

Baltimore City Council



Budget & Appropriations

Committee

Bill: 25-0061

**Title: Annual Property Tax – Fiscal Year
2026**

Public Testimony

May 15, 2025

Dear Esteemed Members of the Baltimore City Council:

We urge you to allocate increased funding to support immigrant communities in Baltimore City. In light of the current federal administration's hostility toward immigrants, **we believe that more of our taxpayer dollars should be allocated to advancing the rights and ensuring the well-being of our immigrant neighbors.**

As the federal government actively seeks to destroy immigrant families, we look to our local government to serve as a crucial safeguard to defend our community members and their rights.

By investing in programs and services that assist immigrants, you will send a strong message to the New Americans in our community who have been feeling powerless, voiceless, and anxious. In this way, our local government can work to ensure that *all* of its residents feel safe, even as those outside Baltimore target our city with misinformation, fear, and threats.

Baltimore City is home to more than 50,000 immigrants (almost 10% of the city's population). These fifty-some thousand Baltimoreans are spouses, parents, caretakers, friends, instructors, students, and colleagues to the rest of the population. Significantly, many of those individuals are parents to U.S. citizen children. The lives of our immigrant neighbors are woven into the fabric of Baltimore, and without allocating sufficient funds to programs that provide support and services to immigrants, our local government risks disrupting countless communities across the city.

Increased funding for immigrant-supporting programs would create protections for Baltimore's New Americans, who are facing an unprecedented level of xenophobic and racist persecution from the current federal administration. Our immigrant communities contribute—beyond taxpayer dollars—greater diversity of experience, perspective, and talent to Baltimore. These people deserve to feel safe in the city they have chosen as their home and as the place where they want to raise their families. Bolstering immigrant services with additional city funds tells current and future immigrants that Baltimore protects its own and will not abandon its residents to hate and ignorance.

Baltimore, like other cities in the U.S., would not be the strong, resilient, and charming city it is today without its deep and ongoing history of welcoming immigrants. **We ask that you apportion funding to programs that support immigrant families and only adopt a budget with such a revision** to ensure that our immigrant families can stay together to continue thriving in and contributing to our shared community of Baltimore.

Respectfully,
The undersigned

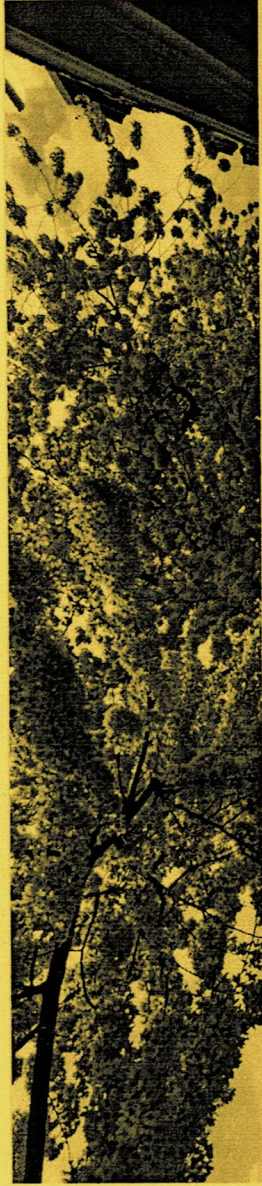
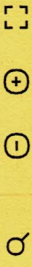
Community Organizations

Amica Center for Immigrant Rights, 11th District
Asylee Women Enterprise, 2nd District
Centro de Apoyo para la Superación del Inmigrante (CAPSI)
CASA, 13th District
Chacón Center for Immigrant Justice at Maryland Carey Law, 11th District
Chinese American Parent Association of Baltimore
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante (CDM), 14th District
Comité Latino de Baltimore, 1st District
Critical Responses to Anti-Asian Violence (CRAAV)
Episcopal Refugee & Immigrant Center Alliance, 14th District
Esperanza Center, 1st District
Global Refuge, 13th District
Islamic Leadership Institute of America, 8th District
Jews United for Justice, 12th District
Just Neighbors, 11th District
Komité Ayiti, Inc., 2nd District
Latino Economic Development Center, 1st District
Latino Racial Justice Circle
League of Korean Americans in Maryland
Maryland Latinos Unidos
ROAR Healing Co., 7th District
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore
Tahirih Justice Center, 11th District
TAMOJA Foundation, 3rd District
UNITE HERE Local 7, 7th District
Women's Law Center of Maryland
World Relief Baltimore, 11th District

Constituents

Adonia Simpson, 12th District
Anne Draddy, 14th District
Anne Stangl, 5th District
Carolyn Stolte, 7th District
Carson McFadden, 3rd District
Cathy Semans, 14th District
Charlene Dyer, 8th District

Claire O'Brien, 3rd District
Daniel Wilkinson, 7th District
Dave Anguish, 6th District
Elena Hampton-Stover, 13th District
Ellen Line, 7th District
Flor Giusti, 5th District
George Jakuta, 14th District
Giuliana Valencia-Banks, 7th District
J. Alice Corral, 14th District
Jack Newhouse, 11th District
Joe O'Brien, 4th District
Kate Jakuta, 14th District
Kevin O'Brien, 4th District
Kristine Smets, 11th District
Lorena M. Diaz, 12th District
Lucía Islas, 1st District
Luis O. Cardona, 1st District
Marly Cardona Moz, 1st District
Maureen A. Sweeney, 4th District
Mike Alksnis, 3rd District
Mishy Leiblum, 3rd District
Monica Guerrero Vazquez, 3rd District
Pamela O'Brien, 4th District
Paulina Saba, 11th District
Rachel Sanchez, 14th District
Rasha Elmahdi, 9th District
Rianna Eckel, 12th District
Ricardo Ortiz, 6th District
Sean Danaher, 7th District
Shannon Rommel, 13th District
Tania Caballero, 14th District
Tannaz Motevalli, 14th District
Tyler Vinje, 7th District
Xin Wang, 14th District



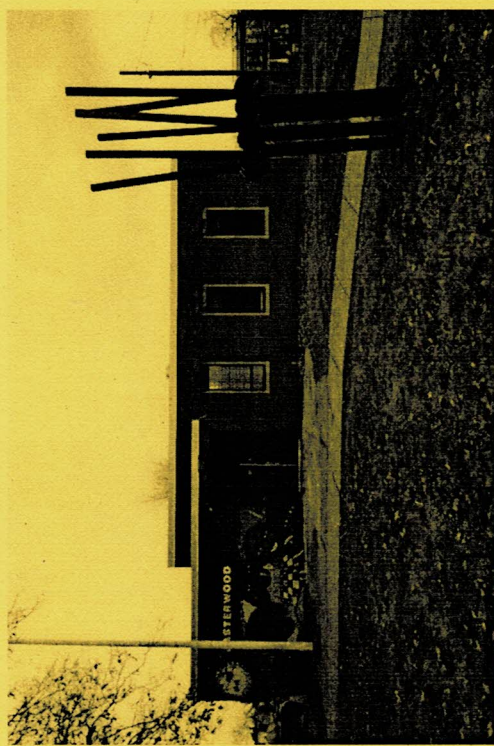
MATTHEW HENSON/ EASTERWOOD VISION PLAN

the
Neighborhood
Design Center

Project #3406

2020 September 30





The Neighborhood Design Center
Johnny Macdon
Kathryn Carter

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Riley Sull

Matthew A. Henson Community Development Corporation (MHCDC)

Dr. Marvin L. Cheatham Sr., President

Advisory Committee

Matthew A. Henson, Neighborhood Association (MNA) Members
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Michael Boyd, Vice President
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Erma Ray, Financial Secretary
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Valerie Copeland, Recording Secretary
Marvin L. Cheatham Sr., Recording Secretary
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Amelia Boyd, Board Member



the
Neighborhood
DesignCenter

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APPROACH

PRIORITIES

On September 6, 2012, the MHCDC held a community evening charrette hosted by 40th legislative district Senator Barbara Reardon and attended by federal, city and state elected officials as well as officers and members of various neighboring community associations. Prioritized needs identified were as follows:

- Food Market
- Other neighborhood retail such as:
 - Bank or Credit Union
 - Pharmacy
- Community Action Center/ Outreach Village
- Community and Mental Health Services Facilities
- Senior Center and Services
- Job Training and Rehabilitation Services Center
- State of the Art Recreation Center
- Skateboard Park
- Improved mobility with better bus access and alternative mobility options

VISION PLAN

The plan supports blighted or underutilized sites with new or updated uses such as new housing types, neighborhood retail, and community services facilities. Meanwhile, it considers how to improve the existing built environment by limiting the loss of historic and industrial areas while simultaneously improving streetscapes with street trees and other improvements.

At the same time, the plan considers how the neighborhood can be redefined, with new gateway conditions marking entrances into the neighborhood. Also, the plan promotes the improvement of open spaces such as the Easterwood Park and school grounds to better serve the local community.

These improvements are done within a framework of enforcing Matthew Henson/ Easterwood as an enclave in West Baltimore. By building upon existing assets, the neighborhood is to be improved to be livable and beautiful as a place that is set apart. To do this, the plan takes advantage of the existing boundaries that form the edges of the neighborhood to consider them as thresholds. As one enters through these thresholds, the plan seeks to establish a strongly defined character that is primarily community focused character where children and families can lay down roots and thrive.

Ultimately, the vision for the neighborhood is to create an amenity and services rich environment that meets people's needs and promotes investment and ownership.

The Matthew Henson Easterwood neighborhood is a unique enclave in West Baltimore. While the neighborhood does suffer from a concentration of blight on its east end, the majority of the neighborhood benefits from high owner occupancy affording the community with a measure of stability. This is noticeable when walking some of the neighborhood streets such as Baxter Avenue which has well maintained sidewalks, parks and tree walks with few vacant houses scattered in between.

The strength of the neighborhood is in its legacy residents, some of whom are among the first African Americans to move into the area following the diaspora of the historic Jewish community that once resided there. These life-long residents recall a safe neighborhood with supportive amenities populated by families with strong relationship investments in the neighborhood. The holdovers to this former enclave have urged to reestablish the neighborhood to what they believe it can be.

The vision for the Matthew Henson Easterwood neighborhood is to transform it to be a safe and quiet neighborhood where there is a variety of housing options that accommodate a diverse community. The desire is to make the neighborhood livable with quality amenities and services such as a food market, recreation center and community services.

To achieve this, the vision plan builds upon the strengths and unique characteristics of the neighborhood while also targeting its specific challenges.



the
Neighborhood
DesignCenter

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MATTHEW HENSON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION – ppl 36,563
P.O. BOX 23761- 501c3 – E.I.N. 47-4426049
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21203



From the Office of:
Dr. Marvin L. Doc' Cheatham, Sr.
Chief Executive Officer - President
667/495-4990 civilrights@verizon.net

BALTIMORE CITY DIRTIEST CITY SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

1. BETTER PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION TO RESIDENTS.
2. IMPROVED AND BETTER SIGNAGE OF STREET CLEANING DAYS.
3. CAMERAS IN CONTINUOUS DUMPING AREAS.
4. SCRUTINIZATION OF MAIL WITHIN GARBAGE.
5. INSTITUTE FINES AND INCREASE TRASH AND DUMPING PENALTY.
6. BUSINESS PENALTY OF DIRT REMOVAL WITHOUT TARPS.
7. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF LOTS COMMUNITIES CAN BE COMPENSATED FOR CUTTING AND CLEANING.
8. INCREASE DAYS OF 311 JUNK PICK-UP DAYS.
9. Authorize communities, such as M.H.C.D.C., that has over 100 vacant lots, to clean and cut more than the limited 35 vacant lots.
10. REDUCE DUMPING FEES ON CONTRACTORS.

“ELIMINATE GRIME – DECREASE CRIME”

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BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21203



From the Office of:

Dr. Marvin L. 'Doc' Cheatham, Sr.

Chief Executive Officer

443/255-6056 civilrights@verizon.net

BALTIMORE CITY, MD FOOD DESERTS/APARTHEID

1. BRIDGEVIEW/GREENLAWN COMMUNITY
2. CHERRY HILL COMMUNITY
3. DOUGLASS HOMES
4. FRANKLINTOWN ELLAMONT APARTMENTS
5. GILMOR HOMES APARTMENTS
6. GREENS APARTMENTS AT FOREST PARK
7. GWYNNBROOKE TOWNHOUSE APARTMENTS
8. HARLEM PARK GARDEN APARTMENTS
9. HARVEY JOHNSON APARTMENTS
10. LAKEVIEW TOWERS APARTMENTS
11. MATTHEW HENSON COMMUNITY
12. MIDTOWN EDMONSON COMMUNITY
13. MOUNT VERDE APARTMENTS
14. NORTHWEST COMMUNITY COALITION
15. POPULAR GROVE – ROSEMONT GARDENS APARTMENTS
16. WINCHESTER - ROSEMONT GARDEN APARTMENTS
17. SANDTOWN COMMUNITY
18. THE ALLENDALE 3600 APARTMENTS
19. WEST HARLEM PARK COMMUNITY
20. WESTCHESTER GARDENS APARTMENTS
21. WINCHESTER SENIOR CITIZENS

City Council Tax Payer's Night Testimony - 5/15 (Written)

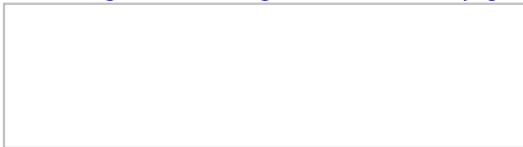
From Ellie Mitchell <emitchell@mostnetwork.org>

Date Thu 5/15/2025 10:50 AM

To Testimony <Testimony@baltimorecity.gov>; McCray, Danielle (City Council)
<Danielle.McCray@baltimorecity.gov>

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**City Council Tax Payer's Night Testimony
May 15, 2025**

Good evening, Council President Cohen and members of the City Council.

My name is Ellie Mitchell. I'm the Director of the [Maryland Out of School Time Network](#), a lifelong Baltimore resident, and a parent.

Over the last several years, Baltimore has made meaningful progress. Investments in afterschool programs, community schools, summer learning, the Children and Youth Fund, and recreation have created more opportunities for our young people.

However, **progress is not the same as reaching scale or having a coordinated, effective system.**

This summer will be a wake-up call. With the end of ESSER funds and reductions in philanthropic investment, we are facing the first summer in years with significantly fewer opportunities for youth—fewer programs, shorter hours, less support.

We ask you to reflect:

- 80% of a young person's waking hours are spent outside school.
- Has the City set clear goals for youth opportunities across all age groups?
- Is there a plan to achieve those goals—and sustain them?
- Have youth and families helped shape that plan?

- What systems exist to ensure collaboration, quality, and accountability?

Baltimore has great programs and dedicated leaders, but good intentions aren't enough. We need bold leadership, a unified vision, and creative financing strategies.

If we're genuinely committed to youth success, safer communities, and long-term impact, we must invest broadly, deeply, and boldly in infrastructure and youth development.

Does the proposed FY2026 Budget answer these questions? What can you do to make more positive changes?

I encourage you all to review chapter 3 on OST Systems in the newly published National Academies publication: [The Future of Youth Development, Building Systems and Strengthening Programs](#).

I also shared these examples from other cities for inspiration with my testimony at the Summer hearing.

New Orleans

A master plan, a Children Youth Advisory Board, an online searchable directory of program

- <https://nolayouthmasterplan.org/>
- <https://www.nolacypb.org/>
- <https://www.youthprogramsdirectory.org>

Philadelphia

Strong city system, data collection, program locator on city website

- <http://ost.phila.gov/>

Denver

Strong city system, connected partnership -utilizes Cannabis funding

- <https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Office-of-Childrens-Affairs/ProgramsInitiatives/DenverAfterschoolAlliance>

And there are more examples we can emulate! Thank you for holding this hearing - we look forward to collaborating with you to move Baltimore forward.

Ellie Mitchell, Director

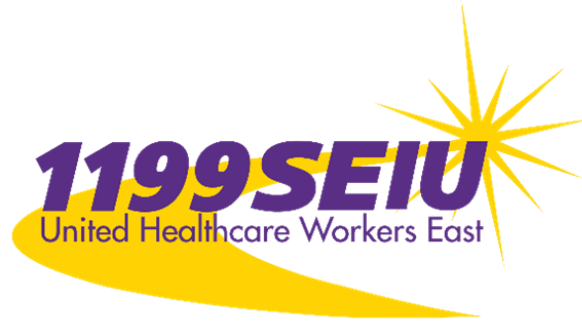
Maryland Out of School Time Network

Maryland Coalition for Community Schools

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Testimony on 25-0060

Ordinance of Estimates for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026

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

My name is Andre Johnson. I'm a homeowner, and my family has lived in Baltimore for generations. My grandmother was a nurse, my aunt is a retired school teacher, and my other aunt worked for juvenile services. My wife and I are both healthcare workers, and our daughter wants to become a nurse too. Public service runs deep for us.

Maryland has the longest Emergency Department wait times in the country because of short staffing. This impacts the whole care team at the hospital where I work, as well as City EMS workers like Firefighters. Hospital short staffing is not only hurting quality of care, it's affecting the City's budget and slowing down emergency response times. I'm extremely concerned about how the city's \$85 million budget shortfall will impact public employees and EMS.

Working people are already bearing the brunt of this shortfall through high property taxes and under-funded services. The city can't "fine and fee" its way out of this crisis. Everyday people don't have that kind of money. It's time for wealthy, tax-exempt hospitals and universities to pay their fair share for city services. They used \$47 million in city services, but only paid \$6 million in a PILOT agreement. That \$41 million gap accounts for almost half of the City budget deficit.

I urge the Council to vote YES on Bill 25-0036 to create a Taskforce to recommend a fair PILOT and a transparent process where labor and community has a voice. People are losing faith in Government right now. It's very disheartening to see the attacks on democracy on a federal level, and increases in fines and fees for working people on the local level. The PILOT Taskforce is an opportunity to do better here in Baltimore, close the budget gap, and build a city that's with us & for us. Thank you.

In Unity,

Andre Johnson
Baltimore City, District 4

FY2026 Baltimore City Budget Testimony – Andrew Hinz

Andrew Hinz
1427 Park Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21217
ahinz61@outlook.com

May 14, 2025

In general the budget is irresponsible in terms of resources allocated to waste diversion.

The police budget should be cut at the same level as other city services, if not more.

The PILOT agreement is not equitable.

I have the following specific requirements:

1. General Fund Item 42981, Service 663: Waste Recycling and Removal, Recycling Program Associate, \$0 in FY26 (was \$49,533). This position should be funded, not cut. One of the explicit duties should be to work with benefits districts to help them divert both yard trimmings, food waste, and other organics away from incineration. Additional duties should be to work with major sources of yard trimmings and food waste and other organics to divert those resources from incineration. Another duty should be, working with the City legal department, to reduce single-use plastics, sold into and consumed in the City. Another duty should be to establish a program through which citizens can volunteer to have their trash and recycling picked up monthly rather than weekly (they would pay the same rate and could be 'rewarded' by an annual picnic, letter of thanks, or a symbolic \$.01 reduction in their monthly bills).
2. General Fund Item 00090, Service 738: Weatherization Services, Operations Manager (non-civil), \$0 in FY26 (was \$121,081). This position should be funded for 5 years and the duties should be modified to be leading the transition of all City housing units from current energy supply to rooftop solar plus storage during the 5-year appointment—all of the units should be transitioned during that tenure. The position should have the authority to enter into contracts to convert city housing to solar plus storage that are revenue neutral to the city or revenue-producing.
3. General Fund Item 00089, Service 185: Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, Operations Officer V (non-civil), \$129,855 in FY26. An additional position should be funded for 1 year to develop 25-year plan to redress the harm and loss of life the City caused, and continues to cause, by zoning the Eastern and Southern districts for industrial use on top of pre-existing residential communities.

Thank You

Andrew hinz