



## MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Alice Kennedy, Housing Commissioner

Date: November 1, 2022

### **Re: City Council Bill 22-0280 Urban Renewal - Johnston Square - Amendment \_\_\_\_**

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 22-0280 for the purpose of amending the Urban Renewal Plan for Johnston Square to reauthorize the acquisition of properties within the Project Area, to extend the life of the Plan, and to remove certain properties from the list in Appendices A and B; waiving certain content and procedural requirements; making the provisions of this Ordinance severable; providing for the application of this Ordinance in conjunction with certain other ordinances; and providing for a special effective date.

Pursuant to Maryland Code, Real Property, § 12-015.1, which was enacted in 2007, authority to acquire property by eminent domain must be renewed after 4 years if it has not been exercised. The City's Urban Renewal Plans (URPs) are the primary source of acquisition authority for various properties in areas where the City is addressing vacant lots and buildings, and encouraging or catalyzing community-based redevelopment efforts. DHCD is the steward for many URPs that would be affected by an expiration of acquisition authority, and is therefore seeking to renew such authority where it is still needed. Additionally, some URPs expire in their entirety at the end of 2022, which could eliminate the authority to sell the properties that have already been acquired pursuant to the URPs. Therefore, DHCD is also seeking to extend some URP plans altogether.

If enacted, Council Bill 22-0280 would reauthorize the acquisition authority for the properties identified in the Johnston Square URP and extend the life of the URP through December 31, 2026, and also remove from the URP those properties already sold for redevelopment in furtherance of the URP's objectives. Absent the amendments in Council Bill 22-0280 both the acquisition authority for listed properties and the URP itself would expire at the end of 2022. DHCD has determined that it still needs to acquire certain properties listed in the URP, and sell for redevelopment the properties it has acquired, in order to complete the renewal efforts identified and undertaken in conjunction with the Johnston Square community.

At its regular meeting of October 13, 2022, the Planning Commission reviewed the bill, voted in favor of adopting the recommendations of its planning staff and recommended that Bill 22-0280 be approved by the City Council.



DHCD **supports** the passage of City Council Bill 22-0280.

AK/sm

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*