



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Khalil Zaied, Director, Department of Public Works
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	March 3, 2025
SUBJECT	Council Bill: 25-0003R Informational Hearing – Permit Reforms

Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

Council Bill 25-0003R calls for an informational hearing regarding reforms to the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) permit process. The bill invites representatives from various city agencies, including the Department of Public Works (DPW), to provide input on permit-related reforms aimed at improving efficiency, transparency, and integration across departments. The hearing will address existing challenges and explore enhancements to the permit approval and inspection processes.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

DPW supports Council Bill 25-0003R, as it aligns with ongoing efforts to streamline permitting processes and improve inter-agency coordination. DPW recognizes the importance of integrating permits issued by various city agencies into a cohesive system.

DPW appreciates the opportunity to participate in this discussion and looks forward to collaborating with the City Council and other agencies to enhance the permitting process in Baltimore City.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

10.A How will permits issued by other city agencies—and/or reviews or other actions regarding permit applications handled by DHCD—be integrated into the new E-Permits system?

The Utility Enterprise permit will remain with DPW's Office of Research and Environmental Protection. DPW will continue to approve the necessary forms for applicants to obtain DOT Right of Way permits. Additionally, Water and Wastewater Discharge permits will remain under the purview of the Office of Pollution Control.

10.B. Who will provide customer support for permits that do not fully integrate into Accela, such as DOT Right of Way permits and DPW permits?

Customer support for these permits will be handled by the Office of Research and Environmental Protection and the Office of Pollution Control. These offices will ensure that applicants receive guidance on permit requirements and assist with any issues that arise during the application process.

10.C. What will communication look like for these permits?

All comments, FYI statements, and responses related to DPW permits are captured within the Review tab of the system. Applicants can respond only when they have an assigned task. Additionally, a discussion tab is used for fee charges and receipts, meeting events, and plan approval language. DPW strives to keep all communications about project reviews within the system, instead of separate emails. Since our program and the other regulatory review programs using the BCNR system are subject to audits by the state agency, the BCNR system serves as a central document repository.

10.D. What do you anticipate will be the average length of time required to issue such permits, and will implementation of the new E-Permits system result in time savings for the issuance of these permits?

The processing time for DPW-issued permits depends on the completeness and accuracy of the information provided on the application. However, once all necessary information is received, DPW has a 10-day service level agreement (SLA) to approve or deny the request.