


FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE  <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #20-0218R/ RECOGNIZING SYSTEMIC RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS		

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

DATE: November 18, 2020

The Department of Planning is in receipt of City Council Bill #20-0218R, which is for the purpose of recognizing systemic racism as a public health crisis.

The Department of Planning recommends **approval** of City Council Bill #20-0218R, for the following reasons:

Baltimore remains one of the most segregated cities in the US, according to Census data. It is undeniable that historic policy and planning decisions created and exacerbated inequity and inequality in Baltimore City. Policies to deliberately segregate white and black residents – such as restrictive covenants, the Federal Housing Administration’s openly racist system for mortgage loan approval, urban renewal, and others – directly contributed to many of the economic and social challenges Baltimore City faces today.

These and other policies have led to distinct “health and wealth gaps” between white and black populations in Baltimore. For example, the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicator Alliance found a 22.4 year difference in life expectancy between two neighborhoods, with the lowest in a neighborhood with 96.3% black residents and the highest life expectancy in a neighborhood with 20.4% black residents. Black residents in Baltimore have higher unemployment rates, more children living in poverty, less access to goods and services, and lower educational attainment than white populations within the city. A desire to understand and actively work to dismantle and remedy the legacies of inequity drove the Department of Planning (DOP) to establish an Equity in Planning Committee (EIPC).

The EIPC developed a 5-point Equity Action Plan focused on the following:

1. **Improve** and increase the dialogue and connections between the Department of Planning and underserved communities in Baltimore.
2. **Ensure** that the Planning Department staff reflect the demographics of Baltimore City.
3. **Use** an equity lens to develop, revise, and evaluate City policies.
4. **Use** an equity lens to prioritize capital investments.
5. **Evaluate** the Planning Department’s internal practices and policies.

Our agency Equity Statement outlines “an equitable Baltimore addresses the needs and aspirations of its diverse population and meaningfully engages residents through inclusive and collaborative processes to expand access to power and resources.” Implementation of our Equity Action Plan to fulfill the Equity Statement is guided by our Equity Lens.

Our Equity Lens was borrowed from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network and uses a series of prompts:

1. **Structural Equity:** What historic advantages or disadvantages have affected residents in the given community?
2. **Procedural Equity:** How are residents who have been historically excluded from planning processes being authentically included in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed policy or project?
3. **Distributional Equity:** Does the distribution of civic resources and investment explicitly account for potential racially disparate outcomes?
4. **Transgenerational Equity:** Does the policy or project result in unfair burdens on future generations?

These are highlights the agency implementation of our Equity Action Plan from 2017-present:

### **2017-2019 Project Highlights**

- **Baltimore Planning Academy:** Engages City residents in a 6-week course concerning land use and development.
- **Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Equity Analysis:** Ongoing analysis of where capital dollars are going based on geography, scale of investment and evaluation criteria.
- **Sustainability Plan Implementation Framework:** First citywide plan developed with an equity lens.
- **Food Equity Advisors Program:**

### **2020 Project Highlights**

- **Resiliency Hubs:** Community-based sites supplied with resources to combat the adverse impacts of climate change.
- **Workforce & Inclusion:** A report was researched & compiled by Mayoral Fellow in summer 2020.
- **Internship Policy:** A new, formalized policy related to the hiring and recruitment of interns will be available in late fall 2020.
- **Equity in Staff Reports:** An internal staff team is developing and testing an equity lens to be applied to forthcoming staff reports. A guide to this work will be available in fall 2020/winter 2021.

In conclusion, we stand in agreement with this resolution that structural racism impacts the built environment and by extension public health. Through the ongoing implementation of our Equity Action Plan and compliance with the City’s Equity Assessment Program, the

Department of Planning remains committed to the critical work of eliminating structural racism and building an equitable and just Baltimore.

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

CR/ewt

cc: Mr. Nicholas Blendy, Mayor's Office  
Mr. Matthew Stegman, Mayor's Office  
Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office  
The Honorable Edward Reisinger, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
Mr. Colin Tarbert, BDC  
Ms. Livhu Ndou, BMZA  
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration  
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD  
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Dept.  
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC  
Mr. Liam Davis, DOT  
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services  
Mr. Dominic McAlily, Council Services