


| | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| FROM | NAME & TITLE | Robert Cename, Deputy Finance Director <i>RC</i> | CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO |  |
| | AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS | Department of Finance Room 454, City Hall | | |
| | SUBJECT | 24-0491 Footway Repairs – Citations and Billing | | |

DATE:

TO

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

November 24, 2023

Position: Support

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 24-0491, Footway Repairs – Citations and Billing, for the purpose of altering the notice and appeal timelines for certain footway improvements, gradings, pavings, repavings, or repairs; excepting an assessment from bearing interest under certain circumstances; making conforming changes; and generally relating to the citation and billing process for footway repairs.

Background

There are approximately 3,600 miles of sidewalks throughout Baltimore City. The process for ensuring that every sidewalk is in need of grading, paving, repaving, or repairing is Article 26 Subtitle 10 of the Baltimore City Code. This legislation aims to clarify and revise this subtitle.

The legislation broadly revises and clarifies language throughout the subtitle. The most important changes include giving the property owner more time at key points throughout the process such as, to appeal the Director’s decision that the footway needs improvement, if the property owner can have the footway privately improved, and to appeal the assessed cost of repairing the footway. The legislation removes the requirement that notice be published in a newspaper. This reduces costs for the City as well as the property owner.

Fiscal Impact

The Department of Finance anticipates that this legislation will ultimately have a minor cost savings to Department of Transportation capital project budgets, based on reduced publication requirements. The process changes enumerated above will have minimal fiscal impact to implement. The proscription that interest on unpaid bills be paused when there is an appeal, will likely result in minimal lost revenue.

Other Considerations

The Council may consider examining other municipal processes that include a required publishing in a newspaper, and if this is the best practice to meet an intended goal. The goal of publishing in a newspaper is to raise awareness or serve as public notice. Publication costs continue to rise and this becomes another source of expenditure must be supported, in this case, by capital project budgets.

Conclusion

The Department of Finance supports this legislation, as it clarifies and creates a more customer focused process for assessing and repairing Baltimore’s footways. The legislation also eliminates the need for

advertising that work on footways has been completed in the local newspaper, in lieu of more direct methods of notice.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance supports City Council Bill 24-0491.

cc: Michael Mocksten
Nina Themelis