



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Mission Statement

On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the Land Use & Transportation Committee is committed to shaping a reliable, equitable, and sustainable future for Baltimore's land use and transportation systems. Through operational oversight and legislative action, the committee aims to develop and support lasting solutions grounded in principles of good governance.

The Honorable Ryan Dorsey

CHAIR

PUBLIC HEARING

9/25/2025

10:00 AM

CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Bill: 25-0062

***Title: Building Code – Single Exit from Residential
Occupancy***

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Meeting: Bill Hearing

Committee: Land Use & Transportation

Bill # 25-0062

Title: Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

Purpose: FOR the purpose of permitting certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

REPORTING AGENCIES

Agency	Report
Law Dept	Approve for form & sufficiency
Fire Dept	Approve with amendments
Finance Dept	Does not oppose
Housing & Community Development	Favorable
Planning Commission	Approved
Baltimore Development Corporation	Favorable

BACKGROUND

This bill, if enacted, would allow for apartment buildings to have a single exit staircase instead of two, provided the building met certain conditions. This would allow for more flexibility in the design and construction of small and medium-sized apartment buildings, the goal being to reduce impediments in building this kind of housing stock. That flexibility can mean that lots that otherwise could not be built on would now be a viable site for a building with a single exit. This infill construction can help buildings to blend into existing neighborhoods, and when incorporating other features like retail on the 1st floor, can help improve walkability in communities.

The single exit is allowed under the International Building Code (IBC) (Chapter 10, Section 1006.3.4). However, the IBC restricts the height of these buildings to 3 stories, and 25-0062 would increase that to 6 stories. As noted in the Department of Finance’s report, the trend of

allowing for additional stories with the single exit allows for greater density to be built, and other cities such as Seattle, Knoxville, and New York allow for this.

A paper on this from George Mason University notes that in addition to the flexibility in design, the cost of building smaller buildings with a denser population would be a cost saving, which can help with the cost of housing. These buildings are also more energy efficient, and generally smaller buildings are more readily accepted by existing communities.

The Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD), in its analysis of the bill, suggests several amendments:

1. Sprinklers should be throughout the building – not just in living areas but in areas that are hidden from residents, or are made from combustible materials such as attics, & roof cavities.
2. If the door that residents use to exit the building is located inside, it must be enclosed in walls rated for 2 hours of fire resistance, and the doors must be rated for 90 minutes.
3. Apartments should not open into the fire exit stairwell – all apartments should be separated from the stairwell by a corridor

A property would need to meet the following conditions under 25-0065 to qualify for a single exit:

1. Size and Type
 - a. It can be up to 6 stories tall if built with fire-resistant materials (Types I, II, III-A, or IV).
 - b. It can be up to 4 stories tall if built with standard wood construction (Type V).
 - c. No more than 4 apartments per floor.
2. Fire Safety
 - a. The whole building must be built to resist fire for at least 1 hour.
 - b. It must have sprinklers in every part of the building.
 - c. The stairway must be in a 2-hour fire-rated enclosure, with 1-hour fire-rated doors.
 - d. The stairway must be pressurized, meaning air is pumped in to keep out smoke during a fire.
 - e. Doors into the stairway must swing inward, except the door to the outside, which must swing outward.
3. Layout
 - a. No apartment door can open directly into the stairway.
 - b. Apartments must be connected to the stairway by a hallway.
 - c. The hallway from any unit to the stairway must be 20 feet or less.
 - d. The total distance to exit the building can't be more than 125 feet.

4. Elevators and Roof Access

- a. Elevators must also be pressurized or open into a separate lobby.
- b. The stairway must reach the roof, either through a roof hatch with a ladder or a full stair bulkhead.

5. Other Uses

- a. Other types of businesses or uses can be in the building, but they must be separated from the residential area and cannot use the same stairway.
- b. The garage or rooftop (if part of the apartments) can share the stairway.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Note:

Information Source(s):

Analysis by: Tony Leva
Analysis Date: 9/17/2025

Direct Inquiries to: 410-369-1091

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 25-0062
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Dorsey

Cosponsored by: President Cohen and Councilmembers Conway, Gray, Bullock, Blanchard, and Ramos

Introduced and read first time: May 12, 2025

Assigned to: Land Use and Transportation Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance,
Fire Department, Department of Housing and Community Development, Planning Commission

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy**

3 FOR the purpose of permitting certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a
4 single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

5 BY repealing and re-ordaining, with amendments,

6 Article - Building, Fire, and Related Codes

7 Section 2-103 (IBC §§ 1002 to 1010)

8 Baltimore City Revised Code

9 (2024 Edition)

10 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
11 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

12 **Baltimore City Revised Code**

13 **Article – Building, Fire, and Related Codes**

14 **Part II. International Building Code**

15 **§ 2-103. City Modifications.**

16 The additions, deletions, amendments, and other modifications adopted by the City are as
17 follows:

18 **Chapter 10. Means of Egress**

19 **[Sections 1002 to 1010. {As in IBC}] SECTIONS 1002 TO 1005. {AS IN IBC}**

20 1006.1 TO 1006.2 {AS IN IBC}

21 1006.3 {AS IN IBC}

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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1006.3.1. {AS IN IBC}

1006.3.2 {AS IN IBC}

1006.3.3 {AS IN IBC}

1006.3.4. *SINGLE EXITS.*

A SINGLE EXIT OR ACCESS TO A SINGLE EXIT SHALL BE PERMITTED FROM ANY STORY OR OCCUPIED ROOF WHERE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS EXISTS:

1. TO 5. {AS IN IBC}

6. A BUILDING MAY HAVE A SINGLE EXIT OR ACCESS TO A SINGLE EXIT PROVIDED THAT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET:

6.1. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE I, TYPE II, TYPE III-A OR TYPE IV CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 6 STORIES OF GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 6 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE;
OR

6.2. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE V CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 4 STORIES OF GROUP R- 2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 4 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE.

6.3. THE BUILDING DOES NOT CONTAIN A BOARDING HOUSE.

6.4. THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 4 DWELLING UNITS PER FLOOR.

6.5. THE BUILDING IS OF NOT LESS THAN 1 HOUR FIRE-RESISTIVE CONSTRUCTION.

6.6. THE BUILDING IS EQUIPPED WITH A SPRINKLER SYSTEM THROUGHOUT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 903.3.1.1 OF THE BALTIMORE CITY FIRE CODE.

6.7. THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 2 SINGLE EXIT STAIRWAY CONDITIONS IN THE SAME BUILDING.

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- 1 6.8. STAIRWAYS MAY BE AN EXTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY OR AN INTERIOR
2 EXIT STAIRWAY. INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAYS SHALL:
- 3 A. BE ENCLOSED IN A 2-HOUR FIRE RATED WALL WITH 1-HOUR FIRE
4 RATED DOORS;
- 5 B. BE PRESSURIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 909.20 OF THIS CODE;
6 AND
- 7 C. HAVE DOORS THAT SWING INTO THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY
8 REGARDLESS OF THE SERVED OCCUPANT LOAD, PROVIDED THAT
9 DOORS FROM THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY TO THE BUILDING
10 EXTERIOR SWING TOWARDS THE EXTERIOR.
- 11 6.9. A CORRIDOR SEPARATES THE ENTRY AND EXIT DOOR OF EACH
12 DWELLING UNIT FROM THE DOOR TO AN INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY,
13 AND NO DWELLING UNIT DOORS OPEN DIRECTLY INTO THE INTERIOR
14 EXIT STAIRWAY.
- 15 6.10. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE EXIT STAIRWAY AND THE ENTRY AND
16 EXIT DOOR OF ANY DWELLING UNIT IS NO MORE THAN 20 FEET.
- 17 6.11. TRAVEL DISTANCE, MEASURED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 1017 OF
18 THIS CODE, DOES NOT EXCEED 125 FEET.
- 19 6.12. ELEVATORS ARE PRESSURIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 909.21 OF
20 THIS CODE, OR OPEN INTO ELEVATOR LOBBIES IN COMPLIANCE WITH
21 § 713.14 OF THIS CODE.
- 22 6.13. THE STAIRWAY EITHER:
- 23 A. EXTENDS TO THE ROOF SURFACE THROUGH A STAIRWAY
24 BULKHEAD IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 1511.7.2 OF THIS CODE, IF
25 THE ROOF HAS A SLOPE NOT STEEPER THAN 20 DEGREES (0.35
26 RAD); OR
- 27 B. IS CONSTRUCTED AGAINST THE STREET WALL, WITH 1 WINDOW
28 FACING THE STREET AT EACH LANDING, AND ACCESS TO THE
29 ROOF IS PROVIDED VIA A SCUTTLE WITH A STATIONARY,
30 NONCOMBUSTIBLE ACCESS LADDER.
- 31 6.14. OTHER OCCUPANCIES ARE PERMITTED IN THE SAME BUILDING
32 PROVIDED THEY COMPLY WITH ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS
33 CODE. OTHER OCCUPANCIES SHALL NOT COMMUNICATE WITH THE
34 GROUP R OCCUPANCY PORTION OF THE BUILDING OR WITH THE
35 SINGLE-EXIT STAIRWAY.

Council Bill 25-0062

EXCEPTIONS

PARKING GARAGES AND OCCUPIED ROOFS ACCESSORY TO THE
GROUP R OCCUPANCY ARE PERMITTED TO COMMUNICATE WITH
THE EXIT STAIRWAY.

1006.3.4.1 {AS IN IBC}

SECTIONS 1007 TO 1010. {AS IN IBC}

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th
day after the date it is enacted.

**AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL BILL 25-0062
(1st Reader Copy)**

By: Baltimore City Fire Department
{To be offered to the Land Use and Transportation Committee}

Amendment No. 1

On page 1, in line 7, strike “1010)” and substitute “1031)”; and, on that same page, after line 9, insert:

“BY repealing and re-ordaining, with amendments,
Article - Building, Fire, and Related Codes
Section 8-102 (IFC §§ 1001 to 1032)
Baltimore City Revised Code
(2024 Edition)”

Amendment No. 2

On page 2, in line 11, strike “TYPE III-A”; and, on that same page, in lines 13 and 14, strike “PLANE; OR” and substitute “PLANE.”; and, on that same page, after line 14, insert:

“6.2. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE III-A CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 5 STORIES OF GROUP R- 2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 5 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE ESTABLISHED BY GROUND OR PODIUM.”;

and on that same page, in lines 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 25, strike “6.2.”, “6.3.”, “6.4.”, “6.5.”, “6.6.”, and “6.7.”, respectively, and substitute “6.3.”, “6.4.”, “6.5.”, “6.6.”, “6.7.”, and “6.8.”, respectively; and, on page 3, in lines 1, 11, 15, 17, 19, 22, and 31, strike “6.8.”, “6.9.”, “6.10.”, “6.11.”, and “6.12.”, respectively, and substitute “6.9.”, “6.10.”, “6.11.”, “6.12.”, and “6.13.”.

Amendment No. 3

On page 2, in line 23, after “WITH”, insert “§ 903.3.1.1 OF THE BALTIMORE CITY BUILDING CODE AND”; and on that same page, in line 24, after “CODE.”, insert:

“ADDITIONALLY, SPRINKLER PROTECTION SHALL EXTEND TO THE FOLLOWING SPACES, WITH NO EXCEPTION FOR DRAFTSTOPPING:

- A. COMBUSTIBLE ATTIC SPACES;
- B. COMBUSTIBLE CONCEALED ROOF SPACES;
- C. COMBUSTIBLE FLOOR OR CEILING ASSEMBLIES; AND
- D. ANY OTHER AREA THAT IS HIDDEN OR MADE OF COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS.”;

and, on page 3, in line 3, after “2-HOUR FIRE”, insert “PROTECTION”; and, on that same page, in that same line, strike “1-HOUR FIRE” and substitute “1.5-HOUR FIRE PROTECTION”; and, on that same page, in line 11, after “CORRIDOR”, insert “WITH 2-HOUR FIRE PROTECTION RATED WALLS”.

Amendment No. 4

On page 4, after line 6, insert:

“ . . .

[Sections 1016 to 1031 {As in IBC}] SECTIONS 1016 TO 1019 {AS IN IBC}

SECTION 1020 CORRIDORS.

1020.1 TO 1020.2 {AS IN IBC}

TABLE 1020.2
CORRIDOR FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING

<u>OCCUPANCY</u>	<u>OCCUPANT LOAD SERVED BY CORRIDOR</u>	<u>REQUIRED FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING (HOURS)</u>	
		<u>WITHOUT SPRINKLER SYSTEM</u>	<u>WITH SPRINKLER SYSTEM</u>
<u>H-1, H-2, H-3</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>1^c</u>
<u>H-4, H-5</u>	<u>GREATER THAN 30</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>1^c</u>
<u>A, B, E, F, M, S, U</u>	<u>GREATER THAN 30</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>R</u>	<u>GREATER THAN 10</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>0.5^c/1^d/2^e</u>
<u>I-2^a</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>I-1, I-3</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>I-4</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

^a FOR REQUIREMENTS FOR OCCUPANCIES IN GROUP I-2, SEE §§ 407.2 AND 407.3.

^b FOR A REDUCTION IN THE FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING FOR OCCUPANCIES IN GROUP I-3, SEE § 408.8.

^c BUILDINGS EQUIPPED THROUGHOUT WITH AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH §§ 903.3.1.1 OR 903.3.1.2 WHERE ALLOWED.

^d GROUP R-3 AND R-4 BUILDINGS EQUIPPED THROUGHOUT WITH AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 903.3.1.3. SEE § 903.2.8 FOR OCCUPANCIES WHERE AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS ARE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 903.3.1.3.

^e R-OCCUPANCY BUILDINGS EQUIPPED WITH A SINGLE EXIT IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 1006.3.4.6.

1020.3 TO 1020.7 {AS IN IBC}

SECTIONS 1021 TO 1031 {AS IN IBC}

Part VII. International Fire Code

§ 8-102. City Modifications.

The additions, deletions, amendments, and other modifications adopted by the City are as follows:

Chapter 10. Means of Egress

[{As in IFC}]

SECTIONS 1001 TO 1005 {AS IN IFC}

1006.1 TO 1006.2 {AS IN IFC}

1006.3 {AS IN IFC}

1006.3.1 {AS IN IFC}

1006.3.2 {AS IN IFC}

1006.3.3 {AS IN IFC}

1006.3.4 *SINGLE EXITS.*

A SINGLE EXIT OR ACCESS TO A SINGLE EXIT SHALL BE PERMITTED FROM ANY STORY OR OCCUPIED ROOF WHERE 1 OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS EXISTS:

1. TO 5. {AS IN IFC}

6. A BUILDING MAY HAVE A SINGLE EXIT OR ACCESS TO A SINGLE EXIT PROVIDED THAT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET:

6.1. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE I, TYPE II, OR TYPE IV CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 6 STORIES OF GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 6 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE.

6.2. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE III-A CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 5 STORIES OF GROUP R- 2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 5 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE ESTABLISHED BY GROUND OR PODIUM.

6.3. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE V CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 4 STORIES OF GROUP R- 2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 4 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE.

6.4. THE BUILDING DOES NOT CONTAIN A BOARDING HOUSE.

6.5. THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 4 DWELLING UNITS PER FLOOR.

- 6.6. THE BUILDING IS OF NOT LESS THAN 1 HOUR FIRE-RESISTIVE CONSTRUCTION.
- 6.7. THE BUILDING IS EQUIPPED WITH A SPRINKLER SYSTEM THROUGHOUT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 903.3.1.1 {"NFPA 13 SPRINKLER SYSTEMS"} OF THE BALTIMORE CITY BUILDING CODE AND § 903.3.1.1 {"NFPA 13 SPRINKLER SYSTEMS"} OF THE BALTIMORE CITY FIRE CODE. ADDITIONALLY, SPRINKLER PROTECTION SHALL EXTEND TO THE FOLLOWING SPACES, WITH NO EXCEPTION FOR DRAFTSTOPPING:
- A. COMBUSTIBLE ATTIC SPACES;
 - B. COMBUSTIBLE CONCEALED ROOF SPACES;
 - C. COMBUSTIBLE FLOOR OR CEILING ASSEMBLIES; AND
 - D. ANY OTHER AREA THAT IS HIDDEN OR MADE OF COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS.
- 6.8. THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 2 SINGLE EXIT STAIRWAY CONDITIONS IN THE SAME BUILDING.
- 6.9. STAIRWAYS MAY BE AN EXTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY OR AN INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY. INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAYS SHALL:
- A. BE ENCLOSED IN A 2-HOUR FIRE PROTECTION RATED WALL WITH 1.5-HOUR FIRE PROTECTION RATED DOORS;
 - B. BE PRESSURIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 909.20 {"SMOKEPROOF ENCLOSURES"} OF THE BALTIMORE CITY BUILDING CODE; AND
 - C. HAVE DOORS THAT SWING INTO THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY REGARDLESS OF THE SERVED OCCUPANT LOAD, PROVIDED THAT DOORS FROM THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY TO THE BUILDING EXTERIOR SWING TOWARDS THE EXTERIOR.

- 6.10. A CORRIDOR WITH 2-HOUR FIRE PROTECTION RATED WALLS SEPARATES THE ENTRY AND EXIT DOOR OF EACH DWELLING UNIT FROM THE DOOR TO AN INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY, AND NO DWELLING UNIT DOORS OPEN DIRECTLY INTO THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY.
- 6.11. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE EXIT STAIRWAY AND THE ENTRY AND EXIT DOOR OF ANY DWELLING UNIT IS NO MORE THAN 20 FEET.
- 6.12. TRAVEL DISTANCE, MEASURED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 1017 {"EXIT ACCESS TRAVEL DISTANCE"} OF THIS CODE, DOES NOT EXCEED 125 FEET.
- 6.13. ELEVATORS ARE PRESSURIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 909.21 {"ELEVATOR HOISTWAY PRESSURIZATION ALTERNATIVE"} OF THIS CODE, OR OPEN INTO ELEVATOR LOBBIES IN COMPLIANCE WITH § 713.14 {"ELEVATOR, DUMBWAITER, AND OTHER HOISTWAYS"} OF THE BALTIMORE CITY BUILDING CODE.
- 6.14. THE STAIRWAY EITHER:
- A. EXTENDS TO THE ROOF SURFACE THROUGH A STAIRWAY BULKHEAD IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 1511.7.2 {"BULKHEADS"} OF THE BALTIMORE CITY BUILDING CODE, IF THE ROOF HAS A SLOPE NOT STEEPER THAN 20 DEGREES (0.35 RAD); OR
 - B. IS CONSTRUCTED AGAINST THE STREET WALL, WITH 1 WINDOW FACING THE STREET AT EACH LANDING, AND ACCESS TO THE ROOF IS PROVIDED VIA A SCUTTLE WITH A STATIONARY, NONCOMBUSTIBLE ACCESS LADDER.
- 6.15. OTHER OCCUPANCIES ARE PERMITTED IN THE SAME BUILDING PROVIDED THEY COMPLY WITH ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS CODE. OTHER OCCUPANCIES SHALL NOT COMMUNICATE WITH THE GROUP R OCCUPANCY PORTION OF THE BUILDING OR WITH THE SINGLE-EXIT STAIRWAY.

EXCEPTIONS

PARKING GARAGES AND OCCUPIED ROOFS ACCESSORY TO
THE GROUP R OCCUPANCY ARE PERMITTED TO
COMMUNICATE WITH THE EXIT STAIRWAY.

1006.3.4.1 {AS IN IFC}

SECTIONS 1007 TO 1019 {AS IN IFC}

SECTION 1020 CORRIDORS.

1020.1 TO 1020.2 {AS IN IFC}

TABLE 1020.2
CORRIDOR FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING

<u>OCCUPANCY</u>	<u>OCCUPANT LOAD SERVED BY CORRIDOR</u>	<u>REQUIRED FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING (HOURS)</u>	
		<u>WITHOUT SPRINKLER SYSTEM</u>	<u>WITH SPRINKLER SYSTEM</u>
<u>H-1, H-2, H-3</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>1^c</u>
<u>H-4, H-5</u>	<u>GREATER THAN 30</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>1^c</u>
<u>A, B, E, F, M, S, U</u>	<u>GREATER THAN 30</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>R</u>	<u>GREATER THAN 10</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>0.5^c/1^d/2^e</u>
<u>I-2^a</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>I-1, I-3</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>NOT PERMITTED</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>I-4</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

^a FOR REQUIREMENTS FOR OCCUPANCIES IN GROUP I-2, SEE §§ 407.2 AND 407.3.

^b FOR A REDUCTION IN THE FIRE-RESISTANCE RATING FOR OCCUPANCIES IN GROUP I-3, SEE § 408.8.

^c BUILDINGS EQUIPPED THROUGHOUT WITH AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH §§ 903.3.1.1 OR 903.3.1.2 WHERE ALLOWED.

^d GROUP R-3 AND R-4 BUILDINGS EQUIPPED THROUGHOUT WITH AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 903.3.1.3. SEE § 903.2.8 FOR OCCUPANCIES WHERE AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS ARE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 903.3.1.3.

^E R-OCCUPANCY BUILDINGS EQUIPPED WITH A SINGLE EXIT IN ACCORDANCE WITH
§ 1006.3.4.6.

1020.3 TO 1020.7 {AS IN IFC}

SECTIONS 1021 TO 1032 {AS IN IFC}”.

Baltimore City Council

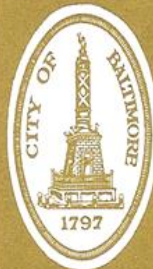


Land Use & Transportation Committee

Bill: 25-0062

**Title: Building Code – Single Exit from
Residential Occupancy**

Agency Reports

FROM	NAME & TITLE	CHRIS RYER, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #25-0062 / BUILDING CODE – SINGLE EXIT FROM RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY		

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street

DATE:

September 5, 2025

At its regular meeting of August 28, 2025, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0062, for the purpose of permitting certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended approval of City Council Bill #25-0062 and adopted the following resolution, with six members being present (six in favor):

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, adopts the findings and equity analysis outlined in the staff report, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #25-0062 be **approved** by the City Council.

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

CR/ewt

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
The Honorable John Bullock, Council Rep. to Planning Commission
Ms. Rebecca Witt, BMZA
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administration
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
Ms. Hilary Ruley, Law Dept.
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC
Mr. Luciano Diaz, DOT
Ms. Nancy Mead, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair

STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer
Director

August 7, 2025

REQUEST: City Council Bill #25-0062/ Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

FOR the purpose of permitting certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Caitlin Audette

PETITIONER: Introduced by Councilmember Dorsey, Cosponsored by President Cohen and Councilmembers Conway, Gray, Bullock, Blanchard, and Ramos

HISTORY

There are no previous legislative or Planning Commission actions regarding this site.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore was enacted by Ordinance #24-426, dated December 2, 2024. Goal 4.06 states the following:

Examine the building code to identify ways to expand opportunities for the creation of affordable housing (for example, raise the story limit for single-stair buildings).

The proposed legislation addresses this goal by expanding the use of single exit and access to single exit buildings for residential construction.

ANALYSIS

Background: The proposed legislation was created with feedback from both Housing and the Fire Department, making sure that any safety concerns were addressed prior to the introduction of the legislation.

By modifying the code to allow for single exits new construction of multi-family housing will be less expensive, will be more suited to smaller infill sites, and will allow for a wider variety of building types creating a wider range of building typologies – which will allow for a more unique urban context.

The changes to the code continue to allow other uses in the building, maintain mixed use opportunities.

1006.3.4. *SINGLE EXITS.*

A SINGLE EXIT OR ACCESS TO A SINGLE EXIT SHALL BE PERMITTED FROM ANY STORY OR OCCUPIED ROOF WHERE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS EXISTS:

1. TO 5. {AS IN IBC}
6. A BUILDING MAY HAVE A SINGLE EXIT OR ACCESS TO A SINGLE EXIT PROVIDED THAT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET:
 - 6.1. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE I, TYPE II, TYPE III-A OR TYPE IV CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 6 STORIES OF GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 6 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE;
OR
 - 6.2. THE BUILDING, IF IT IS OF TYPE V CONSTRUCTION, HAS NO MORE THAN 4 STORIES OF GROUP R- 2 OCCUPANCY AND NO MORE THAN 4 STORIES ABOVE GRADE PLANE.
 - 6.3. THE BUILDING DOES NOT CONTAIN A BOARDING HOUSE.
 - 6.4. THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 4 DWELLING UNITS PER FLOOR.
 - 6.5. THE BUILDING IS OF NOT LESS THAN 1 HOUR FIRE-RESISTIVE CONSTRUCTION.
 - 6.6. THE BUILDING IS EQUIPPED WITH A SPRINKLER SYSTEM THROUGHOUT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 903.3.1.1 OF THE BALTIMORE CITY FIRE CODE.
 - 6.7. THERE ARE NO MORE THAN 2 SINGLE EXIT STAIRWAY CONDITIONS IN THE SAME BUILDING.

- 6.8. STAIRWAYS MAY BE AN EXTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY OR AN INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY. INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAYS SHALL:
- A. BE ENCLOSED IN A 2-HOUR FIRE RATED WALL WITH 1-HOUR FIRE RATED DOORS;
 - B. BE PRESSURIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 909.20 OF THIS CODE; AND
 - C. HAVE DOORS THAT SWING INTO THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY REGARDLESS OF THE SERVED OCCUPANT LOAD, PROVIDED THAT DOORS FROM THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY TO THE BUILDING EXTERIOR SWING TOWARDS THE EXTERIOR.
- 6.9. A CORRIDOR SEPARATES THE ENTRY AND EXIT DOOR OF EACH DWELLING UNIT FROM THE DOOR TO AN INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY, AND NO DWELLING UNIT DOORS OPEN DIRECTLY INTO THE INTERIOR EXIT STAIRWAY.
- 6.10. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE EXIT STAIRWAY AND THE ENTRY AND EXIT DOOR OF ANY DWELLING UNIT IS NO MORE THAN 20 FEET.
- 6.11. TRAVEL DISTANCE, MEASURED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 1017 OF THIS CODE, DOES NOT EXCEED 125 FEET.
- 6.12. ELEVATORS ARE PRESSURIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 909.21 OF THIS CODE, OR OPEN INTO ELEVATOR LOBBIES IN COMPLIANCE WITH § 713.14 OF THIS CODE.
- 6.13. THE STAIRWAY EITHER:
- A. EXTENDS TO THE ROOF SURFACE THROUGH A STAIRWAY BULKHEAD IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 1511.7.2 OF THIS CODE, IF THE ROOF HAS A SLOPE NOT STEEPER THAN 20 DEGREES (0.35 RAD); OR
 - B. IS CONSTRUCTED AGAINST THE STREET WALL, WITH 1 WINDOW FACING THE STREET AT EACH LANDING, AND ACCESS TO THE ROOF IS PROVIDED VIA A SCUTTLE WITH A STATIONARY, NONCOMBUSTIBLE ACCESS LADDER.
- 6.14. OTHER OCCUPANCIES ARE PERMITTED IN THE SAME BUILDING PROVIDED THEY COMPLY WITH ALL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS CODE. OTHER OCCUPANCIES SHALL NOT COMMUNICATE WITH THE GROUP R OCCUPANCY PORTION OF THE BUILDING OR WITH THE SINGLE-EXIT STAIRWAY.

Equity:

- Impact:
 - The proposed legislation would make smaller scale multi-family easier and more cost efficient to complete, thus allowing developers to work in neighborhoods that might not otherwise be feasible. The building types are well suited to infill lots that are predominately found in the higher need communities.
- Engagement:
 - Various advocacy organizations have been sharing information on this bill including Balt P.O.P. (People Oriented Places) and the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU). CNU Mid-Atlantic held a single stair design competition in May.
- Internal Operations:
 - Will have no impact to Planning Department operations, but will require Housing review staff to become familiar with the updated requirements so that they are correctly implemented.

Notification: The agenda was sent to the 17,000 unique emails on file with the Planning Department.



Chris Ryer
Director



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Chief James Wallace, Baltimore City Fire Chief, Baltimore City Fire Department
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	August 26, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0062 Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

Position: Support with Amendments

BILL SYNOPSIS

This bill allows for certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a four single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD) supports the intent of this bill. A single stair access building can offer significant advantages for development, particularly in Baltimore City, where housing demand, space constraints, and construction costs continue impact the city. This type of building design provides a unique opportunity to maximize efficiency in construction and use of space, allowing more of a building's square footage to be dedicated to actual residential units rather than space for additional stairwells and hallways. For Baltimore, where many neighborhoods include narrow or irregularly shaped lots, especially in older parts of the city, this approach to building design can help develop better underutilized or difficult-to-develop areas of land.

Encouraging the development of single stair access buildings can also promote the creation of more affordable and diverse housing types by lowering construction costs and improving design flexibility. This aligns with broader city goals to increase housing supply, create more options for residents at different income levels, and support development in established neighborhoods without dramatically altering the existing community.

However, it is imperative that fire safety and accessibility requirements be carefully considered and thoroughly addressed when discussing the use and implementation of single stair access buildings. Life safety must remain a top priority, and the BCFD emphasizes the need for clear code compliance, well-defined egress routes, and adequate fire protection systems in any building approved under this model. While this bill presents promising opportunities, the success of this building type in Baltimore will depend on a balance between development innovation and

public safety.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill has no fiscal impact on BCFD.

AMENDMENTS

Every building using this single-stair design must have a full sprinkler system installed throughout the entire structure. This includes not just living spaces but also areas that are hidden or made of combustible materials, such as attics, roof cavities, and the spaces between floors. These areas must be protected with sprinklers, and draftstopping (which blocks the spread of fire) cannot be used as a substitute.

The stairway that people use to exit the building in case of emergency can either be located inside or outside. If it's inside, it must be enclosed in fire-rated walls that can resist fire for two hours, and the doors must also be fire-rated for 90 minutes. This is consistent with national fire safety standards and helps ensure that the exit remains safe during a fire.

Finally, the layout of the building must include a corridor that separates the door of each apartment from the stairwell. This means no apartment door can open directly into the stairwell. These corridors must also be built with walls that can resist fire for two hours. This added protection allows the building to meet fire safety requirements without needing to have a separate emergency rescue window in each bedroom.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Alice Kennedy, Commissioner, Housing and Community Development
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	September 12, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0062 Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 25-0062 Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy for the purpose of permitting certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

If enacted, Council Bill 25-0062 would allow certain types of residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a single exit, so long as specific conditions are met that allow those buildings to remain safe. If approved, this Bill will take effect on the 30th day after its enactment.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

DHCD would first like to thank the sponsor of this Bill for collaborating with our agency before its introduction and working to address our initial concerns. This Bill, in short, would allow for certain types of residential buildings to have only one means of egress, so long as they meet all requirements, as outlined in the Bill, to ensure safety. Permitting “Single Stair” building construction is already the accepted standard outside of North America, and several US cities such as Seattle and Knoxville have already successfully implemented the change.

Without needing to build around multiple stairwells, smaller scale multi-family homes are both easier and more cost-effective to build. Perhaps even more importantly, this change would allow for those multi-family homes to be built on lots that would have otherwise been considered too small or oddly shaped to accommodate them. Permitting such construction would better serve to develop otherwise unacceptable infill sites within communities that would benefit the greatest from increased housing opportunities. Furthermore, this legislation may allow for older commercial properties, such as those along the Howard Street corridor, to lawfully convert their upper floors to residential uses, thereby returning them to productive use.

At its regular meeting of August 28th, 2025, the Planning Commission concurred with the recommendation of its Departmental Staff and recommended that City Council Ordinance 25-0062 be approved by the City Council. The Commission's report noted many of the same points addressed by DHCD, and we share in their support for this legislation.

FISCAL IMPACT

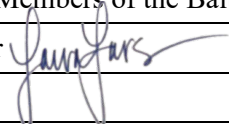
As drafted, this Bill would have minimal fiscal or administrative impact on DHCD.

AMENDMENTS

DHCD does not seek any amendments to this Bill at this time.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Laura Larsen, Budget Director 
DATE	September 3 rd , 2025
SUBJECT	25-0062 Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

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

Position: Does Not Oppose

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 25-0062, Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy, the purpose of permitting certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

Background

‘Single exit’ or ‘single stair reform’ is the effort to amend the building codes to allow for more construction of multi-family residential buildings with only one staircase in conjunction with fire safety improvements. There is a national standard for building construction called the International Building Code (IBC), many jurisdictions adopt and modify the IBC, including Baltimore City. ‘International,’ it should be noted, is a misnomer as the IBC is rarely used outside of the United States.

Currently single exit from residential occupancy is laid out in Section 1006.3.4 in Chapter 10 of the IBC, which restricts the height of an apartment building to a maximum of three stories, with no more than four units on each story, when only one exit is provided. To support higher-density housing, some major cities, such as Seattle (1970’s) and Honolulu (2012), have amended their codes to allow single-exit buildings up to six stories, while it has always been allowed in New York City. In addition to those three cities, the table below lists other cities that have recently adopted the measure as well, and many more have the measure under consideration.

City	Single Stair Reform Adoption
Jackson, Tenn	Jan 2025
Knoxville, Tenn	Jan 2025
Memphis, Tenn	April 2025
Austin, Texas	April 2025
Nashville, Tenn	July 2025

25-0062 Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

The legislation allows for new small apartment buildings in Baltimore to be built that have just one exit stairway, instead of the usual two, as long as the enhanced fire safety rules, proscribed in 25-0062, are

followed.

Under 25-0062, a building can have one exit if all of these conditions are met:

1. Size and Type
 - a. It can be up to 6 stories tall if built with fire-resistant materials (Types I, II, III-A, or IV).
 - b. It can be up to 4 stories tall if built with standard wood construction (Type V).
 - c. No more than 4 apartments per floor.
2. Fire Safety
 - a. The whole building must be built to resist fire for at least 1 hour.
 - b. It must have sprinklers in every part of the building.
 - c. The stairway must be in a 2-hour fire-rated enclosure, with 1-hour fire-rated doors.
 - d. The stairway must be pressurized, meaning air is pumped in to keep out smoke during a fire.
 - e. Doors into the stairway must swing inward, except the door to the outside, which must swing outward.
3. Layout
 - a. No apartment door can open directly into the stairway.
 - b. Apartments must be connected to the stairway by a hallway.
 - c. The hallway from any unit to the stairway must be 20 feet or less.
 - d. The total distance to exit the building can't be more than 125 feet.
4. Elevators and Roof Access
 - a. Elevators must also be pressurized or open into a separate lobby.
 - b. The stairway must reach the roof, either through a roof hatch with a ladder or a full stair bulkhead.
5. Other Uses
 - a. Other types of businesses or uses can be in the building, but they must be separated from the residential area and cannot use the same stairway.
 - b. The garage or rooftop (if part of the apartments) can share the stairway.

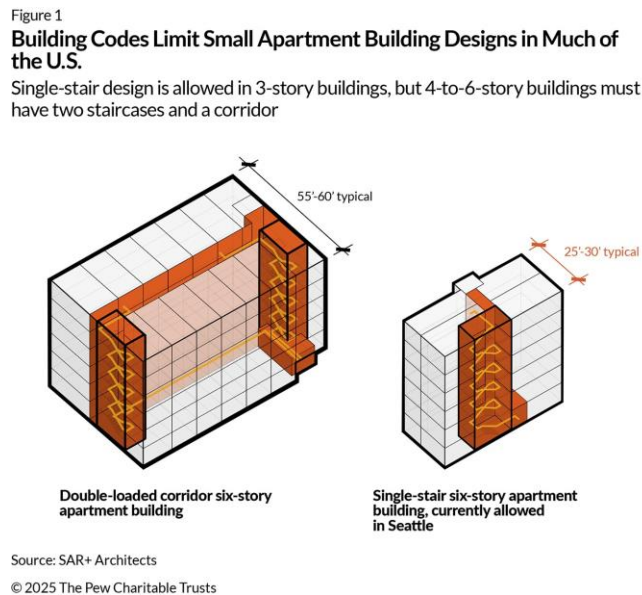
Maryland Housing Needs Assessment

The State of Maryland commissioned the “2020 Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10-Year Strategic Plan”, via Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MD DHCD). The MD DHCD issued a follow up report in 2025 with updated numbers and revised policy recommendations. The report’s intent is to assess Maryland’s current and future housing needs and outline strategies to address them over the next decade. Its goals include identifying housing challenges, projecting future demand, and recommending policies to ensure all Maryland residents have access to safe, affordable, and appropriate housing. It also aims to guide state and local decision-makers in prioritizing investments, aligning resources, and coordinating efforts to meet diverse housing needs. The report discussed 70 actions designed to address priority needs by region in the state.

Council Bill 25-0062 touches upon three of the recommended actions in the report: enact zoning changes to allow or expand for higher density residential development, amend zoning codes to allow for the by-right development of diverse housing types, and revise land use standards to encourage small lot development.

Council Bill 25-0062 is a zoning changes that would allow for higher density residential development. Traditionally, residential buildings have been required to provide multiple exits, even when a single, well-designed exit could meet modern safety standards. This requirement often adds cost, physical size and space, and complexity to smaller-scale multifamily projects, which can discourage development in areas already struggling to produce enough housing.

By legalizing single-exit design, this expands the by-right development of diverse housing types. Single-exit building design allows for smaller denser buildings. The graphic below shows the differences in scale between a 6-story building that is currently allowed under the code, and a 6-story building that could be built with Council Bill 25-0062's passage.



By allowing a safe single-exit design, the reform could make it feasible to build more small and mid-sized apartment buildings on small lots where a second exit would be physically or financially prohibitive. This aligns with broader zoning and housing reforms aimed at increasing density, expanding by-right development for diverse housing types, and reducing regulatory hurdles that keep much of Maryland's residential land locked into low-intensity use. In essence, the single-exit reform serves as another tool for creating more housing options without compromising safety—removing a technical but significant barrier that has long slowed the production of modest-scale multifamily housing.

Fiscal Impact

The Finance Department was not able to come up with a fiscal note for this legislation. There is not a variance that allows for the new construction of single exit buildings that 25-0062 allows. While there are existing structures that were built prior to the ban on single-exits, it is not feasible to estimate how many structures in the City are single stair buildings that were built before the adoption of the IBC. The Department of Finance reached out to both Seattle and Honolulu to see if there was a way to understand how many buildings and units overall were created by this change in policy, and the revenue impact derived from this policy change. Staff from Seattle's Department of Construction and Inspections stated that they do not track how many single stair structures have been built since adopting single stair reform. Honolulu's staff have also stated that they cannot track this type of construction. As New York City has always had some form of single stair exit legalized, so there is nothing to track post-legalization.

The fiscal impacts of 25-0062 are difficult to estimate, as other cities that have adopted single-stair reform do not track buildings that benefit from the reform or have adopted them so recently that no projects have been completed. Single stair reform is expected to lower construction costs, increase the diversity of residential building types, and encourage density. When undeveloped lots are improved and new people move into the City this will positively impact revenues like property taxes and income taxes. However, the lack of data, such as number of buildings built or their assessed value, from other cities' experience with single-stair reform makes it difficult to estimate the impact that the reform would have on Baltimore

Conclusion

Council Bill 25-0062 introduces a targeted update to Baltimore's building code that would permit the construction of small apartment buildings with a single exit stairway, provided strict fire safety and design standards are met. The reform is intended to support the development of more compact, space-efficient housing types that are currently limited under existing code requirements. While the fiscal impact is difficult to estimate at this time due to limited data on past and potential single-stair construction, the proposed change offers a path to expand the city's housing supply in a controlled and safety-conscious manner. This approach may be particularly useful for increasing housing options on smaller or irregular lots where conventional two-stair layouts are impractical.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance does not oppose City Council Bill 25-0062.

cc: Michael Mocksten
Nina Themelis

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW
EBONY M. THOMPSON, CITY SOLICITOR
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET
SUITE 101, CITY HALL
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

September 16, 2025

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 25-0062 – Building Code – Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 25-0062 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill would amend the City's Building Code to permit certain residential buildings to have a single exit or access to a single exit, so long as certain conditions are met regarding the construction of the exit.

The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore have the express power to pass laws that promote the general welfare and to regulate the "construction, use, operation, maintenance and removal of buildings and structures, or any part thereof, of every kind." City Charter, Art. II, §§ (1), (47). This broad express legislative power is subject to the statewide Maryland Building Performance Standards ("MBPS" or "Standards"), made up of the International Building Code (IBC), the International Residential Code (IRC), and the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), with modifications by the State. Code of Maryland Regulations ("COMAR"), 09.12.51.02; Md. Code, Pub. Saf., § 12-501(h). State law requires each jurisdiction in Maryland to "implement and enforce" the Standards for buildings and structures, subject to any local amendments. Md. Code, Pub. Saf., §12-505(a)(1)(i).

Local jurisdictions may modify the Standards subject to certain restrictions.

(a)(1) A local jurisdiction may adopt local amendments to the Standards if the local amendments do not:

- (i) prohibit the minimum implementation and enforcement activities set forth in § 12-505 of this subtitle;
- (ii) weaken energy conservation and efficiency provisions contained in the Standards;
- (iii) except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, weaken the automatic fire sprinkler systems provisions for townhouses and one- and two-family dwellings contained in the Standards; or

(iv) weaken wind design and wind-borne debris provisions contained in the Standards.

Md. Code, Pub. Saf., §12-504(a)(1).

These state restrictions do not prohibit the amendments proposed in City Council Bill 25-0062, which would allow single exit or access to a single exit for a building when certain conditions are met.

These amendments conflict with the means of egress standards outlined in the 2021 International Building Code (“IBC”), which only permit single exit or access to a single exit from any story or occupied roof when certain conditions exist. IBC 1006.3.4 (as incorporated by reference by COMAR 09.12.51.04). However, state law allows local jurisdictions to pass amendments that conflict with the Standards. Md. Code, Pub. Saf., §12-504 (c) (“If local amendment conflicts with the Standards, the local amendment prevails in the local jurisdiction.”).

A local jurisdiction must adopt a local amendment in accordance with applicable local law and provide a copy of the local amendment to the Department at least 15 days before the effective date of the amendment or within 5 days after the adoption of an emergency local amendment. Md. Code, Public Safety § 12-504(d)-(e).

As there are no legal impediments to this bill, the Law Department can approve it for form and legal sufficiency

Sincerely,



Desiree Luckey

Assistant Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson, City Solicitor
Hilary Ruley, Chief Solicitor
Jeff Hochstetler, Chief Solicitor
Ashlea Brown, Chief Solicitor
Michelle Toth, Assistant Solicitor

Baltimore City Council



Legislative Investigations

Committee

Bill: 25-0062

**Title: Building Code – Single Exit from
Residential Occupancy**

Public Testimony



100 North Charles Street, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

410-223-2222
www.brhp.org

September 18, 2025

Land Use and Transportation Committee
Baltimore City Council
Baltimore City Hall, Room 408
100 N. Holliday St.
Baltimore, MD 21202

**RE: Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership Testimony in Support of City Council
Bill 25-0062 Single Exit from Residential Occupancy**

Dear Chair Dorsey, Vice Chair Middleton and Honorable Committee Members:

On behalf of the Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership, I am writing to express strong support for **City Council Bill 25-0062**, which proposes updating Baltimore's building code to allow residential buildings up to six stories high to be constructed with a single stairway. This bill represents a meaningful step toward creating a more affordable, equitable, and sustainable Baltimore by enabling more efficient use of space and resources.

At BRHP, our mission is to expand housing choices for families historically excluded from opportunity-rich neighborhoods. As the Regional Administrator for the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, we serve over 4,300 families, helping them transition from areas of concentrated poverty to communities where they can thrive. Our work is grounded in [research](#) that shows that where you live shapes your access to education, employment, health, and safety. Yet, we consistently encounter a major obstacle: the lack of affordable housing in well-resourced neighborhoods.

Currently, Baltimore's building code requires two stairways for any residential building over three stories. This mandate significantly increases construction costs

and reduces usable floor space. According to a [report from The Pew Charitable Trusts](#), the requirement for a second stairway and connecting corridor can consume 7% of a building's floor area and add 6–13% to total construction costs. These added costs make it harder to build affordable housing and often render small-scale infill projects economically infeasible. The result is fewer homes built, higher rents, and continued vacancy in areas that could otherwise thrive.

Baltimore is facing a severe shortage of affordable homes. **[Over half of Baltimore renters are cost-burdened](#)**, and thousands of families are struggling to find homes that meet their needs and budgets. Alarming, over [20% of all Baltimore households spend over half their income on housing](#), and 92% of these severely burdened households are earning less than half of the area median income. Recent reporting from the [Baltimore Banner](#) on the latest U.S. Census Bureau data further underscores the affordability crisis for renters, finding that 39% of occupied rental units housed tenants make less than \$35,000 a year, and more than half of those families spent 50% or more of their income on rent. These numbers reflect a housing system that is failing thousands of families across our city, and we must act to ensure these families are not left behind.

Baltimore has the opportunity to join a growing movement and lead the way in smart, equitable housing policy. Cities like Seattle and New York allow single-stair buildings up to six stories, and the Pew research found no fire-related deaths linked to the lack of a second exit over the 12 years studied. Importantly, this bill includes modern fire prevention standards to ensure no compromise on safety.

For the families BRHP serves—many of whom have been historically excluded and priced out of the housing market or subjected to living in overcrowded or substandard conditions—this bill offers a pathway to safe, stable, and affordable housing in communities of opportunity. By easing overly restrictive requirements, Baltimore can pursue new housing potential in a variety of neighborhoods across the city, directly aligning with our mission to expand housing choices for low-income families.

For these reasons, we respectfully request the committee's support for Bill 25-0062 to support the housing needs of our residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Adria Crutchfield
Executive Director

About the [Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership](#):

The Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership (BRHP) is a non-profit organization that expands housing choices for low-income families who have historically been excluded from housing in well-resourced neighborhoods by helping them access and transition successfully to safe, healthy, and economically vibrant communities. As the Regional Administrator for the Baltimore Housing Mobility Program, BRHP has been opening pathways to better futures for low-income families for over 10 years. BRHP currently provides over 4,300 low-income families rental assistance in the form of Housing Choice Vouchers coupled with counseling support for families as they move from areas of concentrated poverty to areas of opportunity in Baltimore City and the five surrounding counties.

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Daniel Wilson <ds.wilson82@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 3:18 PM
To: Brandon M Scott; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Tiso, Eric (DOP); Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill #25-0062/ Building Code---Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

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Dear Sirs:

I am hard pressed to think of a good reason for a 6-story building to have only one exit, no matter how well-constructed that exit is. Surely enough lives have been lost to poor fire safety that we all see the need for at least two exits from any but the tiniest of buildings.

I am reminded of my own son's experience two years ago, where he and his fellow residents barely got out of their two-story apartment building before it burned to the ground in a middle-of-the-night blaze. No one died, but the fire spread so fast that everyone lost everything including many pet dogs and cats.

Please oppose this bill.

Regards,
Daniel S. Wilson
6302 Boxwood Rd,
Baltimore City, MD 21212

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Michael Scepaniak <michael@baltpop.org>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 12:18 AM
To: rdorsey
Cc: Leva, Anthony F (City Council); Nicholes, Ash (City Council); Weiss, Sumner (City Council)
Subject: Re: Land Use & Transportation Committee - written testimony
Attachments: Baltimore City Bill 25-0065 Testimony (Zoning – Eliminating Off-street Parking Requirements) 20250907.pdf; Baltimore City Bill 25-0064 Testimony (Zoning – Bulk And Yard Requirements – Amendments) 20250907.pdf; Baltimore City Bill 25-0062 Testimony (Building Code – Single Exit From Residential Occupancy) 20250907.pdf

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Attached, please find testimony on behalf of BaltPOP to be considered in the upcoming Land Use & Transportation Committee hearings regarding the following bills:

- Bill 25-0062 (Building Code – Single Exit From Residential Occupancy)
- Bill 25-0064 (Zoning – Bulk And Yard Requirements – Amendments)
- Bill 25-0065 (Zoning – Eliminating Off-street Parking Requirements)

Please confirm receipt. Thank you for your time and efforts. Good luck!

Mike....

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

On Thu, Aug 28, 2025, at 11:07 AM, Weiss, Sumner (City Council) wrote:

Best to send it in a couple of days before. But the earlier, the better- it will give committee members more time to review.

Sumner Weiss (he/him)



Baltimore City Council

Director of Legislative Affairs
Councilman Ryan Dorsey
Baltimore City Council, District 3
sumner.weiss@baltimorecity.gov
(410) 396-4812

From: Michael Scepaniak <michael@baltpop.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 4:16 PM
To: rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Leva, Anthony F (City Council) <anthony.leva@baltimorecity.gov>; Weiss, Sumner (City Council) <Sumner.Weiss@baltimorecity.gov>; Nicholes, Ash (City Council) <Ash.Nicholes@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Re: Land Use & Transportation Committee - written testimony

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Thank you. Is there a deadline other than "before the hearing starts"? Or do you need it by EOD one or two days before?

Mike.....

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

On Tue, Aug 26, 2025, at 3:34 PM, rdorsey wrote:

Send them as a PDF attachment to me at this address and CC the three others I've CC'd here.

Ryan Dorsey
Baltimore City Council
District 3
o [410-396-4812](tel:410-396-4812)
c [410-925-4156](tel:410-925-4156)

"To be on the side of people who are struggling for something doesn't necessarily mean you are being political." -Bob Dylan

From: Michael Scepaniak <michael@baltpop.org>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 1:47:50 PM
To: rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>
Subject: Land Use & Transportation Committee - written testimony

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Councilmember Dorsey,

We'd like to submit written testimony in support of the bills being considered in the Land Use & Transportation Committee on September 11th and 18th. What are the procedures for doing that? To whom should I send the testimony and by when? I don't see instructions posted for these meetings or prior meetings. Thank you.

Mike.....

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 2:22 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Oppose City Council Bill #25-0065 -Zoning - Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements

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PLEASE GIVE THIS YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND ADD TO THE LEGISLATIVE RECORD (LEGISTAR) IMMEDIATELY. THANK YOU.

Dear Honorable President and Members of the City Council

Re: **Oppose** City Council Bill #25-0065 – Zoning – Eliminating Off-Street Parking Requirements

As Baltimore City residents and homeowners for over four decades, we **strongly oppose** City Council Bill #25-0065. Please share this letter with the members of the City Council and include it in the legislative record for this bill.

Baltimore's citizens are already well served by the recently updated Zoning Code. There is no defensible rationale to upend the legislated Off-Street Parking Requirements.

Homeowners have invested in Baltimore City and depend upon residential zoning that supports their neighborhoods. Citizens and communities already count on zoning that:

- 1- encourages owner occupancy and long term commitment,
- 2- discourages institutional and absentee investors,
- 3- provides a reliable and stable tax base,
- 4-maintains and encourages greenspaces, including homeowner and public yards and gardens
- 5-preserves thoughtful community design that builds upon existing community assets.

There are actually three current bills (#25-0064, #25-0065). If all three bills become law there will be a layering effect. The resulting impacts are unknown and not addressed in the legislation. We have no idea what this will look like if the legislation is enacted. We encourage the City Council to review the three bills as a whole and not make piecemeal decisions about such major changes.

Here are reasons the reasons we **oppose Bill #25-0065:**

1- Treats all neighborhoods as though they have the same characteristics and needs. They do not. It is self evident that Baltimore's neighborhoods offer a variety of uses and densities of structures. Many neighborhoods include both residential and commercial properties of a variety of sizes and scales. Many include churches,

schools, health care facilities, restaurants, grocery stores and specialty businesses. Each kind of use will have distinct parking needs associated with their specific location. Eliminating off-street parking requirements in all zoning categories will discourage homeowners, renters, church-goers, business customers, health care patients, tourists and people of all categories who need to find a parking place.

2- Creates incentives to cut corners and not include parking in new construction and business plans. Many Baltimore neighborhoods already lack sufficient parking spaces to accommodate existing stores, restaurants, churches, health care facilities and group homes. Already some households, both homeowner and rental, have multiple vehicles and resort to parking on front yards. Already there is inadequate Zoning enforcement of this type of illegal parking. Matters will only become worse if there are no minimum off-street parking requirements. It would be a serious mistake to discourage Baltimore City's homeowners by thwarting their current expectations to park near their house. Homeowners are key to the City's tax base and should be respected for their support of Baltimore's stability.

3- Does not address the additional zoning, housing, building and transportation inspection staffing requirements. There likely will be more double parking and illegal parking in general. There should be a plan to provide adequate parking and a plan for enforcement for those who violate the rules.

4- There is no fiscal analysis or data to support this legislation. It does not address fiscal implications for the future, including potential increases to the City budget. This short-sighted planning also ignores the needs of

visitors to our city. We seek the financial benefits of additional tourism, but frustrate our visitors when they come to see us by car. We want more residents, but not all are carless, Many of our residents and visitors have disabilities that require special transportation consideration. What is the physical and fiscal impact upon these individuals? Before passing this “one size fits all” legislation we need to consider some actual data that addresses the potential outcomes. It is not too much to expect before we take the risk.

5- While the legislation suggests an optimistic view of a Baltimore City with fewer cars, it fails to address our current realities. It is an admirable goal to increase the use of bicycles as a mode of transportation, but not all Baltimoreans are able to regularly use bikes. It is also an admirable goal to wean ourselves away from reliance on cars, but we do not have a fully viable public transportation system. While admirable as an idea, this legislation cannot assure public transportation funding. A highly functioning transportation system relies upon State and Federal dollars, and they are becoming increasingly scarce. Major public transportation projects often require decades to complete, assuming that there is sufficient political alignment to support construction. It would be irresponsible to eliminate off-street parking minimum requirements prior to achieving a fully viable public transportation system.

In conclusion, we strongly **OPPOSE Bill #25-0065**. This bill represents top down decision making that imposes upon the people of Baltimore City. It is one bill in a package of bills that, when combined, constitute an experiment that could be detrimental to Baltimore’s neighborhoods. Bill #25-0065 contradicts the effort that went into the recently updated Zoning Code. Baltimoreans did not vote for this and expect better of their City government.

Respectfully,

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

3021 Iona Terrace

Baltimore MD 21214

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Kathleen Kotarba <kathleenkotarba@icloud.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 2:15 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: OPPOSE City Council Bill 25-0064 Zoning - Bulk and Yard Requirements - Amendments

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PLEASE GIVE THIS YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND ADD TO THE LEGISLATIVE FILE (LEGISTAR) IMMEDIATELY. THANK YOU.

Dear Honorable President and Members of
the Baltimore City Council

Re: **Oppose** City Council Bills #25-0064

As Baltimore City residents and homeowners for over four decades, we **strongly oppose** City Council Bill #25-0064. Please share this letter with all members of the City Council and include it in the legislative record for this bill.

Baltimore's citizens are already well served by the recently updated Zoning Code. There is no defensible rationale to upend the legislated Bulk and Yard Requirements. Homeowners have invested in Baltimore City and depend upon residential zoning that supports their

neighborhoods. Citizens and communities already count on zoning that:

- 1- encourages owner occupancy and long term commitment,
- 2- discourages institutional and absentee investors,
- 3- provides a reliable and stable tax base,
- 4-maintains and encourages greenspaces, including homeowner and public yards and gardens
- 5-preserves thoughtful community design that builds upon existing community assets.

There are actually three current bills (#25-0064, #25-0065 and #25-0066) that raise interconnected concerns. If all three bills become law there will be a layering effect. The resulting impacts are unknown and not addressed in the legislation. We have no idea what this will look like if the legislation is enacted. We encourage the City Council to review the three bills as a whole and not make piecemeal decisions about such major changes.

Here are the reasons we **oppose Bill #25-0064**:

- 1- Treats all neighborhoods as though they have the same characteristics and needs.**

They do not. The City Council knows that Baltimore's neighborhoods offer a variety of designs with greenspace that is generally proportionate to the building types. This is an asset, offering a range of choices for everyone. Imposing a uniform change that reduces open and green space is misguided at best. This can lead to more hardscaping, increased run off and loss of green space overall. This is counter to decades of Baltimore City's sustainability planning and this is counter to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

2- Creates incentives for ill-conceived additions and "tear downs" that destroy the character and desirability of neighborhoods. Will there be any enforceable design standards that apply to new construction and additions? There is no evidence of that in the proposed legislation. With the exception of properties in CHAP Baltimore City Historic Districts, property owners need not follow any particular design standards. This legislation will allow property owners to cover more lot area and further reduce green space. The resulting additions and new construction could be in visual conflict with existing communities. No one will review the visual impact. There will be no recourse for bad design.

3- Does not address the additional housing and building permit and inspection staffing requirements. There will be more construction activity that requires

additional monitoring and additional City attorneys when legal action is needed.

4- There is no fiscal analysis or data to support this legislation. It does not address fiscal implications for the future, including potential increases to the City budget.

5- Does not address overall environmental impacts resulting from increased density.

In conclusion, we strongly **OPPOSE Bill #25-0064**. This bill represents top down decision making that imposes upon the people of Baltimore City. It is one bill in a package of bills that, when combined, constitute an experiment that could be detrimental to Baltimore's neighborhoods. Bill #25-0064 contradicts the thoughtful years long effort that went into the recently updated Zoning Code of several years ago. Baltimoreans did not vote for this and expect better of their City government.

Respectfully,

Kathleen and Michael Kotarba

3021 Iona Terrace

Baltimore MD 21214

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: ahinz61@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Andrew Hinz <ahinz61@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 6:07 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

One of the largest costs associated with construction of new housing is parking. The city's remaining parking minimums are arbitrary and force up the cost of housing for everyone living in a building, even if they choose not to own a car. Devoting too much space to parking also degrades the walkability of neighborhoods, removing potential space for housing and small businesses in favor of car storage. #25-0065 would remove arbitrary parking minimums, and allow a developer or homeowner to determine their parking needs. Cities across the country have successfully repealed arbitrary parking minimums, and seen improvements to the walkability, affordability, and small business climate as a result.

All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Andrew Hinz
1427 Park Ave Baltimore, MD 21217-4231
ahinz61@outlook.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: weberse2@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Sarah Weber <weberse2@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 4:22 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

One of the largest costs associated with construction of new housing is parking. The city's remaining parking minimums are arbitrary and force up the cost of housing for everyone living in a building, even if they choose not to own a car. Devoting too much space to parking also degrades the walkability of neighborhoods, removing potential space for housing and small businesses in favor of car storage. #25-0065 would remove arbitrary parking minimums, and allow a developer or homeowner to determine their parking needs. Cities across the country have successfully repealed arbitrary parking minimums, and seen improvements to the walkability, affordability, and small business climate as a result.

Less parking lots, more green space, more SAFETY.

All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Ms. Sarah Weber
141 N Kenwood Ave Baltimore, MD 21224-1244 weberse2@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Gabriel Kroiz <kroizarch@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 2:41 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065 Inbox

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Dear Council,
Please consider my testimony regarding CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065:

For Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will enable more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that can more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and feature more windows, leading to improved cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates the present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

One of the largest costs associated with the construction of new housing is parking. The city's remaining parking minimums are arbitrary and force up the cost of housing for everyone living in a building, even if they choose not to own a car. Devoting too much space to parking also degrades the walkability of neighborhoods, removing potential space for housing and small businesses in favor of car storage. #25-0065 would remove arbitrary parking minimums and allow a developer or homeowner to determine their parking needs. Cities across the country have successfully repealed arbitrary parking minimums and seen improvements to the walkability, affordability, and small business climate as a result.

All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Gabriel Kroiz

2213 Winterling Court | Baltimore, MD 21231
410.499.7571 | kroizarch@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: renejcardona27@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Rene Cardona <renejcardona27@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 2:26 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Oppose the Jones Falls Transfer Station proposal, especially without safety improvements

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in opposition to the city's proposal to relocate the Sisson Street Transfer Facility to the Potts & Callahan site along Falls Road in the Jones Falls Valley.

For years, the Mayor's Office and the Baltimore City Department of Transportation have made promises for improvements to this corridor that would make it safe for people of all ages and abilities to walk and bike from Maryland Avenue all the way to Union Avenue.

These promises included:

- 1) Widening the Jones Falls Trail to high quality trail standards between Maryland Avenue and the Round Falls switchbacks, as the trail along this section is below minimum trail width standards. Part of this proposal is currently in planning as part of the Jones Falls Gateway project.
- 2) Maintaining the closure to through traffic north of the Potts and Callahan site. This commitment was made by Mayor Scott in his first term to the Greater Remington Improvement Association to expand safe outdoor recreational space during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the commitment was broken and the road reopened. Baltimore City Department of Transportation was subsequently instructed to produce several designs including restoration of that traffic diverter, which were presented to the community with an anticipated installation timeline of 12 months. No improvements were installed.
- 3) Conversion of a small section of Falls Road and Clipper Mill Road to one-way, which would allow installation of a walking and biking sidepath on the most dangerous and narrow section of the corridor.

All three of these unrealized improvements--improvements already promised by the administration--are necessary to make the corridor safe and accessible to people of all ages and abilities walking and biking TODAY. Potential introduction of increased truck and personal vehicle traffic to the corridor with a relocation of the Sisson Street Transfer Facility makes all of these improvements even more urgent and necessary.

It's important to note that these improvements would not restrict vehicle access to any businesses or residences along the corridor. All would still be accessible by car, and via the routes currently most commonly used to access those residences and businesses. The only thing this proposal would do is prevent the most dangerous behavior on the corridor: through speeding by drivers seeking to avoid the JFX.

There is no safe path to relocation of the transfer facility to the Jones Falls Valley without all three of these improvements being installed in advance of or concurrently with relocation. Anyone supporting relocation without committing to these improvements is endorsing a plan that will injure and kill pedestrians and bicyclists.

I do not believe the proposed relocation site is a good one, but I urge you to commit to these improvements regardless of the outcome of the relocation proposal.

Sincerely,
Sir Rene Cardona
1832 Gough St Baltimore, MD 21231-2610
renejcardona27@gmail.com
(228) 239-7197

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: natsbar@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Nathan Sbar
<natsbar@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 9:22 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

I know that the following message is a form letter, but I do sincerely approve the message. I believe that a city should be a city. Baltimore will never thrive if we can only imagine suburbs then try to force our city into that straightjacket of a development pattern. Allowing for developers in a city to build outside of the suburban pattern is necessary, even if not sufficient, to leading Baltimore to prosperity. The rest is the form letter part:

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

One of the largest costs associated with construction of new housing is parking. The city's remaining parking minimums are arbitrary and force up the cost of housing for everyone living in a building, even if they choose not to own a car. Devoting too much space to parking also degrades the walkability of neighborhoods, removing potential space for housing and small businesses in favor of car storage. #25-0065 would remove arbitrary parking minimums, and allow a developer or homeowner to determine their parking needs. Cities across the country have successfully repealed arbitrary parking minimums, and seen improvements to the walkability, affordability, and small business climate as a result.

All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Nathan Sbar
1736 Patapsco St Baltimore, MD 21230-4824 natsbar@pm.me

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: JBeall0114@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Jaden Beall <JBeall0114@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 1:48 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

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All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Jaden Beall
2203 Guilford Ave Baltimore, MD 21218-5816 JBeall0114@mail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: dhbjorndalen@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of David Bjorndalen
<dhbjorndalen@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 1:45 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

One of the largest costs associated with construction of new housing is parking. The city's remaining parking minimums are arbitrary and force up the cost of housing for everyone living in a building, even if they choose not to own a car. Devoting too much space to parking also degrades the walkability of neighborhoods, removing potential space for housing and small businesses in favor of car storage. #25-0065 would remove arbitrary parking minimums, and allow a developer or homeowner to determine their parking needs. Cities across the country have successfully repealed arbitrary parking minimums, and seen improvements to the walkability, affordability, and small business climate as a result.

All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
David Bjorndalen
710 S Beechfield Ave Baltimore, MD 21229-4423 dhbjorndalen@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: mel@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Melanie Scheirer
<mel@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 1:11 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

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All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Melanie Scheirer
1623 W Pratt St Baltimore, MD 21223-2446 mel@mountclare.net

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: cohenrachels@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Rae Cohen
<cohenrachels@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 8:05 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

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In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

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All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Miss Rae Cohen
119 Station North Mews Baltimore, MD 21202-2998 cohenrachels@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: cohenrachels@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Rae Cohen
<cohenrachels@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 8:04 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

One of the largest costs associated with construction of new housing is parking. The city's remaining parking minimums are arbitrary and force up the cost of housing for everyone living in a building, even if they choose not to own a car. Devoting too much space to parking also degrades the walkability of neighborhoods, removing potential space for housing and small businesses in favor of car storage. #25-0065 would remove arbitrary parking minimums, and allow a developer or homeowner to determine their parking needs. Cities across the country have successfully repealed arbitrary parking minimums, and seen improvements to the walkability, affordability, and small business climate as a result.

All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Miss Rae Cohen
119 Station North Mews Baltimore, MD 21202-2998 cohenrachels@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: shoestalk@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Frank Szustak
<shoestalk@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 6:40 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Frank Szustak
101 W 23rd St Baltimore, MD 21218-5607
shoestalk@outlook.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: arianna.koudounas@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Arianna Koudounas
<arianna.koudounas@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Friday, September 5, 2025 4:00 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Ms. Arianna Koudounas
2203 Gough St Baltimore, MD 21231-2636
arianna.koudounas@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: murdock_ls@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Lauren Murdock
<murdock_ls@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 2:43 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Ms Lauren Murdock
3940 Via Lucero Santa Barbara, CA 93110-1669 murdock_ls@hotmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: jesskell@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Jessie Keller
<jesskell@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 1:50 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Ms Jessie Keller
3806 Beech Ave Baltimore, MD 21211-2222 jesskell@yahoo.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: asadahiro@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Artie Sadahiro
<asadahiro@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 10:15 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Artie Sadahiro
1602 Park Ave # 3R Baltimore, MD 21217-4305 asadahiro@mica.edu

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: mystereogotmono@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Elyce Bloomfield
<mystereogotmono@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 9:38 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Ms. Elyce Bloomfield
425 Nottingham Rd Baltimore, MD 21229-2439 mystereogotmono@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: morah129@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Tracy Barnes-Malone <morah129@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 9:21 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Tracy Barnes-Malone
3607 Clifmar Rd Windsor Mill, MD 21244-3114 morah129@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Ryan Kingsbury <ryankingsbury766@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 4, 2025 8:35 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Ryan Kingsbury
2 E Wells St Apt 551 Baltimore, MD 21230-4948
ryankingsbury766@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: michael.b.guyiii@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Michael Guy
<michael.b.guyiii@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10:52 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr Michael Guy
1315 Winston Ave Baltimore, MD 21239-3414 michael.b.guyiii@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: pessoa.stoner@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Cecilia Pessoa Gingerich
<pessoa.stoner@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 9:09 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

As my representative, please support these three important bills to improve our city. As the adage about trees goes, the best time to implement was 10 years ago, but the second-best time is today. These bills, especially the removal of parking minimums, make me excited to envision the Baltimore of 10 years from now!

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Cecilia Pessoa Gingerich
2105 Liberty Heights Ave Baltimore, MD 21217-2027 pessoa.stoner@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: gtherk@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Gary Therkildsen
<gtherk@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 5:52 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Sincerely,
Mr. Gary Therkildsen
2439 E North Ave Baltimore, MD 21213-1517 gtherk@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: kroizarch@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Gabriel Kroiz
<kroizarch@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 5:39 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Gabriel Kroiz
251 W Lafayette Ave Baltimore, MD 21217-4217 kroizarch@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: kroizarch@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Gabriel Kroiz
<kroizarch@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 5:36 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Gabriel Kroiz
251 W Lafayette Ave Baltimore, MD 21217-4217 kroizarch@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: kroizarch@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Gabriel Kroiz
<kroizarch@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 5:35 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

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Sincerely,
Mr. Gabriel Kroiz
251 W Lafayette Ave Baltimore, MD 21217-4217 kroizarch@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: george@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of George Bourozikas
<george@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 1:17 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr George Bourozikas
719 Park Ave Baltimore, MD 21201-4712
george@bourozikas.net

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: nickybainbridge@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Nicky Meara-Bainbridge
<nickybainbridge@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:30 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,

Mr. Nicky Meara-Bainbridge

929 Homestead St Baltimore, MD 21218-3607 nickybainbridge@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Brian Line <brian.a.line@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 12:00 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Fwd: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear Council President Zeke Cohen,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Brian Line
2917 Guilford Ave Baltimore, MD 21218-4116
brian.a.line@gmail.com

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cohen, Zeke (City Council)** <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>
Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2025 at 10:11 AM
Subject: Re: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065
To: brian.a.line@gmail.com <brian.a.line@gmail.com>

Good morning,

Thank you for your email. To ensure your comments are included in the official bill file and received by the committee, please submit your testimony to testimony@baltimorecity.gov.

Thank you,
Hailey Kancherla

Office of the Baltimore City Council President Zeke Cohen
Baltimore City Council
100 Holliday Street, Room 400
Baltimore, MD 21202
Office: (410) 396-4804

From: brian.a.line@everyactionadvocacy.com <brian.a.line@everyactionadvocacy.com> on behalf of Brian Line
<brian.a.line@everyactionadvocacy.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:32 AM

To: Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>

Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear Council President Zeke Cohen,

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass

Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,

Mr. Brian Line

2917 Guilford Ave Baltimore, MD 21218-4116

brian.a.line@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Andrew Waldman <andrew.r.waldman@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:46 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Please record my SUPPORT for Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

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I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

I am very supportive of moving our housing policies beyond the stagnation they have suffered at the hands of the feckless leadership of Baltimore's past. We cannot afford to let our city's housing policies fester in a toxic soup of outdated thinking. There is nothing holding us back from doing this now, and we must do so. We will be left behind if we do not find ways to make housing more available to more people who want to live in Baltimore.

All three of these bills are consistent with goals outlined in the city's recently adopted comprehensive plan, and will work to make Baltimore a more affordable, walkable, and family-friendly place to call home.

I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Mr. Andrew Waldman
2635 Hampden Ave Baltimore, MD 21211-3107
andrew.r.waldman@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: melissafreilich@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Melissa Freilich
<melissafreilich@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 11:45 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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Dear City Council Testimony,

I am writing in support of Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

I'm a young professional and parent planning to spend my life in Baltimore, and I want Baltimore to thrive. In order for Baltimore to grow, it must be a city that accommodates young families. #25-0062 will allow more diverse building designs in Baltimore City that more easily accommodate multiple bedrooms for families and allow for more windows in and better cross-ventilation of apartments.

Much of our built environment in Baltimore pre-dates present bulk and yard requirements. Adjusting those requirements, as #25-0064 seeks to do, will also further a diversity of building types in the city, allowing us to build both larger and smaller kinds of homes and enabling more people of different incomes and needs to live in more neighborhoods.

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Ms. Melissa Freilich
400 W 28th St Baltimore, MD 21211-3026
melissafreilich@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Blake Barnett <blakebarnett43@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 10:19 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for Bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Dr Blake Barnett
1201 Berry St Baltimore, MD 21211-1994
blakebarnett43@gmail.com

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: PSINNIS@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Photini Sinnis
<PSINNIS@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 8:39 AM
To: Testimony
Subject: Support for CB #25-0062, CB #25-0064, CB #25-0065

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I encourage the Land Use and Transportation Committee to vote favorably, and for the full council to pass Baltimore City Council bills #25-0062, #25-0064, and #25-0065.

Sincerely,
Dr. Photini Sinnis
719 Park Ave Apt 1 Baltimore, MD 21201-4712 PSINNIS@JHSPH.EDU

Leva, Anthony F (City Council)

From: Daniel Wilson <ds.wilson82@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2025 3:18 PM
To: Brandon M Scott; Cohen, Zeke (City Council); Conway, Mark (City Council); Tiso, Eric (DOP); Testimony
Subject: City Council Bill #25-0062/ Building Code---Single Exit from Residential Occupancy

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Dear Sirs:

I am hard pressed to think of a good reason for a 6-story building to have only one exit, no matter how well-constructed that exit is. Surely enough lives have been lost to poor fire safety that we all see the need for at least two exits from any but the tiniest of buildings.

I am reminded of my own son's experience two years ago, where he and his fellow residents barely got out of their two-story apartment building before it burned to the ground in a middle-of-the-night blaze. No one died, but the fire spread so fast that everyone lost everything including many pet dogs and cats.

Please oppose this bill.

Regards,
Daniel S. Wilson
6302 Boxwood Rd,
Baltimore City, MD 21212

Baltimore City Council



Land Use & Transportation Committee

Bill:25-0062

**Title: Building Code – Single Exit From
Residential Occupancy**

Additional Materials



HOUSING | POLICY BRIEFS February 19, 2025

The Single-Stair Solution: A Path to More Affordable, Diverse, and Sustainable Housing

Building code reform to encourage innovative design, stimulate housing development, and improve the quality of life for residents

By Sean Jursnick and Peter LiFari

[!\[\]\(2b376d1a92330ab09dad2665d2f89bf5_img.jpg\) Download the Policy Brief PDF](#)

FIGURE 1. Milo Apartments, Denver, Colorado by SAR+ Architects



Mercatus AI Assistant
Ask questions about this research.



This three-story single-stair housing project—on a narrow lot zoned for height and neighboring eight-story apartment buildings—is constrained from denser development due to building code restrictions. *Photo by David Lauer Photography.*

Efforts to reform rules that limit developers have focused on easing zoning laws that restrict where housing can be built and how large buildings can be. However, a new movement is emerging. Driven by market demand for more livable, family-friendly, multifamily rental homes, the US's building codes, which regulate what is built inside the box defined by zoning regulations, are coming under scrutiny.

One particularly burdensome code is the requirement that most multifamily buildings have multiple exit stairs. This seemingly innocuous rule has far-reaching implications for the design, cost, and feasibility of housing projects. A growing movement, spearheaded by code experts, housing developers, advocates, and recently, Colorado Governor Jared Polis, is challenging this norm and championing a more flexible approach in line with global standards: single-stair buildings.

In early September 2024, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) hosted the two-day “Single Exit Stair Symposium,” bringing together building code officials, fire marshals, life-safety experts, architects, and housing advocates to discuss increasing the allowable height of single-staircase housing in the United States. At first glance, dedicating two full days to a single building-code topic may seem excessive, but with the nation facing a historic housing crisis, this discussion is a critical one. In growing numbers, advocates and experts are shining a spotlight on housing regulations and asking an essential question: Why is the US an outlier in how it restricts housing, while around the globe more diverse options are available?

This brief will shine light on the benefits of single-stair housing—benefits that make it a prevalent option around the world—and how single-stair options can improve the quality and quantity of housing being constructed in the US.

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The Case for Single-Stair Buildings

It's no surprise that the requirement for multiple exit stairs has become the first building code provision to face popular challenges with support from YIMBY (yes in my backyard) groups across the country and even Minnesota's Sierra Club chapter. Single-stair housing offers a flexible, efficient, and visually appealing infill housing type that helps create walkable, livable communities around the world. If more US jurisdictions embraced international best practices and allowed mid-rise single-stair housing, it would open the door to more family-sized apartments, spur a surge in affordable, energy-efficient housing, and help address both the housing and climate crises.

Single-stair buildings offer numerous advantages:

More Homes, Lower Costs: By eliminating the need for a second stairwell, developers can create more compact buildings. This increases the number of small, urban lots where housing can be constructed, making housing more plentiful and thus affordable. Smaller buildings also mean reduced construction costs, bringing housing prices down even further.

Flexible Living Options: Clustering units around a single stair allows for more flexible floor plates that can accommodate a wider range of unit sizes and layouts, including family-sized apartments with multiple bedrooms and windows. This range addresses the growing demand for larger, more functional living spaces. Putting in a second stair generally requires developers to “double-load” corridors—having apartments on both sides of a corridor—which means each apartment typically only has windows on one side. It's common that only the end or corner units in contemporary US buildings provide multiple exterior wall exposures. Removing the requirement for two stairs connected by a corridor allows for more diverse configurations and enables developers to design units with windows on multiple sides, making it easier to build family-sized apartments with two bedrooms or more. By contrast, in most contemporary apartment buildings, developers need to figure out what to do with all the interior areas with no sunlight, often resulting in larger bathrooms and closets, or, in more and more cases, windowless bedrooms. Additionally, single-stair buildings feel brighter, airier, and more livable—key

Mercatus AI Assistant

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Smarter, More Efficient Homes: Buildings with increased density and compact footprints have reduced energy consumption in operation and construction. Because single-stair units include more windows and access to natural light than standard apartments, single-stair buildings reduce reliance on artificial lighting, leading to lower energy consumption and reduced carbon footprints. The extra windows allow for cross-breezes to cool apartments naturally on hot days, which makes the units even more energy efficient. Additionally, small-lot density enabled by taller single-stair buildings can multiply overall density severalfold. Small lots that typically only result in construction of single-family homes, duplexes, and triplexes can use single-stair construction to efficiently build a 20-unit building that requires less energy to build per each unit of housing due to efficiencies of scale.

Neighborhoods People Love to Live in: Through infill construction on small urban lots where housing is most in demand, single-stair buildings can be integrated into the existing urban fabric more seamlessly, fostering more walkable, vibrant neighborhoods. Single-stair buildings, with their smaller footprint, can transform overlooked, challenging sites into opportunities and blend harmoniously with existing neighborhood forms. When single-stair apartment buildings come with ground-floor retail, they also activate the streetscape, allowing for the creation of small local businesses, bringing opportunity and vibrancy to the neighborhood. By contrast, large contemporary US apartment buildings commonly stretch an entire city block with only their two required exits as access points. These monolithic designs tend to isolate residents and fail to weave themselves into the fabric of the community.

Smaller-scale developments also tend to face less community opposition, as their neighborhood-friendly design makes them a more palatable solution to local housing needs. Allowing single-stair buildings more broadly could speed up lot development while reducing the need to acquire and demolish neighboring buildings.

Supporting Innovation: Opportunities for small multifamily housing could also spur innovation by empowering new entrants in the multifamily development business. This innovation can be seen in Seattle where the unique building code has unlocked a range of small lot housing

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options, from luxury condominiums to student housing to affordable housing. One of us (Sean Jursnick) documented this in a previous policy brief, “The Seattle Special: A US City’s Unique Approach to Small Infill Lots” (Mercatus Center, December 2024).

Allowing single-stair buildings gives developers the flexibility to create more human-centered spaces with desirable open space that residents can utilize. European and Asian cities offer many examples of single-stair mid-rise buildings clustered around shared courtyards and open spaces. This design can foster meaningful connections, improve health, and enhance sustainability.

Overcoming Regulatory Hurdles

To unlock the potential of single-stair buildings, policymakers and building code officials must be willing to consider evidence-based arguments that challenge existing regulations. Building codes exist to protect public health and safety, and they evolve over time based on advances in technology. Codes do reflect the thoughtful and diligent work of professionals dedicated to minimizing risks and ensuring safety in the built environment. However, technology, materials, and design strategies have advanced significantly over time, and these advances offer new design opportunities that can ensure the safety of residents and first responders.

The most common national consensus code in the US, the International Building Code (IBC), limits the height of single-stair housing to three stories—a standard upheld for over a century. While it is worth acknowledging that this long-standing restriction has been rooted in genuine concern for safety, it is time to reevaluate whether this limitation is necessary and relevant to preserve safety today.

Several jurisdictions, including Seattle, New York City, Knoxville, and Honolulu, have recognized the benefits of single-stair housing and have increased the allowable height of single-stair buildings to six stories. These changes incorporate thoughtful safety provisions, such as short exit distances and limits on the number of units per floor, ensuring that residents have quick and safe egress options. These tailored building codes create safer buildings with quick, intuitive emergency egress options.

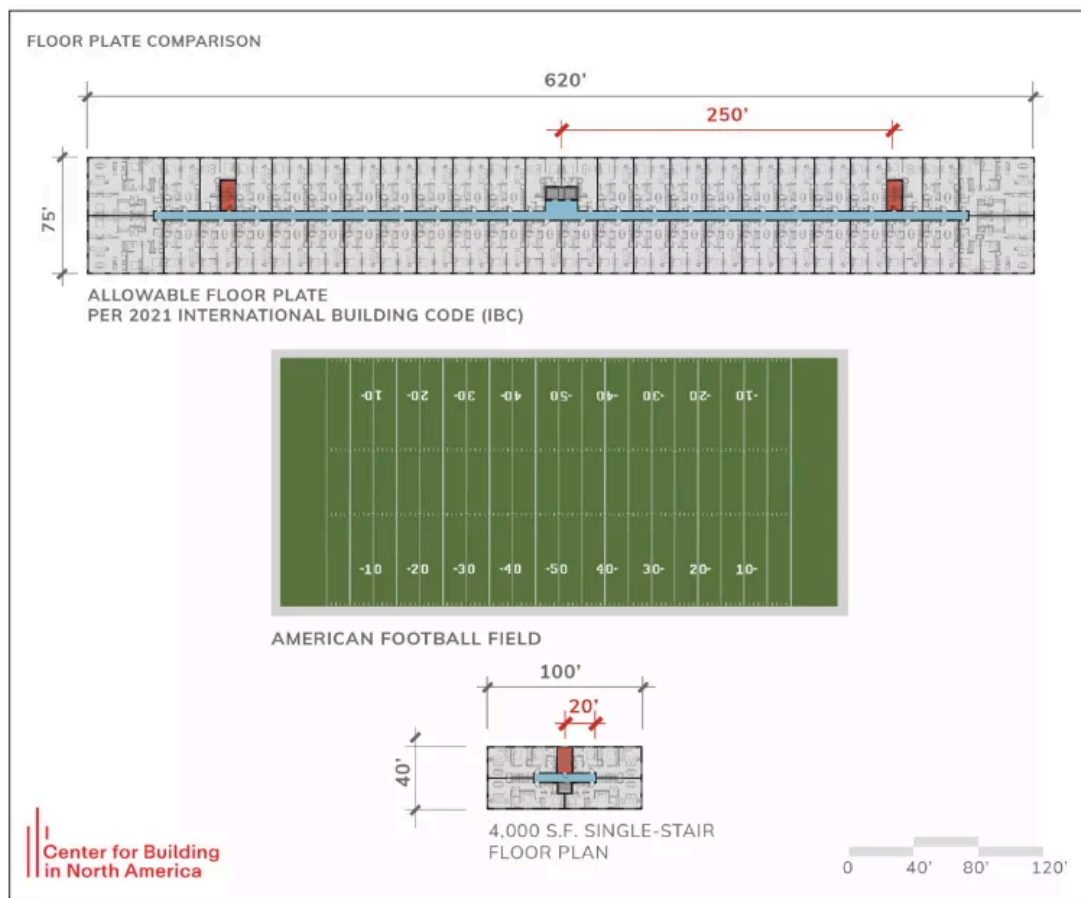
Mercatus AI Assistant

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with large floorplates allowed under current IBC regulations for multistair buildings, which allow more residents but feature longer corridors, dead ends, and extended exit times. The contrast between the scale of the two-stair building allowed under current consensus building code and the smaller footprint that used by single-stair buildings is dramatic, as illustrated in figure 2, which compares the two floor plates to a standard American football field.

FIGURE 2. Visual comparison of a two-stair floor plate compliant with the 2021 International Building Code and the largest single-stair floor plate allowed by the 2018 Seattle Building Code



Source: Drawing by Sean Jursnick, SAR+ Architects, completed for Center for Building in North America.

One City's Struggle with Small Lots

Governments and the private sector increasingly agree on the value of infill development. But densifying built-up areas is a challenge. The economics of housing development, shaped by zoning and building codes,

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heavily favor massive apartment buildings built on massive lots. These parcels are scarce in dense urban areas, driving up demand and, with it, costs. As stated, the requirement of a second staircase is a key factor pushing developers towards bigger buildings on oversized lots. With a few notable exceptions, jurisdictions in the United States require that buildings four stories and up have two exit staircases that take up space that could otherwise be used for rentable livable areas. This renders mid-height buildings financially unviable in dense areas unless developers can acquire enough adjoining lots to create a larger footprint. The result? Highly desirable urban areas are littered with undeveloped or underutilized lots—spaces that could be transformed into much-needed homes that would help mitigate the housing unit shortfall.

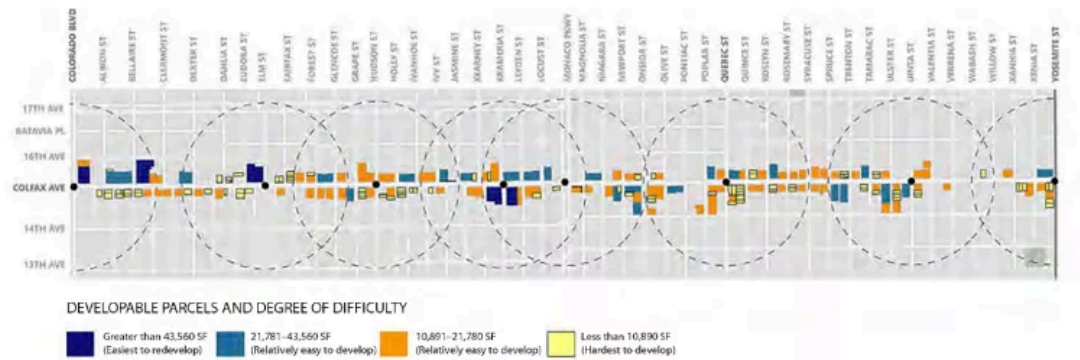
In 2020, the City of Denver published the East Area Plan, a visioning document outlining goals for several central Denver neighborhoods. These goals included improved access to opportunity and expanded housing diversity. The report identified the abundance of small and narrow lots along historic Colfax Avenue as a significant challenge to development in the area where growth is being encouraged to support a bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor currently under construction. The numerous small lots are shown in orange in figure 3. Despite zoning that permits building heights ranging from 5 to 12 stories, the report warned that without targeted regulatory reforms, many of these small lots will remain vacant, suppressing growth and undermining the success of the transit corridor. By including single-stair buildings in its code, Denver can address these barriers to development and enhance the built environment of Colfax Avenue. This change could activate these overlooked lots into vibrant, transit-orientated communities that both support the upcoming BRT corridor and affirmatively further the city's vision for a more equitable and connected future.

FIGURE 3. Barriers to redevelopment—development parcels and degree of difficulty due to lot size

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Source: City of Denver East Area Plan (Nov. 16, 2020), Barriers to Redevelopment, p. 227

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Conclusion

When pursuing regulatory reforms to tackle the housing crisis, we must prioritize both increasing housing production and ensuring the quality of the homes we build. The movement to embrace single-stair buildings offers an opportunity to meet these goals by fostering sustainable development and delivering high-quality homes that are more deeply connected to their communities. This time-tested building typology has the power to not only complement but also enhance our housing landscape, creating homes people love in neighborhoods they are proud to call their own.

About the Authors

Peter LiFari is an affordable housing developer, CEO of a public housing authority, and a fellow at the Common Sense Institute. His work focuses on developing affordable housing, housing policy, and land use reform. With experience in both development and policy analysis, he advocates for housing abundance and equitable community growth. This work reflects his commitment to evidence-based solutions and the democratization of land use regulations.

Sean Jursnick, AIA, is a licensed architect in Colorado with a keen interest in research and housing advocacy. Jursnick moderated a panel on the single-stair reform movement at the 2024 AIA Conference on Architecture and Design, and as an Emergent Ventures grant recipient, he organized an international single-stair design contest. Jursnick is also the cochair of the

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the AIA Colorado Housing Committee and was awarded the AIA Colorado Fisher Travel Scholarship to study carbon reduction efforts in smart cities.

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