



**BRANDON M. SCOTT**  
MAYOR

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**HB 1334**

March 26, 2024

**TO:** Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

**FROM:** Brandon M. Scott, Mayor of City of Baltimore

**RE:** House Bill 1334 – Housing and Community Development – Continuing the CORE Partnership Fund – Extension

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1334.

HB1334 would extend the Continuing C.O.R.E. Partnership Fund which is set to expire on June 30, 2024. This bill is in line with the State Department of Housing and Community Development's Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget which allocates funding for Strategic Demolition/Project C.O.R.E Funds. These funds are critical to the work of the City's community development partners, supporting homeownership in the Penn North Neighborhood, Upton Neighborhood, West North Avenue Corridor, infrastructure to support new homeownership units, mixed-use residential, retail, and commercial units in various locations across the City, all of which are historically redlined neighborhoods.

In Baltimore, there is a movement building a renaissance for our city and it includes people everywhere from City Hall to downtown to every single neighborhood across the city. This renaissance would not be possible, in part, without the success of Project CORE, which since 2016 has helped eliminate more than 5000 blighted properties in Baltimore City. Right now, we have achieved the lowest number of vacant properties we've seen in Baltimore in more than 20 years - and Project CORE's work has been a critical piece of those efforts.

In December of last year, I announced an unprecedented vision to inject \$3 Billion into our neighborhoods over the next 15 years to solve Baltimore's vacant housing crisis once and for all. It is specifically designed to overcome decades of intentional disinvestment that far too many of our neighborhoods have endured.

This bill will be particularly impactful in Baltimore's long disinvested neighborhoods that are the focus of current revitalization efforts. By extending the Fund we will be able to increase our efforts to reduce the number of vacant properties in the City of Baltimore through enhanced acquisition, demolition and stabilization efforts. The City is prepared to do our part, too. I've committed an unprecedented \$300M in local public dollars through non-contiguous TIF bonds and the Industrial Development Authority. Together, we will continue our all hands on deck approach to eliminating blight and build thriving communities in Baltimore.

The BCA would like to thank the sponsor, Delegate Stephanie Smith, for introducing this meaningful piece of legislation.

For the above reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 1334.