



FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR 	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #25-0063 / ZONING ADMINISTRATOR – TRANSFER TO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING		

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

DATE: June 27, 2025

At its regular meeting of June 26, 2025, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0063, for the purpose of transferring the Office of Zoning Administrator and all attendant authorities and duties from the Department of Housing and Community Development to the Department of Planning.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #25-0063 and adopted the following resolution, with six members being present (six in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, and recommends that City Council Bill #25-0063 be **approved** by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Eric Tiso, Division Chief, Land Use and Urban Design Division at 410-396-8358.

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
The Honorable John Bullock, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
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



Chris Ryer
Director

June 26, 2025

REQUEST: City Council Bill #25-0062/Zoning Administrator – Transfer to Department of Planning For the purpose of transferring the Office of Zoning Administrator and all attendant authorities and duties from the Department of Housing and Community Development to the Department of Planning.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Caitlin Audette

INTRODUCED BY: Council Vice President Green Middleton, and Council President Cohen, Councilmembers Dorsey, Conway, Torrence, Gray, Bullock, Blanchard, and Ramos

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore was enacted by Ordinance #24-426, dated December 2, 2024. One of the overarching goals of the plan is to make the development process easier to understand for all parties. The relocation of the Zoning Office in the Planning Department aligns with this goal, by having those that write the zoning code within the same department as those that interpret and review projects against the zoning code.

ANALYSIS

Background: This bill moves the Zoning Administrator to the Department of Planning from the Department of Housing and Community Development. This is done with changes to several articles of City Code. Legislative Reference also made minor changes to the relevant Articles as needed. These changes are detailed below.

- Removing the following from **Article 13. Housing and Urban Renewal, Subtitle 2. Department of Housing and Community Development, § 2-3. General Powers, (a) Enumerated.**

[(9) exercise the powers and perform the duties conferred and imposed upon the Zoning Commissioner by Ordinance No. 1247, approved March 30, 1931, as amended from time to time, and as are now or may hereafter be conferred upon him by law or ordinance;]

- Add the following to **Article 13. Housing and Urban Renewal, Subtitle 2. Department of Housing and Community Development, § 2-3. General Powers, (a) Enumerated** for clarification.

(11) [(12)] exercise the powers and perform the duties and responsibilities conferred and imposed upon the Economic Development [Commission.] COMMISSION, AS TRANSFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT BY OPERATION OF ORDINANCE NO. 1022, APPROVED NOVEMBER 24, 1975, THEREBY VESTING IN THE DEPARTMENT CERTAIN POWERS AND DUTIES TO BE EXERCISED IN CONNECTION WITH AIDING THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH OF THE CITY.

- Add the following missing elements to **Article 13. Housing and Urban Renewal, Subtitle 2. Department of Housing and Community Development, § 2-3. General.**

(B) POWERS – BUILDING AND INSPECTION.

(1) DEPARTMENT: DUTY AND AUTHORITY.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SHALL EXERCISE THE DUTY AND AUTHORITY, AS ORIGINALLY TRANSFERRED TO THE DEPARTMENT BY OPERATION OF ORDINANCE NO. 152, APPROVED JUNE 28, 1968, AND AS NOW OR HEREAFTER CONFERRED BY LAW OR ORDINANCE, TO:

(I) ISSUE PERMITS FOR AND EXERCISE SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION OVER:

(A) BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATIONS;

(B) THE USE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS; AND

(C) THE ALTERATIONS, RELOCATION, REPAIR, RECONSTRUCTION, AND CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY OF BUILDINGS AND THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES HOUSED IN BUILDINGS IN THE CITY; AND

(II) INSPECT, REPAIR, CONDEMN, AND REMOVE PRIVATE PROPERTY IN BALTIMORE CITY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OWNER THEREOF.

(2) COMMISSIONER: DUTY AND AUTHORITY.

(I) IN GENERAL.

THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IS AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED TO EXERCISE AND PERFORM ALL OF THOSE AUTHORITIES, POWERS, RESPONSIBILITIES, RIGHTS AND DUTIES IMPOSED OR CONFERRED, WHICH WERE, PRIOR TO THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF ORDINANCE NO. 1091, APPROVED AUGUST 2, 1967, IMPOSED OR

CONFERRED BY ORDINANCE OR OTHERWISE UPON THE BUILDING INSPECTION ENGINEER.

(II) ENUMERATED.

THE COMMISSIONER OR THE COMMISSIONER'S DESIGNEE SHALL HAVE CHARGE AND BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

(A) CONDUCTING RESEARCH STUDIES, PREPARING STATISTICAL DATA, AND KEEPING INFORMED ON INSPECTION ACTIVITIES IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS;

(B) CONDUCTING RESEARCH STUDIES RELATING GENERALLY TO THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT AS IT RELATES TO BUILDING INSPECTION;

(C) PUBLIC INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO ENFORCEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES;

(D) INSPECTING ALL NEW AND EXISTING BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND APPURTENANT AREAS AND EQUIPMENT FOR CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS OR REGULATIONS;

(E) INSPECTING, REPAIRING, CONDEMNING, AND REMOVING PRIVATE PROPERTY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OWNER THEREOF PURSUANT TO APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS;

(F) SUCH OTHER DUTIES AND POWERS WHICH HEREAFTER MAY BE IMPOSED AND CONFERRED UPON THE COMMISSIONER.

- **Change the Department to Planning - Article 32. Zoning, Title 3. Outline of Code Administration, Subtitle 2. Administrative Agencies and Officials, § 3-201. Zoning Administrator.**

(a) Office established.

(1) There is an Office of Zoning Administrator, constituted as an independent unit of the Department of [Housing and Community Development.] PLANNING.

- **Add the following missing elements to Article 32. Zoning, Title 3. Outline of Code Administration, Subtitle 2. Administrative Agencies and Officials, § 3-201. Zoning Administrator.**

(c) Powers and duties – Specific.

(7) to preserve all records from the administration of the zoning law since its

*enactment by [Ordinance 31-1247;] ORDINANCE NO. 1247, APPROVED
MARCH 30, 1931;*

Equity:

This will have limited impacts to city residents. In the short term, there may be some limited confusion. However, Zoning staff will maintain a presence on the first floor, and the staff will remain the same. In the long term, the shift of the Zoning office to the Planning Department will streamline development review, positively impacting city residents.

Notification: This proposed action was shared by email to over 17,300 recipients via GovDelivery.



Chris Ryer
Director