

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Chichi Nyagah-Nash, Director CNN	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of General Services 200 N. Holliday Street, Room 800		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 19-0164R		

DATE: October 25, 2019

TO The Honorable President and Members of the City Council
c/o Nina Themelis, Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the
City Council

RE: City Council Bill 19-0164R (Resolution)
POSITION: No objection

City Government Customer Service Centers

INTRODUCTION

The Department of General Services reviewed City Council Bill 19-0164R – City Government Customer Service Centers for the purpose of recommending the creation of City government customer service centers introduced by Councilman Bill Henry.

PURPOSE

The Department of General Services supports the City Council's attempt to establish customer service centers where residents can access information about Baltimore City services. DGS takes both customer service and transparency seriously. Based on City Council Bill 19-0164R's recitals, services can vary by location, but residents can generally receive information about city services, get referrals, pay bills, receive applications and necessary forms, receive advice from a legal clinic, and use computers to access the internet. In Seattle, Washington, for example, there are multiple customer service centers that function as small "city halls" spread out across the city, mainly as storefronts along commercial corridors. Seattle also has a mobile customer service center that visits underserved neighborhoods.

Additionally, customer service centers can offer access to a wide variety of forms that residents might find necessary, such as applications for parking permits, applications for permits to operate a business, and applications for employment with the City. At many such centers, citizens can pay utility bills and parking fines, get pet licenses. They can also receive general information about City services, like the days for trash pick-up, contacts for community organizations, and zoning information.

DGS suggests using a data-backed approach to determine the uses and availability of resources at such customer service centers. The City should be able to use website traffic, inquiries, and clicks as a proxy for citizen's interests and needs. This can help inform the uses and resources needed at customer service sites and the space required to meet the need(s). A data-backed approach may also enable the Council to determine whether kiosks distributed across the city could be used to meet the public's needs.

FISCAL IMPACT

Due to the broad language used in the bill DGS is unable to provide a fiscal impact without additional information as to the scope of the services being provided at customer service centers and thus their space and maintenance needs.

DEPARTMENT POSITION

The department has **NO OBJECTION** to **CCB19-0164R**. DGS is supportive of the intent behind CCB19-0164R but requests a thorough examination of the needs of residents, the availability and costs of specific locations to meet those needs, and an investigation into the possibility of using technology to more adequately and financially prudently meet those needs.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Director Chichi Nyagah-Nash at chichi.nyagah-nash@baltimorecity.gov or (410) 396-3704.

CC: Matt Stegman