



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill

Introduced by: The Council President
At the request of: The Administration (Department of Planning)

A Resolution Entitled

A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council concerning
The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore
For the purpose of reviewing, revising, and adopting the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore; and providing for a special effective date.

Recitals

Under State Land Use Article, § 1-405 {"Plan required"} the City of Baltimore is required to enact, adopt, amend, and execute a comprehensive plan that contains the policies, statements, goals, and interrelated plans for private and public land use, transportation, and community facilities for the City's future development in accordance with Part III of Subtitle 4 of the State Land Use Article. Following adoption, the City shall review the comprehensive plan at least once every 10 years, and, if necessary, revise or amend the compressive plan to include: (i) implementation the visions set forth in § 1-201 {"Visions"} of the State Land Use Article; (ii) development regulations; and, (iii) the sensitive areas element of the plan.

State Land Use Article § 1-406 describes the required elements for charter county comprehensive plans: development regulations element, housing element, sensitive areas element, transportation element, water resources element, and growth tiers.

The State's 12 Planning Visions reflect the State's ongoing aspiration to develop and implement sound growth and development policy. The visions address: quality of life and sustainability; public participation; growth areas; community design; infrastructure; transportation; housing; economic development; environmental protection; resource conservation; stewardship; and implementation approaches.

The Mayor and City Council most recently adopted a Comprehensive Master Plan on November 21, 2006, when Resolution 06-019 was signed by then Mayor Martin J. O'Malley. Following the adoption of the City's plan the Maryland General Assembly passed and the governor signed House Bill 409 that changed the review cycle for comprehensive plans from every 6 years to every 10 years to coincide with the decennial census.

The Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore is now being revised in accordance with Title 3, Subtitle 1 {"Requirement and Elements"} of the State Land Use Article and in adherence to Article VII, §§ 72 and 74 of the City Charter.

Following the 2020 Census, the Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore shall be adopted no later than December 31, 2024.

Plan Organization

The 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore is organized into 5 primary sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Background, (3) Growth and Retention, (4) Policy Recommendations, and (5) Plans Shaping the City. Together, these sections detail the history of the City's development, the current state of City planning and development, and the City's vision and strategy for equitable, sustainable growth into the future.

(1) Introduction.

The Introduction defines the purpose of the plan and shares how it was created in partnership with residents and other community stakeholders. It casts a vision for the future of our City, grounded in our complex history and our connection to the region. Finally, it lays out a framework for holding the City accountable to the actions outlined in the plan.

(2) Background.

The Background section includes a brief history of Baltimore and exploration of population, demographic, and job data shaping Baltimore today.

(3) Growth and Retention.

The Planning for Growth and Retention section details how the City can both support current residents and grow our population. Through a variety of tools and strategies, this section provides a vision for future land use, changing development patterns, and identifying ways to support residential and economic growth.

(4) Policy Recommendations.

The Policy Recommendations section provides a large menu of potential policy options for the City to pursue. The Department of Planning developed these recommendations in partnership with residents, community organizations, City staff, and other community stakeholders to better ensure they reflect the needs and interests of Baltimore. Through this process, we identified 17 policy topic areas that we then organized into four overarching themes: (1) Livable Places, (2) Equitable Access, (3) Healthy Communities, and (4) Inclusive Economy.

(5) Plans Shaping the City.

This section highlights ongoing and future planning efforts for specific neighborhoods within the City. The section explores both Citymanaged plans and community-managed plans. We organized these planning efforts reshaping our City into three smaller sections: (1) Citywide Plans, (2) Area Focused Plans, and (3) Impact Investment Areas.

Land Use Map

The Growth and Retention section of the plan includes a land use map, which will be updated every 4 years. The Land Use Map serves as the guide for future development in our community, both in public and private actions, to ensure the harmonious and equitable development of the City.

The Land Use Map is important to the overall Comprehensive Plan because it provides the City with a way

to determine how land should be used in the future. Rather than evaluating proposed changes in isolation, the Land Use Map enables the City to consider the potential impacts of proposed rezonings on the surrounding area and how each of those changes affects future patterns around the City

The Land Use Map will be used to review proposed changes to the zoning map; it does not change the zoning of a property. Each land use category corresponds to one or more zoning categories. If a property owner makes a request to change the zoning designation of their property, the Land Use Map will be consulted to see if the request is consistent with the plan for the City.

Article 32 of the Baltimore City Code is our City's Zoning Code. Currently, the Zoning Code has 50 specific zones to regulate development and control how land may be used. In contrast, the Land Use Map makes use of general categories to establish the land use vision for the City, while still allowing for flexibility with regard to specific uses and development patterns. The Land Use Map includes an open space category, 3 residential categories, 6 mixed-use categories, and an industrial land category. Each of the 50 specific zones in the Zoning Code map to one or more of the broader categories in the Land Use Map. By connecting the Zoning Code to the Land Use Map, the City is better equipped to more equitably review zoning change requests and general development to ensure it follows the land use vision for the City.

The Land Use element, as a part of Comprehensive Plan shall be updated at least every 10 years. The Land Use Map shall be updated more frequently, with comprehensive updates during the 2nd year of every 4-year City Council term.

Goals

The Policy Recommendations section includes the following goals, organized into 4 themes: (1) Livable Places, (2) Equitable Access, (3) Healthy Communities, and (4) Inclusive Economy.

(1) *Livable Places.*

(i) *Affordable Housing.*

- (A) Increase the amount and types of housing supports tailored to the needs of immigrants to help them stay and grow in Baltimore.
- (B) Increase the amount and types of housing supports tailored to the needs of the City's most vulnerable (for example, older adults, those with different abilities, children, those experiencing homelessness, those who are/have been incarcerated) to better ensure that all Baltimoreans have stable and safe housing.
- (C) Increase the diversity of and access to resources and supports for residents to obtain safe and affordable housing within the City.
- (D) Increase the number of affordable housing units available for purchase and rent within the City to minimize payment burden for residents.
- (E) Leverage investment in affordable housing as a tool for community and economic development.

(ii) *Equitable Neighborhood Development.*

- (A) Increase engagement of under-represented individuals and groups in planning and community development to better ensure development is reflective of the community.
- (B) Increase opportunities for community and individual wealth building among low-

income and BIPOC Baltimore residents.

(iii) *Historic Resources.*

- (A) Expand the use of historic preservation programs and services across the City to better protect more parts of our historic City.
- (B) Expand workforce development resources and services to support the growth of a local historic preservation workforce and restoration economy.
- (C) Increase engagement with residents to tailor historic preservation programs and supports to community needs.

(iv) *Public Spaces and Placemaking.*

- (A) Implement high quality programming and stewardship of public spaces by Baltimore City agencies and partners.
- (B) Increase efforts to build community capacity to undertake placemaking projects.
- (C) Increase the development of City-supported placemaking projects in historically disinvested neighborhoods.
- (D) Revise policies and processes related to public spaces and placemaking to improve transparency and efficiency.

(v) *Vacant Housing.*

- (A) Increase the redevelopment of vacant buildings at scale using a block level approach.
- (B) Increase the resources and supports provided to residents related to vacancy prevention and elimination.
- (C) Intervene early, assertively, and proactively to prevent additional houses from becoming vacant.
- (D) Strengthen strategies for addressing privately-owned vacant buildings and improve the supports to residents to purchase and/or rehabilitate individual vacant buildings.

(2) *Equitable Access.*

(i) *Access to Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreation.*

- (A) Develop and implement an equitable capital investment strategy to make existing and future recreational facilities and parks more accessible and better maintained.
- (B) Expand and improve programming in parks, open spaces, and at recreational facilities to ensure that all residents have access to outdoor and recreational programs.
- (C) Implement a capital investment strategy, operations plan, and funding plan to ensure equitable access to parks, recreational facilities, and activities.
- (D) Increase access to neighborhood parks and open spaces to ensure that all residents have

the opportunity to use and enjoy the City's recreational amenities.

- (E) Increase the frequency and quality of maintenance for existing neighborhood parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities to improve public recreational experiences.

(ii) *Digital Access and Equity.*

- (A) Increase resident access to modern computing devices.
- (B) Increase the availability and accessibility of high speed internet and digital devices, prioritizing neighborhoods with low levels of digital equity and inclusion.
- (C) Increase the quality and availability of digital skills training, education, and technical support throughout the City.

(iii) *Food Access.*

- (A) Engage residents in food systems education and support community-led work, particularly for urban farmers, families with young children, and older adults.
- (B) Increase accessibility of healthy and culturally appropriate foods, particularly in areas of high food insecurity.
- (C) Increase opportunities for urban agriculture to facilitate access to fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods for historically disinvested neighborhoods.
- (D) Provide economic supports to help grow local food businesses and develop the local food economy.

(iv) *Transportation Equity.*

- (A) Implement “Complete Streets” to increase the number of people who walk or bike to work.
- (B) Increase City transit service accessibility, reliability, and affordability.
- (C) Increase investment in and development of TOD throughout the City.
- (D) Increase the use of land use tools and policies to support the development of equitable transit.
- (E) Support efforts to expand regional transit in partnership with MTA and MDOT to connect more people and places within the Baltimore metro area.
- (F) Update and modernize the City transit system to increase ridership.

(3) *Healthy Communities.*

(i) *Designing for Public Safety.*

- (A) Assess and understand the impacts of zoning and land use on public safety to identify ways to use them as tools to improve public safety.

- (B) Increase efforts to educate and empower residents to use principles of CPTED in their communities.
- (D) Increase the availability and accessibility of rehabilitative services to help communities heal from past and present trauma.
- (E) Increase the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design by City agencies.
- (F) Invest in more traffic calming measures and speeding deterrents to improve pedestrian and traffic safety.
- (G) Support the use of CPTED principles in the creation and maintenance of public spaces in an effort to deter crime.

(ii) *Environmental and Climate Justice.*

- (A) Increase City and community environmental and climate literacy to better equip all residents with relevant knowledge.
- (B) Increase the employment and training opportunities available for climate careers for frontline communities.
- (C) Increase the services and supports available to frontline, overburdened, and environmental justice communities to help them deal with the impacts of environmental harms.
- (D) Reduce the exposure of frontline, overburdened, and Environmental Justice Communities to environmental pollutants.

(iii) *Neighborhood Cleanliness.*

- (A) Increase and diversify the types of efforts the City provides to support neighborhood-led clean ups.
- (B) Increase availability of resources and programs to educate residents on recycling and waste disposal, with an emphasis on moving toward zero waste.
- (C) Increase City-led efforts to improve and maintain sanitary conditions in public spaces.

(iv) *Public Health Disparities Related to Extreme Heat.*

- (A) Implement measures that reduce heat exposure at the pedestrian level to minimize the impacts of extreme heat on residents.
- (B) Implement strategies to make the built environment, specifically homes, schools, and senior centers, more resilient during extreme heat.
- (C) Increase the diversity of and access to programs and supports that provide relief during extreme heat events, particularly for older adults, infants, those experiencing homelessness, and those with mobility challenges.
- (D) Increase the number of City staff trained in and focused on addressing and mitigating extreme heat to better ensure the City is equipped for a warming climate.

- (E) Reduce the number of residents who experience electrical service interruption on days when the heat index is higher than 105 degrees.

(v) *Trees and Forests.*

- (A) Increase public education and awareness for the City's natural resources to create a more informed public that can support conservation efforts.
- (B) Increase the City's tree canopy using native and heat-tolerant species in the neighborhoods experiencing frequent instances of extreme heat to reduce heat island effects.
- (C) Increase the survival rate of trees planted by the City to better maintain the tree canopy and its cooling effects.
- (D) Preserve the City's existing canopy, including street trees, forested areas, and other natural areas as a way to manage heat, water runoff, and improve overall quality of life.

(4) *Inclusive Economy.*

(i) *Freight Movement.*

- (A) Achieve and maintain a State of Good Repair for roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure for freight movement building on the work of the State and Freight Movement Task Force.
- (B) Identify and mitigate conflicts between freight movement and other activities to reduce the impacts of freight on residents.
- (C) Reduce the environmental impacts of freight movement within the neighborhoods most affected to protect residents.
- (D) Reduce transportation and training barriers for Baltimore City residents seeking freight movement jobs.

(ii) *Small Business Ecosystem and Neighborhood Retail.*

- (A) Evaluate the viability, implementation, and success of commercial corridors, City retail programs, and business incentives to identify how best to develop neighborhood retail.
- (B) Identify policy and practical measures to align broader economic development with small businesses and neighborhood retail development.
- (C) Increase the availability and accessibility of services and supports for helping to launch and maintain small businesses.
- (D) Provide more supports to encourage the development neighborhood retail establishments.
- (E) Provide supports to communities to help them diversify the types of retail available so that the local economy better matches their needs.

(iii) *Workforce Development.*

- (A) Improve quality of and access to job training in high priority fields within the state and region that pay family supporting wages.
- (B) Increase the readiness of BCPS students for employment and/or post-secondary education.
- (C) Streamline and centralize access to the City's workforce and wrap-around services to make them more accessible to all residents.

Section 1. Be it resolved by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That after having reviewed the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore, including the Land Use Map, and after conducting a public hearing, the 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Baltimore, as revised September 11, 2024, is adopted as the City's official Master Plan.

Section 2. And be it further resolved, That the Department of Planning shall review and propose updates to the Land Use Map on a quadrennial basis. Any revision of the Land Use Map shall be introduced as a Resolution of the Mayor and City Council during the 2nd year of every 4-year City Council term. The Land Use Map shall be maintained by the Department of Planning in an accessible manner.

Section 3. And be it further resolved, That after enactment of this Resolution, a copy of the Resolution and the Master Plan adopted by it be sent to the Mayor, Maryland State Department of Planning, Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Department of Finance, Health Department, Baltimore City Heritage Area, Baltimore Dept. of Housing & Community Development, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Law Department, Department of Legislative Reference, Mayor's Office of Minority Business Development, Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods, Department of Planning, Police Department, Department of Public Works, Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Transportation, the Commission on Aging, Retirement and Education, the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities, the Enoch Pratt Free Library System, the Baltimore City Public School System, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety, Baltimore City Information Technology, and the Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals.

Section 4. And be it further resolved, That this Resolution takes effect on the date it is enacted.