BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE ECONOMY IN BALTIMORE

By Brandon Scott
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Leverage the Board of Estimates ........................................................................................................................................... 2
  Implement Small, Local Business Procurement Preference ........................................................................................................ 2
  Establish Procurement Policy Committee ........................................................................................................................................ 2
  Establish the Office of Contract Compliance ............................................................................................................................. 2
  Advance 25% Hiring Benchmark for City Residents in City Contracts .................................................................................... 3
  Change Makeup of the Board of Estimates ........................................................................................................................................ 3
  Enforce Wage Equality ........................................................................................................................................................................ 3
  Support Employee-Owned Businesses ............................................................................................................................................... 3
  Establish Preference for Businesses Hiring Hard-to-Employ Populations ........................................................................... 4
  Institute Residency Requirement for Management-Level New Hires .................................................................................... 4

Incubate Small Businesses and Provide Access to Capital ........................................................................................................ 5
  Utilize Data and Feedback to Evaluate Policies .................................................................................................................................. 5
  Invest in Incubator Space for Start-ups and the Maker Community ............................................................................................. 5
  Double the BDC Micro Loan Fund and Mandate 50% of Funds go to MWBEs ........................................................................ 5
  Establish City-Owned Public Bank .................................................................................................................................................. 5

Fully Invest in Our Education System ........................................................................................................................................ 6
  Establish a School to City Job Pipeline via YouthWorks Job Guarantee ................................................................................... 6
  Maintain Commitment for Kirwan ....................................................................................................................................................... 6
  Install HVAC in All City Schools ..................................................................................................................................................... 6
  Mandate Financial Literacy as a Requirement for High School Graduation ............................................................................ 6
  Create CTE Curriculum and Enhanced Technology ...................................................................................................................... 6

Improve Infrastructure and Connectivity for Business Growth ................................................................................................... 8
  Make Smart City Investments: Municipal Broadband & Technology Access ................................................................................... 8
  Expand Howard Street Tunnel ............................................................................................................................................................. 8
  Support Main Street and Neighborhood Growth ............................................................................................................................. 8
  Expand Mass Transit and Neighborhood Connectivity .................................................................................................................. 9
  Establish Strategically-Placed Road Diets .......................................................................................................................................... 9

Invest in Historically Disinvested Neighborhoods ...................................................................................................................... 10
  Implement Equity Assessment Program and Capitalize the Equity Fund .................................................................................... 10
  Estate Planning Assistance to Preserve Generational Wealth ....................................................................................................... 10
  Leverage Capital Improvement Program Funds and Enhanced 311 ............................................................................................. 10
  Establish City-Owned Grocery Stores ............................................................................................................................................... 10
  Incentivize Equitable Development ................................................................................................................................................ 11
  Analyze Land Use and Provide Community Support ................................................................................................................... 11
  Transfer Vacant Lots to Community Organizations ..................................................................................................................... 12
As a longtime public servant, I am the only candidate in this race who is committed to equitable economic and community development in Baltimore. For too long, Baltimore’s leadership has allowed the few to prosper while the many see none of the gains. Changing this economic status quo will take someone who knows how to wield the reins of city government without needing to preserve it.

There are structural changes and operational improvements in government that will streamline and ease the flow of business activity within the city. However, Baltimore needs to not just fix our basic business regulatory infrastructure, but invest in new, regenerative economic systems.

My primary guiding principle for economic and community development is equity. It is why I passed the Equity Assessment Ordinance, and intend to fully fund the Equity Assistance Program. I am also committed to:

- fiscal accountability;
- equal access to safe housing in all of Baltimore’s neighborhoods;
- expanding Baltimore’s capacity through dignified work that pays family-supporting wages;
- providing safe and reliable transportation to job centers;
- equitable distribution of City contracts.

We can no longer accept Mayoral administrations who continue to broker extractive economic deals for insiders behind closed doors. Mayor after mayor has rolled over while developers and lobbyists dictate the terms of city contracts, tax breaks, Payments In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOTS), and Tax Increment Financing (TIFs). This will end in my administration. I am committed to economic and community development that supports all Baltimoreans.

Above all, I intend to partner with community-led organizations in my economic and community development decisions. Every other candidate is funded by developers and deep-pocket donors with little interest in an equitable future for Baltimore. No longer will people simply be able to buy their seat at the table.

This is the most important election in Baltimore in decades. This election is about the future of Baltimore. This election is a choice between the status quo, who have demonstrated a lack of commitment to moving the city forward, and a candidate who has a track record of leading and voting on progressive issues.

In service,

Brandon Scott
LEVERAGE THE BOARD OF ESTIMATES

Implement Small, Local Business Procurement Preference

As Mayor I will pursue policies that leverage the City’s contracting power to support our small, local businesses. As we recover from COVID-19 and begin to dig out of the economic devastation, this will be more important than ever.

All levels of government must streamline their processes to ease the path to investment and employment. For small businesses, the biggest impediment to securing city government contracts is that they are not large enough businesses. As Council President and Chair of the Board of Estimates, I seek to bridge that gap.

As Mayor, I am committed to supporting local businesses and working to make sure that the tools we have in place are used to this end. As a councilman, I supported charter amendment 16-0672, which allowed for the creation of a small and local business enterprise procurement preference. After this was approved, the Council passed an ordinance creating a Small Local Business Enterprise Procurement Preference, which I also supported. Unfortunately, the City has not yet implemented this program. The ordinance allows a 10% preference for local and small businesses. As Mayor, I will direct my administration to establish this program and my departments to use it.

This means that in new, un-grandfathered competitive bids, local and small businesses can win the contract bid even if their price is up to 10% higher than the lowest bid.

Establish Procurement Policy Committee

As Mayor, I will establish a Procurement Policy Committee to make our rules easier to navigate and more transparent. The Committee will include representatives from the minority-and women-owned business community, other local small businesses, and Baltimore residents committed to transparency and accountability in government. This committee will ensure our procurement rules are efficient and conducive to doing business in Baltimore. The group will be tasked with reviewing laws, regulations, contract awards, and other relevant information so we can implement long-needed changes, streamline procurement, increase transparency, and ensure City dollars are spent on homegrown businesses wherever possible.

Establish the Office of Contract Compliance

The City’s wage laws, minority business requirements, and local hiring law are all vital to our efforts to use City dollars to reflect the values and priorities we all share — to support our minority contracting community, to put our residents to work, and to make sure they earn a fair wage.

Currently, however, the important work of ensuring compliance with the City’s various programs falls to agencies across City government. The Law Department’s Office of Minority and Women Business Opportunity Office monitors compliance with the City’s MBE and WBE requirements. The Mayor’s Office of Employment Development tracks Local Hire. The Office of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement monitors wage-related requirements. The result is a regulatory scheme that is difficult to understand, lacks transparency, and leads to insufficient compliance with these important city policies.

As Mayor, I will combine these efforts under one office, the Office of Contract Compliance. Doing so will create efficiencies that will allow multiple under-resourced offices to function at a higher level. I will provide additional budgetary support to these offices in order to increase staff and therefore increase compliance. The centralized, fully staffed office will be able to monitor compliance, enforce penalties, investigate waiver requests, assist contractors through the process, and work with agencies to ensure full compliance on their part.
Advance 25% Hiring Benchmark for City Residents in City Contracts

As Mayor, I commit to advancing a mandatory 25% hiring benchmark of city residents for City contracts. We all know the current local hiring system has too many loopholes. I commit to implementing more straightforward local hiring requirements for all City contracts.

The surest way to bring economic opportunity to more Baltimoreans is by supporting good, union careers that pay honest, family-supporting wages. That is why as Council President I have introduced legislation that would mandate Project Labor Agreements, also known as community workforce agreements, on some City contracts. These agreements would ensure that the City’s valuable contracting dollars go to support good wages and benefits, opportunities for Baltimore residents, workforce training, and other community benefits.

Change Makeup of the Board of Estimates

As Council President, I introduced a Charter Amendment to reduce the size of the Board of Estimates from five members to three. The Board is currently made up of the City Council President, Mayor, Comptroller, City Solicitor, and Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW). The Board of Estimates approves over a half a billion in city government contracts for goods and services every year. The City Solicitor and DPW Director are both appointed by the Mayor. This raises questions of independence and objectivity. Removing the City Solicitor and Director of DPW from the Board of Estimates would make the BOE process more accountable to residents by rebalancing voting power. Moreover, most cities no longer use a Board of Estimates to approve city contracts. As Mayor, I will investigate alternatives to the Board of Estimates to make the decision-making process more transparent and democratic. This proposed amendment will begin that conversation.

Enforce Wage Equality

Baltimore’s wage enforcement office needs to be restructured. Its current staff has neither the expertise nor support from the mayor’s office to meaningfully enforce contractual agreements or labor law violations. As Mayor, I will bolster this office to ensure that workers are protected, contractual obligations are met, and that all Baltimoreans prosper from economic development in this City.

Support Employee-Owned Businesses

Worker co-operatives are inclusive economic development models but have never been fully embraced by prior administrations. In addition to democratic working conditions and a living wage, worker co-ops also provide opportunities for people with criminal records who experience discrimination in the job market. Core Staffing Cooperative is a great example of a local employee-owned business that provides second chances for residents returning from prison. Employee-owned businesses tend to be mission-driven and can yield positive impacts on our environment and our communities.

As Mayor, I would incentivize the creation of more worker co-ops by first officially recognizing employee-owned businesses as a component of my economic development strategy. I will also focus on policies and programs that make it easier for them to do business in Baltimore. I will support initiatives that provide legal and technical assistance to those looking to establish these democratic and family-sustaining ventures, particularly in our economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods. I will investigate creating a procurement preference for worker co-op vendors, contractors, and those that use co-ops in their supply chain.
Establish Preference for Businesses Hiring Hard-to-Employ Populations

As Mayor, I will pass legislation to provide preference points for businesses that demonstrate that they have a history of hiring those who have a difficult time finding employment: residents returning from jail or prison, recovering addicts, and those with limited formal educational certifications. Investing in these residents will pay dividends in increased GDP output, reduced government dependence, less crime, and less death from overdoses. Most importantly, these people will be able to have more opportunities at a living wage job to stand on their own and support their families.

Institute Residency Requirement for Management-Level New Hires

The Baltimore City government is the economic engine of the region. More than fifty percent of the upper management in the City government live outside of Baltimore. This is not only illegal but detrimental to the health and vitality of our City. As Mayor, I will not only ask, but require that all agencies report yearly on the residency status of their management teams.
INCUBATE SMALL BUSINESSES AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO CAPITAL

Utilize Data and Feedback to Evaluate Policies

Create a division of the Small Business Resource Development Center focused on measuring and tracking specific metrics on the health of small businesses in Baltimore. These metrics include business dynamism, total lending to small businesses in Baltimore, average loans received, total number and size of equity investments received, employee growth, leverage, and revenue, and EBITDA growth. The SBRC will gather this information via an annual voluntary survey of businesses and the information will be used to determine the effectiveness of existing programs and to identify new programs that can assist businesses.

Invest in Incubator Space for Start-ups and the Maker Community

The Emerging Technology Center is a city-funded incubator space on North Haven Street. It has been a strong focal point for the start-up community in Baltimore. The ETC is probably the best-known secret in this town. Dozens of startups are helped through them every year and millions of dollars are attracted into Baltimore led startups through their efforts and connections.

As Mayor, I will increase access to a program that is working by creating an extension location in West Baltimore. In addition, the Made In Bmore program while successful needs to be expanded with deeper investment to help Baltimore’s maker economy continue to grow. Through fiscal investment and creative rezoning, I will build a Made In Bmore maker incubator. Lastly, I will also through similar investment and administrative action support Baltimore’s art community creating an environment that supports expansion of our artist into a larger economy.

Double the BDC Micro Loan Fund and Mandate 50% of Funds go to MWBEs

The Baltimore Micro Loan Fund provides existing and start-up small businesses with financing for working capital, furniture, fixtures, machinery, and equipment. The loans are for amounts between $5,000 to $30,000, to stimulate employment, assisting small businesses in obtaining fixed-rate financing, and to encourage private sector investment in Baltimore City.

As Mayor, I will double this fund and require that half of the total funds be earmarked for MWBE businesses. We know that these businesses struggle most with access to capital. This fund will help alleviate this problem and spur entrepreneurship in Baltimore.

Establish City-Owned Public Bank

I would support a feasibility study on a Baltimore City public bank. I am encouraged by public banking efforts like that of North Dakota, and those proposed by the democratic party of the West Virginia legislature. Establishing a Baltimore City-owned and independently-run public bank could house city funds, increase the region’s lending capacity to small businesses, support new homeowners, and help reduce the cost of financing infrastructure projects within and around the city, among other important and relevant byproducts. Another byproduct is that this bank could provide meaningful financial and technical assistance to build the capacity of black, and other underrepresented groups, owned-businesses.
FULLY INVEST IN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

Establish a School to City Job Pipeline via YouthWorks Job Guarantee

YouthWorks is a great program that provides young people with meaningful work while exposing them to basic banking and money management. Unfortunately, there is never enough funding allocated to ensure this program can support all young people who want to work. Every young person who qualifies for a YouthWorks job should be provided one. We can do more to incentivize businesses to participate in this program.

As Mayor, I will fully fund YouthWorks, to ensure that every eligible applicant has the funding they need for a summer job. Additionally, we can leverage this program to bridge Baltimore’s youth into permanent careers in city agencies. This will allow our students to then grow within an agency and the city government thereby improving city services.

Maintain Commitment for Kirwan

As Council President, I passed a resolution asking the Maryland General Assembly to override the Governor’s veto of HB 1300 — Blueprint for Maryland’s Future — Implementation, also known as the Kirwan Commission legislation. COVID-19 has laid bare the inequities in our society. Many students have been unable to participate in distance learning because they do not have the needed materials including a computer and broadband internet access. Funding Kirwan is an equity issue that will pay dividends back to our economy. Funding education is the economic stimulus we need to overcome this economic downturn. Concurrently, more federal funding is imminent to help offset the devastating economic and budgetary impact of COVID-19. Once this support comes, there will be no excuse to not fully fund Kirwan.

Install HVAC in All City Schools

Simply put, it is unacceptable that our students lose so much instructional time merely because our school buildings do not have proper heating and air conditioning. This inequity has a direct impact on our economy because that lost instructional time equals less preparation for students. As Council President, I called on the Mayor to utilize the FY 2019 budget surplus to solve this problem. Unfortunately, the Mayor did not listen and many schools remain inadequate. Therefore, As Mayor, I will ensure that this problem is solved on an aggressive timeline to limit and ultimately eliminate lost instruction time for HVAC issues.

Mandate Financial Literacy as a Requirement for High School Graduation

Every student who graduates from City schools should be able to manage their finances and have a basic understanding of the larger economy they operate within. Simply teaching basic personal financial literacy will aid students in their upward economic mobility. As Mayor, I will urge the School Board to create this mandate. This is a common-sense policy that will have lasting effects on the economy and the future of our students.

Create CTE Curriculum and Enhanced Technology

For far too long the education our young people receive has been out of touch for the world they live in. Every young person who graduates from a Baltimore City High School should have the ability to obtain a job needed in today’s world. As a CTE graduate from Mervio I know first hand the benefits of a CTE education. We will still support our young people in seeking higher education but will also make sure that those who chose not to are not left behind.
Recently, I fought for $3 million to be spent on providing a laptop for every city student. This is merely the beginning of what is required to better prepare our students for success. As Mayor, I will fight for every student to understand the essentials of technology and to have access to them. I will prioritize STEAM learning that prepares students for the technological changes of today’s global economy.

As Mayor, I will work with our schools CEO, educators, business leaders, labor leaders and our young people to redevelop our CTE education to match the careers needed in Baltimore now and in the future. We can see what industries are growing and where the opportunities are. Our curriculum should reflect those realities and under my leadership it will.
IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

Make Smart City Investments: Municipal Broadband & Technology Access

As Mayor, I will invest in infrastructure that makes internet access ubiquitous across Baltimore. Too many of our neighbors are shut out of the gig economy, and other 21st century economic opportunities because they do not have reliable broadband access or adequate technology to fully utilize high-speed internet access. As we have seen in the COVID-19 crisis, many assistance programs, job opportunities, and places to connect with people require technology that too many Baltimoreans do not have.

I will prioritize building BmoreNet, Baltimore’s municipal broadband network. Building the network will be done through a lens of equity to ensure that neighborhoods with the least access to the internet are built out first, and that members of those communities are employed in the process.

Expand Howard Street Tunnel

As Mayor, I will fully support the needed expansion of the Howard Street Tunnel. This expansion will remove the freight bottleneck which prevents more cargo from moving through the Port of Baltimore to the rest of the Nation. This expansion will significantly increase shipping container traffic through our city and be a boon for our economy. The economic benefits include 6,550 construction jobs, 7,290 jobs as a result of double-stacking including 2,950 direct jobs, 3,400 induced jobs, and 940 indirect jobs, $613 million annually in personal income and re-spending/local consumption, $43 million annually in business revenue, and $65 million annually in state and local tax revenue.

Support Main Street and Neighborhood Growth

Baltimore City currently has a neighborhood approach to revitalization through the Main Streets program. The existing eight Main Street programs work to bring businesses and jobs to communities in our City. I will extend this program to include historically redlined Black neighborhoods that need government support to spur small business investments. These new Main Street programs will work to bring local Black run businesses to our neighborhoods revitalizing forgotten parts of our City. I will establish the following Main Street programs in neighborhoods desperately needing investment:

1. Monument Street to revitalize a key corridor in East Baltimore strengthening businesses around Northeast Market;
2. North Avenue to strengthen commerce along this vital connector between east and west;
3. York Road to aid the development of community enterprise in North Baltimore;
4. Reisterstown Road and Liberty Heights to bring more community businesses to Northwest Baltimore;
5. Pennsylvania Ave to support the first Black Arts & Entertainment District
6. West Baltimore Street to strengthen business and local economic development while building on the growth of nearby University of Maryland in West Baltimore;

I will also strengthen the following existing Main Streets Programs which are serving historically underinvested communities and need additional support to make impactful and meaningful change in their communities:

i. Belair-Edison which is driving meaningful change in a much-needed area along Belair Road in Northeast Baltimore;

ii. Waverly which is serving the diverse communities along Greenmount Avenue;

iii. Pennsylvania Avenue in West Baltimore is serving the historic Black commercial district, which due to disinvestment is a shadow of its former self. As part of the Pennsylvania Avenue Main Street, we will also provide the necessary startup support to the Black Arts District, the first Black arts and entertainment district in the State. Support for the Black Arts District will help build community and bring back arts and commerce to this once legendary avenue.

**Expand Mass Transit and Neighborhood Connectivity**

Transit and transportation should support a neighborhood’s development, not prohibit it. Transportation is critical to both an individual and a community’s economic potential and success.

I will expand the footprint of the Charm City Circulator to include neighborhoods with Black majorities. The Circulator should not only serve affluent white touristy neighborhoods. All residents deserve access to equitable transportation. The Circulator should traverse neighborhoods with the highest percentage of transit riders. Currently, the Circulator’s depot is in Cherry Hill; however, they refuse to add a stop for the Cherry Hill neighborhood, ending on the other side of the bridge in Federal Hill. Including a stop in Cherry Hill is an easy change to bring equity to how Baltimore invests in public transportation.

Additionally, the Circulator will be expanded to provide job center routes that take workers from West and East Baltimore to areas of employment where transit issues exist, like TradePoint Atlantic and the industrial areas of the city.

Walkable neighborhoods increase a sense of community and also contribute to business growth and development. By deprioritizing cars, on certain roads throughout the City, we can create safer neighborhoods and increase customers for local community-centric small businesses. I will work with communities to identify key streets that would benefit from changing the emphasis from cars to people.

**Establish Strategically-Placed Road Diets**

Roads through Baltimore’s commercial Main Streets should not be high-speed expressways, instead, they should emphasize safety, accessibility, and walkability. Slowing streets through Road Diets are good for people and businesses. Currently, Harford Road has been altered to prioritize pedestrians and transit riders, making bus stops more accessible and crosswalks safer. Safer business communities make smart business sense. I would seek to expand this road diet to other major thoroughfares to keep people safe and drive business success.
INVEST IN HISTORICALLY DISINVESTED NEIGHBORHOODS

Implement Equity Assessment Program and Capitalize the Equity Fund

Our financial investments must be disseminated through a lens of equity. Historically underinvested communities will require incentives to attract businesses and home buyers. Unfortunately, poor leadership and worse government processes and laws prevent these goals from being attainable. I wrote and passed City Council Bill 18-0222 Charter Amendment — Equity Assistance Fund and City Council Bill 18-0223 Equity Assessment Program to redress these problems. We know that this legislation is necessary due to the historic inequities that were embedded in law with racist intent.

As Mayor, I plan to oversee the implementation of this bill so it is done correctly and to measure its progress to ensure positive outcomes for disenfranchised Black and brown communities. As Mayor, I will ensure operating and capital dollars, tax incentives, and tax credits are equitably spent and awarded. We know that for the past forty years, these funds have been spent in areas that do not need these public investments. As Mayor, I will capitalize the Equity Assistance fund to get access to capital for projects, businesses, and other initiatives that remedy past harm and reduce inequity based on race, gender, or economic status in Baltimore.

Estate Planning Assistance to Preserve Generational Wealth

Nearly 70% of Black Americans do not have a will. And in many of Baltimore's predominantly Black neighborhoods, homeowners do not have their estates in order to allow their homes to seamlessly stay in their families. A direct consequence of this inequity is the inability for Black wealth and property to transfer from one generation to another. Often, families remain in homes without the transfer, causing lapses in property tax payments, which in turn leads to homes being taken. These affect Black communities’ ability to accumulate inter-generational wealth through home ownership. This problem is easily solvable through proper estate planning.

As Mayor, I will devote funds to support programs that seniors with estate planning to help stabilize our communities by maintaining home-ownership and wealth transfer. I will work with organizations like Maryland Volunteers Lawyer Service who are already engaging in this important work. By building black wealth and allowing black homeowners and families to take advantage of the same tools that other families use, we can strengthen our communities, address long-standing inequities in our city, and create a more prosperous Baltimore.

Leverage Capital Improvement Program Funds and Enhanced 311

The CIP provides the roadmap for repairs in the city. Unfortunately, many feel their neighborhoods have been in disrepair for decades. It is no secret that aesthetics, green space, and proper infrastructure functionality improve property values, reduce crime, and increase business dynamism in a given area. As Mayor, I will seek to leverage the CIP to ensure equitable repair of city roads, lights, sidewalks, and other infrastructure.

Furthermore, many residents have not been trained on how to properly use the 311 app. Creating a massive drive to get people to download the free app coupled with simple how-to tutorial videos within the app will allow us to increase the ability to gather data from residents whenever there is infrastructure or quality of life needs in an area. To be successful, the city must better track referrals and ensure quality control to confirm requests are being handled appropriately.

Establish City-Owned Grocery Stores

To address the problem of food deserts within our city we will use the template created by other municipalities and establish our own City-owned and operated grocery stores.
Using existing research that has been conducted, our initial response to address the crisis of food deserts within our community will be to identify an area that has the highest indicators of food disparity and find a vacant building owned by the city that is in a central location within that neighborhood.

Once a building is identified as the site for this grocery store, we will secure and allocate capital improvement funds through Public Infrastructure Loans issued in general obligation bonds to rehabilitate and upgrade the facility.

The next step will be to hire employees. Those hired to work in the city’s neighborhood grocery store will be residents directly from the community that this store services and they will receive their pay and benefits from the city payroll.

This grocery store initiative will implement a direct buy program from local farms in the city, and surrounding jurisdictions to provide produce and other products for the store before contracting with out-of-state farmers.

Every year on the anniversary of the store opening, a financial report will be published on the city’s website so that taxpayers can see how funds are being spent, and if the business is being managed efficiently.

After two-years, an assessment will be done on the impact that the grocery store has had to close the food disparity gap within the community. If this assessment produces positive results, the city will identify the next community for us to replicate this initiative in.

Incentivize Equitable Development

Too often, PILOTs and TIFs are used to further concentrate wealth in Baltimore’s White L. This practice must stop. I will use the full power of the Mayor’s Office to ensure that government subsidies are offered in a way that benefits the entire city and not just the more affluent areas.

As Mayor, I commit to analyzing all TIF proposals through an equity lens. Baltimore’s economic and community development history is rooted in extractive and discriminatory practices. I am committed to only approving TIF proposals that create real opportunities for inter-generational wealth in Baltimore’s historically underinvested neighborhoods. This includes moving away from TIF development that only creates luxury, waterfront communities that are inaccessible to most Baltimoreans.

As Mayor, I will support changes to the TIF approval process that provide meaningful opportunities for public participation. Government officials must ensure the public is in support of TIFs, especially those that benefit institutional developers. We must publicly evaluate the costs and benefits of these arrangements, including periodic reviews to ensure that developers are held accountable for their required contributions in exchange for the subsidy. Moreover, we must include in the discussion an understanding and analysis of the historical impact these types of developments have had on Baltimore communities, both positive and negative.

Analyze Land Use and Provide Community Support

For far too long, our public resources have been diverted from the neighborhoods that need them most, triggering a vicious cycle of disinvestment that has plagued generation after generation. Baltimore is the birthplace of redlining, racially-restrictive covenants, and discriminatory lending practices. The legacy of those practices, concerning race, gender, sexual orientation, and economic status, is still with us today. This inequity continues to impact Baltimore’s Black neighborhoods hardest. This must stop. As Mayor, I will reverse the trend of disinvestment from our Black and historically-redlined neighborhoods, while ensuring that residents have a stronger voice in determining the outcome of our shared City resources.
As Mayor, I have committed to a thorough analysis of all city-owned properties, including the thousands of vacant lots and properties in the City’s possession. The highest and best use of city-owned land will mean that land will get transferred to Baltimoreans through an equity lens.

**Transfer Vacant Lots to Community Organizations**

I will support a vacant lot program that will transfer the land back to community organizations. I will direct the Director of Sustainability to partner with DHCD and DPW to create one community lot program. The various pilot programs that agencies have implemented demonstrate that communities want control over their nearby vacant land, however, the current program is inefficiently administered, based on an individual’s connections to City Hall, and does not have a cohesive strategy. I look forward to implementing a vacant lot program that provides land and technical assistance to communities throughout Baltimore.

We will also begin transferring its property holdings at nominal fees to community-driven organizations so that city-owned vacant property can be held by the community.

I will work to create a “$1 Vacant Lot Program” that would award vacant lots to nonprofits and community organizations based on stewardship and development proposals.