

Council Bill 22-0195 – Inclusionary Housing for Baltimore City
Committee of the Whole Hearing, November 17, 2022

Position: Support with Sponsor Amendments

Along with the Inclusionary Housing for Baltimore Coalition, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East requests that the City Council pass CB 22-0195, Inclusionary Housing for Baltimore City, with amendments offered by Council Member Ramos.

1199 SEIU is the largest healthcare union in the country with over 5,000 members here in Baltimore City. We fight for quality care and good jobs for essential workers who have been on the frontlines this pandemic.

Inclusionary Housing is an essential tool to building more affordable, integrated neighborhoods in Baltimore City. If a developer is receiving a major public subsidy or significant zoning change, they should make at least 10% of those units affordable to households earning no more than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI), plus an additional 5% of units affordable at even lower incomes if the city offers the developer additional subsidy to do so.

Affordable housing is worker justice. We know that despite fighting for higher wages, we are never matching the skyrocketing cost of living. According to a National Low Income Housing Coalition [report](#) published this August, one would need to work 93 hours per week at a rate of \$28.93 per hour to afford a 2 bedroom rental apartment in Maryland. Our members who are often overworked and underpaid are predominantly women of color. They come home to neighborhoods in which they worry about paying their bills, educational equity, public safety, and keeping a roof over their family's heads. Inclusionary housing means racial and gender equity for our essential workers who deserve to live and work without the fear of being priced out.

Affordable housing is healthcare. Our Baltimore City members work at premier medical institutions like Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland Medical System, Chase Brexton, as well as long term care facilities. Yet, these very institutions have patients and workers alike who struggle to pay rent and experience homelessness – all while their higher paid employees take advantage of new developments offering market-rate luxury living near their workplace. Inclusionary housing ensures that for every developer receiving public subsidy to fund their projects, there is a guarantee for at least 10% of affordable units for those earning below \$62,000 for a family of 3.

The coalition supporting CB 22-0195 urges you to reject weakening amendments:

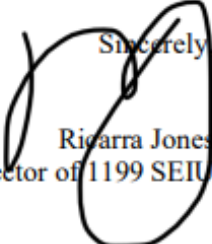
1. **Do not reduce the very limited affordability required – no rental units above 60% AMI.** 60% AMI (\$55,740 for a family of two) is already based on a *regional* assessment of income – average incomes in Baltimore City are already much lower than the region. 60% AMI allows frontline workers and persons 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. 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 affirmatively market the affordable units to groups that have historically been excluded from the benefits of new development and then hold the developers accountable for doing so.

With CB 22-1095, Baltimore has a chance to break with development policies that subsidized segregation and separate-and-unequal development and create a more equitable, integrated future.

Please issue a **FAVORABLE** committee report on Council Bill 22-0195 with sponsor amendments. If you have any questions, please contact Ricarra Jones, ricarra.jones@1199.org.

The health of workers and patients depend on effective inclusionary housing policy that will create and protect affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones
Political Director of 1199 SEIU