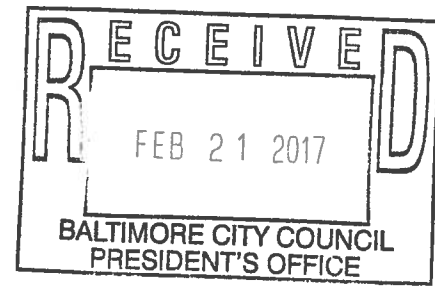




**BALTIMORE
HOUSING**

CATHERINE PUGH
Mayor

MICHAEL BRAVERMAN
Acting Executive Director, HAABC
Acting Commissioner, HCD



MEMORANDUM

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

From: Michael Braverman, Acting Commissioner *(MB)*

Date: February 16, 2017

Re: **City Council Bill 17-0002R - Coordinated Agency Violence Reduction Strategy**

The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 17-0002R for the purpose of requesting that the Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Baltimore Health Commissioner, the Director of Department of Public Works, the Director of Transportation, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore Housing Commissioner, the Director of CitiStat, and the President of the Baltimore Development Corporation present to the City Council on a coordinated violence reduction strategy for Baltimore.

This bill provides City agencies to discuss their role in contributing to the reduction of violence and how they work together to assist the Baltimore Police Department in striving to create safe neighborhoods for the residents of Baltimore City.

The City's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is committed to ensuring that all citizens of Baltimore have access to adequate and affordable housing and opportunities to live in *safe*, livable and decent neighborhoods. Establishing and maintaining safe and healthy neighborhoods requires the ability to address and eliminate threats to the life, health, and safety of City residents. HCD has a long record of coordinating its activities to ensure healthy neighborhoods with numerous other City agencies such as the Departments of Health, Fire and Police.

For example, the Code Enforcement Legal Section within HCD has developed the Property Based Crime Solutions Program (PBCS), which is a one-stop-shop for the abatement of nuisance activity in Baltimore City. Attorneys partner with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), the State's Attorney's Office of Maryland for Baltimore City, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HAABC) and the Mayor's Office cooperatively to address nuisance properties. Problem properties are identified by partnering agencies, residents, community leaders and local



Comments

elected officials and submitted to the PBCS team for review. The PBCS team reviews the information, selects the cases that meet the PBCS criteria and pursues the appropriate methods available to abate specific property based nuisance activities. The attorneys are deputized as Assistant States Attorneys and are able to:

- Pursue abatement efforts as properties that are involved with the distribution, sale, manufacturing and use of controlled dangerous substances. The abatement efforts include, but are not limited to, termination of a lease, eviction, property improvements, ban certain tenants/visitors and vacate the property and move towards auction (receivership).
- Assist the BPD to support padlocking of certain nuisance properties by the Police Commissioner by reviewing referrals for legal sufficiency and then defending the action in an administrative hearing.
- Support the Housing Commissioner's authority to revoke a Multi-Family-Dwelling License when the property has been determined to be unsafe, or the premises are used for criminal activity. (Madison Park North Apartments)
- Use Zoning and Building Code to combat criminal nuisance activity ("Night Club" Task Force").

HCD has various programs to assist with Blight Elimination efforts targeted on improving the quality of life and strengthen neighborhoods for Baltimore City residents and are coordinated with City agencies, residents, community leaders and local elected officials. The programs include:

- Disposition of City owned property and assistance with property acquisition to support site assembly for major redevelopment projects.
- Receivership of privately owned vacant property for rehabilitation where markets will support it (Community Development Clusters).
- Relocation of residents to support strategic whole block demolition.
- Issuance of 40,000 work orders to clean and secure vacant properties annually, helping to prevent squatting, vandalism, fires, and other criminal activity inside vacant properties.
- Response to complaints of illegal dumping, proactive monitoring of known dumping hotspots, and installation of 85 cameras citywide that are used to catch and prosecute illegal dumpers. More than 400 cases have been prosecuted since 2009. Many times, these cameras also record other illegal activity, and the video files are forwarded to BPD for follow up.

The Governor and Mayor have allocated significant funding for demolition in Baltimore City. Working with many agencies including BPD, DHCD and Planning identify the most strategic use of the money. The demolitions we pursue almost always change the built environment in a way that improves the ability of the police to address criminal activity. In total, HCD undertakes more than 500 demolitions each year that contribute to public safety and quality of life

The Department of Housing and Community Development appreciates the opportunity to participate at the public hearing on February 22, 2017.

MB:sd

cc: Ms. Karen Stokes, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*
Mr. Kyron Banks, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*