



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Welch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED
Neighborhoods At Risk - City Council Rapid Response Task Force

FOR the purpose of creating the City Council Rapid Response Task Force to identify neighborhoods at eminent risk of deterioration from a convergence of social, health, housing, and crime-related problems, to create a mechanism within the 911 and 311 response systems to identify calls from the neighborhoods designated as rapid response areas, and to formulate a rapid responder system to deliver services immediately to these areas; and requesting the Housing Commissioner, the Health Commissioner, the Police Commissioner, the Director of Planning, and the Director of Public Works to serve on the Task Force.

Recitals

Within Baltimore City, a number of neighborhoods exist that have long been host to a disproportionate share of social, educational, health, drug-related, and criminal ills. These neighborhoods continue to suffer under the weight of negative factors that coalesce to impact the quality of life of the residents and also attract those engaged in aberrant behavior who seek anonymity in areas where the day-to-day surveillance of law enforcement and other code enforcement agencies is perceived to be lax. Without immediate and intense response by government agencies, these neighborhoods are at risk of continued and increased deterioration.

The City Council Rapid Response Task Force will include neighborhoods at risk as neighborhoods where any 3 of the following conditions exist:

- * crime statistics are 20% above the national average for all crimes or 10% above the national average for violent crimes.
- * the mean household income is at or below the national poverty level.
- * vacant residential properties are equal to 10% of the housing stock.
- * documented complaints of rat infestation are at 20 per month or general sanitation complaints are at 10 per week.
- * recipients of all types of social service grants, including AFDC, elderly, and disabled, equal or exceed 10% of the resident population.

- * the unemployment rate is 10% or greater or where the average educational level is at or below 10th grade completion.
- * the area has been designated an urban renewal area by a unit of local or state government.
- * the rate of those with drug dependency, alcoholism, or HIV/AIDS is at or exceeds 5% of the population.

In neighborhoods where these conditions exist, in addition to any other condition the Task Force will identify as determining a neighborhood to be at risk, the City Council Rapid Response Task Force will implement a 48-hour-turn-around priority response to complaints regarding:

- * broken or inoperative street lighting,
- * rat infestation,
- * illegal drug-related activities,
- * disturbance of the peace by loud, disruptive, or curfew-violating neighbors,
- * illegal dumping activities,
- * illegal signs, such as posters advertising upcoming events, graffiti, and other negative indicators, such as tennis shoes thrown over utility wires, and
- * vacant residential and commercial properties in conditions of neglect.

Instituting a program in which the neighborhoods that have historically been "last" on the priority list for receipt of City services become the "first" will go far in addressing the endemic ills of those neglected neighborhoods and in improving the quality of life of Baltimore City as a whole.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That there is a City Council Rapid Response Task Force the purpose of which is to identify neighborhoods at eminent risk of deterioration from a convergence of social, health, housing, and crime-related problems, to create a mechanism within the 911 and 311 response systems to identify calls from the neighborhoods designated as rapid response areas, and to formulate a rapid responder system to deliver services immediately to these areas; and that the City Council requests the Housing Commissioner, the Health Commissioner, the Police Commissioner, the Director of Planning, and the Director of Public Works to serve on the Task Force.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Task Force will adopt accountability measures that inform the Councilmember and the neighborhood association(s) or organization(s) representing the at risk neighborhood of the time of receipt of the complaint and the time of resolution of the problem.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Task Force will submit to the City Council a request for all legislation that is needed to implement a Rapid Response System.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Housing Commissioner, the Health Commissioner, the Police Commissioner, the Director of Public Works, and the Director of Planning, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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