, I have spoken to numerous residents and community leaders, and everyone I have encountered is opposed to these bills, sharing all of my concerns regarding these bills and the negative impacts they will have to current residents, not only in my community but throughout the city.

Additionally, based on council testimony during the hearing last week, areas all over the city also share these concerns and are in opposition to these bills. If this Council is truly committed to passing legislation which improves equity and reverses the negative impacts to historically marginalized communities, then, when those exact communities speak out against legislation, PLEASE listen to them!

For bill 25-0065, while Baltimore has made progress towards our complete streets program, it also needs to consider that we are a city very far from being vehicle free. Not only, do we need many improvements to our transit system, we need to acknowledge that alternate transit options, such as bikes, are not accessible to all and in fact are a Privilege that many can not access, are far from the norm. Biking in particular is a privileged mode of transportation. One needs to be physically fit to ride a bike, have access to a flexible work schedule (you wouldn't want to bike home at 2am after a bar shift, or at 7am after a night shift in the middle of January), a consistent route which is safe for biking, a safe place and room to store

a bike, and not have either children or elder dependents who rely on them for transportation. Until better overall transportation options exist, there will be a need for parking. Eliminating parking requirements ignores current realities and puts additional burdens on already over saturated streets.

As for 25-0064 and 25-0066, Baltimore is in urgent need of better housing outcomes, but these bills take the city in the wrong direction. The proposed zoning amendments do not solve the problems we face, they sidestep them entirely, offering more of the same policies that have favored absentee landlords and developers over community needs, accountability, and affordability. They do nothing to counter the great need for more affordable housing, and only leave communities open to be prey to developers who can potentially alter the basic design and fundamental aspects of Baltimore's neighborhoods. More should be done with things such as permit reform and enforcement of current codes/violations to improve the zoning process before making sweeping city-wide changes that do not acknowledge the unique and charm of our neighborhoods.

Addressing the Real Problem: Vacancy and Ownership

Baltimore is not short on developable land, we are overwhelmed by vacant, neglected, and underutilized properties. This is not due to restrictive zoning, but to decades of disinvestment, speculation, and unchecked slumlord behavior. These bills do nothing to confront that reality. They offer no plan to convert vacant housing into ownership opportunities for longtime residents. They do not address the systemic failure to enforce existing codes. Instead, they propose looser rules for those already profiting from a broken system, developers who will carve up homes into small, high-rent units and leave neighborhoods with the cleanup, while pushing out long time, often multi generational residents.

In summary, I urge City Council to listen to your constituents and to vote against these bills as currently written. We need bold, data-driven policy, but that policy must prioritize enforcement, equity, and ownership, not expedience and deregulation.

Thank you in advance of your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kate Simms

On Oct 20, 2025, at 9:24 AM, Kate Simms <knbeagle@gmail.com> wrote:

Please consider taking a moment to read this article today for additional constituent viewpoints.

<https://www.baltimorebrew.com/2025/10/20/the-false-promise-of-zoning-bills-being-pitched-as-a-path-to-affordable-housing/#comments>

On Oct 19, 2025, at 11:17 PM, Kate Simms <knbeagle@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Council President Cohen and members for City Council,

Please see attached letters of opposition to Bills 25-0064 and 25-0065. Both letters have been submitted as official testimony as well.

Not only am I strongly opposed to both bills and the potential negative impacts they could have on my community and many others throughout the city, I am also concerned with the lack of constituent awareness about these proposals that I am encountering while talking to people in various communities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Kate Simms

<Bill 25-0064.pdf>

<Bill 25-0065.pdf>

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Liz A. Bement <lizbement1@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2025 5:26 PM
To: Jones, Jermaine (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council); Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Ramos, Odette (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Torrence, James (City Council); Schleifer, Isaac (City Council); McCray, Danielle (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council)
Cc: Keane, Timothy (DOP); Hasiuk, Ethan (City Council); Pruitt, Adler (City Council); Winpigler, Shea (City Council); Serrano Portillo, Kony (City Council); Davis, Kirsten A. (City Council); Testimony
Subject: Opposition to Bills 25-0064, 25-0065 and 25-0066

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Dear Council President Cohen and Members of the Baltimore City Council,

My name is Liz Bement, and I write to you as a resident of Upper Fells Point and an advocate for equitable urban development. I am writing to express my firm opposition to Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and 25-0066.

These bills, while framed as progressive reforms, fail to address the structural challenges facing Baltimore's neighborhoods. Instead, they risk deepening inequities by removing safeguards that protect residents from speculative development and infrastructure strain.

Parking Is Not a Luxury—It's a Lifeline

Bill 25-0065 seeks to eliminate parking minimums—a proposal that may appear progressive but overlooks the everyday realities of working families. In my neighborhood, and in many others across Baltimore, public transit is unreliable and biking is simply not feasible for a large portion of residents. For many, owning a car is not a luxury—it's a necessity. People rely on personal vehicles to get to medical appointments, navigate shift work, transport children to daycare, commute to jobs in areas with little or no transit access, and respond to emergencies. Seniors and individuals with mobility challenges cannot be expected to bike to the grocery store or doctor's office. Removing parking requirements without first improving transportation infrastructure places an unfair burden on those who depend on cars to meet basic needs--we need investment in transit equity before we dismantle infrastructure that supports mobility for working-class residents.

Zoning Reform Must Be Rooted in Accountability

Bills 25-0064 and 25-0066 offer sweeping zoning changes that, in theory, could increase housing supply. But in practice, they open the door to unregulated development with little regard for affordability, ownership, or neighborhood character. The absence of meaningful guardrails means developers can reshape communities without input or accountability.

Baltimore's housing crisis is not due to a lack of buildable land—it's due to a lack of enforcement, a lack of ownership pathways, and a lack of trust. We have thousands of vacant properties that could be rehabilitated and transferred to residents through land trusts, co-ops, or community development corporations. These bills do not address that. Instead, they incentivize absentee landlords and short-term profit models.

We Need a People-First Approach

True reform would start with code enforcement, permit transparency, and community-led planning. It would prioritize affordability tied to income, not market rate. It would protect legacy residents from displacement and ensure that new development serves those who already live here—not just those who might move in.

I urge the Council to reconsider these bills and engage in deeper dialogue with residents across the city. We are not opposed to change—we are opposed to change that leaves us behind.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Liz Bement

Resident, Upper Fells Point

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Keondra Prier <president@reservoirhillassociation.org>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 9:42 AM
To: Jones, Jermaine (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Glover, Antonio (City Council)
Cc: Torrence, James (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Middleton, Sharon (City Council); McCray, Danielle (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Moore, Dana P (Mayor's Office); Testimony
Subject: Vote No on Bills 25-0064 or 25-0065

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Dear Councilmembers Jones, Bullock, Glover, Porter, and Gray,

Passing the Housing Options and Opportunity Act bills will accelerate displacement and strip power from the longtime residents who built your districts. I expect you to protect our community, not enable developers.

If you vote for Bills 25-0064 or 25-0065 on Monday, it will be seen as a direct betrayal of the people who put you in office. We are organized, watching closely, and prepared to mobilize our neighbors to hold you accountable.

Councilman Dorsey doesn't represent or engage Black neighborhoods, yet the impact of these bills will fall hardest on the Black Butterfly. Standing against that takes genuine courage. We expect you to be brave enough to do what's right for your constituents.

Here is why this doesn't work:

- **Handouts to developers without guardrails is no path to affordable housing.**
We are entering into a housing emergency and need radical change for affordable housing now. Proponents are using research that claims that a housing boom in wealthier neighborhoods will create affordable housing here. We call BS. It's no time for half measures!
- **This is an attack on the Black Butterfly.**
We want to keep our neighbors in our communities. This type of zoning package has shown to displace Black communities (see: New York and Washington, D.C.)
- **Options Opportunities: Big Developers v Neighbors**
We are being pushed against the wall. Our taxes are financing big developers who use our money to make decisions that work for them. All take no give. Instead we want to see actions like cooperative housing and rent stabilization that have shown to keep our neighbors in place.

Sincerely,

Keondra Prier
District 7 Resident

Keondra A. Prier
President
Reservoir Hill Association
www.reservoirhillassociation.org
president@reservoirhillassociation.org
Cell: (904) 860-0859

"Nothing about us without us."

From: cofarrell@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 6:09 PM
To: Testimony; Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov.
Subject: Testimony in support of Baltimore City Bill #25-0066

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Dear Baltimore City Council Members:

I want to include my support for the passage of Baltimore City Bill #25-0066. I attended the open meeting last week with Councilman Ryan Dorsey and also listened this week to the mayor's forum on the legislation. I also on this week's Zoom call with the Mt. Washington Improvement Association and Councilman Schleifer as well. At MWIA's meeting, I had wanted to speak in support of the bill to tell my own story, but before I realized how the meeting was being organized, the roster of speakers was full. I'm disappointed that the only perspectives shared by people in that public discussion were largely negative, and I believe an inaccurate perception has developed that doesn't reflect the positive aspects that this legislation could provide to the neighborhood.

My husband Stephen and I moved to Baltimore 23 years ago from Boston once I finished graduate school. Mt. Washington was the only neighborhood we looked at, and we were delighted to find a wonderful old bungalow on Oakshire Road on a double lot. We set about repairing, restoring, painting, and planting a beautiful garden around the house. We are blessed with 150 feet of street frontage that can accommodate parking, and also have a parking pad in back for two cars. We have about three-quarters of an acre of land, and a two-floor house of roughly 3,000 square feet. Interestingly, during the war years in the 1940s and subsequently in the 1950s, the second floor of our house was turned into an apartment to help ease the housing shortages that resulted from an influx of workers to Baltimore's booming factories. A bump-out

containing stairs to the second floor and separate doorbell buttons still attest to the multi-family history of the house.

Stephen and I are getting older, and we would like to age in place. We love Mt. Washington, our neighbors, and the historic architecture of our house. The large rooms on the first floor would make for a generous two-bedroom space for us in retirement and allow us to live and more easily move about without needing to climb stairs. The second floor would also be perfect for a two-bedroom apartment; in fact, the original 1940s kitchen is still in place. Subdividing our home into two living units would require minor changes to the interior, and nearly no alterations outside or to the footprint of the house. From the street, everything would look the same. We are interested in focusing on renters who would be graduate students or medical residents finishing their programs at Hopkins or any of the city's other major universities. The apartment would be rented furnished. We envision somewhat older tenants, focused on completing their degrees, then either moving on or staying in place when their studies are completed.

Thus, the bill being considered by the city council is ideal for our situation. As I consider the neighborhood immediately around us, I don't know of any other owners who are planning to add tenant units, and I certainly don't know of anyone who would plan four units under one roof. I think those persons who are positing an influx of new neighbors and parking difficulties are weaving a scenario that is unlikely, and unnecessarily fraught. We and our closest neighbors are enthusiastic about the number of young families that are rearing children, and we have noticed with great fondness how many of those children have been peeling away to college and getting started with their own careers, families, and lives. Perhaps they'll return to Mt. Washington one day and buy their own homes here if that's still affordable.

As I said, Stephen and I are ready to retire and travel and garden and age in place. Extra income will be crucial to that goal. Happily, we're lucky to have some equity in the home where we've lived for years. Our best retirement would be to stay where we are and avoid diminishing that equity by selling our house and buying a smaller, and due to today's interest rates, more expensive home in another neighborhood. The transaction costs would severely eat into our equity. Neither of us have had high-powered jobs. We've lived

comfortably, but modestly. I'm the priest-in-charge of St. John's Mt. Washington and have led services and pastoral care activities at Springwell Senior Living for a more than a decade. It's been a modestly paid job, particularly in light of the doctoral education I've completed in theology and philosophy and the hands-on pastoral care I've provided for those seriously ill or near death. Stephen is the marketing director for an engineering firm that's been in Baltimore for more than 114 years.

Baltimore City Bill #25-0066 would be the answer to our prayers of how we could frugally age in place during our retirements. The concerns that many people have raised about nightmare situations of unruly, antisocial new residents just don't seem to me to be a very likely outcome. The owners of the houses that surround us will do what we've learned to do so well: keeping roofs and gutters and downspouts in good repair; eking aging heating plants to keep churning out warmth after years of service; replacing sump pumps after this summer's deluges; and paying for yard maintenance when our lawn mowing days are over. Most of us are horrified at the increasing cost of utilities, which seem to be getting worse month by month.

Thank you for entering into our world, family history, and aspirations for our future, and for imagining how Baltimore City Bill #25-0066 will help us have good retirements. I salute all the elected officials of Baltimore City government and how hard you're working to make the city a better place in which to live. You're showing us the way by example of what sterling, friendly, and supportive neighborhoods are all about.

With kindest regards,

The Rev. Dr. Neil O'Farrell
5702 Oakshire Road
Baltimore, MD 21209

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Gregory Friedman <gfriedman@agmcommercial.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 6, 2025 3:36 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: concerns about the zoning measure under consideration allowign houses to be demised.

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To the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore -

I am writing today to express my grave concern about the bill pending before the council that would allow homes in single family neighborhoods to be subdivided based on the square footage. We have a house on the very northern edge of the city near Boys Latin on a street called Wilmary Lane. Its a quiet 9 house cul-de-sac of 3200 foot homes built in the 60s. We have a mix of retirees (Judge Joseph Caplan was a neighbor) all the way down to families with young kids.

Yitzy, you may recall my reaching out to you about a house just outside of our street which was purchased for the intent of housing 6 unrelated post graduate students. It was done under the guise of the fact that all were members of the same church. I can testify to the impact after those students moved in - we immediately saw that all parking on the street was taken (6 cars plus a few extras). We also saw cars going very fast down our 100 yard long street to turn around in the cul-de-sac. Of course, at any time, one of the kids could have come out from between two of the now parked cars and been injured. All of this stemmed from JUST ONE HOUSE!! Personally, i dont really care what people do inside their house or how many people stay there. The critical issue is dealing with the ancillary impacts that occur. Parking is primary, but it also leads to food wrappers, empty water bottles, etc. And these were very nice people that lived there!!

I ask you to deeply consider ways to mitigate the impacts that the bill under consideration would have on neighborhoods such as ours if it were to proceed. If I may offer a suggestion (and I come at this as an advocate for finding ways to increase the housing supply):

1. Create a restricition for houses that are subdivided in single family zones such that there are 2 parking spots per unit
2. Create a restricition for houses that are subdivided in single family zones so that each "unit" must have its own bathroom and kitchen
3. Create a restricition for houses that are subdivided in single family zones so that each "unit" must have two seperate means of non-overlapping eagress.

I'm sure there are smarter people that can suggest other items, but my hope is that if a bill such as the one under consideration were to be passed, it would at least make it so that anyone subdividing is truly making an investment and creating separate units instead of simply calling a bedroom a unit and overcrowding a neighborhood.

I would be excited to support you guys in your continued public service if these measures were considered and included. I cannot express our concern strongly enough.

Thank you as always for your time and consideration.

Gregory Friedman
AGM Commercial Real Estate Advisors
5900 Wilmary Lane
Baltimore, MD 21210
M - 410-294-7277
gfriedman@agmcommercial.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Jeri delambo <jerinick@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:01 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: CCB 25-0066

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I oppose CB 25-0066. This bill will reduce homeownership opportunities throughout the City and has the potential to greatly increase population densities in all neighborhoods. It will incentivize investors to purchase properties and convert them to low quality rental units at the expense of neighborhood stability and it will rob homeowners of the equity they have accrued in their homes.

Jeri Delambo

Sent from my iPhone

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Mary peacock <mpeacock243@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:14 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Opposition to ccb 25-0066

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Dear to whom it may concern.

I would like to express my opposition to

CCB 25-0066.

There is a tremendous need for better business investors in the area but i do not think increased population would help. The houses would be divided up , yards neglected, parking affected. and most personal to me, my proper Value would decrease.

There are beautiful houses in yhis neighborhood but every ine thats turned unto a multi unit rental is neglected and butchered.

Thank you for our consideration ,

Mary Peacock

3417 Glenmore Ave 21214

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: kmills25 <kmills25@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2025 9:38 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Opposition to Bill 25-0066

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I just wanted you to be aware of my oppositionn to Bill 25-0066, the multi-unit housing bill that will severely damage our communities, reduce homeowner occupied housing, snarl our neighborhood streets with traffic and insufficient parking, stress our infrastructure system of schools, utilities, roads and public safety. There is little doubt that the controls needed to review plans, inspect construction, provide code enforcement and maintain cleanliness will be challenged well beyond capacities today and in the future.

Ken Mills
Lauraville

CCB 25-0066

Here are a few talking points in opposition to the Bill.

- It incentivizes investors and absentee landlords to convert single family dwellings to multi-family rental units
- Greatly increases the population and vehicular density in neighborhoods.
- Will increase the cost of housing by reducing the inventory of single family houses available to homebuyers.
- Increases the burden on public utilities, such as streets, trash collection, sewer and water services, etc.
- Undermine neighborhood stability by increasing the transient rental population.
- Will Increase traffic and parking congestion in neighborhoods
- Further Reduce the rate of homeownership in the city, which has been on the decline for the past two decades.
- Conflicts with the City's effort to promote homeownership and maintain single family neighborhoods and the City tax base.

RE: Personal Testimony on Bill 25-0066

Among Baltimore's varied housing stock, my living situation is unconventional. I'm the owner of a three-unit row home in District 7, where I live in one dwelling unit and rent the other two units. But **I would not want to see more multi-unit row houses across the city**, which would be a direct effect of city council bill 25-0066 if it becomes law. In its current form, this bill does not redress Baltimore's housing challenges and instead would exacerbate the inequities that negatively affect Baltimore's row house neighborhoods.

Baltimore does not have the demand for more housing to justify making it easier to add multiple apartments to row homes. Usually, population pressures motivate increases in density in a city. The row home where I live was subdivided during Baltimore's population boom of the mid-twentieth century, when there was high demand for labor to power the city's industrial base and before the modern zoning code. At its apex, Baltimore's population was more than 1,000,000 people and since then has halved. It was good news this year when Baltimore's population increased for the first time in a decade according to the latest Census numbers, yet the growth amounted to less than 1,000 people, well below 1 percent of the population. If there truly were demand for more housing, Baltimore would not have upwards of 10,000 chronically vacant row houses.

Row houses already are dense housing stock. Single-family row homes were designed to be dense city living. Legacy multi-unit row homes like mine already add even more density to their blocks, and unfortunately their renters tend to rent from absentee property owners who minimally care for their properties. The row house on one side of where I live is another multi-unit property owned by someone who lives outside of Baltimore. I've had to work with him and the residents of the building to ensure the trash and recycling bins are regularly set out on the right days. I convinced him to make his property look better by planting up his front patch of open soil myself. He only visits the property when there is a serious issue, like when he came out this summer to remediate a roach infestation.

Weaker housing markets already have an abundance of multi-unit housing. So many row houses in weaker housing markets are in a state of divestment today from the reverberations of redlining and blockbusting. For years, investors and developers have targeted row houses that are in rough shape in divested neighborhoods for conversion into multi-unit properties for their own profit, often without proper permitting and licensing, and precisely where there is not demand for more housing. Bill 25-0066 would exacerbate these trends while eliminating more single-family row homes for families to live, send their children to local public schools, and build generational wealth. The row house on the other side of where I live was previously a multi-unit property that fell into serious disrepair. After years of vacancy, the conditions in the immediate housing market were right for a developer to convert it back to a single-family home, and now the home is cared for and I routinely talk with my neighbors there. Weaker housing markets do not favor converting multi-unit properties back to single-family housing, even though it would bring needed stability to their neighborhoods.

Owner-occupants are the key to making row house neighborhoods flourish.

Particularly in weaker housing markets, promoting policies and programs for people to live in the row homes they own brings stability to row house neighborhoods. Owner-occupants take care of their home and the block around it in ways that redound to the good of the surrounding community. Over the years, I've seen the block and nearby park where I live grow more lively and public safety improve as more owner-occupants have taken the initiative to care for the place where they live.

More apartments does not automatically make them more affordable. Apartments already vary in affordability depending on where they're located in Baltimore, regardless of how many are available for rent. Bill 25-0066 does nothing to ensure that apartments in stronger housing markets like mine are just as affordable as apartments in weaker housing markets, nor does it strengthen renter protections for safe, stable housing.

Baltimore already has row homes of all sizes that can meet residents' varied housing needs, such as mine. In contrast to bill 25-0066, the following ideas would strengthen Baltimore's row house neighborhoods:

- Through mutually reinforcing city laws, regulations, and rules, focus on ensuring all row house neighborhoods have vibrant communities, which depend on having a healthy base of owner-occupants, particularly families.
- Promote existing resources that make rental housing and homeownership opportunities more affordable and, where needed, create new programs for affordable housing, especially with rehabilitating chronically vacant row houses.
- Allow adding a second dwelling unit to larger row houses by right, as recommended by the Planning Commission in 2023, to make them more affordable for owner-occupants and provide more housing for renters.
- Target housing growth in areas in Baltimore with the right conditions to increase density, such as constructing more housing near transportation hubs or repurposing larger buildings for residential use.

Row houses and their distinct neighborhoods are one of the defining features of Charm City. Changes to the zoning code should strengthen their vitality for the good of everyone who lives in Baltimore.



David Nyweide
1833 Bolton St.
District 7

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: anna brown <goodwood28@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 16, 2025 5:04 PM
To: Brandon M Scott; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); rdorsey; Testimony
Subject: City Council Hearing on CCB 25-0066 to eliminate Single Family Zoning In Baltimore City

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As a longtime Baltimore resident and homeowner, I am strongly opposed to this bill that threatens the character and charm of our city's neighborhoods. The elimination of existing zoning laws in order to build four story apartment buildings next to homes and convert single family dwellings to multiple occupancy housing goes against everything we've understood about creating healthy neighborhoods. This bill will reduce homeownership opportunities throughout the City and has the potential to greatly increase population densities in all neighborhoods. It will incentivize investors to purchase properties and convert them to low quality rental units at the expense of neighborhood stability and it will rob homeowners of the equity they have accrued in their homes. Additionally, making no provision for parking for the increased numbers and prohibiting curbside parking for parking pads for homeowners sets up predictable stress and distress.

Please, abandon this plan. Those of us who have supported Baltimore with our property taxes for decades will be driven out, leaving you with folks who will, for the most part, be just passing through accelerating Baltimore's further decline.

Sincerely,

Anna Brown
Lauraville

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council)
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 6:17 AM
To: James Prost; billhamilton@mail.com
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; rdorsey; Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Brandon M Scott
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

Bill,

I disagree with your argument that "There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors."

I would assume most members of the council, and of the public, would disagree as well.

That being said, regarding the concerns that you, Jim, Kevin, David, Charlie, and other members of BHCA have brought up regarding the actual impact this package will have on housing cost and affordability in Baltimore, I can assure you that I support the [Planning Commission's proposed legislative amendment](#) that:

"Within three years of the effective date of this Ordinance, and within every three years thereafter, the Director of Planning and Planning Commission shall conduct and present to the Mayor and City Council an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Ordinance and recommend its continuance, modification, or termination. The evaluation report shall include, but need not be limited to, the number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance, the number of dwelling units each structure contains, the gross floor area of each dwelling unit, the zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located, and affordability of these units. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning shall ensure that such data is collected to permit production and delivery of the required report."

You and I are operating on different predictions of what impact the 25-0066 (and it's companion bills) will have on the City. I fully support requiring the impact to be publicly studied and evaluated on a mandatory recurring basis.



Zac Blanchard
Councilmember, District 11
Office: (410) 396-4816

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2025 1:51 PM

To: billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com>

Cc: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council) <Phylcia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>

Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

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Very well said.

On Sat, Nov 15, 2025 at 11:34 AM billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com> wrote:

Hello Zac,

I write to underscore my opposition to Bill 25-0066, which would make it easier to subdivide large row houses into four units.

This is by far the more ill-conceived of these bills whose sponsors wrongheadly claim will make owning and renting residential property in the city cheaper and easier for ordinary citizens. It is particularly harmful for my neighborhood in your district. For old and stable neighborhoods like ours, passage of this bill is an open invitation for out-of-town speculators and real estate flippers to buy and cut up the remaining historic single and two-unit rowhouses that are the soul of Bolton Hill.

The prices for these homes, for the most part already beyond \$500,000 apiece, will go up, not down, as investors compete to acquire them and chop them up, pricing out residential buyers. As you were told (in my presence) by a longtime realtor in our neighborhood, she regularly hears *already* from affluent parents of incoming students at MICA and other colleges who like the idea of buying a big residence and making it available through individual rental agreements to students as tax-advantaged, informal dormitories. Where this has happened in the past, the city has done nothing to enforce existing zoning and rental requirements. To this market you will now be adding in new investor groups and corporations from other states who can pay these prices and profit by dividing up the properties they acquire and then neglecting their upkeep.

There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subleased for low-income renters and seniors. We also have a growing list of ill-managed and poorly maintained properties owned by absentee landlords. The city does not enforce existing standards. This bill inevitably will make that neglected property list longer.

I urge you to rethink your support for this proposal.

Bill Hamilton
[248 W Lafayette Ave](#)

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 10:11 AM
To: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council); Laria, Jon (DOP)
Cc: billhamilton@mail.com; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; rdorsey; Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council); Brandon M Scott; Torrence, James (City Council); dnyweide@yahoo.com; Lee Tawney; D. Druckman; Charlie Duff; Charles Williams
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

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Zack,

We will have to respectfully disagree on the current real estate conditions in Bolton Hill and the unanticipated unintended negative consequences of the cumulative impact of the three bills (eliminating parking minimums, reducing site coverage and by right allowing conversion of single family homes to up to four rental units. I would urge you to speak to real estate brokers active in Bolton Hill.

I would also suggest that at a MINIMUM any impact evaluation can NOT wait three years. It must be begin immediately ,establishing in detail ,EXISTING housing supply and characteristics in EACH of City's neighborhoods ; and continuously MONITOR the changes taking place , the likely factors causing these changes; and evaluate the impact on housing AFFORDABILITY both by neighborhood and City wide.A detailed before and after impact STUDY DESIGN should be in place BEFORE THE LEGISLATION IS APPROVED. The impact evaluation must include a robust and fully involved citizen advisory committee. I would be delighted to participate in a citizen advisor committee to address these important impact issues

BEFORE SUCH DRAMATIC CHANGES
ARE MADE TO THE CITY'S ZONING CODE A MUCH MORE ROBUST AND SIGNIFICANT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS MUST TAKE PLACE !!

James L Prost AICP
205 W. Lanvale Street
Baltimore MD 21217
jprostmd@gmail.com
410-212-8222

On Mon, Nov 17, 2025 at 6:17 AM Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov> wrote:
Bill,

I disagree with your argument that "There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors."

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Zac Blanchard
Councilmember, District 11
Office: (410) 396-4816

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2025 1:51 PM

To: billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com>

Cc: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council)

<John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council) <Phylcia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>

Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

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The prices for these homes, for the most part already beyond \$500,000 apiece, will go up, not down, as investors compete to acquire them and chop them up, pricing out residential buyers. As you were told (in my presence) by a longtime realtor in our neighborhood, she regularly hears *already* from affluent parents of incoming students at MICA and other colleges who like the idea of buying a big residence and making it available through individual rental agreements to students as tax-advantaged, informal dormitories. Where this has happened in the past, the city has done nothing to enforce existing zoning and rental requirements. To this market you will now be adding in new investor groups and corporations from other states who can pay these prices and profit by dividing up the properties they acquire and then neglecting their upkeep.

There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsidized for low-income renters and seniors. We also have a growing list of ill-managed and poorly maintained properties owned by absentee landlords. The city does not enforce existing standards. This bill inevitably will make that neglected property list longer.

I urge you to rethink your support for this proposal.

Bill Hamilton
[248 W Lafayette Ave](#)

billhamilton@mail.com
202 641-0350

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Avendui Lacovara <avendui@monumentsothebysrealty.com>
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 12:58 PM
To: billhamilton@mail.com
Cc: Charlie Duff; David Nyweide; Kevin Cross; Lee Tawney; Dolph Druckman; James Prost; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Testimony; rdorsey; Middleton, Sharon (City Council); Parker, Mark (City Council); Gray, Paris (City Council); Bullock, John (City Council); Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council); Brandon M Scott
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

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Good afternoon Zac,

Could you please provide the data to support your position that there is not a shortage and let us know what increase of density would then trigger a reconsideration of the current policy? Per your email:

"Within three years of the effective date of this Ordinance, and within every three years thereafter, the Director of Planning and Planning Commission shall conduct and present to the Mayor and City Council an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Ordinance and recommend its continuance, modification, or termination. The evaluation report shall include, but need not be limited to, the number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance, the number of dwelling units each structure contains, the gross floor area of each dwelling unit, the zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located, and affordability of these units. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning shall ensure that such data is collected to permit production and delivery of the required report."

For example, is the goal to add an additional 400 households to the Bolton Hill neighborhood? If so, then this cannot be achieved by subdivision of existing properties alone. What mix of rental to homeownership is the target?

Could you point me to the current figures for Bolton Hill?

I am assuming you must have data in hand so that you can compare to the data collected in three years time. If the data is not currently in hand, would it not be better to have the data in hand, analyze it and then pass bills accordingly with guardrails in place if the figures change drastically within the first two years of implementation?

If the info is only collected and presented in three years after the bill is passed we will miss our first opportunity to assess the impact from years 1-3

Thank you for advance for any information you can provide.

All my best,
Avendui

Avendui Lacovara, Realtor
Senior Vice President
Monument Sotheby's International Realty
443-326-8674 direct/text
Avendui@MonumentSothebysRealty.com

On Mon, Nov 17, 2025 at 10:53 AM billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com> wrote:
I'm sharing this since some of you are mentioned and apparently not copied. Feel free to pass it on to others.

Bill Hamilton
billhamilton@mail.com
202 641-0350

Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 at 6:17 AM
From: "Blanchard, Zachary (City Council)" <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>
To: "James Prost" <jprostmd@gmail.com>, "billhamilton@mail.com" <billhamilton@mail.com>
Cc: "Cohen, Zeke (City Council)" <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>, "Testimony" <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>, "rdorsey" <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>, "Middleton, Sharon (City Council)" <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>, "Parker, Mark (City Council)" <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>, "Gray, Paris (City Council)" <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>, "Bullock, John (City Council)" <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>, "Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council)" <Phylcia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>, "Brandon M Scott" <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

Bill,

I disagree with your argument that "There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subleased for low-income renters and seniors."

I would assume most members of the council, and of the public, would disagree as well.

That being said, regarding the concerns that you, Jim, Kevin, David, Charlie, and other members of BHCA have brought up regarding the actual impact this package will have on housing cost and affordability in Baltimore, I can assure you that I support the Planning Commission's proposed legislative amendment that:

"Within three years of the effective date of this Ordinance, and within every three years thereafter, the Director of Planning and Planning Commission shall conduct and present to the Mayor and City Council an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Ordinance and recommend its continuance, modification, or termination. The evaluation report shall include, but need not be limited to, the number of structures which have been constructed or converted under this Ordinance, the number of dwelling units each structure contains, the gross floor area of each dwelling unit, the zoning district and neighborhood in which each structure is located, and affordability of these units. The Department of Housing and Community Development and the Department of Planning shall ensure that such data is collected to permit production and delivery of the required report."

You and I are operating on different predictions of what impact the 25-0066 (and it's companion bills) will have on the City. I fully support requiring the impact to be publicly studied and evaluated on a mandatory recurring basis.



Zac Blanchard
Councilmember, District 11
Office: (410) 396-4816

From: James Prost <jprostmd@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, November 15, 2025 1:51 PM

To: billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com>

Cc: Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council) <Phylcia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>

Subject: Re: Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

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Very well said.

On Sat, Nov 15, 2025 at 11:34 AM billhamilton@mail.com <billhamilton@mail.com> wrote:

Hello Zac,

I write to underscore my opposition to Bill 25-0066, which would make it easier to subdivide large row houses into four units.

This is by far the more ill-conceived of these bills whose sponsors wrongheadly claim will make owning and renting residential property in the city cheaper and easier for ordinary citizens. It is particularly harmful for my neighborhood in your district. For old and stable neighborhoods like ours, passage of this bill is an open invitation for out-of-town speculators and real estate flippers to buy and cut up the remaining historic single and two-unit rowhouses that are the soul of Bolton Hill.

The prices for these homes, for the most part already beyond \$500,000 apiece, will go up, not down, as investors compete to acquire them and chop them up, pricing out residential buyers. As you were told (in my presence) by a longtime realtor in our neighborhood, she regularly hears *already* from affluent parents of incoming students at MICA and other colleges who like the idea of buying a big residence and making it available through individual rental agreements to students as tax-advantaged, informal dormitories. Where this has happened in the past, the city has done nothing to enforce existing zoning and rental requirements. To this market you will now be adding in new investor groups and corporations from other states who can pay these prices and profit by dividing up the properties they acquire and then neglecting their upkeep.

There is no shortage of rental and small-condo apartments and rowhouses in our neighborhood, and there also are high-rise rental units in a wide range of sizes and prices -- many of them subsized for low-income renters and seniors. We also have a growing list of ill-managed and poorly maintained properties owned by absentee landlords. The city does not enforce existing standards. This bill inevitably will make that neglected property list longer.

I urge you to rethink your support for this proposal.

Bill Hamilton
[248 W Lafayette Ave](mailto:billhamilton@mail.com)

billhamilton@mail.com
202 641-0350

Councilman Dorsey and Members of the Land Use & Transportation Committee,

Please accept this email as written testimony regarding Bill 25-0066.

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to respectfully but firmly voice my opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066.

I write from the perspective of a homeowner in Historic Marble Hill, a legacy Black neighborhood that has fought for decades to regain stability, preserve historic properties, and protect longtime residents from displacement and speculation. My concern is not with the idea of adding housing options, but with the way this particular bill would land on fragile blocks like mine.

The Mayor's Own Words About Homeownership

In a 2023 video about purchasing his own home in Baltimore, Mayor Brandon Scott spoke movingly about what homeownership means to him and to this city. He talked about:

- Dreaming of owning a home since childhood,
- Seeing homeownership as a way to build legacy and generational wealth,
- Wanting to plant roots and build memories with neighbors,
- Believing that every Baltimorean should have the chance to purchase a home, and
- Emphasizing that when residents are able to buy homes, we strengthen the entire city.

Those sentiments resonate deeply with many of us in West Baltimore who have worked hard to buy, maintain, and stabilize homes on blocks that were once written off.

Bill 25-0066, however, moves policy in a very different direction.

How Bill 25-0066 Undercuts Those Goals

Allowing by-right subdivision of rowhouses into up to four units may be framed as “gentle density,” but in neighborhoods like Marble Hill, Upton, Madison Park, and Druid Heights, the most immediate impact will not be increased opportunity for families to purchase homes. Instead, it will be:

- Increased speculative investment,
- More cash buyers outbidding first-time homebuyers,
- Faster conversion of single-family homes into multi-unit rentals, and

- A rise in absentee ownership and instability.

For over two decades, Baltimore has invested millions of dollars to encourage homeownership and stabilize legacy communities, particularly for Black residents. Bill 25-0066 risks reversing that progress by making our already-vulnerable blocks even more attractive to investors and less accessible to families who want to plant roots.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Baltimore is a city of very different neighborhoods and block conditions. On some blocks, added density may be appropriate and even welcome. On others—where there are already high vacancies, historic properties, weak code enforcement, and limited infrastructure—blanket upzoning without safeguards can do real harm.

On my block alone, churches, child-care centers, community anchors, and longtime homeowners share the same short stretch of rowhouses. Our concern is not about “keeping people out,” but about maintaining a balance that allows existing residents to stay, new homeowners to buy in, and historic character to survive.

Enforcement, Infrastructure, and Reality on the Ground

Baltimore already struggles with:

- Code enforcement backlogs,
- Illegal or unsafe conversions,
- Parking and infrastructure strain, and
- Limited capacity to monitor the effects of zoning changes.

Layering new by-right density on top of these existing challenges, without a clear enforcement and monitoring plan, is not responsible policy—especially in communities that have repeatedly asked for targeted, thoughtful, block-sensitive approaches rather than blanket changes.

A Better Path Forward

I fully agree that Baltimore needs more housing options. But we can pursue that goal in ways that:

- Protect and expand homeownership opportunities,
- Prioritize legacy residents and first-time buyers,
- Respect neighborhood history and current conditions, and

- Include real community participation in shaping zoning changes.

That vision is completely aligned with what the Mayor described in his own homeownership story—building legacy, planting roots, and giving every Baltimorean a fair chance to own.

Closing

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Land Use & Transportation Committee to vote NO on Bill 25-0066 in its current form, or at minimum, to pause and redesign this legislation with neighborhood-specific safeguards, a robust enforcement plan, and explicit protections for homeownership in vulnerable communities.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of residents like me who are simply asking that our hard-won stability not be put at risk.

Sincerely,

Charles Williams

Historic Marble Hill Resident

Baltimore, Maryland

To: Matthew Peters

Re:

1. CCB #25-0064, Zoning – Bulk and Yard Requirements Amendments
2. CCB 25-0065 -Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements and
3. CCB 25-0066 – Housing Options and Opportunities Act

We, the undersigned owners and/or residents of property in Ridgely's Delight are writing in opposition to all three of the proposed bills mentioned above. We have addressed all 3 in one letter since these proposed changes are essentially joined at the hip, having all been included in a single bill in the past, which are meant to work together. We ask that this letter be included as a separate letter of opposition for the record for all 3 bills.

The stated purposes of these bill are to:

1. Promote increased development of low-density, multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts, including North Ridgely's Delight, which is zoned R8, by establishing a new category of "low density, multi-family housing which permits development that would increase density up to 4 dwelling units."
2. To eliminate the current requirement that off-street parking be provided for any additional units.
3. Reduces the amount of yard and greenspace required for properties.

Ridgely's residential properties are zoned R-8. These proposed changes would no longer be permitted as a conditional use only. All required off-street parking requirements would be removed for all residential uses in our neighborhood.

We are opposed to these proposed changes for the following reasons.

1. Impact on infrastructure
 - a. The homes in Ridgely's primarily date from the early to late 19th century. The infrastructure is also quite old and we have experienced a lot of problems with it.
 - i. We had a flood beneath the 700 block of Dover St. that lasted for almost a week and damaged a number of houses because the water turnoff valve did not work.
 - ii. We routinely have flooding in some areas because the storm drains cannot handle the rain water when there is a heavy downpour.
 - iii. We have experienced a number of water pipe breaks.
 1. Several years ago, we experienced a major water line break in the center of the 600 block of Portland. The break was at least 6 feet below the street and caused major flooding for days.

- b. Increased development will lead to a reduction in green spaces, with the attendant negative environmental and quality-of-life impacts that come with that. But, this will also have infrastructure impacts. As we reduce the areas that serve to absorb rain water, we put an additional burden on our already overtaxed storm drain system. We already have flooding in heavy down pours because the storm drains cannot handle the demands. Further reduction of green space will only exacerbate this problem.
 - c. We have added 84 new dwelling units since 2019 and we are in the process of adding 9 more units right now in North Ridgely's. This is an increase in density of almost 50% and we do not know how the existing infrastructure will be able to handle more increases. We are concerned about further increases in density without the improvements to our sewage, water and storm drain systems that we hope will be coming our way as a result of the agreement with the EPA.
- 2. Impact of eliminating all parking requirements
 - a. As evidenced by a city-run parking survey, there is already not enough parking in our neighborhood. We are a geographic island. Because of this, neighbors have to cross MLK and try to find parking in the deserted commercial areas of Pigtown when we return to the neighborhood at night, which is the only adjacent area with any large amount of parking.
 - b. We know the city would like to see residents move towards the use of public transportation, and many of our residents would like to be able to do that, but the current public transportation system is frankly terrible. Until a decent and reliable public transportation system is put in place, it is premature to try to force city residents to give up their cars by failing to plan for adequate parking.
 - c. We live in a food desert. For many residents, especially those of us who are older, it is impossible to try to use public transportation to purchase groceries and transport them home. And, while delivery is an option for some, the cost is prohibitive for many residents. The availability of fresh, nutritious food must also be addressed before the city tries to force residents to give up their cars.
- 3. Impact of an increase in density on the historic nature of the neighborhood.
 - a. Ridgely's Delight is an historic neighborhood and much of the historic feel of the neighborhood comes from the current density, which varies between the older, smaller properties in our area of the north and the larger properties with double lots in the south, which are ripe for development if this change passes.
 - b. Under current CHAP guidelines, modern in-fill in historic neighborhoods should be clearly non-historic/modern in appearance.

- i. At this time, we have very few modern in-fill properties. But if this bill passes, we should expect that situation to change, thus dramatically reducing both the current spacing and appearance of properties in a manner that reduces the historic nature of the neighborhood.
 - c. Over their life-span, a number of larger properties in the neighborhood were split up into multiple apartments. In more recent years, a number of these houses were returned to single-family units in an attempt to respect the historic nature of these houses. This proposed change would encourage breaking these properties up into multiple apartments again, thus also moving to make these properties less historic in nature again.
- 4. Impact on trash, rats and appearance
 - a. The houses that have been divided into multiple apartments in our neighborhood have insufficient city-provided trash cans to handle the amount of trash they are creating and landlords are not paying for either extra cans and/or private pickup. This leads to overflowing trashcans, dumping of garbage, out-of-control rat populations and the poor/dirty appearance of the city as a whole.
- 5. Impact of density on housing costs
 - a. Underlying this bill is an assumption that increased density will lead to decreased costs and more affordable housing. However, as previously mentioned. We are in the midst of increasing our density of housing by about 50 % and that has NOT led to decreased costs. Most of the new units are tiny (less than 400 sq. ft,) and the proposed costs we have seen are in the \$1,400-\$1,600 per month range. So, increased density has NOT led to decreased costs in our neighborhood.
- 6. Impact on property values
 - a. Many property owners, particularly owner/occupants buy their properties as an investment.
 - b. This proposal is likely to lead to increased purchasing by developers and those interested in rental properties, which will lead to these properties being broken up into multiple apartments, single room rentals and AirBnBs.
 - c. You cannot build a neighborhood without a core of owner/occupants and this bill provides significant disincentives for owner/occupants to remain in their homes since it is likely to drive overall property values down.
- 7. Impact on diversity
 - d. A number of older and/or mobility-challenged owner/occupants feel that proposals like this are designed to drive them out of the city.
 - e. Those who can drive, need their cars since public transportation is difficult and unreliable for those who have any level of mobility challenges. They are also more likely to be targets of crime, so waiting on city streets for buses is

dangerous for them and riding alternative transportation such as bikes and scooters is not possible for many of them.

- f. We invested in our properties as part of our long-term plan for financial security in retirement. But, if the city is going to undertake policies that reduce the value of our investment, the only smart thing to do is to leave the city.

In conclusion, we think a far better way to increase the city's tax base (i.e., population) and provide more affordable housing that becomes an investment for owner/occupants instead of investors would be to develop a program that truly values and promotes racial and spatial equity by developing a city-government program that encourages and supports efforts by residents to buy and develop vacant properties. This should help to stabilize and enhance many communities that are both in need of and deserving of such government support. This would be more consistent with the many equity and justice commitments officially and publicly stated by the city—e.g., by the Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Etc.

We fear that diverting efforts away from addressing how to remedy the overwhelming number of vacant properties throughout the city, many located in communities that have large numbers of African Americans and other people of color living in them, will simply perpetuate and exacerbate the many attendant problems associated with these vacant properties (e.g., higher crime rates, dumping, vandalism, deteriorating property values, rats, etc.), which will lead to further destabilization of these neighborhoods and communities. This, will make things worse, instead of better, for everyone, but especially for the communities that this bill is designed to help most. We strongly suggest that it would be better to develop such a program than to simply change the zoning rules and hope they lead to the desired outcome.

For all the reasons listed above, we are opposed to the proposed bill. Thank you for considering our input.

(Note, all addresses below are located in Baltimore, MD, 21230. If the signer's name indicates "owner," it means that the signer owns but does not reside at that address.)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1) Paul Wilder
(owner)
705 Dover St. | 4) Etty Stern
Shterenboim
(owner)
219 Penn St | 7) Patricia Bergeron
717 Dover St, |
| 2) Michele Vitolo
(owner)
719/721 Dover St. | 5) Steve Yannaras
625 Portland St. | 8) Nate Hauser
(owner)
210 Penn St. |
| 3) Kate Campbell
715 Portland. | 6) Kate Gillespie
717 Dover St. | 9) Greg Laub
728 Dover St. |
| | | 10) Gerri Salley |

646 Melvin
11) Esther Van Dyke
717 Portland St.
12) Tania Robalino
313 S. Fremont St.
13) James Wright
313 S Fremont St.

14) Lillie Hyman
658 Portland St.
15) Rosalie Barret
719 Portland St.
16) Claude Williams
719 Portland St.
17) Farzana Muhib

710 Portland St.
18) Debbie Brain
623 Washington
Blvd.
19) Deb O'Neill
208 Penn St.

Dear Councilman Dorsey and members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

As a resident of Baltimore City and president of the Garwyn Oaks United Neighbors Association, I am writing to express opposition to the passage of City Council Bill 25-0066. This bill will negatively impact the growth, stability and sustainability of homeownership in Baltimore's neighborhoods as follows:

Undermines Homeownership and Neighborhood Stability in Baltimore City

By allowing up to four dwelling units on a residential lot in the city, this bill will reduce homeownership opportunities especially for first time, and low-moderate homebuyers as these buyers will be unable to compete with investors who have available and ready finances to purchase homes and settle quickly—advantages these homebuyers cannot match – posing a risk to Baltimore communities with high home ownership.

Weakens Baltimore's Neighborhoods Uniqueness

The proposed allowance of multi-family housing as a right in communities that have majority single-family homes risks altering the unique residential character and nature of our neighborhoods. We are not a cookie cutter city. Known as a City of Neighborhoods, it is this uniqueness characteristic that draws homebuyers to buy and live in Baltimore communities. Removing that option will impact the attractiveness and desirability of our communities.

Undermines Years of City Investment in Homeownership

Instead of providing incentives for young and low-moderate income homebuyers to buy in Baltimore and continue the legacy of homeownership in our neighborhoods, this bill incentivizes investors to buy up single-family houses in our stable desirable neighborhoods and convert them to multi-family units, which negates Baltimore's efforts of promoting homeownership over the years. For 25 years Baltimore has invested millions through Live Baltimore, Healthy Neighborhoods, Baltimore City's Dept. of Housing and Community Development and other homeownership-oriented organizations to promote homeownership and help families and individuals purchase their homes in Baltimore City. This bill works against these efforts and the City's stated goal of increasing homeownership, especially among Black households.

Incentivizes Absentee Ownership, not Community Growth

Increasing the opportunity to have more rental units, increases percentage of absentee landlords in Baltimore versus invested homeowners. Increasing residential density increases existing challenges for communities and existing residents, i.e. lack of parking space, code enforcement, public safety and health concerns, and reduces the quality of life for current and future residents. Instead of strengthening community stability, the bill invites disinvestment and transiency among residents

Lacked Community Involvement and Input

The development of this bill lacked the necessary community engagement and education for Baltimore residents , so residents could be participants in the policies and zoning changes that greatly impact their lives,.. This bill favors investors' needs over residents' concerns , absentee landlords over homeowners, and increased density over neighborhood stability and sustainability.

The Garwyn Oaks United Neighbors has voted to oppose this bill at our July meeting held July 22, 2025. I ask that the Committee members to consider the aforementioned issues and vote no on the passage of City Council Bill 25-0066.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mereída Goodman

President, Garwyn Oaks United Neighbors Association

November 19, 2025

Dear City Officials;

I respectfully oppose Bill 25-0066 and urge your consideration in voting against its passage for the following reasons:

- Inadequate community notification regarding the bill's significant impact on housing, zoning, the economy, and quality of life (social determinants of health).
- Insufficient engagement and outreach conducted in a meaningful and systematic manner across all communities.
- Limited time provided to evaluate information from city agencies.
- Discrepancies in the public process, including inconsistencies in protocols for testimony at public hearings.
- Non-compliance with the Equity Ordinance's requirements for impact analysis on present and future operations, capital budgets, and equity reports by City agencies. This is especially relevant to 311 services, water and wastewater, solid waste operations, housing permits and inspections, and public safety/first responder services.
- Absence of a stratified equity analysis evaluating impacts across demographic groups and neighborhoods, including health and environmental assessments—particularly important given proposals to increase density in communities already facing adverse indicators.
- Reliance on comparisons to cities not analogous to Baltimore's circumstances.
- Failure to address the cumulative effect of Bill 25-0066 alongside Bills 25-0064, 25-0065, and "Complete Streets."
- Lack of identification of alternatives that would achieve similar objectives with less burden on families and neighborhoods.
- Potential erosion of neighborhoods and families as well as creation of new concerns regarding displacement, gentrification, and perceived "flight."
- Insufficient data demonstrating increased homeownership opportunities for middle- and low-income families, especially those contending with rising taxes, utilities, and living expenses, along with inadequate incentives or protections for economically disadvantaged prospective homeowners.
- Perceived prioritization of investors and developers over local residents.

- Lack of evidence showing how communities have been uplifted or economically advanced despite prior funding for urban challenges, such as the aftermath of Freddie Gray’s death and the “Highway to Nowhere.”
- Amidst neighborhood deterioration—including the closure of schools, pharmacies, markets, and businesses—no strategic assessment has been undertaken at the neighborhood level to determine requirements for successful implementation of this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide feedback on Bill 25-0066. The bill does not meet the criteria for effective and equitable policymaking. Accordingly, I reiterate my request that you vote against its enactment.

Linda Batts

Ignores the Voices of Baltimore's Communities

By Janet Allen, President, Heritage Crossing Resident Association

Heritage Crossing does not stand alone. From Northwest Baltimore to Union Square, Bolton Hill to Hillside, Hamilton to Harlem Park—residents across our city are united in opposition to HB 25-0066O.

This bill proposes more multi-unit rental housing in neighborhoods already saturated with poverty and disinvestment. It ignores our calls for homeownership, equity, and meaningful investment. It fails to address the real needs of our communities: safe streets, quality schools, access to supermarkets and pharmacies, and a future our children can inherit.

I oppose the Bill 25-0066 -Housing Options and Opportunity due to concerns over lack of enforcement on construction on new and existing properties. How is it not a fire hazard to only have one stairwell and exit? Who will ensure that properties meet the codes and that rent is set at affordable rates? There will be less available parking spaces, and an increase in traffic and trash. This will become a problem for smaller neighborhoods that cannot handle an unexpected increase in residents. I am also concerned that homeowners may see a decrease in property value. We are already stretched thin with high taxes, which are the highest in the state. This bill will forever change the landscape in our small neighborhoods. This bill written as is allows for profitability not affordability.

Alaysia Phillips



November 19, 2025

Baltimore City Council
Land Use and Transportation Committee
SENT VIA EMAIL

Chair Dorsey and Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

Bikemore and the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance are **writing in support of Council Bill #25-0066** Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity.

This bill will allow construction of gentle density, multi-family buildings in neighborhoods where currently only single-family homes are allowed, improving housing affordability and access to opportunity for Baltimoreans.

Baltimore is the birthplace of racist zoning policy. In response to fears from white neighbors in Madison Park and Bolton Hill when a Black Yale-educated lawyer chose to buy in their neighborhood, Baltimore City Council passed Ordinance 610, which stated no Black resident could move on to a block where more than half of the residents were white. When this ordinance was struck down, the city tried again and again to craft legislation that would wall off certain neighborhoods from certain people.

In the 1920s, Baltimore City Council, lenders, and community groups were finally successful in constructing that wall, and continued to build it through zoning maps, red-lining, and covenants designed to prevent Black and lower-income residents from accessing housing in certain neighborhoods.

The explicit goal of single-family zoning is to maintain inequity. We have seen that exposed in testimony at the Planning Commission, where community members from the very neighborhoods that originally advocated for racist zoning policy testified about renters and people living in smaller units as being undesirable neighbors who do not contribute to the community.

For that explicit goal of inequity alone, we should aim to undo single-family zoning. But there are many other reasons to allow housing flexibility in all zoning districts across the city.

Baltimore's population is stagnant or shrinking. We were a city of nearly one million in 1950, and our infrastructure and neighborhoods were built to support that level of density. Today, houses that used to host a family of five or six are hosting families of two or three. So all of our neighborhoods do have the capacity to welcome more neighbors, expanding our tax base to help support the city's infrastructure that is crumbling as a result of its design for that nearly one million people.

But we are making welcoming new neighbors impossible. We're gatekeeping an entire generation of people who want to live in, and raise their families in a thriving city. A recent Gensler report¹ surveying 65 cities across the world showed only 50% of respondents feel "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with Baltimore as a place to live, leaving it at 64th place. Only Athens, Greece ranked worse. Over 60% of young adults surveyed said they are likely to leave Baltimore, with only Delhi, India seeing a higher percentage.

Respondents, especially young adults, prioritize cost of living in their decisions to locate and stay in cities. The report concludes that cities must focus on affordability, connecting community across income, and increasing compact, walkable development.

¹ <https://www.gensler.com/gri/city-pulse-2025>

Single-family zoning limits the number of potential units that can be built, increasing housing costs. It prevents rehabilitation and subdivision of larger vacant housing stock and infill construction of new diverse types of housing stock that better reflect the needs of young people. It's no wonder they want to leave when they can't find the housing they want to live in.

Cities that have passed legislation that legalizes multi-family development in all zoning categories fare far better in the Gensler report, including Minneapolis, which ranks 55th on the list of cities people are likely to move out of, compared to Baltimore at 2nd.

Maryland is facing a housing crisis. Comptroller Lierman's October 2025 Housing & the Economy² report shows that Maryland is seeing a massive loss of residents to other states, specifically states with less regulated and lower-cost housing. Maryland has a shortage of nearly 100,000 housing units, and will need to build nearly 600,000 new housing units by 2045 to meet projected growth. To lessen this crisis, to reduce the number of residents leaving Baltimore to seek a more affordable cost of living, we must take action through zoning reform like permitting housing flexibility in all zoning districts.

Overwhelmingly, Baltimoreans want this. In February 2024, YouGov polling from Greater Greater Washington³ showed 75% of Baltimore City respondents believe we should "allow townhomes, duplexes, and apartments in areas zoned for single-family homes."

The Baltimore City Council has an opportunity here to undo a racist, inequitable wrong while improving housing flexibility in a housing crisis. The results will reduce housing costs, increase the city tax base, make communities more walkable, and bring the slight density increase necessary to help support more frequent, reliable public transportation.

We urge you to vote favorably on Council Bill #25-0066.

Sincerely,



Brian O'Malley
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance



Jed Weeks
Bikemore

² <https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/research/housing-economy-print.pdf>

³ <http://www.ggwash.org/files/HEAApollslidedeck.pdf>



November 19th, 2025

Dear Mayor Scott, Council President Cohen, and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the **Brewers Hill Neighbors (BHN) Neighborhood Association**, we write to express our strong opposition to Baltimore City Council Bill 25-0066, *Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity*.

BHN fully supports the goal of increasing safe, affordable, and high-quality housing throughout Baltimore. However, Bill 25-0066—by eliminating single-family zoning citywide, allowing up to four units on a residential lot by right, and removing long-standing residential conversion standards—poses significant risks to Baltimore’s most vulnerable communities and does not contain the safeguards needed to achieve its stated goals responsibly.

1. Removal of essential protections invites speculative pressure

Bill 25-0066 repeals existing “Residential Conversions” standards, enabling by-right 2–4 unit conversions with minimal review. This change invites speculative acquisition of properties, especially in neighborhoods historically targeted by absentee investors. The absence of conversion standards makes it more likely that rowhomes will be subdivided with inadequate oversight, leading to increased strain on aging infrastructure and diminished quality-of-life for surrounding residents.

2. Research from other cities shows upzoning alone fails to improve affordability

Evidence from major U.S. cities makes clear that **upzoning, on its own, does not create affordability**:

- Chicago’s upzoning study found that land and property values **rose sharply** while affordable housing production remained flat.
- Brookings Institution analysis warns that broad upzoning can **fuel speculation and raise prices**, particularly in lower-income areas.
- Academic research from UCLA, NYU Furman Center, and other institutions shows that without affordability mandates, upzoning often produces **market-rate units aimed at higher-income households**, not working-class families.

These outcomes run counter to the bill’s intent and disproportionately impact cities with histories of redlining and uneven development—Baltimore included.

3. Blanket zoning changes typically harm low-income and Black communities first

Experiences in New York City, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Los Angeles reveal a consistent pattern: when single-family zoning is lifted without strong affordability and anti-displacement measures, redevelopment often accelerates **first** in neighborhoods with:

- Lower land values,
- Higher concentrations of renters, and
- Less political power to resist predatory development.

These are typically predominantly Black or low-income communities. Displacement pressures increase, taxes go up, speculative flipping becomes more profitable, and long-time residents bear the brunt.

Baltimore cannot afford to repeat these patterns. Our city's vulnerable communities have already endured decades of disinvestment, redlining, and predatory lending. Removing zoning safeguards without meaningful protections will magnify—not solve—those inequities.

4. Risks to Baltimore residents if Bill 25-0066 passes as written

BHN is concerned about several predictable negative outcomes:

A. Displacement of renters and legacy homeowners

Land values will rise due to new redevelopment potential. Landlords may clear out long-term, lower-rent tenants to convert units or raise prices. Older homeowners—especially those on fixed incomes—may feel pressured to sell.

B. Overconcentration of multi-unit conversions in already-burdened neighborhoods

Wealthier neighborhoods often have stronger tools (HOAs, covenants, organized advocacy) to discourage speculative redevelopment. As a result, the majority of conversions will likely occur in lower-income neighborhoods, worsening structural inequity.

C. No guarantee of deeply affordable housing

The bill lacks requirements for:

- income-targeted units,
- long-term affordability covenants, or
- dedicated protections for extremely low-income residents.

Upzoning without affordability mandates almost always results in **market-rate** units first.



5. More equitable and effective ways to add housing

Brewers Hill Neighbors strongly supports expanding housing options, but it must be done **responsibly and equitably**. We encourage the Council to prioritize:

- Development of vacant lots and city-owned properties first;
- Targeted, corridor-based upzoning where infrastructure can support added density;\
- Strong anti-displacement and anti-harassment protections;\
- Inclusionary housing requirements tied to any new density;\
- Community-driven planning processes that give neighborhoods a meaningful voice.

These approaches expand housing supply while safeguarding Baltimore's most vulnerable residents.

6. BHN's request

For these reasons, the Brewers Hill Neighbors (BHN) Neighborhood Association respectfully urges the Council to **vote NO on Bill 25-0066** in its current form.

We ask the Council to revisit zoning reform through a more collaborative, equity-centered process that:

- Prevents displacement,
- Protects legacy residents,
- Requires affordability, and
- Ensures that growth strengthens—rather than destabilizes—Baltimore communities.

We value your commitment to Baltimore's future and hope you will take a careful, community-driven approach to any zoning changes that reshape our city for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Brant Fisher

President, Brewers Hill Neighbors Association

BHNBoard@BrewersHillNeighbors.Org

HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF
Baltimore City Council Bill #25-0066 – Zoning – Housing Options and
Opportunity Act

Baltimore City Council
Land Use and Transportation Committee
November 20, 2025



Health Care for the Homeless strongly supports Council Bill #25-0066 – Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity, which would amend certain provisions of the Baltimore City Zoning Code to promote increased development of low-density multi-family dwellings in certain residential districts. The bill would, among other things, create a new housing category to expand where 2 to 4 unit homes are allowed and ends the outdated process that restricts converting single-family homes into multi-family ones. By allowing for the creation of more critically needed affordable housing, Council Bill 25-0066 will tangibly prevent and end homelessness in Baltimore City. We support this bill as part of the broader housing affordability and development package known as The Housing Options & Opportunity Package, which Health Care for the Homeless strongly supports. 25-0066, along with the housing package in its entirety, will increase housing density, lower housing costs, and have tremendous benefits to the community and future residents of our city.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland’s leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver integrated medical care, behavioral health services, dental care and harm reduction interventions for more than 11,000 people annually at multiple clinic sites in Baltimore City, including through a Mobile Clinic and a Street Medicine team. We also support more than 800 highly vulnerable Baltimoreans in more than 550 units of permanent supportive housing.

Housing Solves Homelessness

After operating for 40 years, we know what works to end and prevent homelessness: **housing ends homelessness**. With a dire housing shortage, Council Bill 25-006 puts into action an evidence-based approach that we know works to end homelessness.

We believe that everyone deserves a home they can afford in a stable and healthy community, but most renters in Baltimore pay more than they can afford on their housing. In response, Health Care for the Homeless formed a subsidiary non-profit organization known as HCH Real Estate Company, Inc. HCH Real Estate Co, Inc. develops affordable and supportive multifamily rental housing in Baltimore. Our projects are designed to be community-centered, environmentally sustainable and deeply affordable. Our affordable housing development work is in direct response to the fact that there is simply not enough housing in Baltimore.

In 2022, we opened Sojourner Place at Oliver, a 70-unit affordable apartment building in the historic Oliver neighborhood in Baltimore City with co-developer and co-owner Episcopal Housing Corporation. We have a number of subsequent projects in various stages, all with a focus on developing rental housing for people experiencing and at risk of homelessness. While the deficit in available housing is the large for any income level, it is particularly felt for people making 30% or less of Area Median Income. Council Bill 25-0066 will undoubtedly help address Baltimore City's pressing need for quality, affordable housing, particularly for households with extremely low incomes.

Homelessness and Health are Inextricably Linked

Homelessness is a housing and health crisis. Homelessness creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones. Where someone who is stably housed could easily manage something like diabetes or hypertension, our providers see every day that homelessness makes caring for these things exponentially harder and sometimes impossible. Studies across the country confirm what we see in Baltimore City, that when people without homes are provided a safe and stable place to live, at a price they can afford, costly ED visits and hospitalizations reduce,¹ encounters with the criminal justice system reduce, and positive indicators of stability and health increase, particularly when the housing is accompanied with voluntary access to supportive health services. The ability to create more housing, as this legislation would do, will not only lead to more stably housed people, but can also lead to greater health outcomes for residents throughout the City. Simply put, **housing is health care**.

Only housing solves homelessness. Council Bill 25-0066 makes critical and long-overdue reforms that will tangibly lead to more housing. We fully support this bill as a necessary step to solve homelessness in Baltimore and we strongly urge this Committee's support.

For more information about our agency, visit www.hchmd.org and www.hchreco.org.

Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.

Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.

¹ See, for instance, the outcomes of the Maryland Medicaid supportive housing waiver program, known as Assistance in Community Integration Services (ACIS), which showed "[s]tatistically significant decline in the average number of ED visits, avoidable ED visits, and inpatient admissions for ACIS participants in the year following enrollment in the program." The Hilltop Institute UMBC, *Summary Report: Assistance in Community Integration Services (ACIS) Program Assessment, CY 2018 to CY 2021* (Sept. 15, 2023), available at [Summary Report: ACIS Program Assessment \(hilltopinstitute.org\)](https://hilltopinstitute.org/reports/summary-report-acis-program-assessment). The ACIS pilot and recent expansion was only possible, in large part, because of Mayor Scott and his administration.

Once again...

this concept -is brought to surface, aiming to create density in areas of the City - where the real property taxpayers oppose the principals of density. Using this concept, as a means to correct the housing problems of Baltimore City. There is NO data showing where density - as 4 units in a single-family zoned home- has been successful- not in "Baltimore City".

What "has been successful" when applied, is the presence of more police to detour crime, enforced zoning and the efforts of the city to create a more successful method, in purchasing a new home for first time buyers.

When going into the areas where large Victorian homes exist- the infrastructure is NOT present to accommodate an abundance of people. The infrastructure was built in the 1920's. Streets that are narrow, many are one way with parking limited. The forestry department is unable to even maintain, medians or sidewalks. The police aren't as available as we like, so we can watch out for each other. Most have extended families, such as grandparents and/or children living in them.

Mr. Doresy feels there so much wasted space on Harford Road- such as churches, parking lots and empty businesses. Truer, there is a lot of churches, if you do the homework, you'd find that NE Harford Rd. houses many AA and NA programs in these church facilities, besides people who practice their faith. The empty businesses is a place to push for high rise facilities IF you need housing. There is certainly a way to reform the blocks of empty homes in the city without encroaching on stable healthy neighborhoods.

Many neighbors in these communities have NO idea-- what an Overlay Bill is OR that you wish to "crush zoning- Bill 25-0066" for these homes to become apartments. Most do not oppose such efforts ON the business corridor of NE Harford Rd.

Lauraville, is a stable neighborhood that has encouraged younger families to purchase single family homes. IF you look into who is buying presently surrounding Lauraville, you would discover that the prices are much more affordable than most of Baltimore City. It's hard to believe, that this council would push so hard for density why avoiding the true reasons people move out of our city.

The people moving into "our community" are due to the efforts- to promote the idea that they too...can own a home in a quiet, diverse and stable urban community....as we offer. They will earn equity in their home, instead of the builders making all the profit. No one has to wait to make equity- as Mr. Dorsey has implied. Why shouldn't it be a family instead of a builder?

All are welcomed. We have worked hard to turn these communities around, where you can recognize a stranger, and know the renters by name. That's called NO absentee landlords. Corporations/ builders are not great neighbors.

Nancy Broadfoot

Dear Members of the Baltimore City Council:

I write in strong opposition to Bill 25-0066. I urge you to consider the profound historical and economic consequences this legislation would impose, consequences that directly contradict its stated aim of “affordability.” This bill is not a solution; it is the latest instrument in a long history of policies that perpetuate racial capitalism and widen the generational wealth gap for Black Baltimoreans.

The data is unequivocal. According to the Pew Research Center, white families hold, on average, \$250,000 in wealth, compared to \$49,000 for Black families. A CBO report from the Biden administration places white household wealth at \$285,000, dwarfing the \$44,000-\$65,000 range for Black and Latino households. The primary driver of this chasm is property ownership. A brief from the Institute on Assets and Social Policy [Institute for Economic and Racial Equity] found that “the number of years of homeownership accounts for 27 percent of the difference in relative wealth growth between white and African-American families,” the single largest factor in the growing wealth gap [<https://heller.brandeis.edu/iere/pdfs/racial-wealth-equity/racial-wealth-gap/roots-widening-racial-wealth-gap.pdf>].

Baltimore already lags far behind in homeownership. With a homeownership rate of just 47.5%—compared to a national average of 66%—our city has more renters than homeowners. Bill 25-0066, by facilitating the conversion of single-family homes into rental units, would exacerbate this crisis. It attempts to answer the problem of population decline and wealth inequality not with home ownership, but with more tenancy. Rent extracts wealth from our communities; ownership builds and retains it.

This bill is a boon for corporate landlords, venture capital, and private equity firms. These entities, using financial instruments like DSCR loans, acquire depressed properties not to revitalize neighborhoods, but to hold them as assets, often without meaningful improvements. This further destabilizes once-thriving Black neighborhoods, replicating the harm of redlining under a new, financialized guise. While redlining’s explicit goal was segregation, its enduring economic consequence was the systematic denial of resources and investment, preventing Black families from building sustainable, self-reliant communities through property ownership. This bill continues that legacy by removing the very asset—the single-family home—that is the foundational step toward generational wealth.

The liberal refrain of “affordability” is a hollow misdirection when it privileges rental supply over ownership opportunity. True affordability must address the structural inequalities that prohibit self-reliance. It means enabling families to build equity, secure their future, and pass on assets—the dream exemplified by the white family that becomes mortgage-free in their 50s [<https://www.npr.org/2022/08/13/1113814920/racial-wealth-gap-economic-inequality>], a reality still too rare for Black families. This bill demonstrates a failure of

historical comprehension and political imagination. It ignores the lessons of Reconstruction's end, Jim Crow, redlining and the continued underfunding of our community assets.

Personally, as a Black Baltimorean with a century-long family legacy here, there are few remaining neighborhoods where a diverse, mixed-income community with viable single-family homes can still be found. We must not sacrifice such communities to a corporate takeover that offers only transient tenancy.

This bill is a failure of both historical comprehension and political imagination. It is a policy that entrenches structural racism, ignoring current realities in this city, based on a nearly absent understanding of the historical intentions which brought us to this point.

Do not be complicit in a policy that perpetuates structural racism. Reject Bill 25-0066. Instead, champion policies that actively promote and expand affordable homeownership for Black Baltimoreans. Our city's future depends on building wealth for all residents, not for corporations (Home Partners of America, Harbor Bay Ventures LLC, Vinebrook Homes Trust, etc.).

Sincerely,

David Scott

Baltimore City Resident\

Dear Baltimore elected officials,

I hope you'll have time to consider the following in advance of the next hearing on bill 25-0066.

I think the proponents of this legislation should pause, listen to the reasonable objections of so many constituents and experts, and consider whether the first draft might have missed the mark in one respect.

Supporters of 25-0066 claim that it will lower apartment rental costs, but as Christina Schoppert Devereaux, a Community Law Center attorney recently commented, "Nothing in this bill ensures that it creates affordable housing." Instead, advocates say simply by supply & demand, if more apartments are on the market, rents should come down.

My concern is this: if developers are permitted to buy existing single-family rowhouses and turn them into apartment buildings, that diminishes the number of single-family homes on the market for families to buy. If that happens, supply and demand tells you that making such homes more scarce will raise prices, making it harder for families to buy in Baltimore. We need families to buy into Baltimore: "Once families leave, cities are left with fewer vocal advocates pushing for better schools, parks, and transit, making the areas even less attractive to the next generation of parents. And as stressful as more kids in schools might be to finance, in the long run, declining school enrollment (fueled in part by more people leaving cities) and fewer children born mean even fewer taxpayers and less consumer spending."

<https://www.vox.com/policy/469816/cities-made-a-bet-on-millennials-but-forgot-one-key-thing>

As Charlie Duff and Peter Duvall observed earlier this year, Baltimore's dwelling units may be increasing, while its population is stagnating:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/10/31/the-doubters-are-wrong-baltimore-can-fill-vacant-houses-guest-commentary/?share=talfroteioioeteibter> We have more small households, but we need a healthy mix of both apartment housing and single-family homes to thrive.

Before Baltimore's current Planning Director Tim Keane came to town, only three years ago elsewhere he said "We need to acknowledge it's not only acceptable, it's preferred to have a city of different types of neighborhoods. We don't want a city of one type. We want a city that has a diversity of neighborhoods. We need to look at how we can surgically permit some increase in density within single-family but not in a one size fits all kind of fashion."

<https://boisedev.com/news/2022/05/31/tim-keane-boise-planning-2/>

I think Mr. Keane was right about that back then. In my neighborhood of Bolton Hill, when I was a member of the community association, we supported multifamily development projects like 1214 Eutaw Place and the Strawbridge Church conversion, but we also wanted to maintain existing single-family rowhouses.

That's the right mix for our diverse neighborhood, but it's understandable that northeast or northwest Baltimore might have different needs. It makes no sense, therefore, for the City to proceed with this one-size-fits-all approach now, contrary to what Mr. Keane advised elsewhere only three years ago.

I urge the proponents of this legislation to pause and humbly consider, in the face of so much constituent feedback, the possibility that they might have gotten this a little bit wrong in this respect. By all means, allow and encourage new apartment construction, multifamily conversion of institutional properties, and of long-vacant rowhouses, but preserve from developers those exiting single-family rowhouses for Baltimore families. If those costs increase, rich families might just dig a little deeper to buy in thriving neighborhoods, but it's the more modest-income families you would really be hurting, if they want to buy a home in Baltimore.

Warm regards,

Kevin Cross

I support Bill 25-0066 based on my own experience moving to Baltimore. When I retired and looked for a home, my priorities were simple and practical: a walkable neighborhood, good access to transit, and housing I could reasonably afford. These are the same priorities that many potential residents — retirees, young professionals, families — bring when deciding whether Baltimore can be home.

I found my condo in Bolton Hill, created through the renovation of a historic mansion into six units of varied sizes. It's exactly the kind of neighborhood-scaled housing that lets more people live in the places that already function well. And it's precisely the type of home Bill 25-0066 aims to make possible.

My experience reflects a larger truth Baltimore has to confront: we have been losing population for years, and the policies we've relied on have not reversed that trend. A turnaround requires progress on a short list of core essentials: more housing in strong, transit-connected neighborhoods; improving public safety; better public transit, restoring basic government competence; strengthening our schools; and getting vacant and abandoned properties back into productive use. Cities that reversed their population declines — from Philadelphia to Minneapolis — did it by leaning into these fundamentals, especially by allowing more people to live in the neighborhoods that already work.

Housing policy is central to Baltimore's future. We simply cannot grow our population or rebuild our tax base if people can't find a place to live in thriving neighborhoods like Bolton Hill. I understand the concerns raised about the bill, particularly around absentee landlords and code enforcement. Oversight matters, and the City Council should strengthen it — but without crippling the kinds of modest, adaptive projects that created the home I live in today.

Bill 25-0066 does not allow large-scale development. It does not change the character of our blocks. It does not threaten the historic fabric of the neighborhood. What it does is open the door for more neighbors who want to put down roots here, the same way I did. It isn't a cure-all, but it's a practical step in the right direction.

Baltimore will not recover by repeating the same decisions that accompanied decades of decline. Doing nothing guarantees more of the same. Thoughtful, incremental reforms like Bill 25-0066 give us a chance at a different future — one where Baltimore grows again, block by block and neighbor by neighbor.

Pass the bill!

Bob Matha
Bolton Hill Resident

I oppose CCB 25-0066 because I believe:

- It is designed to shift wealth and property control from a wide population of city residents to a few developers and landlords. It benefits the few over the many. It appears to be a quick money grab by those who are promoting the bill.
- It will shift home equity wealth from families to developers and landlords—depriving Baltimore families of stable housing and a path to financial security and generational wealth. This will significantly affect lower income and minority families. It will reinforce generational poverty.
- That this shift will degrade the living conditions of stable single-family neighborhoods and welcome great abuse in less stable or less affluent neighborhoods.
- That this is being sold to residents as a quick fix to Baltimore's declining population and tax base.

What would keep or bring more people to the city and expand the tax base?

–Investments in better schools, better public transportation, and continuation of the ongoing improvements in crime prevention.

- So many people are against this—why are our elected representatives NOT representing the will of their constituents? This looks like political corruption.

Paula Millet

millet3@verizon.net

Baltimore City Resident

I am a resident of Hampden, and I wanted to share testimony in support of the recent package of housing bills, particularly bill 25-0066.

I appreciate there are many different types of housing options for all of us living in Baltimore, and I think these bills will ensure that remains the case in the future. I moved to Baltimore in 2018 from Silicon Valley, California, where there was an acute housing shortage. The housing available there was almost entirely detached single family homes. In Palo Alto, where I worked, it was nearly impossible to build a new apartment building because of onerous zoning laws -- stringent minimum parking requirements, set-back minimums, and maximum building heights of ~25 feet. Whenever anyone did propose new housing, it felt like a small but vocal minority of residents would testify in opposition at city council meetings, arguing that new housing would change the character of the city. I left a good job at Stanford and moved to Baltimore in 2018, in part because I couldn't afford to live in Silicon Valley and have the quality of life that I wanted. I appreciate that Baltimore has housing options for everyone, not just for the wealthy. It's clear that Baltimore and Silicon Valley are very different places, and Baltimore doesn't have the same acute housing shortage at present. With that said, I would argue that Silicon Valley's housing shortage was decades in the making through a long series of restrictive zoning decisions.

I love that Baltimore is an economically diverse city, and I think the current house bills, particularly bill 25-0066, would help ensure that remains the case by allowing for diverse housing options in the future.

Sincerely,
Scot Miller

IGM Career Solutions LLC

1819 N. Milton Ave
Baltimore, Maryland
(410) 805-1497
IndiaMitchell15@gmail.com

Mental Health First Aid for First Responders Initiative

Good afternoon Council President, Council Members, and everyone gathered here today.

My name is India Mitchell, and I stand before you not just as a business owner or a human services professional—but as someone who has spent over 15 years walking beside people in crisis, sitting with families in fear, and supporting individuals whose lives could have gone in a very different direction if the right help had arrived at the right moment.

That “right moment” is what I want to talk about today.

Every day in Baltimore, our first responders rush toward danger when everyone else is running away. They enter homes where fear fills the air. They approach people who are not violent criminals—but people who are scared, confused, traumatized, or fighting a silent battle with their own mind.


And in those moments...

the difference between escalation and safety isn't just training in tactics—

It's training in understanding.

When a person is in a mental health crisis, they don't need more fear.

They don't need force. They need someone who knows how to recognize what is really happening beneath the surface.



But we cannot expect our first responders to know what they've never been taught.

I have seen the impact of mental health crises up close.

I have seen moments that could have turned tragic—saved because someone recognized the signs and responded with compassion.

And I have also seen moments that ended in trauma, injury, or loss... not because first responders didn't care, but because they weren't given the tools to truly understand what they were walking into.

Mental Health First Aid gives them those tools.

It gives them the confidence to pause instead of panic.

It gives them the skills to de-escalate instead of escalate.

It gives them the training to save lives—

not just from physical danger, but from invisible dangers too.

And let me be clear—

This is not about blame.

This is about responsibility.

This is about giving the men and women who protect us the support they deserve.

Our first responders are tired.

They are overwhelmed.

They carry the weight of every call, every tragedy, every life they couldn't save.



We owe it to them to lighten that burden by preparing them for the reality of modern crisis response.

Baltimore is at a crossroads.

We can continue reacting to crisis after crisis...

or we can decide—right here, right now—to lead the nation in how we protect both our community and the heroes who serve it.

Mandatory Mental Health First Aid training is not just a policy change.

It is a life-saving decision.

It is a statement that Baltimore values compassion.

It is a promise that we will not allow another preventable tragedy to unfold because someone didn't recognize a cry for help.

Through my company, IGM Career Solutions LLC, I am ready to help.

I am ready to train.

I am ready to partner with the city to make this vision real.

But today, I am asking you, our city leaders, to take the first step.

Give our first responders the tools they need.

Give our community the safety it deserves.

Give families the peace of knowing that when help arrives... it truly is help.

Baltimore can be the model.

Baltimore can be the example the nation looks to.

Baltimore can be the city that chose understanding over fear—



prevention over reaction—

and lives over headlines.

Thank you for your time, your commitment, and your willingness to make a decision that could change—and save—lives in this city we all love.

Sincerely,

Ms. India Mitchell



Re: Opposition to City Council Bills 25-0064 and 25-006 (Zoning – Housing Options and Opportunity Act)

I am writing to express my strong opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066. While I recognize the importance of addressing affordable housing needs in Baltimore, I firmly believe that this legislation will be detrimental to the stability and future of neighborhoods.

My concerns include the following:

- Incentivizing absentee landlords and investors to convert single-family dwellings into multi-family rental units, eroding the character of a community.
- Failure of adequate municipal oversight regarding code valuations, evidenced by years of systemic failures.
- Driving up the cost of housing by reducing the supply of single-family homes available to prospective homebuyers.
- Overburdening public utilities and services, such as trash collection, sewer and water systems, and street maintenance.
- Exacerbating traffic and parking congestion in residential areas.
- Conflicting with the City's stated goals of promoting homeownership, preserving single-family neighborhoods, and strengthening the property tax base.
- Further reducing the rate of homeownership in Baltimore, which has already been in decline for the past two decades.

It is also deeply discouraging that the City Council has not pursued more creative solutions to address the city's abundance of abandoned houses and vacant buildings as a means of expanding rental housing. Instead, this bill targets stable neighborhoods—such as Lauraville—where Black homeownership is growing and should be supported, not undermined.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to withdraw this bill. Baltimore's long-term success depends on stable, livable neighborhoods where families, especially black families, and individuals can invest in their homes and communities.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued service to the residents of Baltimore.
Annet

I oppose CCB 25-0066 because I believe:

- It is designed to shift wealth and property control from a wide population of city residents to a few developers and landlords. It benefits the few over the many. It appears to be a quick money grab by those who are promoting the bill.
- It will shift home equity wealth from families to developers and landlords—depriving Baltimore families of stable housing and a path to financial security and generational wealth. This will significantly affect lower income and minority families. It will reinforce generational poverty.
- That this shift will degrade the living conditions of stable single-family neighborhoods and welcome great abuse in less stable or less affluent neighborhoods.
- That this is being sold to residents as a quick fix to Baltimore's declining population and tax base.

What would keep or bring more people to the city and expand the tax base?

—Investments in better schools, better public transportation, and continuation the ongoing improvements in crime prevention.

- *So many people are against this—why are our elected representatives NOT representing the will of their constituents? This stinks of political corruption.*

Paula Millet

millet3@verizon.net

Baltimore City Resident

Position on bill: Oppose

Calculating Density

Zoning District	Area (Acres)	% of City	% of Residential Land
R-1	1,837.79	3.53%	7.66%
R-1A	0.00	0.17%	0.37%
R-1C	1,235.29	2.31%	4.02%
R-2	22.18	0.04%	0.07%
R-2A	1,123.10	2.16%	5.67%
R-2B	66	0.13%	0.27%
R-3	3,088.17	7.86%	16.40%
R-3/RH	2.06	0.00%	0.01%
R-4	1,607.52	3.05%	6.11%
R-4A-MU	24.39	0.04%	0.08%
R-4/RH	19.13	0.04%	0.04%
R-5	2.38	0.00%	0.01%
R-5A	1.21	0.00%	0.00%
R-6	6,155.86	11.60%	20.00%
R-6/RH	1.87	0.00%	0.01%
R-7	1.08	0.00%	0.00%
R-7A-MU	7.26	0.01%	0.02%
R-7	2,161.04	2.43%	5.19%
R-7/RH	1.18	0.00%	0.00%
R-7B-MU	3.18	0.00%	0.01%
R-8	2,600.51	5.00%	10.69%
R-9	1,035.33	2.00%	4.27%
R-10	1,232.10	2.37%	5.07%

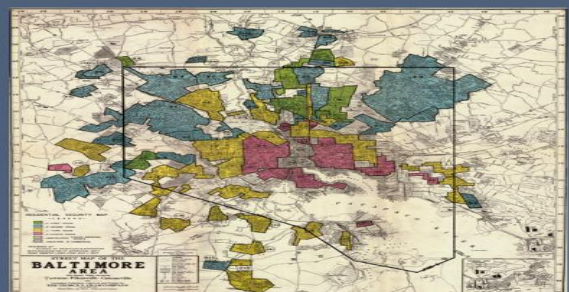
	R1 - R4 newer Baltimore	R5 R10 old Baltimore
Total Acres	10,702.63	16,132.21
Acres Percent	39.88%	60.12%
Housing Lots	39,200	171,000
Housing Lots per Acre	3.7	10.60

The primary equity goal for the City of Baltimore should be desegregating our neighborhoods that fought to preserve racial segregation such as Roland Park...

[illegible]

..and Mount Washington
using exclusionary
zoning. These
communities are less
dense due to their efforts.

Hence, these and similar communities should be the focus of increasing density and providing affordable housing.

[illegible]

Please consider NOT passing these Bills

This letter is to express concern, on the distressing news that ONCE again, our community must fight for “the right to preserve Single-Family Housing and the promotion of homeownership”.

There have been minimal discussions with the communities that these bills effect. Known to many from only being read in -rag newspapers. This Committee should recall that the Lauraville Community conducted a survey whereas the total data reflected- 65% of the people in Lauraville strongly protested a Bill that creates “density” by diminishing Single Family Housing. At the time it was not published in our community news or presented in the local newspapers. Most of the Baltimore rag papers have an association with Mr. Dorsey who composed these Bills. These reported support by “flippers”, and thus potential absentee landlords. Mr. Dorsey ‘s replies to these remarks were: absentee doesn’t make for a poor overseer. Living between two properties presently, that in total have 5 units, I seriously disagree. Having personally called 311/911 on disorderly conduct and drug usage. All was rectified when repurchased by neighbors who were part of the community. “Flippers” are always happy to split Victorian Homes up into “multi’s”. Even though our present infrastructure doesn’t support unlimited parking. You can’t even get an extra trash container currently. A tree stump removed which occupied 3 parking spaces, took me over several years to have tended to, due to lack of personnel in that Department. There is no police presence to help end the increasing crimes along NE Harford road, in proof by new arrests posted to me EVERY day, which I have sent to Mr.

Dorsey's office, that took a summer for his office to get back to me.

Prior to Mr. Zeke Cohen being nominated as our new Leader of Council, I wrote to Mr. Zeke and expressed that the community was "being ignored" I implored all involved to MEET with the Real Property Taxpayers over Bills being passed -regardless of how we felt. Mr. Zeke informed me though email, he would vote in Council mania: for example, on the Overlay Bill. Since, we the community -KNEW of Mr. Dorsey's agenda and voted him into office. This was FALSE. Mr. Dorsey did not present his plans to push an Overlay Bill OR to pass bills that will disrupt the efforts of our community to preserve peace and efforts to encourage single family ownership- PRIOR to him running for office. Anyone who follows politics can see how Mr. Dorsey is avoiding homeowners so NOT to have ANY opposition. Since these Bills are his.

When I moved into Lauraville the zoning was lean. It didn't enforce some of it's Rules. As a community we asked for help from them-concerning noise, crime and large numbers of unrelated people swatting in properties. The Dept. of Zoning worked with us as a community and along with Baltimore City Police, we guided Lauraville into a healthy community to raise a family, to use our local schools, places of worship, along with nurturing diversity. These Bills are taking us "backwards- not forwards". They will diminish our hard work. Mr. Dorsey expresses that the opposition to his Bills are related to the age of the community. Progress is not based on forgetting history. This community is growing with new young homeowners, because of the present zoning restrictions and the efforts to keep Homeownership in the forefront.

I know 5 new Homeowners in 21214, just this year. They have brought Single-Family Homes and are under the age of 40. (2 on Overland Ave, 1 on Montebello Terrace, 1 on Elsrode, 1 on Batavia). There is VERY affordable Housing in Lauraville. This is an upcoming and growing community to raise a family. Mr. Dorsey is NOT concerned with our philosophy of a healthy, happy community-unless it serves his political objective. I was sorry to hear the Mayor repeat Mr. Dorsey's words at a meeting. This neighborhood is more diverse than their own neighborhoods. THAT'S why young people buy here to raise a family, in a stable diverse neighborhood along NE Harford Road. These Bills are the start of a trend to reduce family's efforts of building wealth and giving it to the investors.

TO ALL, One blanket doesn't fit all.

We have fought crime and have succeeded. Our kids can go outside and ride their bikes. WE do not wish to implode our community with absentee landlords OR an abundant amount of people that the city cannot serve.

*Please consider, lend an ear to the people you represent.

It's a shame when politicians ignore the comments of the people who put them into the office. Or Council vote YES- though Council mania without seriously considering comments from the families of their District, just in order to win favor with the few.

IT is OUR community and not just a project.

Nancy Broadfoot 21214



GREATER REMINGTON
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

November 23rd, 2025

Wynnona Engle-Pratt
President

Ryan Dorsey, Chair Land Use and Transportation Committee
Baltimore City Council

Corey Jennings
Vice President

Dear Chair Dorsey and Members of the Committee:

Samantha Horn
Secretary

The Greater Remington Improvement Association is writing you in support of Council Bill #25-0066, which will permit more housing options in what are now single-family zoning districts.

Sadie Baker
Treasurer

This legislation is consistent with recommendations in the recently adopted Baltimore City Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, it aligns with recommendations in the Remington Neighborhood Plan, accepted by the Baltimore City Planning Commission:

Board Members at Large

Michele Baskin
Matt Williams
Peter Morrill
Mauricio Lainez
Frances McGaffey

R1. a. Ensure that a diversity of housing types are available and that large numbers of one type is not concentrated in a single building or space

Manager of Operations
Jennifer Mckenzie

4.1 The land uses that most Remingtonians want in a walkable, dense neighborhood include...rowhomes or other forms of single family homes, small and medium-size apartment buildings

Single-family zoning is inherently inequitable. Baltimore City Council was at its lowest when it passed explicitly racist and classist housing ordinances in the early 1900's. Unfortunately, those attitudes persist today in homeowners who wrongly treat the large percentage of our city who rents as transients with no stake in their community. Our experience in Remington is that attitude couldn't be further from the truth.

You have a chance to right this wrong. Please don't listen to the privileged class of homeowners who want to maintain inequity and limit choice, forcing young people to look to other cities as a place to call home. Instead, pass this legislation that expands access to opportunity and allows neighborhoods like ours to grow and welcome new residents: something we very much want.

Sincerely,

Wynnona Engle-Pratt
President



Land Use and Transportation Committee
Baltimore City Council
100 N. Holiday Street
Suite 400
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

Community Law Center was founded in 1986 by a group of lawyers and community organizers who saw the need for residents in Baltimore City to band together and advocate effectively for their neighborhoods. We are the legal partner to neighborhoods and nonprofits in pursuit of more just and vibrant communities.

Community Law Center writes in opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066. We are concerned that this Bill 1) has not undergone the legal process necessary for its passage, 2) does not provide for housing affordability, and 3) compounds Baltimore's racist real estate history and current inequitable real estate landscape.

Process: The process behind the drafting and introduction of City Council Bill 25-0066 has been obtuse. As the Law Department notes, widespread upzoning – especially in combination with City Council Bills 25-0062, 25-0063, 25-0064, and 25-0065 - may well be found by a court to constitute comprehensive rezoning, which under Maryland Code requires thorough studies and processes, none of which have been undertaken.

The concerns we have heard from community leaders throughout the City demonstrate why widespread changes to zoning codes require processes above and beyond what other City ordinances may require. Longtime Baltimore City residents – including champions of formerly redlined neighborhoods – are dismayed that they have yet again been excluded from conversations about the future development of their neighborhoods. Many community members attended Mayor Scott's town hall on this Bill in October, in an attempt to learn more about it. Rather than learning about any concrete advantages of the proposed upzoning, however, they were seated at tables and told to ask questions of each other and of staff – without having a sense of what they were supposed to be asking questions about.

The people who live and work in Baltimore's most historically under-resourced neighborhoods are full of knowledge, wisdom, and ideas. They deserve a voice at the table, at least. And really, they should be leading the conversation.

Affordability: City Council Bill 25-0066 does nothing to address the fact that housing in Baltimore is too expensive for Baltimoreans. It does not increase housing affordability, as its proponents purport. It increases density. Some argue that an increase in density and supply will result in a decrease in rents. They point to Minneapolis's 2019 comprehensive rezoning package, which – significantly – was the result of years of public engagement with residents. While DHCD's memo cites one Pew article that makes vague assertions about affordability, the academic research on Minneapolis and other cities is mixed, with recent articles in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* and elsewhere showing that at best increased supply might correlate with slow rent growth in some markets - when accompanied with government intervention, and at worst unregulated increased market supply can result in rent increases for all but the highest income quartile. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis published a report in August

2025 showing that based on national comparisons, Minneapolis's slowed rent growth is the result of low demand – not increased supply. In fact, Minneapolis's rents increased in the four years following its comprehensive rezoning more than the rents in all but one of 126 other jurisdictions nationally.

While some have alluded to this bill addressing the needs of the “missing middle” in Baltimore, it is unclear how upzoning will result in more housing options for middle class families. Rather, the demographic that proponents seem to be courting is “young professionals” who will live in one-bedroom apartments and help “grow” the City – not people who live in Baltimore right now.

Racial Equity: Finally, this Bill further entrenches, rather than resolves, Baltimore's racist real estate landscape. Loosening regulations for for-profit developers and absentee landlords, and inciting the economic shock of increased land value – to the benefit of Real Estate Investment Trusts, not of residents – in the neighborhoods of Baltimore that are already the most dense neighborhoods in the State is not undoing harm. It is compounding harm.

Baltimore City is more dense than any county in Maryland. The State Department of Planning considers 57% of residential land in Baltimore City to be high density. For comparison, the county with the second most high density residential land is Prince George's County, in which 15% of the residential land is high density. Increasing density – without regard for affordability, neighborhood history, or racial equity – in the densest neighborhoods of Maryland, many of which have already borne the brunt of racist public and private real estate practices, compounds the inequitable nature of land use in Baltimore City.

For example, one of CLC's community leader partners is a Black woman in east Baltimore who is very upset about the possibility that speculative housing developers may buy the properties on either side of her R8 home to build units for students. Her concern for her small home and for her community that has been redlined, subject to urban renewal, preyed upon by lenders, and is now piquing the interest of investors – is a valid and real concern.

By upzoning residential districts across the city, without regard for the varied histories of Baltimore neighborhoods, this Bill promises to be today's iteration of Baltimore's long history of exploitative and extractive real estate policies.

There ARE ways to thoughtfully increase housing affordability throughout Baltimore. We can attach inclusionary zoning requirements to density bonuses. This Council can learn about great work that is already being done throughout our City on shared equity co-ops and community land trusts, models that have proven successful not only in providing affordable housing, but in empowering residents of long disinvested neighborhoods to actually determine the course of community development efforts.

Sincerely,



Christina Schoppert Devereux
Staff Attorney



Testimony in Opposition to CCB 25-0066

From doneill1952@comcast.net <doneill1952@comcast.net>

Date Thu 11/27/2025 10:51 PM

To Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>

 1 attachment (38 KB)

Zoning Testimony 112525r.docx;

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Baltimore City IT Network Systems.

Reminder: DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. Report any suspicious activities using the Report Phishing Email Button, or by emailing to Phishing@baltimorecity.gov

(Note, Please include both this email and the attachment as testimony in the file for CCB 25-0066. Can you please confirm its receipt and inclusion? Thanks!)

My Testimony

BMZA's analysis asserts that data from 3 "peer cities" (i.e., Portland, Oregon; Minneapolis, MN; and New Rochelle, NY) provides "compelling evidence" that creating the type of housing proposed by this bill will stabilize market prices and affordability will improve. **The data provided does NOT!**

A review of the source material cited in BMZA's analysis of this bill as well as other sources that can fill in the important information missing from their analysis reveals that **not only is the data NOT compelling, but much of it is not on point and missing significant information** required to properly evaluate whether we can predict success here in Baltimore from their experience.

Overall Differences Between the "Peer Cities" and Baltimore

- All 1) All 3 cities **developed their bills based on extensive community input and engagement**, which has not occurred here.
- The 2) The bills for both Minneapolis and New Rochelle are **parts of comprehensive, overarching plans that looked at the impact on services and infrastructure**, which has not occurred in Baltimore.
- 3) Both Portland and New Rochelle had **affordable housing incentives or requirements built in**, which this bill does not have.

In Minneapolis - Only **1%** of new permits went to properties that were 2-4 units. **That's 1%.**

In Portland - the median cost of housing was almost **\$700,000** higher than the median cost in Baltimore and BMZA's testimony **does not contain any rental data** even though the majority of Baltimore's housing stock is made up of rentals.

In New Rochelle – BMZA’s source material **only discussed construction of new apartment, which are different than the 2–4-unit residences this bill will create, and the data cited by BMZA testimony does match the data in the source cited** on the increase of rents In New Rochelle and, therefore, cannot be confirmed.

Conclusion

You cannot predict outcomes by

- 1). **Looking at situations that are notably different in terms of the process used to develop them and the specific terms of each bill.**
- 2). **Data that is either 99% percent or completely based on changes to properties not covered by this bill (i.e., apartment rental prices).**
- 3). **Data that contains NO information about the impact on the change in rental prices and is based on house sale prices in an area where the median cost of a house is almost \$700,000 higher than here in Baltimore.**
- 4). **Data from cities with affordable house requirements, which this bill does not contain and which will serve to deflate the median cost of housing and the overall increase in rental cost data in the areas that have these requirements.**
- 5). **Data whose source is not included in the testimony.**

BMZA has NOT provided data that can be used to predict the success of this bill. I urge you to vote NO because of that,

Their analysis does show that a process of intense community engagement, involvement and input that are part of an overarching and comprehensive plan are necessary. We urge you to follow this process before taking further action on comprehensive zoning changes in the future.

I have attached a document with a detailed analysis. Thank you for considering this input.

An analysis of the testimony submitted by the Baltimore City Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) in connection with CCB 25-0066, the Housing Options and Opportunity Act,

BMZA's analysis of this bill raises some concerns and questions about their projection on the impacts of this bill. of the impact that this bill will have.

Specifically, what BMZA said in their testimony was:

"Baltimore requires additional housing options that families can afford. The "missing middle" housing typology, which includes duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, fills the gap between expensive single-family homes and large apartment buildings. When cities permit this housing type, market prices stabilize and affordability improves."

The statement then goes on to say that the following "peer cities" (i.e., Portland, Oregon; Minneapolis, MN; and New Rochelle, NY) provide "compelling evidence."

Not only is the evidence not compelling, but **much of it is not on point and missing significant information** required to properly evaluate whether we can predict success here in Baltimore from their experience.

I have attached a more detailed analysis of specifically what BMZA has alleged to be compelling information along with the significant problems that we found with their analysis. A summary of those findings is shown below.

Overall

- All 3 cities **developed their bills based on extensive community input and engagement**, which has not occurred here.
- The bills for both Minneapolis and New Rochelle are **parts of a comprehensive, overarching plans that looked at the impact on services and infrastructure**, which has not occurred in Baltimore.

Comment: You cannot expect to achieve the same results based on the experience of other cities without replicating the most important steps of the process used to get to their outcomes.

Minneapolis

- Only **1%** of new permits went to properties that were 2-4 units.

Comment: Since the City Council bill deals exclusively with properties that are 2-4 units, you cannot predict any outcome in Baltimore based on Minneapolis' experience, which is based on changes to housing that is almost entirely NOT covered by the City Council bill.

Portland

- Portland's bill contains **incentives to provide affordable housing**. It is unknown what impact this has had on housing costs.

Comment: Since CCB 25-0066 does not contain similar incentives, it is impossible to use the data provided for Portland to predict the impact that this bill will have on housing costs in Baltimore.

- **The cost of housing and median income levels in Baltimore are dramatically different from Portland's** (e.g., almost a \$700,000 difference in the median purchase price of new houses).

Comment: The disparity in the economics between the two cities makes it problematic to compare cost impacts between the two with any reliability.

- BMZA's testimony **does not contain any rental data**,

Comment: The majority of Baltimore's housing stock is made up of rentals. Portland's changes cannot be used as a predictor of this bill's impact on Baltimore's rental housing costs.

New Rochelle

- The article cited by BMZA in their testimony **addresses only new apartment construction**

Comment: Since the City Council bill applies **ONLY** to single family residences expanded up to 4 units, we cannot draw conclusions on what this bill will do based on any impact data cited in that article which is based on apartments, not 2-4 unit residences.

- The **data cited in the BMZA testimony does match the data in the source cited** on the increase of rents In New Rochelle.

Comment: The correct source of the data cited needs to be part of the testimony so that it can be validated by voters to ensure that it is applicable to this bill.

- New Rochelle's zoning change **requires a set percentage of units for lower income residents**, while the City Council bill does not..

Comment: Because we do not have affordable housing requirements in the City Council bill, we cannot infer that the rent reduction that is cited by BMZA for New Rochelle would be applicable here.

Conclusion

BMZA concludes by stating that “These outcomes demonstrate a consistent pattern. When cities remove regulatory barriers to building modest-scale housing, affordability improves. This represents documented evidence from jurisdictions that have implemented policies similar to those proposed in this bill.”

You cannot predict outcomes by

- **Looking at situations that are notably different in terms of the process used to develop them and the specific terms of each bill.**
- **Data that is either 99% percent or completely based on changes to properties not covered by this bill (i.e., apartment rental prices).**
- **Contains NO information about the impact on the change on rental price and is based on house sale process in an area where the median cost of a house is almost \$700,000 higher than here in Baltimore.**
- **Data from cities with affordable house requirements, which this bill does not contain and which will serve to deflate the median cost of housing and the overall increase in rental cost data.**
- **Data whose source is not included in the testimony.**

BMZA has NOT provided data that can be used to predict the success of this bill. I urge you to vote NO because of that,

Their analysis does show that a process of intense community engagement, involvement and input that are part of an overarching and comprehensive plan are necessary. We urge you to follow this process before taking further action on comprehensive zoning changes in the future,

Individual City Analysis

Minneapolis, MN

BMZA Testimony:

“Minneapolis, Minnesota: Following the 2018 “Minneapolis 2040” plan, which eliminated single-family zoning, the city increased its housing stock by 12% between 2017 and 2022. Consequently, rents in Minneapolis grew by just 1%, compared to a 14% increase in the remainder of Minnesota where housing supply remained constrained.² While other communities experienced significant rent inflation that displaced residents, Minneapolis maintained housing accessibility.” (N.B., the link to the supporting document included in BMZA’s testimony led to an error message; the correct link is included below.).

[Minneapolis Land Use Reforms Offer a Blueprint for Housing Affordability | The Pew Charitable Trusts](#)

- The cited Pew Report states that from 2017-2022, only 1% of new permits went to buildings with 2-4 units.
 - That slow growth of rent increases comes almost exclusively from the increase in apartment units, not from subdivided single-family units.
 - Per the report, “Their more consequential reforms, so far, however, were those that allowed more apartment buildings near transit and commerce.”

Comment – Since this bill deals exclusively with permitting expansion of single- family units anywhere in the city, this data, which is predicated almost exclusively on apartment rents, cannot be applied with any reliability to the probable outcomes of this bill. It is apples to oranges.

- The attached articles show that the changes in Minneapolis are the result of a comprehensive plan, Minneapolis 2040, that was developed based on 2-years of community engagement and addresses.
 - Land Use, transportation,
 - Housing,
 - Economic Competitiveness,
 - Environmental Systems,
 - Public Health,
 - Heritage Preservation,
 - Arts and Culture,
 - Parks and Open Space,
 - Public Services and Facilities,,
 - Technology and Innovation

Comment: The City Council bill has been developed in a vacuum, with no overarching plan that considers significant related areas of impact like the ones addressed in Minneapolis' 2040. Nor has there been a comprehensive plan and effort to engage the community and obtain and consider their input.

<https://minneapolis2040.com/>

<https://minneapolis2040.com/overview/>

Portland, Oregon

BMZA Testimony:

“After legalizing up to four units on residential lots, new middle housing units sold for \$250,000 to \$300,000 less than new detached single-family homes in the same zones.¹ This price differential represents the difference between homeownership remaining aspirational versus becoming accessible for working families, teachers, nurses, and first-time buyers.”

[Portland sees significant production in middle housing resulting from recently adopted zoning changes | Portland.gov](#)

- Per the link cited in BMZA’s testimony,
 - They provided tax and fee relief to developers in exchange for meeting affordability and income requirements
 - The average price of a new home in Portland was \$916,000 in 2024,,
 - i. According to Live Baltimore, the median purchase price for houses in Baltimore is \$220,000.
 - ii. This information is required to put the reduction in housing cost in perspective.
 - No information was provided on the impact that this zoning change had on the cost of rentals.

Comment:

- **CCB 25-0066 does not contain incentives to provide affordable housing, which can lower the cost of housing.**
- **The cost of housing and median income levels in Baltimore as compared to Portland are so dramatically different that is problematic to compare cost impacts between the two with any reliability.**
- **In order to use data from Portland as a predictor of this bill’s ability to reduce housing costs, impact on rental data needs to be included, given that the majority of the properties in Baltimore are currently rental units.**

- Through a Portland City government link, which is contained below, we also discovered the following.
 - The changes were developed following extensive community engagement through a variety of venues.
 - They included density restrictions in historic conservation districts.

Comment:

- **There was little to no structured and comprehensive community engagement in Baltimore prior to the development of this bill.**
- **The City Council bill does not contain density restrictions in designated historic districts and should, given the concern about historic preservation here in Baltimore.**

https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/rip/about#:~:text=The%20project's%20proposed%20changes%20include:%20**A,going%20into%20effect%20on%20August%201%2C%202021*

New Rochelle

BMZA Testimony:

“After implementing zoning reforms to streamline approvals and increase density, New Rochelle added approximately 4,500 new units. While national rents surged by double digits following 2020, median rents in New Rochelle actually declined by 2% between 2020 and 2023 because robust supply effectively absorbed demand.³” (N.B., the link to the supporting document included in BMZA’s testimony led to an error message; the correct link is included below.).

[How More Housing Revitalized a Suburban Downtown | The Pew Charitable Trusts](#)

- Per the link cited in BMZA’s testimony,
(*Note: The document that they cited as the basis for their analysis is an interview with a former mayor*).
 - The focus of this effort was to build more apartments near commerce and transportation to meet the demand created by the housing shortage in nearby New York City.
 - They worked with a specific 300 acres for redevelopment
 - They adopted a 5-part comprehensive plan in 2015 which included:
 - Zoning reform
 - A generic environmental review of the entire build out which required developers to either preserve or replace parking to the city’s satisfaction.
 - Undertook a comprehensive analysis of the impact on services including:
 - Schools, where developments pay a one-time contribution to mitigate the possible increased financial impact on schools due to the development.

- Water and sewer, which required investment to modernize aging lines
- The article cited in the testimony does not include the same data on the impact that these changes had on New Rochelle's rent reduction (i.e., rents rose by 7% from 2017-2021 as opposed to declining by 2% between 2020 and 2023), so we are not sure where BMZA's numbers came from.
- Since the majority of this change appears to have come from new apartments, we need to see the source data to determine if it can be used as a predictor for impacts on rents here for expanded single family units/
- .

Comments:

- **New Rochelle made their zoning changes based on an overarching plan that the rezoning fit into, which we do not have.**
 - **There was a detailed assessment of the impact on services and infrastructure, which has not occurred in Baltimore..**
 - **There was intense and extensive community engagement lasting over a year leading to the development of that plan, which has not occurred in Baltimore.**
 - **The article addresses new apartment construction, and since the City Council bill applies ONLY to single family residences, we cannot draw conclusions on what this bill will do based on any impact data from New Rochelle.**
 - **The actual source of the data on the impact on rents In New Rochelle needs to be part of the testimony so that it can validated by voters to ensure that it is applicable to this bill.**
2. A second article found in Smart Growth America states
- a. In developing the 2015 plan, New Rochelle city officials undertook "a robust public engagement to learn about residents' perceptions of development. This is described as nearly a year of intense community collaboration which took place before they produced a recommended action plan.
 - It also states that projects must provide 10% of residential square footage for residents at 80% of area median income.

Comments:

- **There has not been a comprehensive and effort to robustly engage the public here in Baltimore.**
- **The City Council bill does not contain a set percentage of units for lower income residents. We cannot infer that the rent reduction that is cited by BMZA for New Rochelle would be applicable here.**

<https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/knowledge-hub/news/new-zoning-makes-new-rochelles-vision-a-reality/>

Baltimore is known as a City of Neighborhoods. Indeed, the City is blessed with many great neighborhoods that have remained stable, liveable, affordable. and attractive to homebuyers and residents over many decades. During a period of time when owner occupancy in the City overall has declined below 47%, many neighborhoods have maintained homeownership rates exceeding 75% One of the reasons neighborhoods have remained strong is because of engaged residents, active neighborhood associations, and the fact that the City for more than 50 years has sought to preserve the character of the neighborhoods through reasonable zoning policies, preserving single family housing, and by promoting homeownership opportunities in the City through programs like Live Baltimore and Healthy Neighborhoods.

Clearly these programs and policies have been successful in helping to preserve thriving single family neighborhoods and promote homeownership throughout the City. So it is completely baffling and disturbing to see the Mayor and City Council change course and incentivize investors and absent landlords to acquire single family homes in stable, affordable neighborhoods. With this bill and the companion bills 0064 and 0065, the City of Baltimore is betraying the many homeowners who have chosen to live and invest in single family homes by changing the rules and shifting its policy preferences to favor Investors and absentee landlords over neighborhood preservation and homeownership.

Under CCB 25-0066 Single Family zoning is rendered virtually meaningless, because the bill permits up to as many as 4 Dwelling Units on a residential lot in the City, regardless of the underlying zoning - even if it specifies single-family detached houses. This bill simply incentivizes investors to buy up single-family houses and convert them to low quality scattered-site multi-family rental units, with no off-street parking.

Stable, affordable Neighborhoods with high homeownership levels will become prime targets for this type of speculation which will undercut efforts to promote and preserve homeownership. I can testify, based on more than 35 years in the real estate business working with homebuyers, that homebuyers, particularly first-time buyers, cannot compete against investors, who offer cash contracts with quick settlements and no inspections or appraisals and they pay the closing costs.

Investors are already competing in the housing market against homebuyers, But under the current law, investors who purchase a single-family home cannot just convert it to a multi-family unit, without going through a public legal process. If this bill passes that will no

Attn: Land Use Committee

longer be true. Under the existing zoning, investors are incentivized to rehab the property and improve it for resale as a single family dwelling at top end of the market which creates market value. This bill opens the flood gates to no hassle, low cost conversions permitting real estate predators to invest as little as possible in the way of improvements and to cram in as many units as possible to get higher monthly returns. Low quality rental units, which are already endemic in various neighborhoods, will only increase dramatically throughout the City and low quality does not necessarily equate to low cost.

Do we need more rental housing in the City? Absolutely! But this bill is not targeted to the nearly 42,000 vacant housing units or the thousands of acres of vacant land that has been created because of demolition and condemnation. Instead of targeting these properties this bill aims to cannibalize our existing single family housing stock and diminish homeownership opportunities and negatively impact neighborhoods. The bill will do nothing to reduce housing prices! It will have the reverse effect by reducing the supply of single family homes available.

There is virtually no data or fiscal analysis available to support this measure. as far as its effect on home prices or the increased burden that will be placed on public services, such as sanitation, fire, police, roads, water and sewer in predominantly single family neighborhoods. However, if this bill should pass, any property will be able to be converted or redeveloped as multi-family rental units.

This policy proposal is fraught with unintended consequences and I strongly urge the Land Use Committee to recommend against its passage until and unless further study is done and/or the bill is more narrowly targeted to vacant and unimproved properties.

Respectfully Submitted

Jody Landers

2810 Rueckert Ave, Baltimore, MD 21214

November 26, 2025

Baltimore City Council
c/o Land Use and Transportation Committee
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066

Dear Council President Cohen, Chair Dorsey, and Members of the Land Use and Transportation Committee:

I am writing as a homeowner and community advocate in Historic Marble Hill to respectfully urge you to vote NO on Bill 25-0066.

My opposition today focuses specifically on the testimony submitted by the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA). BMZA's testimony assumes that Baltimore has the regulatory capacity to manage a sharp increase in small-scale conversions, even as they acknowledge capacity and workload challenges in their own operations. That assumption is not supported by the evidence they provide, and it is not consistent with what residents experience on the ground in many legacy neighborhoods.

BMZA's analysis relies heavily on "peer city" examples, but those examples rest on conditions that do not exist in Baltimore. In Minneapolis, the modest rent stabilization they cite is driven largely by new apartment construction near transit under a comprehensive, multi-year plan—not by broad, by-right subdivision of single-family homes into two-to-four units, which is the primary focus of CCB 25-0066. In Portland, the outcomes they highlight are tied to incentives and affordability requirements that are not part of this bill, and from a housing market with purchase prices and income levels dramatically higher than ours. In New Rochelle, the zoning reforms they reference were implemented as part of a tightly defined downtown overlay zone, with detailed impact analysis and permanent affordability requirements—again, conditions that are absent from this proposal.

In all three cases, the peer cities used extensive community engagement, clear long-range planning frameworks, and explicit affordability tools. Baltimore has not yet done comparable work for this bill. We do not have a comprehensive plan showing how these changes will interact with code enforcement, sanitation, transit, schools, infrastructure, or historic preservation—especially in fragile, historically Black neighborhoods that are already carrying a disproportionate share of vacancy, speculative pressure, and unregulated rental activity.

It is therefore not accurate or responsible to present these peer city examples as "compelling evidence" that CCB 25-0066 will improve affordability in Baltimore. The contexts, tools, safeguards, and planning processes are fundamentally different, and the testimony does not provide rental data or sources that can be independently verified and applied to our conditions.

Until Baltimore has:

- A comprehensive, citywide framework for zoning and housing that includes impact analysis on services and infrastructure;
- Demonstrated enforcement capacity for existing rental and conversion activity; and
- Genuine, robust community engagement across the neighborhoods that will bear the greatest impact;

it is premature to remove long-standing protections in our residential districts, especially in historically disinvested, predominantly Black communities like Marble Hill.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reject CCB 25-0066 at this time and instead commit to a transparent, data-driven planning process that includes meaningful community participation and clear enforcement mechanisms before any citywide upzoning is adopted.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charles Williams
Homeowner & Community Advocate
Historic Marble Hill Community Association
District 11



WES MOORE
Governor
ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor
JACOB R. DAY
Secretary
JULIA GLANZ
Deputy Secretary

November 20, 2025

Office of the City Council President
100 N. Holliday St
Suite 400
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Support for Council Bill 25-0066

Council President Cohen and members of the Baltimore City Council,

Maryland is experiencing a housing crisis. Families are finding it increasingly difficult to rent or buy, with some living in substandard housing while many others are doubling-or-tripling up due to the almost prohibitive expense of leasing or homeownership. More than half (52%) of renters in Maryland spend more than 30% of their income on housing¹, in a rental market that has seen a 37% increase in median rents since 2010. Meanwhile, 23% of Maryland's homeowners spend a third or more on their mortgage every month². It is projected that there is a shortage of at least 96,000 housing units, statewide, disproportionately impacting young professionals and working-class families.

The State of Maryland supports the Housing Options and Opportunity Act. From the creation of a new housing category - Multi-Family (Low Density) - to expanding where 2-4 unit homes are allowed; from eliminating outdated residential conversion rules to decoupling housing from lot size requirements, this bill would directly create more housing options in Baltimore City adding flexibility, and, most importantly, greater options for housing. It opens the door to homeownership, or affordable rentals, for more Baltimore residents, without stressing local infrastructure, and it reduces the cost of construction for new housing, creating greater affordability to more city residents. Middle housing is a crucial, but often scarce, portion of Maryland's housing stock, and this bill helps to alleviate some of that scarcity and provide relief for our struggling neighbors in Baltimore City.

The combined effort of the Federal, State, county, and municipal governments will need to be brought to bear in order to address our housing crisis. I applaud the Mayor for proposing this bill and the Baltimore City Council's efforts to make housing more affordable in the City. I want to thank you in advance for your consideration in passing this into law and taking a step to directly act on increasing production in Baltimore City to help lessen the financial load on the shoulders of your constituents.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JD" with a stylized flourish.

Jake Day
Secretary

Cc: Councilmember Parker, Councilmember McCray, Councilmember Dorsey, Councilmember Conway, Councilmember Schleifer, Councilmember Middleton, Councilmember Torrence, Councilmember Gray, Councilmember Bullock, Councilmember Porter, Councilmember Blanchard, Councilmember Jones, Councilmember Glover, Councilmember Ramos.

¹ US Census – [1 year ACS Renter](#)

² US Census – [1 year ACS Homeowner](#)





November 24, 2025 at 6:07 PM

Dear Mayor Scott and
Baltimore City Council
Members,

I respectfully and firmly
oppose CCB 25-006.

This is either the very first
time or one of just a couple
of times that I have ever
written to the Mayor and
City Council in regard to a
City Council bill, during my
46 continuous years now in





City Council bill, during my 46 continuous years now in making my home in my beloved City of Baltimore as a proud, engaged and long-time active devoted citizen, resident, voter, taxpayer, City businesses customer, and residential community association and City park and neighborhood business corridor volunteer.

I am writing to you now to express my strong, fervent





I am writing to you now to express my strong, fervent opposition to CCB 25-066.

Why I oppose
CCB-25-066: This bill will reduce homeownership opportunities throughout the City and has the potential to greatly increase population densities in all neighborhoods. It will incentivize investors and absentee landlords to purchase properties and





potential to greatly increase population densities in all neighborhoods. It will incentivize investors and absentee landlords to purchase properties and convert them to low quality rental units at the expense of neighborhood stability and it will rob homeowners of the equity they have accrued in their homes.

Please, respected City elected Mayoral and City Council leaders do not do





homeowners of the equity they have accrued in their homes.

Please, respected City elected Mayoral and City Council leaders, do not do so by passing this bill.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Moyer





Housing Options & Opportunity Act Bill 25-0066

From Kevin Cross <kevinalexandercross@gmail.com>

Date Tue 11/25/2025 12:48 PM

To Kevin Cross <kevinalexandercross@gmail.com>

Cc Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council) <Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Torrence, James (City Council) <James.Torrence@baltimorecity.gov>

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Dear Baltimore elected officials,

I hope you'll have time to consider the following in advance of the next hearing on bill 25-0066.

I think the proponents of this legislation should pause, listen to the reasonable objections of so many constituents and experts, and consider whether the first draft might have missed the mark in one respect.

Supporters of 25-0066 claim that it will lower apartment rental costs, but as Christina Schoppert Devereaux, a Community Law Center attorney recently commented, "Nothing in this bill ensures that it creates affordable housing." Instead, advocates say simply by supply & demand, if more apartments are on the market, rents should come down.

My concern is this: if developers are permitted to buy existing single-family rowhouses and turn them into apartment buildings, that diminishes the number of single-family homes on the market for families to buy. If that happens, supply and demand tells you that making such homes more scarce will raise prices, making it harder for families to buy in Baltimore.

We need families to buy into Baltimore: "Once families leave, cities are left with fewer vocal advocates pushing for better schools, parks, and transit, making the areas even less attractive to the next generation of parents. And as stressful as more kids in schools might be to finance, in the long run, declining school enrollment (fueled in part by more people leaving cities) and fewer children born mean even fewer taxpayers and less consumer spending."

<https://www.vox.com/policy/469816/cities-made-a-bet-on-millennials-but-forgot-one-key-thing>

As Charlie Duff and Peter Duvall observed earlier this year, Baltimore's dwelling units may be increasing, while its population is stagnating:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/10/31/the-doubters-are-wrong-baltimore-can-fill-vacant-houses-guest-commentary/?share=talfroteioiooteibter>

We have more small households, but we need a healthy mix of both apartment housing and single-family homes to thrive.

Before Baltimore's current Planning Director Tim Keane came to town, only three years ago elsewhere he said "We need to acknowledge it's not only acceptable, it's preferred to have a city of different types of neighborhoods. We don't want a city of one type. We want a city that has a diversity of neighborhoods. We need to look at how we can surgically permit some increase in density within single-family but not in a one size fits all kind of fashion."

<https://boisedev.com/news/2022/05/31/tim-keane-boise-planning-2/>

I think Mr. Keane was right about that back then. In my neighborhood of Bolton Hill, when I was a member of the community association, we supported multifamily development projects like 1214 Eutaw Place and the Strawbridge Church conversion, but we also wanted to maintain existing single-family rowhouses.

That's the right mix for our diverse neighborhood, but it's understandable that northeast or northwest Baltimore might have different needs. It makes no sense, therefore, for the City to proceed with this one-size-fits-all approach now, contrary to what Mr. Keane advised elsewhere only three years ago.

I urge the proponents of this legislation to pause and humbly consider, in the face of so much constituent feedback, the possibility that they might have gotten this a little bit wrong in this respect. By all means, allow and encourage new apartment construction, multifamily conversion of institutional properties, and of long-vacant rowhouses, but preserve from developers those exiting single-family rowhouses for Baltimore families. If those costs increase, rich families might just dig a little deeper to buy in thriving neighborhoods, but it's the more modest-income families you would really be hurting, if they want to buy a home in Baltimore.

Warm regards,

Kevin Cross

Charles Williams
1200 Block Druid Hill Avenue
Historic Marble Hill – Upton
Baltimore, MD

Date: November 30, 2025

To:
Baltimore City Council
Land Use & Transportation Committee
Council President Zeke Cohen
Councilmember Ryan Dorsey, Chair
Members of the Baltimore City Council
Members of the Maryland State Delegation

Dear Council President Cohen, Chairman Dorsey, Members of the City Council, and Members of the Maryland State Delegation:

Shared Homeownership Values With the Mayor

Please accept this correspondence as formal written testimony in opposition to City Council Bill 25-0066. My name is Charles Williams, and I am a homeowner on the historic 1200 block of Druid Hill Avenue in Marble Hill—a legacy Black Butterfly corridor with deep civil-rights, cultural, and architectural significance.

In his 2023 “City People” video about buying his first home in Baltimore, the Mayor shared that he had dreamed of owning a home since childhood, always imagined that home being in Baltimore, and believed that “owning a home means something that will be a part of a legacy that helps you accumulate wealth.”

Mayor Scott’s Home-Buying Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYk4y1GaprY>

What the Mayor Said in 2023

In that video, he spoke movingly about:

- Dreaming of owning a home since childhood
- Building legacy and generational wealth
- Planting roots and building community with neighbors
- Believing every Baltimorean deserves the chance to purchase a home
- Strengthening the entire city when residents buy homes

What Is Being Proposed in 2025

Two years later, Baltimore faces a zoning proposal that:

- Removes long-standing single-family protections
- Allows 2–4 unit conversions by right
- Creates incentives that disproportionately benefit developers and investors
- Raises speculation risk in vulnerable neighborhoods
- Provides few protections for historic Black communities

A Respectful, Honest Question

How did we move from celebrating one family, one home, and one legacy...
to promoting conversions that could destabilize the communities that have held Baltimore together?

Conflict With the Comprehensive Housing Plan

Baltimore's new Comprehensive Housing Plan promises development without displacement, historic preservation, vacancy reduction, strong public engagement, and equitable revitalization. Marble Hill is the type of neighborhood this plan claims to uplift. Yet Bill 25-0066 conflicts with all of these commitments.

Concentrated Impact on Historic Black Butterfly Neighborhoods

The "Housing Options & Opportunities" map downplays impact by using citywide averages, but the homes that do qualify for 2–4 units are overwhelmingly in West Baltimore's historic Black Butterfly—Marble Hill, Upton, Madison Park, Reservoir Hill, Druid Heights—neighborhoods already targeted by investors.

Lack of Data, Analysis, and Agency Coordination

Bill 25-0066 contains no:

- infrastructure analysis
- sanitation or trash capacity study
- parking or traffic review
- density or environmental impact assessment
- racial equity analysis
- coordination with DHCD, DPW, DOT, Planning, or CHAP

Investor Incentives Instead of Homeowner Support

The bill:

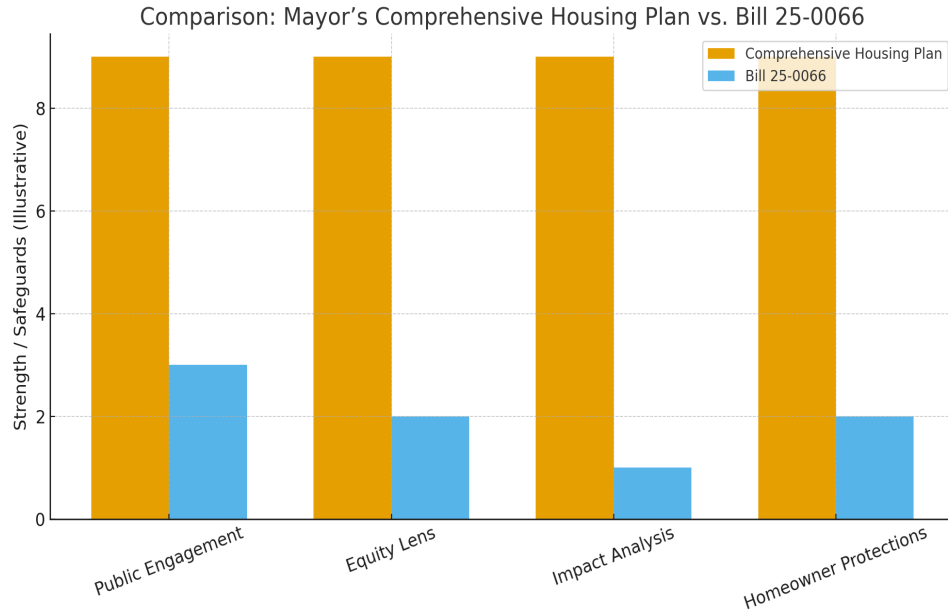
- does not require owner-occupancy
- does not limit conversions to owner-residents
- offers no affordability requirements

Lessons From Fairfax County's Zoning Crisis

Fairfax County loosened zoning thinking it would expand options—but instead saw investor takeovers, infrastructure strain, and displacement.

Fairfax Zoning Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8yqCil6qpg&t=274s>

Comparison: Comprehensive Housing Plan vs. Bill 25-0066



This comparison illustrates that while the Comprehensive Housing Plan emphasizes strong public engagement, equity analysis, impact review, and homeowner safeguards, Bill 25-0066 contains almost none of these structural protections.

Respectfully,

Charles Williams
Historic 1200 Block Druid Hill Avenue
Marble Hill – Upton
Baltimore, Maryland