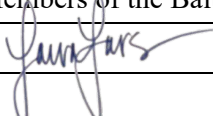




CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Laura Larsen, Budget Director 
DATE	June 25 th , 2025
SUBJECT	25-0040 Zoning – Uses – Retail Small Box Establishment

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 25-0040 Zoning – Uses – Retail Small Box Establishment, the purpose of which is the purpose of making small box discount retail stores a conditional use by approval of the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals in all commercial zoning districts; setting use standards for new small box discount retail stores; and defining certain terms.

Background

This legislation seeks to regulate the future placement of "Small Box Establishments" by making their opening conditional upon approval from the Board of Municipal Zoning Appeals. The legislation also prevents the opening of a new establishment within 2,640 feet (half a mile) of an already operating establishment. A "Small Box Establishment" refers to a retail store that meets the following criteria:

- It is part of a chain with 10 or more locations in Baltimore City, operating under the same name, regardless of the ownership structure of each location.
- The store has a floor area of more than 5,000 square feet but less than 12,000 square feet.
- It sells a variety of inexpensive general goods in smaller quantities.

However, certain establishments are excluded from this classification. A "Retail: Small Box Establishment" does not include:

- Grocery stores,
- Stores with a pharmacy where prescription drugs are compounded, dispensed, or distributed,
- Fuel stations,
- Retail stores where the majority of products sold are personal hygiene products or cosmetics,
- Stores that primarily engage in the resale of used consumer goods.

This distinction helps define specific retail operations within Baltimore City, setting parameters for regulatory purposes. The companies that best fit the criteria are Dollar Tree/Family Dollar (same company operating under different names) and Dollar General.

While these companies appear to offer benefits like jobs and discounted items, communities in Baltimore have reported struggles with lax security and thin staffing, leading to increased trash and safety concerns. These stores also provide poor value to customer, despite perceptions of low prices, dollar stores may

offer limited product quality and selection, affecting overall customer value.

Fiscal Impact

This legislation is not expected to meaningfully impact revenues or expenses.

Conclusion

City Council Bill 25-0040 seeks to define and regulate future locations of Small Box Establishments such as Dollar Tree/Family Dollar and Dollar General. Communities across the City have reported experiencing more trash as well as other negative effects once the stores begin operations. By regulating these establishments, the City can ensure a balance between providing affordable retail options and maintaining community safety, cleanliness, and overall quality of life. The legislation aims to address these concerns, fostering a retail environment that better serves both businesses and the people of Baltimore.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance does not oppose City Council Bill 25-0040.

cc: Michael Mocksten
Nina Themelis