



## MEMORANDUM

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

From: Alice Kennedy, Acting Housing Commissioner

Date: April 21, 2021

### Re: City Council Bill 21-0042 Real Estate Records – Modernization

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 21-0042 for the purpose of modernizing the methods by which the Comptroller shall make certain information regarding the City’s real estate records available to the public; making certain stylistic changes; and conforming and correcting related provisions.

If enacted, City Council Bill 21-0042 would repeal and re-ordain, with amendments Article 5 - Subtitle 16 and Article 28, Section 8-2 of the Baltimore City Code to modernize the office of the Baltimore City Comptroller. The Bill requires that real estate records be maintained in an online public database and available for public inspection instead of maintained in a “well-bound leather book.” The Bill also deletes obsolete references to paper bound record keeping systems and provides for a publicly facing searchable database. Finally, the Bill provides for a 6-month implementation period.

City Council Bill 21-0042 is part of a Legislative reform and modernization package of 4 bills introduced to update the way the office of the Comptroller operates. DHCD will continue to work with the Comptroller and the Director of Finance in maintaining the inventory of City-owned real property and note that much of the real property information is already available to the public on Open Data Baltimore.

DHCD would recommend a minor amendment on page 3 line 1 of the Bill to replace the word “fair” with “assessed” value. This amendment requires that the Comptroller and the Director of Finance maintain information on the assessed market value of the property, which is updated every 3 years. Fair Market Value is the agreed upon price between a willing and informed buyer and a seller under ordinary circumstances, while assessed value is a valuation placed on a property by a public tax assessor for purposes of taxation. It would be unreasonable for the agencies named in this Bill to maintain an inventory of fair market value for every parcel of property in the City of Baltimore without third party assessors.

DHCD **supports** the passage of City Council Bill 21-0042.

AK/sm

cc: Ms. Themelis, Nina, *Mayor’s Office of Government Relations*

Brandon M. Scott, Mayor • Alice Kennedy, Acting Housing Commissioner

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