



## Legislation Text

File #: 21-0010R, Version: 0

\* **Warning:** This is an unofficial, introductory copy of the bill.  
The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

### Introductory\*

### City of Baltimore Council Bill                    R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Middleton

#### A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

#### **Informational Hearing - Getting on the Same Page: Clarifying 311 Services' Approach to Resolving Requests**

For the purpose of inviting representatives from 311 Services, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Office of the City Administrator, the Baltimore Development Corporation, BGE, and the Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation to appear before the City Council to discuss how to improve the status classifications within the 311 to make them better understandable, more transparent, and more reliable for the citizens of Baltimore.

#### **Recitals**

As the first city to launch a 311 service in 1996, Baltimore has pioneered the use of centralized call centers for non-emergency complaints. The expansion of 311 to include a much broader range of services around the turn of the century and the introduction of a free 311 smartphone app for reporting and tracking service requests continued Baltimore's path-breaking role in the field. During its existence, the 311 system has created over 13,000,000 service requests on behalf of Baltimore City residents, businesses, and visitors.

However, citizens still raise concerns about the efficiency of 311's centralized complaint system and their ability to track the City's progress towards resolving complaints. Some feel that the current system does not provide sufficient transparency as to which agency is responsible for a particular complaint or what actions have been taken to "close" a service request. Seeing a "closed" 311 status for an issue that a citizen can see with their own eyes is still on-going is particularly galling and embarrassing for the City.

Further, simple requests often get lost in the byzantine patchwork of agency duties and responsibilities when agencies internally refer certain matters to each other for resolution without alerting the citizen who reported the matter. Without being notified of these inter-agency referrals, citizens face the anxiety of thinking that the City is being unresponsive or delaying their response. In other instances, citizens are simply not made aware of what tools are available for tracking service requests and are left in the dark about the results of their calls.

All of this raises the simple question - is 311 working? How many service requests are satisfactorily resolved and how many instead go unanswered or are "closed" by the system but then require follow-up

requests by residents who aren't satisfied by the initial response? When service requests are referred to other City agencies, are customers connected to the proper people at those agencies to follow-up on their requests? Does 311 Services make repeated efforts, if necessary, to determine whether agencies have fulfilled service requests? If 311 Services directs a service request to the wrong agency, does it have a system in place so that similar service requests will be reported to the correct agency in the future? The City Council is interested in learning the answers to these and similar questions at an informational hearing.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore,** That the Baltimore City Council invites representatives from 311 Services, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Office of the City Administrator, the Baltimore Development Corporation, BGE, and the Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation to appear before the City Council to discuss how to improve the status classifications within the 311 to make them better understandable, more transparent, and more reliable for the citizens of Baltimore.

**And be it further resolved,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, Director of 311 Services, Director of the Department of Public Works, Director of the Department of Transportation, the Acting City Administrator, the Executive Director of the Baltimore Development Corporation, the Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the City Arborist, BGE's Vice President of Support Services, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.