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# CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR

 ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR

100 N. HOLIDAY STREET

BALTIMORE MD, 21202

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## HEARING NOTES

Bill: 25-0027R

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Title: Informational Hearing – Home Repair Assistance for Older Adults

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Committee: Education, Youth, & Older Adults

Chaired by: John Bullock

Hearing Date: 7/24/2025

Time (Beginning): 12:03 PM

Time (Ending): 2:25: PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Attendance: Approximately 24

Committee Members in Attendance: Bullock, Parker, Blanchard, Jones, Ramos

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Bill Synopsis in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attendance sheet in the file? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Agency reports read? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Evidence of notification to property owners? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Final vote taken at this hearing? .....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Motioned by: .....			
Seconded by: .....			
Final Vote: .....			

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### Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

Major speakers for the Committee and Council included Chair John Bullock, Councilwoman Odette Ramos, and Council President Zeke Cohen. Presenters included Director Ondoria Harmon of the Mayor's Office of Older Adults and Advocacy Services; Housing Commissioner Alice Kennedy and Brooke Paluzzi of the Department of Housing and Community Development; Lauren Avervella and Bonnie Besser representing Housing

Upgrades to Benefit Seniors (HUBS); and Colin Choney and Ruth Ann Norton representing the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative.

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### **Major Issues Discussed**

Chair John Bullock opened the meeting with public testimony. Two older adult residents of the city spoke passionately, sharing their concerns and frustrations with the Home Repair Assistance process.

The Chair then moved to agency reports. Director Ondoria Harmon of the Mayor's Office of Older Adults and Advocacy Services discussed her office's collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development to improve Home Repair Assistance for older adults. She emphasized the importance of ongoing communication between agencies to ensure that older residents are well-informed. Director Harmon also announced plans to launch a HUBS information series targeted at older adults across the city.

Housing Commissioner Alice Kennedy of the Department of Housing and Community Development followed with a detailed presentation. She provided an overview of the LIGHT Program, including its services and limitations, outlined HUBS functions, partnerships, and funding, and shared information on the Office of Rehabilitation Services, highlighting eligibility requirements and common reasons for application denials.

Next, Lauren Averella and Bonnie Besser from HUBS, along with Colin Choney and Ruth Ann Norton from the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, presented on the roles of HUBS agents and current challenges the program is facing. They noted that staffing shortages are contributing to a significant backlog in repair requests, which became a topic in the questions round.

Following the agency presentations, the Chair opened the floor to questions from the committee. Council President Zeke Cohen, along with Councilmembers Odette Ramos, Mark Parker, and James Jones, asked questions primarily focused on funding and how additional resources could address the backlogs in both HUBS and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Councilmember Jones specifically raised concerns about the difficulty in retaining contractors due to delayed payments. While the issue has seen some improvement, with about 10 contractors still awaiting payment, many contractors remain hesitant to partner with the Home Repair Assistance program because of previous experiences with late compensation.

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### **Further Study**

**Was further study requested?**

☒ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

**If yes, describe.**

Committee Request about how the Department of Housing and Community Development is spending the money allocated for home repairs for the capital budget.

Committee Request for the clarification of older adults home repair for Lights and HUBS.

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Juliane Jemmott,                      Date: 7/24/2025

Cc:    Bill File  
      OCS Chrono File