




CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Chris Ryer, Director, Department of Planning 
DATE	June 20, 2024
SUBJECT	City Council Bill #24-0537 - Bond Issue - Public Infrastructure Loan - \$125,000,000

Position: Approval

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Department of Planning (DoP) annually prepares a six-year Capital Improvement Program, the first year of which becomes the City's capital budget. DoP works with agencies that manage physical infrastructure and support improvements to the physical environment of the City. General Obligation (GO) bonds are a small but extremely important piece of the City's capital budget, used to match state and federal funds, fund the City's highest priority projects, and fund necessary projects for which no other source is available. Every two years, the City of Baltimore must get permission from voters through a ballot referendum to issue general obligation bonds (GO bonds). GO bonds are borrowed funds that are used for capital projects, including housing and neighborhood revitalization; school renovations and improvements; economic development; improvements to City parks, recreation centers, and other government facilities; transportation infrastructure; and key City institutions and cultural attractions.

Public Infrastructure Loan

The Public Infrastructure Loan provides critical funds for upgrades to public infrastructure including parks, recreation centers, playgrounds, athletic courts, libraries, health centers, streets, bridges, bike lanes, sidewalks, transportation safety improvements, courthouses, city office buildings, police stations, fire stations, and solid waste facilities. It is important to note that this loan allows for transportation funding for projects that, prior to the Great Recession, would have been funded with Highway User Revenue. The Public Infrastructure Loan is the sole source of funding for many facilities, such as city buildings and solid waste infrastructure. It also must be used to match state and federal funding for parks and recreation and transportation. This loan cannot meet the infrastructure needs for the City, but is an incredibly important fund source to meet the most urgent needs.

CONCLUSION

This bill is consistent with what was approved by the Planning Commission in its public meeting on November 2, 2023, and so the Department of Planning recommends that this bill be approved.

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