



August 16, 2020

Sean Davis, Chairman  
Baltimore City Planning Commission  
417 East Fayette St., 8th floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: CITY COUNCIL BILL 20-0552 TAX CREDITS – HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Chairman Davis and Members of the Planning Commission,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I would like to emphatically support City Council Bill 20-0552 Tax Credits – Historic Properties, which will extend the period within which applications may be accepted for the tax credit for historic restorations and rehabilitations to February 28, 2022 and delegates certain administrative duties to be seen jointly by the Director of Planning and the Director of Finance. While a more thorough renewal process had already been underway, extension through February 2022 will allow the impact of COVID-19 to be properly considered before making any improvements or changes to the program to make it more widely available within Baltimore City.

As it begins to recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Baltimore needs to prioritize its programs that encourage job growth and stimulate investment and revitalization. Baltimore City's Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program is such a ready-made economic recovery tool. It has helped more than 3,500 historic properties, leveraging a staggering \$1.2 *billion* in private investment into the City. Additionally, according to a draft report on the tax credit program by the leading firm specializing in the economic impact of historic tax credits across the country, the city can expect over \$40 million in additional tax revenues from properties that have utilized HTCs. The program is also a proven job creator, generating \$36 million in labor income and nearly 600 jobs annually. Extension of the program while the impacts of COVID-19 are assessed will allow the HTCs to continue to aid in the process of recovery.

Baltimore's HTC program assists in the preservation of designated buildings and districts by defraying the cost of substantial rehabilitation work and supporting projects that may not be financially feasible without the program, while also serving as a tool for equitable investment and revitalization. It is the city's primary financial incentive to encourage owners of historic residential and commercial buildings to invest in the revitalization of their neighborhoods. It helps direct private investment into neighborhoods that need it the most and helps increase the property values of not only the CHAP project itself but also that of properties in the surrounding area.

Baltimore City's Historic Tax Credit program can be a key component to the City's economic recovery and future, while also preserving the city's rich and unique past. Therefore, Preservation Maryland is pleased to support the extension of this vital program through City Council Bill 20-0552, and we look forward supporting the Historic Tax Credit program's renewal in the coming years.

Thank you for your continuing support of historic preservation in Baltimore and consideration of the extension of this important program.

Sincerely,



Elly Colmers Cowan  
Director of Advocacy, Preservation Maryland