



## MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Alice Kennedy, Housing Commissioner

Date: February 13, 2024

**Re: City Council Bill 23-0444 Charter Amendment – Inner Harbor Park**

### Introduction

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 23-0444 for the purpose of amending the provision dedicating for public park uses the portion of the City that lies along the north west and south shores of the Inner Harbor, south of Pratt Street to the water's edge, east of Light Street to the water's edge, and north of Key Highway to the water's edge, from the World Trade Center around the shoreline of the Inner Harbor and including Rash Field to permit multifamily residential development and off-street parking within the dedicated boundaries of Inner Harbor Park; and submitting this amendment to the qualified voters of the City for adoption or rejection.

If approved by the City Council, this bill will go before Baltimore City voters as an amendment to the City charter at the next general or congressional election occurring after its passage, in accordance with Article XI-A, § 5 of the Maryland Constitution. If approved by the voters, the amendment would add multi-family dwellings, add off-street parking uses, and increase the area allowed for non-park uses from 3.2 acres to 4.5 acres within the Inner Harbor. If adopted, the amendment would become a part of the city charter on the thirtieth day following said election.

### DHCD Analysis

DHCD recognizes the importance of balancing public space and access with the need for housing and economic development. We also recognize that even with inclusion of mixed-use development, this plan will increase the amount of public and park space from 13.9 acres to 18.7 acres. As this increase includes right-of-way abandoned and contributed as well as McKeldin Plaza becoming an interconnected component of Inner Harbor Park, the public's ability to safely access the space will arguably increase as well.

The development of multi-family or mixed-use dwellings in the subject area may help to address the housing shortage, that exists both in Baltimore and State-wide, by providing additional residential housing options for residents that would complement the existing recreational and commercial uses around the harbor by adding population density that could support the area's commercial tenants.

The subject area is not located within any of DHCD's Impact Investment Areas, Community Development Zones, or Streamlined Code Enforcement Areas. The Bill does not have an operational or fiscal impact on DHCD and the charter amendment would not endanger public health, safety or welfare.

## Conclusion

DHCD respectfully requests a **favorable** report on City Council Bill 23-0444.

*AK/jw*

*cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office of Government Relations*

**Brandon M. Scott**, Mayor • **Alice Kennedy**, Housing Commissioner

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