



F R O M	Name & Title	Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Commissioner of Health 	Health Department MEMO	
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	Subject	Council Bill 09-0272 – Baltimore City Sustainability Plan		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o
409 City Hall

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The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) supports Council Bill 09-0272. The purpose of the Bill is to establish a plan to guide the implementation of sustainability principles for Baltimore City.

Maximizing recycling by the community, a goal under the “Cleanliness” chapter, addresses core concerns by constituents as evidenced in community association meetings. Improving access to acquiring recycling bins and improving access to recycling containers in public spaces will provide significant motivation to the community to be an active participant in the Sustainability Plan.

Improving outdoor and indoor air quality, goals under the “Pollution Prevention” chapter is directly responsive to the Health Department goal of reducing disparities in asthma. The strategies to improve indoor air by continuing to reduce the threats of tobacco smoke and toxic chemicals in housing, schools and offices will offer low cost ways to improve the health of children and other vulnerable groups. Increasing federal funding by providing match and leverage dollars for HUD Lead and Healthy Homes grants, and increasing the impact of existing funding through better coordination of home health and housing programs will also further our goals to eliminate lead poisoning, injuries, and asthma.

Shifting transportation from single-occupancy vehicles to public transit, walking, and biking also have the potential to have a substantial positive impact on health, both through improving air quality and through increasing physical activity. Baltimore City suffers from excess deaths due to chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Both air pollution and physical activity affect the prevalence of these illnesses. Any efforts to improve the city’s air quality and to increase the activity levels of residents will result in longer, healthier lives.

Greening the city will also pay health dividends. Increasing the tree canopy will improve air quality, which can have positive impacts on respiratory illnesses such as asthma as well as on other chronic diseases. A more extensive tree canopy can also help reduce temperatures in the summer months, thereby reducing deaths and illnesses due to extreme heat. Increasing residents’ access to safe green spaces for recreation has the potential to increase residents’ activity levels, which currently remain below the recommended guidelines. Access to green spaces has also

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been shown to reduce racial/ethnic health disparities. Finally, many neighborhoods in the city currently lack access to fruits and vegetables, making it difficult for families to eat nutritious and balanced diets. Increasing access to sustainable and locally grown food may help fill the city's need for access to healthy food.

The implementation of Bill 09-0272 is greatly supported by BCHD.

Cc: Angela Gibson