

CITY OF BALTIMORE

CATHERINE E. PUGH, Mayor



BOARD OF MUNICIPAL AND
ZONING APPEALS

DAVID C. TANNER, Executive Director
417 E. Fayette Street, Room 1432
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: CC Bill #18-0223 Equity Assessment Program

Ladies and Gentlemen:

City Council Bill No. 18-0223 has been referred by your Honorable Body to the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals for study and report.

The purpose of City Council Bill No. 18-0223 is to provide for the implementation of an Equity Assessment Program for Baltimore City, to be developed and overseen by the Department of Planning; requiring City agencies to assess existing and proposed policies and practices for disparate outcomes based on race, gender, or income and to proactively develop policies, practices, and investments to prevent and redress those disparate outcomes; defining certain terms; providing for the adoption of rules and regulations to carry out this Program; requiring certain notices and reports; and generally relating to the goal of eliminating structural and institutional racism and other forms of discrimination based on immutable characteristics.

The BMZA has reviewed the legislation and fully supports the goal of attaining equity throughout city government and viewing local government operations through an equity lens. BMZA has concerns regarding the implementation of this particular bill and the structure in which the proposed equity assessment program will take. BMZA respectfully highlights the following concerns for council's consideration:

- How will equity assessments be managed and by whom?
- What types of data will be collected, how, and by whom?
- How will annual reporting effect agency operation?
- Will additional appropriations be required to manage data and reporting requirements?

- Particularly for small agencies, how will equity assessments be operationalized?
- For maximum impact and benefit to the public, will all city agencies be placed under the same equity umbrella? Or should the equity assessment program be more targeted to achieving specific equity goals?
- Should BCIT be consulted to fully integrate data mining tools to be able to better manage and assess equity baselines and progress goals?

With these considerations in mind, BMZA recommends approval of CC Bill. 18-223 with the amendments offered by HCD and the Planning Department, and would encourage partnership with city agencies in order to structure the proposed equity assessment program to have a maximum positive impact for the public by narrowly tailoring the programs requirements to each city agency.

Sincerely,



Derek J. Baumgardner
Executive Director

CC: Mayors Office of Council Relations
City Council President
Legislative Reference