

City of Baltimore 2024 Legislative Priorities



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

This upcoming legislative session in Annapolis will be crucial to building on the progress we have made over the past three years. The success of my Administration's legislative priorities depends on the support of the hardest-working Delegation in Annapolis.

During my time as Mayor, your leadership and partnership in Annapolis helped to usher in powerful legislation for the City of Baltimore that ranged from expanding the vacant property in rem process to taking the critical first steps in finalizing local control of the Baltimore Police Department. You all answered the call to secure much-needed funds for the Convention Center's design study and provide additional funding for critical repairs. As we faced increasing pressure from surrounding jurisdictions about our aging water infrastructure, you all stepped up and passed legislation to create the Regional Governance Water Task Force.

During the 2024 Legislative Session, we will continue to expand on our core goals of building public safety, prioritizing our youth, and further efforts in equitable neighborhood development in all communities across the City. Below is a description of each of my legislative priorities for the upcoming session. We know that there will be some significant challenges during the upcoming session, but we are optimistic and eager that this session will be another successful year for the City of Baltimore.



BUILDING PUBLIC SAFETY

Home Monitoring Notification **Statewide Bill**

My top priority this upcoming session is to decrease the time someone currently on a home monitoring system can abscond before that person's missing status is reported to the appropriate authorities. This unnecessary delay in reporting, currently up to 4 days depending on the timing of an individual leaving their designated area, has unfortunately led to a number of victims and perpetrators of crimes found while wearing an ankle monitor. This legislation will additionally include the reestablishment of the Work Group on Home Detention Monitoring, previously sponsored by Delegate Stephanie Smith and enacted in 2021. Unfortunately, the work group was never able to perform its work due to a lack of appointments by the former Governor. I look forward to working with the General Assembly to ensure this common-sense legislation is enacted.

Local Control of the Baltimore Police Department **Local Bill**

My Administration requests legislation that will remove limiting language from Article II Section 27 of the Baltimore City Charter to better align Baltimore City's police powers with other jurisdictions around the state of Maryland. The Local Control Advisory Board, in collaboration with my Administration successfully drafted local legislation to define the Baltimore Police Department within our City Code and Charter more comprehensively. The Baltimore City Council has now passed both pieces of legislation and the second ballot measure to enshrine portions of the organization and structure of the Police Department will be on the 2024 ballot for residents to approve.

Diminution Credits **Statewide Bill**

This legislation would reduce the ability of certain inmates who have been convicted of certain crimes of violence from receiving the maximum number of diminution credits as is currently allowable under the State of Maryland's Correctional Services Article 3-708. While the Justice Reinvestment Act of 2016 made some much needed improvements to requirements and permissions under Maryland law, there are still certain crimes that should not allow for the same level of credits to be granted to those inmates.

Impounding Vehicles of Chronic Offenders **Local Bill**

My Administration is interested in pursuing state legislation that would authorize Baltimore City to impound vehicles owned by individuals considered "chronic offenders" of automated speed and red-light cameras. Chronic offenders would be defined as vehicles that have accrued \$1,000 or more in unpaid Baltimore City automated enforcement violations.

Failure to Register a Vehicle in Maryland **Local Bill**

(Sponsor: Delegate Addison)

We have seen a proliferation of vehicles on our roads in Baltimore City that have license plates from other states. Under current Maryland law, vehicles owners have 60 days from the time of moving to Maryland to register their plates. This legislation would allow for vehicles who fail to register within Maryland to be towed or booted to compel the owner to make the required change.



EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Vacant Housing Strategy

I am seeking a commitment of \$900 million over the next 15 years toward our vacant property strategy. This support could be realized through a variety of ways, including direct appropriations, state GO borrowing, leveraging appropriations towards debt service on a special State borrowing mechanism, making use of Federal borrowing programs, or a combination of these approaches.

I am also seeking legislative changes that would enable Baltimore to receive 2% local share from sales tax (Statewide Bill). 1% would be used to provide \$1,000 across the board annual property tax relief for owner-occupied properties, which will help lower the effective tax rate and allow Baltimore to compete with neighboring jurisdictions to grow our population and tax base for the long term. And the other 1% of sales tax would be used to unlock \$1.5 billion in city GO bonds over 15 years.

Property Taxes — Authority to Set Special Rates Local Bill

(Sponsor: Delegate Boyce)

This year, I am proud to again support Delegate Boyce's Authority to Set Special Rates of Property Taxes bill as a part of My Administration 's legislative package. By providing the City with a tool to more equitably distribute property taxes, we can overcome barriers to homeownership, and entice new residents and businesses to come to the City. Moreover, as this is enabling legislation, this bill would allow my Administration to develop an equitable framework to target and balance any changes in property tax rates to ensure such changes are advantageous to the City and our residents, businesses, and other entities and to safeguard against any detrimental impacts or inequities.

Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority Task Force Local Bill

This legislative session, I am seeking to establish a task force to study and make recommendations on the establishment of a Baltimore Convention and Tourism Redevelopment and Operating Authority, potential membership of such an Authority, defining the Authority's purpose and function, and requiring the task force to advise on renovation, revitalization or development projects related to the Baltimore Convention site and surrounding area.

Liquor License Modification Local Bill

My Administration seeks to loosen existing restrictions on the ability of restaurants located downtown to apply for Class B-(BWL) beer, wine, and liquor licenses, with the ultimate goal of making it easier to fill vacant storefronts downtown. This legislation is part of a broader action plan for downtown, referred to as Downtown RISE, which will help stabilize the area through a period in which the office market is predicted to experience further downturn.

Liquor License Fees Local Bill

My Administration seeks to make adjustments to existing fees related to liquor licensing to ensure that such fees are properly representing the true cost of oversight and compliance for those businesses who obtain such licenses.

Consumer Protections Statute of Limitations for Local Jurisdictions Statewide Bill

(Sponsor: Delegate Embry)

I will also be supporting Delegate Embry's legislation which will extend the statute of limitations for consumer protection actions. Having a three-year limitations period will bring it in line with the general three-year statute of limitations applicable to most causes of actions in Maryland. In addition, because it takes time for a local jurisdiction to become aware of unlawful conduct toward citizen consumers and investigate it, the bill prevents bad actors from evading responsibility during that time.



PRIORITIZING YOUTH

Youth Data Sharing Expansion Local Bill

In 2022, SB 0870 created provisions for data sharing necessary for the creation of a Baltimore City Youth Data Hub. State and local agencies and non-profits are authorized to provide records that include personally identifiable information pertaining to youth to the Hub for the purposes of improving youth outcomes. Once the records are provided, a third-party joins the disparate records about individuals and provides de-identified and aggregated data back to agencies for research and evaluation. My Administration is seeking amendments to the existing Youth Data Hub legislation to authorize the receipt of identifiable information by BCHD, BCPS and School Police, DJS, DSS, the Mayor's Office, and local law enforcement to improve their effectiveness in safeguarding children.

Safe Infant Sleep Act Statewide Bill

(Sponsor: Delegate Lewis)

I stand fully in support of this commonsense bill to require hospitals to provide instructions and resources to parents or legal guardians regarding proper safe sleep environments for infants.