



Council Bill 22-0195 – Inclusionary Housing for Baltimore City
Committee of the Whole, November 16, 2022

Position: Support with Sponsor Amendments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for this hearing on updating our Inclusionary Housing policy. The Community Development Network of Maryland (CDN) urges the Council to pass CB 22-1095, *Inclusionary Housing for Baltimore City*, with amendments offered by Councilmember Ramos.

CDN is a statewide member association of community-based nonprofits, affordable housing developers, and community development professionals. Our Baltimore City network includes over 40 member organizations that have worked with city residents and agencies for decades to build safe, quality, affordable housing. We are part of the Baltimore City Inclusionary Housing coalition of advocates and residents that support CB 22-1095.

Our member organizations work tirelessly to strengthen Baltimore’s neighborhoods, particularly those in what Dr. Lawrence Brown has named “the Black Butterfly”--the neighborhoods where the majority of the city’s Black families live. We understand that increasing the city’s overall inventory of housing available and affordable to the city’s working families--particularly those at 60% AMI (\$55,740 for a family of two)--will healthier, more financially sustainable futures.

We would urge you to see the connection between inclusionary housing and the city’s top challenges: public safety, and economic development. Not only is there an overall shortage of affordable rental homes, but they are rarely located in “high-opportunity” neighborhoods that have quality schools, parks, reliable transit, and proximity to jobs, retail, and services. Instead, they are concentrated in disinvested neighborhoods that lack these “opportunity structures” and are often replete with harms ranging from polluted air to decrepit infrastructure to excessive surveillance and violence. Decades of research underscore that living in a neighborhood lacking critical opportunity structures negatively affects health, access to educational and economic opportunities, and life outcomes.

With a strong Inclusionary Housing bill, essential workers—including Baltimore City employees, nursing assistants, and custodial staff--will be able to live in affordable homes in high opportunity neighborhoods, allowing them to build and sustain the financial stability needed to provide for their children and extended family. This also translates into less stress and better mental health for our frontline neighbors, leading to a healthier city overall. Also, with a larger inventory of newly constructed affordable apartments, we can reduce the likelihood that our neighbors will

have to contend with poor environmental concerns such as pests, mold, and lead paint exposure for the sake of their budget.

Our coalition urges you to reject weakening amendments:

1. **Do not reduce the very limited affordability required – no rental units above 60% AMI.** 60% AMI (\$55,740 for a family of two) is already based on a *regional* assessment of income – average incomes in Baltimore City are already much lower than the region. 60% AMI allows frontline workers and neighbors who use vouchers to access the affordable units. Raising this threshold to 80% AMI would place those units beyond the reach of voucher holders and many frontline workers.
2. **Maintain strong oversight and accountability.** The inclusionary housing board should remain in the bill. The prior inclusionary law suffered from weak oversight and implementation. A robust board is needed to maintain transparency and accountability.
3. **No Fee-In-Lieu.** CB 22-0195 creates affordable housing opportunities that are integrated into communities of opportunity. Allowing developers to opt out of the law by paying into a fund would facilitate the creation of affordable units that are not well integrated into communities – thereby repeating the mistakes of our City’s long history of subsidizing segregated affordable housing.
4. **Maintain Strong Affirmative Marketing.** Sponsor amendments will ensure that developers market the affordable units to marginalized residents—often Black and Brown—that are often excluded from the benefits of new development and then hold the developers accountable for doing so.

Please issue a FAVORABLE REPORT on Council Bill 22-0195 with sponsor amendments.

If you have any questions, please contact me at claudia@communitydevelopmentmd.org.

Sincerely,

Claudia Wilson Randall

Executive Director, CDN of Maryland