

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 24-0583
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: The Council President
At the request of: The Administration (Department of Planning)
Introduced and read first time: September 16, 2024
Assigned to: Ways and Means Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Department of Planning, Department of Housing and Community Development, Planning Commission, Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Baltimore City Information Technology, Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals, Baltimore Development Corporation, Department of Transportation, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, Fire Department, Department of Health, Department of Legislative Reference, Office of the Mayor, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, Baltimore Police Department, Mayor’s Office of Small and Minority Business Advocacy and Development, Department of Public Works, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, Commission on Aging, Mayor’s Office of Disabilities, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore City Public School System, Mayor’s Office of Economic and Neighborhood Development, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore**

3 FOR the purpose of reviewing, revising, and adopting the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for
4 the City of Baltimore; and providing for a special effective date.

5 **Recitals**

6 Under State Land Use Article, § 1-405 {“Plan required”} the City of Baltimore is required to
7 enact, adopt, amend, and execute a comprehensive plan that contains the policies, statements,
8 goals, and interrelated plans for private and public land use, transportation, and community
9 facilities for the City’s future development in accordance with Part III of Subtitle 4 of the State
10 Land Use Article. Following adoption, the City shall review the comprehensive plan at least
11 once every 10 years, and, if necessary, revise or amend the compressive plan to include:
12 (i) implementation the visions set forth in § 1-201 {“Visions”} of the State Land Use Article;
13 (ii) development regulations; and, (iii) the sensitive areas element of the plan.

14 State Land Use Article § 1-406 describes the required elements for charter county
15 comprehensive plans: development regulations element, housing element, sensitive areas
16 element, transportation element, water resources element, and growth tiers.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 24-0583

1 The State’s 12 Planning Visions reflect the State’s ongoing aspiration to develop and
2 implement sound growth and development policy. The visions address: quality of life and
3 sustainability; public participation; growth areas; community design; infrastructure;
4 transportation; housing; economic development; environmental protection; resource
5 conservation; stewardship; and implementation approaches.

6 The Mayor and City Council most recently adopted a Comprehensive Master Plan on
7 November 21, 2006, when Resolution 06-019 was signed by then Mayor Martin J. O’Malley.
8 Following the adoption of the City’s plan the Maryland General Assembly passed and the
9 governor signed House Bill 409 that changed the review cycle for comprehensive plans from
10 every 6 years to every 10 years to coincide with the decennial census.

11 The Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore is now being revised in accordance
12 with Title 3, Subtitle 1 {“Requirement and Elements”} of the State Land Use Article and in
13 adherence to Article VII, §§ 72 and 74 of the City Charter.

14 Following the 2020 Census, the Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore shall
15 be adopted no later than December 31, 2024.

16 **Plan Organization**

17 The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore is organized into 5 primary
18 sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Background, (3) Growth and Retention, (4) Policy
19 Recommendations, and (5) Plans Shaping the City. Together, these sections detail the history of
20 the City’s development, the current state of City planning and development, and the City’s vision
21 and strategy for equitable, sustainable growth into the future.

22 (1) *Introduction.*

23 The Introduction defines the purpose of the plan and shares how it was created in
24 partnership with residents and other community stakeholders. It casts a vision for the
25 future of our City, grounded in our complex history and our connection to the region.
26 Finally, it lays out a framework for holding the City accountable to the actions outlined in
27 the plan.

28 (2) *Background.*

29 The Background section includes a brief history of Baltimore and exploration of
30 population, demographic, and job data shaping Baltimore today.

31 (3) *Growth and Retention.*

32 The Planning for Growth and Retention section details how the City can both support
33 current residents and grow our population. Through a variety of tools and strategies, this
34 section provides a vision for future land use, changing development patterns, and
35 identifying ways to support residential and economic growth.

Council Bill 24-0583

1 (4) *Policy Recommendations.*

2 The Policy Recommendations section provides a large menu of potential policy options
3 for the City to pursue. The Department of Planning developed these recommendations in
4 partnership with residents, community organizations, City staff, and other community
5 stakeholders to better ensure they reflect the needs and interests of Baltimore. Through
6 this process, we identified 17 policy topic areas that we then organized into four
7 overarching themes: (1) Livable Places, (2) Equitable Access, (3) Healthy Communities,
8 and (4) Inclusive Economy.

9 (5) *Plans Shaping the City.*

10 This section highlights ongoing and future planning efforts for specific neighborhoods
11 within the City. The section explores both Citymanaged plans and community-managed
12 plans. We organized these planning efforts reshaping our City into three smaller sections:
13 (1) Citywide Plans, (2) Area Focused Plans, and (3) Impact Investment Areas.

14 **Land Use Map**

15 The Growth and Retention section of the plan includes a land use map, which will be updated
16 every 4 years. The Land Use Map serves as the guide for future development in our community,
17 both in public and private actions, to ensure the harmonious and equitable development of the
18 City.

19 The Land Use Map is important to the overall Comprehensive Plan because it provides the
20 City with a way to determine how land should be used in the future. Rather than evaluating
21 proposed changes in isolation, the Land Use Map enables the City to consider the potential
22 impacts of proposed rezonings on the surrounding area and how each of those changes affects
23 future patterns around the City

24 The Land Use Map will be used to review proposed changes to the zoning map; it does not
25 change the zoning of a property. Each land use category corresponds to one or more zoning
26 categories. If a property owner makes a request to change the zoning designation of their
27 property, the Land Use Map will be consulted to see if the request is consistent with the plan for
28 the City.

29 Article 32 of the Baltimore City Code is our City's Zoning Code. Currently, the Zoning
30 Code has 50 specific zones to regulate development and control how land may be used. In
31 contrast, the Land Use Map makes use of general categories to establish the land use vision for
32 the City, while still allowing for flexibility with regard to specific uses and development patterns.
33 The Land Use Map includes an open space category, 3 residential categories, 6 mixed-use
34 categories, and an industrial land category. Each of the 50 specific zones in the Zoning
35 Code map to one or more of the broader categories in the Land Use Map. By connecting the Zoning
36 Code to the Land Use Map, the City is better equipped to more equitably review zoning change
37 requests and general development to ensure it follows the land use vision for the City.

38 The Land Use element, as a part of Comprehensive Plan shall be updated at least every 10
39 years. The Land Use Map shall be updated more frequently, with comprehensive updates during
40 the 2nd year of every 4-year City Council term.

Council Bill 24-0583

1 **Goals**

2 The Policy Recommendations section includes the following goals, organized into 4 themes:
3 (1) Livable Places, (2) Equitable Access, (3) Healthy Communities, and (4) Inclusive Economy.

4 (1) *Livable Places.*

5 (i) *Affordable Housing.*

- 6 (A) Increase the amount and types of housing supports tailored to the needs
7 of immigrants to help them stay and grow in Baltimore.
- 8 (B) Increase the amount and types of housing supports tailored to the needs
9 of the City's most vulnerable (for example, older adults, those with
10 different abilities, children, those experiencing homelessness, those who
11 are/have been incarcerated) to better ensure that all Baltimoreans have
12 stable and safe housing.
- 13 (C) Increase the diversity of and access to resources and supports for
14 residents to obtain safe and affordable housing within the City.
- 15 (D) Increase the number of affordable housing units available for purchase
16 and rent within the City to minimize payment burden for residents.
- 17 (E) Leverage investment in affordable housing as a tool for community and
18 economic development.

19 (ii) *Equitable Neighborhood Development.*

- 20 (A) Increase engagement of under-represented individuals and groups in
21 planning and community development to better ensure development is
22 reflective of the community.
- 23 (B) Increase opportunities for community and individual wealth building
24 among low-income and BIPOC Baltimore residents.

25 (iii) *Historic Resources.*

- 26 (A) Expand the use of historic preservation programs and services across the
27 City to better protect more parts of our historic City.
- 28 (B) Expand workforce development resources and services to support the
29 growth of a local historic preservation workforce and restoration
30 economy.
- 31 (C) Increase engagement with residents to tailor historic preservation
32 programs and supports to community needs.

Council Bill 24-0583

1 (iv) *Public Spaces and Placemaking.*

2 (A) Implement high quality programming and stewardship of public spaces
3 by Baltimore City agencies and partners.

4 (B) Increase efforts to build community capacity to undertake placemaking
5 projects.

6 (C) Increase the development of City-supported placemaking projects in
7 historically disinvested neighborhoods.

8 (D) Revise policies and processes related to public spaces and placemaking
9 to improve transparency and efficiency.

10 (v) *Vacant Housing.*

11 (A) Increase the redevelopment of vacant buildings at scale using a block
12 level approach.

13 (B) Increase the resources and supports provided to residents related to
14 vacancy prevention and elimination.

15 (C) Intervene early, assertively, and proactively to prevent additional houses
16 from becoming vacant.

17 (D) Strengthen strategies for addressing privately-owned vacant buildings
18 and improve the supports to residents to purchase and/or rehabilitate
19 individual vacant buildings.

20 (2) *Equitable Access.*

21 (i) *Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation.*

22 (A) Develop and implement an equitable capital investment strategy to make
23 existing and future recreational facilities and parks more accessible and
24 better maintained.

25 (B) Expand and improve programming in parks, open spaces, and at
26 recreational facilities to ensure that all residents have access to outdoor
27 and recreational programs.

28 (C) Implement a capital investment strategy, operations plan, and funding
29 plan to ensure equitable access to parks, recreational facilities, and
30 activities.

31 (D) Increase access to neighborhood parks and open spaces to ensure that all
32 residents have the opportunity to use and enjoy the City's recreational
33 amenities.

Council Bill 24-0583

- 1 (E) Increase the frequency and quality of maintenance for existing
2 neighborhood parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities to improve
3 public recreational experiences.

4 (ii) *Digital Access and Equity.*

- 5 (A) Increase resident access to modern computing devices.
- 6 (B) Increase the availability and accessibility of high speed internet and
7 digital devices, prioritizing neighborhoods with low levels of digital
8 equity and inclusion.
- 9 (C) Increase the quality and availability of digital skills training, education,
10 and technical support throughout the City.

11 (iii) *Food Access.*

- 12 (A) Engage residents in food systems education and support community-led
13 work, particularly for urban farmers, families with young children, and
14 older adults.
- 15 (B) Increase accessibility of healthy and culturally appropriate foods,
16 particularly in areas of high food insecurity.
- 17 (C) Increase opportunities for urban agriculture to facilitate access to fresh,
18 healthy, and culturally appropriate foods for historically disinvested
19 neighborhoods.
- 20 (D) Provide economic supports to help grow local food businesses and
21 develop the local food economy.

22 (iv) *Transportation Equity.*

- 23 (A) Implement “Complete Streets” to increase the number of people who
24 walk or bike to work.
- 25 (B) Increase City transit service accessibility, reliability, and affordability.
- 26 (C) Increase investment in and development of TOD throughout the City.
- 27 (D) Increase the use of land use tools and policies to support the
28 development of equitable transit.
- 29 (E) Support efforts to expand regional transit in partnership with MTA and
30 MDOT to connect more people and places within the Baltimore metro
31 area.
- 32 (F) Update and modernize the City transit system to increase ridership.

Council Bill 24-0583

1 (3) *Healthy Communities.*

2 (i) *Designing for Public Safety.*

3 (A) Assess and understand the impacts of zoning and land use on public
4 safety to identify ways to use them as tools to improve public safety.

5 (B) Increase efforts to educate and empower residents to use principles of
6 CPTED in their communities.

7 (D) Increase the availability and accessibility of rehabilitative services to
8 help communities heal from past and present trauma.

9 (E) Increase the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design by
10 City agencies.

11 (F) Invest in more traffic calming measures and speeding deterrents to
12 improve pedestrian and traffic safety.

13 (G) Support the use of CPTED principles in the creation and maintenance of
14 public spaces in an effort to deter crime.

15 (ii) *Environmental and Climate Justice.*

16 (A) Increase City and community environmental and climate literacy to
17 better equip all residents with relevant knowledge.

18 (B) Increase the employment and training opportunities available for climate
19 careers for frontline communities.

20 (C) Increase the services and supports available to frontline, overburdened,
21 and environmental justice communities to help them deal with the
22 impacts of environmental harms.

23 (D) Reduce the exposure of frontline, overburdened, and Environmental
24 Justice Communities to environmental pollutants.

25 (iii) *Neighborhood Cleanliness.*

26 (A) Increase and diversify the types of efforts the City provides to support
27 neighborhood-led clean ups.

28 (B) Increase availability of resources and programs to educate residents on
29 recycling and waste disposal, with an emphasis on moving toward zero
30 waste.

31 (C) Increase City-led efforts to improve and maintain sanitary conditions in
32 public spaces.

Council Bill 24-0583

(iv) *Public Health Disparities Related to Extreme Heat.*

- (A) Implement measures that reduce heat exposure at the pedestrian level to minimize the impacts of extreme heat on residents.
- (B) Implement strategies to make the built environment, specifically homes, schools, and senior centers, more resilient during extreme heat.
- (C) Increase the diversity of and access to programs and supports that provide relief during extreme heat events, particularly for older adults, infants, those experiencing homelessness, and those with mobility challenges.
- (D) Increase the number of City staff trained in and focused on addressing and mitigating extreme heat to better ensure the City is equipped for a warming climate.
- (E) Reduce the number of residents who experience electrical service interruption on days when the heat index is higher than 105 degrees.

(v) *Trees and Forests.*

- (A) Increase public education and awareness for the City's natural resources to create a more informed public that can support conservation efforts.
- (B) Increase the City's tree canopy using native and heat-tolerant species in the neighborhoods experiencing frequent instances of extreme heat to reduce heat island effects.
- (C) Increase the survival rate of trees planted by the City to better maintain the tree canopy and its cooling effects.
- (D) Preserve the City's existing canopy, including street trees, forested areas, and other natural areas as a way to manage heat, water runoff, and improve overall quality of life.

(4) *Inclusive Economy.*

(i) *Freight Movement.*

- (A) Achieve and maintain a State of Good Repair for roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure for freight movement building on the work of the State and Freight Movement Task Force.
- (B) Identify and mitigate conflicts between freight movement and other activities to reduce the impacts of freight on residents.
- (C) Reduce the environmental impacts of freight movement within the neighborhoods most affected to protect residents.

Council Bill 24-0583

1 (D) Reduce transportation and training barriers for Baltimore City residents
2 seeking freight movement jobs.

3 (ii) *Small Business Ecosystem and Neighborhood Retail.*

4 (A) Evaluate the viability, implementation, and success of commercial
5 corridors, City retail programs, and business incentives to identify how
6 best to develop neighborhood retail.

7 (B) Identify policy and practical measures to align broader economic
8 development with small businesses and neighborhood retail
9 development.

10 (C) Increase the availability and accessibility of services and supports for
11 helping to launch and maintain small businesses.

12 (D) Provide more supports to encourage the development neighborhood
13 retail establishments.

14 (E) Provide supports to communities to help them diversify the types of
15 retail available so that the local economy better matches their needs.

16 (iii) *Workforce Development.*

17 (A) Improve quality of and access to job training in high priority fields
18 within the state and region that pay family supporting wages.

19 (B) Increase the readiness of BCPS students for employment and/or
20 post-secondary education.

21 (C) Streamline and centralize access to the City's workforce and
22 wrap-around services to make them more accessible to all residents.

23 **SECTION 1. BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That
24 after having reviewed the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore, including
25 the Land Use Map, and after conducting a public hearing, the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan
26 for the City of Baltimore, as revised September 11, 2024, is adopted as the City's official Master
27 Plan.

28 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Department of Planning shall review
29 and propose updates to the Land Use Map on a quadrennial basis. Any revision of the Land Use
30 Map shall be introduced as a Resolution of the Mayor and City Council during the 2nd year of
31 every 4-year City Council term. The Land Use Map shall be maintained by the Department of
32 Planning in an accessible manner.

Council Bill 24-0583

1 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That after enactment of this Resolution, a copy
2 of the Resolution and the Master Plan adopted by it be sent to the Mayor, Maryland State
3 Department of Planning, Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, Department of Finance,
4 Health Department, Baltimore City Heritage Area, Baltimore Dept. of Housing & Community
5 Development, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Law Department, Department of Legislative
6 Reference, Mayor’s Office of Minority Business Development, Mayor’s Office of
7 Neighborhoods, Department of Planning, Police Department, Department of Public Works,
8 Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Transportation, the Commission on
9 Aging, Retirement and Education, the Mayor’s Commission on Disabilities, the Enoch Pratt Free
10 Library System, the Baltimore City Public School System, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood
11 Safety, Baltimore City Information Technology, and the Board of Municipal and Zoning
12 Appeals.

13 **SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That this Resolution takes effect on the date it
14 is enacted.