

TRANSITION REPORT

**For the Office of Baltimore
City Comptroller Bill Henry**



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Letter from the Comptroller

FROM COMPTROLLER BILL HENRY

At the end of 2018, I decided to run for City Comptroller. This decision wasn't made lightly; it was made after consulting with my family, friends, and colleagues about the future we saw for Baltimore. At that point, I had no idea that the circumstances surrounding my election and the beginning of my first term in office would involve masks, and social distancing, but we deal with the challenges that life presents us.

After three terms in the City Council, I decided to run because I knew I still had more to do to improve our city. I strongly believe that Baltimore City has been prioritizing the wrong things in its budget over the years. Since the 1990's, we have continuously increased the Baltimore Police Department's budget, without providing the same increased level of funding for more basic human capital reinvestment, such as affordable housing, recreation, employment development, libraries, and out-of-school time activities. This isn't just horribly inefficient, it's morally repugnant.

When I was sworn in to my first term as a councilmember, our country was entering a recession. I'd like to think that prepared me to govern during another one. What I learned then and hope to put into practice now, is that a rising tide may lift all boats... but that only works if everyone is on board. Government has lost the trust of too many of the residents we serve, and we need to get them back on board.

Government leaders must be intentional and unafraid to tackle the bureaucratic obstacles that prohibit progress. Creating a more open and transparent Board of Estimates, auditing for efficiency, and helping to improve government services – these goals will guide my administration towards restoring faith in our City.

The following report was compiled by some of the brightest leaders in Baltimore City. I asked them to figure out how to rebuild a government agency from the ground up. The Transition Team answered this question with a set of thoughtful and innovative recommendations. I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to the team for this work that, without a doubt, will have long-lasting impacts on Baltimore City.

It's an incredible honor to have been elected to tackle some of Baltimore's biggest challenges. There will be some quick changes; for example, I'm currently working from a new computer, because until recently, there wasn't one on the Comptroller's desk. Other changes will take longer as we restructure the office. Right now, my promise to you – the residents of Baltimore - is to communicate, collaborate, and listen to all voices along the way.

Thanks,

Bill



Letter from Transition Team Co-Chairs

FROM SENATOR MARY WASHINGTON & BRAD ROGERS

As co-chairs of Comptroller Henry's transition, we are proud to present the first public transition report to the Comptroller's office in over 25 years.

Comptroller Henry gave us the formidable task of reviewing an office about which Baltimoreans know little or nothing. Even as leaders in Baltimore City's government and non-profit sectors, our own experience with the Comptroller's Office was extremely limited. The Office of the Comptroller in Baltimore is unique. Most other Comptrollers – or Controllers – are in charge of audits and reviewing City spending, but not other such official has a Department of Real Estate, Municipal Post Office or Municipal Telephone Exchange under their authority. The uniqueness of this office, in our opinion, makes it ripe for radical change.

Our Transition Team has worked over the last four months to compile recommendations for Comptroller Henry's first term in office. The team consisted of six workgroups: Ethics & Transparency, Modernization & Restructuring, Economic Opportunity & Procurement, Audits, Communication Services, and Real Estate. The workgroups were guided by a diverse set of leaders from across the private, nonprofit and government sectors. We want to express our infinite gratitude to our team leaders and members for their efforts in producing this report.

The Transition Team spent countless hours interviewing experts, talking with City employees, reviewing best practices and engaging in spirited discussions over recommendations. The summation of these meetings is reflected in the pages of this transition report.

What became clear to us over the last few months is that we collectively knew little about the Office of the Comptroller. We could have taken a year to write this report and still have ended the process with as many questions as answers. Radical transformation is a process, and this report is just the start. This report is also an invitation for everyone to speak out, share their ideas, voice their concerns, and hold Comptroller Henry to his campaign promises.

We extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Comptroller Henry for asking us to lead this effort and to the Transition Team members for their dedication to improving our City. It's been a humbling experience listening, learning, processing, and planning these past few months. We can't wait to see what comes next.

Thanks,

Mary + Brad



Transition Team & Expert Witnesses

CO-CHAIRS

Senator Mary Washington
Brad Rogers

STEERING COMMITTEE

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EXPERT WITNESSES

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Tamara Brown
Bob Cename
Hillary Chester
Kim Clark
Councilman Eric Costello
Inspector General Isabel Cumming
Julie Day
Mike Fried
Danielle Gooden
Jeff Hochstetler
Dan Hymowitz
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Aaron Moore
Carolyn Mozell
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Bob Pipik
Michael Pokorny
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Executive Summary

On June 8th of last year, then-Councilman Bill Henry won the Democratic primary for Baltimore City Comptroller. Unchallenged in the general election, Comptroller Henry took office on December 8th. He assumed leadership during unprecedented times: a public health crisis, an economic crisis, a crisis of public mistrust in government and a civil rights movement calling this generation of leaders to bring an lens of equity to all that they do.

In the early fall of 2020, Comptroller-Elect Henry assembled a transition committee and began to focus on plans for an office that had not seen new leadership in 25 years. The transition committee consisted of leaders from the private, nonprofit, and public sectors and was organized into six workgroups - three conceptual and one for each of the three departments under the Comptroller:

- Ethics & Transparency
- Modernization & Restructuring
- Procurement & Economic Opportunity
- Audits
- Communication Services
- Real Estate

Each workgroup was asked to research their focus area, report on findings, and make recommendations aligned with the Comptroller's commitment to creating a more transparent, accountable, and equitable government.

From September through December 2020, transition committee members interviewed industry experts, process stakeholders, employees of the Comptroller's Office, and reviewed academic and best practice research from around the country. Over 50 meetings were held, and nearly four dozen expert witnesses were engaged. A summary of recommendations for the first 100 days, first-year, and first-term are included in this report.

The transition committee recommendations serve as a starting point for this new administration and a catalyst for the many necessary discussions the Comptroller's Office must have with Baltimoreans to restore trust. Real transformation will take time, and it starts here.

Below are some of the most critical recommendations that emerged from the work of the transition committee.

Digitize and modernize the Board of Estimates process

There is a clear and urgent mandate for the digitalization of the Board of Estimates (BOE) process, especially in moving city bids to a paperless process. These long overdue efforts will increase efficiency, eradicate unnecessary gatekeeping, and better serve City agencies and vendors. Implementing online bidding will also lay the groundwork for adopting fiscal insight programs that enhance the transparency and accessibility of city spending and purchasing data.

Dismantle bureaucratic barriers that disadvantage local, minority and women's business enterprises and design a new way forward

The Office of the Comptroller provides oversight for millions of dollars in spending each year and should scrutinize every transaction – from vendors to tax increment financing (TIF) in order to ensure Baltimore City does not further exacerbate pre-existing inequities. Adopting an anti-racist accountability and action strategy, one that acknowledges the harm government has inflicted, particularly on those most vulnerable, is vital to rebuilding trust, creating real accountability and supporting a strong economy.

Prioritize Baltimore residents in all efforts to increase communication, transparency and accessibility of information

Through the transition research process, it became clear that Baltimore's Office of the Comptroller is a unique office and role. It was even more apparent that the average resident and even those who work closely with the local government know very little about this office charged with government transparency and accountability. Until recently the Comptroller's Office, which is tasked with improving government services - had virtually no public outreach strategy. A lack of communication in this role is arguably a dereliction of duties of the office.

The Office of the Comptroller can and should be a bully pulpit to advocate for a more efficient and transparent government. It must also directly engage residents and provide information that supports them in advocacy for the government and services they want. Creating an Accountability Ombudsman position could offer residents a single point of contact to share observations, complaints, and other input regarding city operations. In addition, to rebuild public trust with city residents, a comprehensive and consistent two-way communication path must be developed to bring the public into the Comptroller's Office through social media, news media, and a community presence. The Comptroller should also prioritize building press relationships supported by a focused Media Relations position.

Increase focus on impactful performance audits

To better address agencies' and residents' needs, resources should be prioritized for scrutiny of the most challenged systems and services - those that present the greatest risk for waste, underperformance and resident frustration - such as solid waste collection and water billing. The Department of Audits (DOA) is the largest department inside the Comptroller's Office and currently performs biennial performance and financial audits of designated city agencies. Financial audits are duplicative of the federally mandated Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR) and Single Audit and could be discontinued. This will free up DOA resources in order to enable greater focus on persistent problems within essential services and intersecting systems. An audit schedule determined by risk analysis could focus resources on underperforming operations and realize opportunities for policy and process changes delivering a more significant impact for Baltimore residents and businesses.

Lead an interagency collaborative effort to assess the city's real estate assets

The Department of Real Estate (DORE) has engaged overtime in acquiring, disposing, and managing a diverse inventory of city-owned real property. It can bring its institutional knowledge and experience to leading a collaborative effort with the Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC), and the Department of General Services (DGS). This collaboration should develop a single shared inventory and management systems and strategic planning guidelines to more effectively steward city-owned properties and enhance the potential of the city's assets. This process should also entail a comprehensive analysis of all publicly owned properties to determine fair market values and a facility condition index supporting the city's community development strategy.

Evaluate Department of Communication Services operations

The Office of the Comptroller currently houses two operations serving city government agencies - the Municipal Post Office (MPO) and the Municipal Telephone Exchange (MTE). These are referred to collectively as the "Department of Communication Services." There is an opportunity to manage and evaluate independently these operations for efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The independent operation of each may also present opportunities for future revenue generation by serving other government and quasi-governmental agencies.

Overview of Office & Departments

The Comptroller manages the DOA, DORE, MPO, and the MPO; provides oversight of all business before the BOE; and holds positions on various governmental and quasi-governmental boards.

EXISTING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Prior to Comptroller Henry, the office had four main areas: The Executive Office, the Department of Audits, the Department of Real Estate, and the Department of Communications Services, including operations of both the Municipal Telephone Exchange and the Municipal Post Office. All department heads reported to the Comptroller. The Deputy Comptroller was responsible for managing the Executive office's daily operations on the Comptroller's behalf¹.

DEPARTMENT	BUDGET	POSITIONS
Executive	\$1,169,700	14
Audits	\$5,082,109	42
Real Estate	\$1,043,554	10
Municipal Telephone Exchange	\$10,732,691*	23
Municipal Post Office	\$941,093	12

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Under the previous administration, the Executive Office was composed of the Comptroller, the Deputy Comptroller, and 12 additional staff members. Staff members were responsible for the weekly preparation of the BOE agenda, contractor bid openings, and the transcription of all meeting minutes.

¹ Under Comptroller Henry, the Deputy Comptroller manages the DOA, DORE, MPO, and MTE. The Chief of Staff manages BOE, Human Resources, Communications, and IT.

CLASSIFICATION	RESPONSIBILITY
Comptroller	Chief executive
Special Assistant to the Comptroller (Operations Officer II), Operations Assistant III, Special Assistants (2)	Assisted in BOE agenda preparation and reported directly to the Comptroller.
Deputy Comptroller	Management of day-to-day operations of executive Office
Operations Officer I (2)	Lead BOE Technician with oversight of Board agenda preparation
B/E Technician I (3) + B/E Member Secretary	Assisted in BOE agenda preparation Lead Tech
Asst. for Public Affairs	Managed communication including Public Information Act Requests (PIOs), agenda review, and government relations
IT Specialist II	Database specialist

DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS

The DOA is the city's independent auditor, providing various audit attestation engagements and assurance services with the overall goal of improving government accountability. Primary responsibilities include:

- Conducting performance and financial audits, including the CAFR and Single Audit
- Providing attestation engagements and advisory services as requested by various management
- Investigating allegations of fraud, waste, and abuses of city resources
- Reviewing various contracts, change orders, or proposals submitted by agencies to the BOE to verify compliance with city policies
- Other special projects as necessary

The City Charter grants the City Auditor sweeping authority to "audit the expenditure of City-granted funds by any public or private agency that receives such funds," per ART. V, § 3, in accordance with the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards and state and federal law.

The DOA, pursuant to Article V § 11, performs biennial audits of agencies. These audits are staggered so that at least twice during every 4-year term of a Mayor and City Council, the City Auditor shall conduct an audit of each principal agency's operations for the preceding two fiscal years. The Biennial Audits Oversight Commission meets biannually to review the audits and give direction on the next year's reports. Biennial audits are divided into Group A and Group B.

The City Auditor annually audits the City's financial statements through the CAFR and the Single Audit. The CAFR is conducted with independent consultants. The Single Audit is a rigorous, organization-wide examination of the city's programs that expend \$750,000 or more in federal assistance (commonly known as federal funds, federal grants, or federal awards) received for its operations.

DOA manages a fraud hotline to investigate allegations of fraud, waste, and abuses of city resources. To report allegations of fraud, please call 410-396-5089.

DEPARTMENT OF REAL ESTATE

The DORE manages the City's real estate assets. The DORE is responsible for a variety of functions related to real property owned by the city, including:

- Disposition of real property owned by the city
- Leasing city-owned property to agencies and other parties
- Acquisition of real estate for the city
- Reviewing of all city leases
- Reviewing real estate-related transactions and development proposals for city-owned real property
- Providing technical assistance to community development corporations and other developers
- Maintenance of a repository of unsold tax certificates after the annual tax sale
- Management of Broadway Pier
- Processing applications for telecommunications equipment on City property

The DORE works with the BDC, DGS, DHCD, and the Mayor's office. All City property dispositions and proposed development is reviewed by the City's Space Utilization Committee, managed by DORE. The committee determines the lead City agency, or the agency responsible for the property, as well as any contract requirements.

The DORE is responsible for maintaining a public inventory of all city-owned real property and associated leases.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

As currently organized, the Department of Communications Services consists of the MTE and the MPO. Each service area is independently funded. Both are internal service funds of the city, meaning they are not allocated general funds, but are instead funded by charging other agencies for their services.

The MTE provides telephone services to all city agencies. Their services include managing Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP phone service,² supplying mobile phones, providing technical support for various city call centers, and providing for the billing of these services with external vendors. MTE installs and maintains all telecommunications equipment in the various Baltimore City call centers such as 311, Department of Public Works (DPW), Revenue Collection, and City Hall operators.

² VoIP phone service uses VoIP technology to transmit telephone calls over the internet, rather than traditional cable.

The MPO is responsible for handling the city's mail, both by operating interagency mail service and serving as an intermediary with the USPS for all mail coming to and from city agencies. The MPO provides city agencies with external mailing services for parking tickets, tax bills, and water bills.

OTHER ROLES OF THE CITY COMPTROLLER

- **Architectural and Engineering Awards Commission.** The City Comptroller is a member of the Architectural and Engineering Awards Commission overseeing the award of certain contracts for services such as design, project planning, and engineering needed to support construction projects.
- **Appointments.** The City Comptroller appoints a member to the ad hoc board of the Department of Legislative Reference to appoint a director when necessary; one member to the Compensations Commission for Elected Officials, and three members to the Charter Review Commission.
- **Baltimore Hotel Corporation Board.** The City Comptroller serves on the board of the Baltimore Hotel Corporation overseeing the city-owned Hilton hotel.
- **BOE.** The City Comptroller is a voting member of the BOE and its Secretary.
- **Board of Finance.** The City Comptroller is a voting member of the Board of Finance overseeing city borrowing and major tax incentive deals.
- **Employees' Retirement System, Elected Officials Retirement System, Fire and Police Employees' Retirement System.** The City Comptroller is the vice-chair of the Employees' Retirement System sits on the Baltimore City Elected Officials' Retirement System and is a trustee for the Fire and Police Employees' Retirement System.
- **Expenditure Control Committee.** The City Comptroller is a member of the Expenditure Control Committee overseeing the creation and reclassification of positions, authorization of employment contracts, and other personnel matters.
- **Insurance.** The City Comptroller is authorized by the City Charter to purchase certain insurance for the city.
- **Inspector General.** The City Comptroller is a member of the advisory board for the Office of the Inspector General.
- **Retirement Savings Plan (RSP).** The City Comptroller serves on the board of trustees for the RSP for the City of Baltimore, evaluating the investment performance of the RSP and other matters such as employee outreach and assessing the retirement readiness of the city workforce.
- **Space Utilization Committee³.** The City Comptroller is a member of the Space Utilization Committee assigning the management of city property acquisitions to various agencies. The Space Utilization Committee is a body established by the BOE to review requests and make determination for the use of city-owned property.

³ The Transition Team cannot find documentation of the inception of the Space Utilization Committee and is relying on oral history for understanding.

Ethics & Transparency

ETHOS

A core goal of the Baltimore City Office of the Comptroller must be earning, maintaining, and expanding public trust both in the Comptroller's Office and throughout city government. This role is more crucial than ever given the crises of faith in city government over the past number of years, increased hardships generated by the pandemic, and the disparities laid bare during this time.

As an independent repository of the city's financial information and associated actions, tasked with providing scrutiny and oversight, the Office of the Comptroller must use every means of communication at its disposal to regularly and proactively educate and engage the public on how its their tax dollars are spent. This end will be achieved by extensive data readily available to the public and curating and elevating key pieces of data and commentary to support an informed public.

The Comptroller's Office should ensure information is available in advance of key events such as BOE meetings, in order to provide the public ample opportunity to influence City Government decisions before they are made.

The Ethics and Transparency Workgroup recommends that the Comptroller's Office adhere to an ethos buttressed by the following: Independence, Integrity, Innovation, and Invitation.

- **Independence.** The Comptroller's office should be an independent voice for justice and accountability in City government so that people trust its government's presentation of the facts.
- **Integrity.** The Comptroller's Office must promote integrity both within the office and throughout city government.
- **Innovation.** The Comptroller's Office must be innovative in pursuing the public interest, adopting a results-oriented and collaborative approach.
- **Invitation.** The Comptroller's Office should invite the public's participation in government through two-way communication, conversation, and education.

OPPORTUNITIES

Create radical transparency

As a BOE member, the Comptroller has a unique position to influence and oversee how the budget priorities of the Mayor are put into action through spending taxpayer dollars. In addition to holding a critical vote on the five-person spending panel, the Comptroller's Office is responsible for managing the affairs of the BOE. This is an opportunity to expand the public's access to the BOE through shedding light on the Board's historically byzantine, opaque processes by imposing radical transparency. This can be done through website improvements, an audits dashboard, Open Checkbook, real estate mapping, and a language translation strategy.

Implement an effective ongoing communications strategy

The Comptroller's Office has a dual constituent base of city employees and city residents and therefore needs a two-pronged approach to communicating effectively, ensuring transparency and accessibility of information, and rebuilding public trust. Investment in staff positions that focus on communications will be needed; the workgroup recommends hiring an Accountability Ombudsman and a Media Relations Manager. Given that the Comptroller's office has not had a public presence in the past few decades, it is necessary to launch an early and aggressive civic education campaign - treating the office and its functions as though they are brand new to the people of Baltimore - to ensure a broad understanding of the role of the Comptroller's Office.

Expand oversight beyond standard barometers of fiscal compliance

The Comptroller should establish innovative metrics that track the impact of public resource allocation to advance the goals of racial equity, geographic equity, and neighborhood engagement for all Baltimore residents.

Use the Comptroller's Office as a bully pulpit for advocacy and education

The Comptroller should not hold back in taking controversial positions and using the bully pulpit the office provides to advocate on behalf of Baltimore and its residents, including lobbying in Annapolis, working with non-profit organizations, and pursuing a legislative agenda.

CONCLUSION

Prioritizing hiring and retaining staff members who are dedicated to the highest standards of personal and professional integrity, ethics and accountability will be vital to achieving the overarching mission of restoring credibility to a city government sullied too long by scandal. The office should pledge to hold itself accountable to the same discerning lens it will use on all other city agencies and should vow to use its activist orientation to invite residents to engage in the process *before* decisions are made. Creating an office where transparency is second nature will have long-lasting positive effects.

Modernization & Restructuring

ETHOS

The Comptroller's Office is unfortunately best known for operating with antiquated technology. The BOE and bid openings have been completely paper-based processes. Standard operating procedures and practices have not been documented internally or externally. This lack of documentation and a directly related lack of consistency and efficiency resulted in have staff searching through stacked papers and filing cabinets, too often proving slow responses to inquiries from city agencies and the public. Comptroller Henry must drive a culture shift that starts with an immediate team effort to modernize and embrace technology and innovations that will bring the office into the 21st Century.

Opaque bureaucratic policies are a breeding ground for waste and corruption. In order to rebuild trust among Baltimore City residents, the Comptroller's customer service and responsiveness must be excellent. The office can begin with small steps such as hiring an IT manager, obtaining laptops for all staff members, and documenting policy changes for public review. Larger goals, such as digital procurement and a useful website, will also bring the office out of the shadows.

Consideration should be given to restructuring the Comptroller's Office as more is understood. However, the consensus of the workgroup was that further study is necessary before making any position changes or reorganization.

The Comptroller's office should guide their decisions using the following values:

- **Equity.** The Comptroller's Office must meet people where they are when creating new processes.
- **Usability.** The Comptroller's Office must adopt a user-centric approach in the formulation and execution of all services.
- **Efficiency.** The Comptroller's Office must enact policies that don't add undue burdens to the end-user.

OPPORTUNITIES

Leverage available resources to implement immediate accountability, process and service changes

There are several adequate software solutions already owned by the City that can be utilized to digitize office services. For example, the city currently pays approximately \$25,000 per year for Bonfire bid automation software, but purchased licenses are not being maximized, as reported by both City agency leaders and Bonfire account representatives. The Comptroller could utilize this program and others, such as OneDrive for cloud storage, Microsoft Teams to increase communication and Workday for financial management. Using what is already available will eliminate paper-based or static/hard-drive files⁴ that generate unnecessary waste, and act as barriers to transparency, and limit collaboration.

Create a culture of interagency collaboration focused on intersecting issues, practices and systems

Each department under the Comptroller already works with other city agencies daily and there is significant opportunity to build far greater collaboration. The Comptroller's Office needs to define itself as a resource rather than a bureaucratic obstacle. Establishing collaborative, working relationships will be key. For instance, DHCD, DGS, Department of Transportation (DOT), and DPW all use their own asset management software, while DORE uses Microsoft Excel. A lack of inter-agency software crosswalks and general confusion around policies contributes to waste. The Comptroller's Office should lead a collaborative effort to establish shared systems and processes that result in a coordinated asset management system and maximized value of City

⁴ The workgroup found that some secure files in the Comptroller's Office are kept on a flash drive that is transported from the office daily.

properties. Simply creating an environment in which members of different agencies talk with each other as partners, without fear or political retribution, will be an achievement.

Be the leader in efficiency

While the Comptroller's Office has been criticized for outdated systems more than any other city agency, the entire city requires technological upgrades. Leading by example by making the necessary investments in digitizing records and accelerating workflow will help create a case for the long-overdue modernization of systems and processes in other agencies. Comptroller Henry should be publicly outspoken about successes and challenges experienced in modernizing the office.

Unite in leadership and partnership with the City's new executive and legislative administrations

The 2020 election brought new leaders to each city-wide office for the first time in a generation. This is an unprecedented opportunity to create bold new strategies for community development, economic development, transparency, IT infrastructure, and much more. The Comptroller's Office should be a leader and partner with the Mayor and Council President to modernize outdated bureaucratic policies and processes and lead our City into the 21st Century.

CONCLUSION

Reforming outdated, wasteful, and inequitable policies and practices must be a central focus within the Comptroller's Office. Many of the Comptroller Office's and other departments' daily operations rely on decades-old technology or paper-based processes consuming too much time and energy. These antiquated systems and practices are confusing to the public as well as to other municipal agencies. Achieving modernization and transparency will help restore public trust and confidence in government, make information accessible, and provide more equitable opportunities to work with city government.

Procurement & Economic Opportunity

ETHOS

The Comptroller's Office has an opportunity to reimagine, influence, and reform how Baltimore City procures goods and services, and more broadly, to promote economic opportunity. Expert interviews and independent research revealed several opportunities to streamline antiquated processes and use technology to enable greater public accountability. These improvements along with audits of various aspects of the procurement system and supportive City Charter changes, would have the additional benefit of enhancing opportunities for contracts with minority and women's business enterprises.

The Comptroller can lead an effort to disrupt historical policies and practices that negatively impact service provision, create delays, and reduce overall resident and business satisfaction. Further, implementing an anti-racist lens in evaluating all procurement and economic development efforts would address and hold accountable a government that must now strive to acknowledge Baltimore's past and repair inequities.

OPPORTUNITIES

Lead and support greater accountability for the City's minority and women business economic inclusion goals.

In 2000, Baltimore City established minority and women's business enterprises (MBE/WBE) engagement as a priority for contracting; as a result, city contracts set goals for MBE/WBE participation for prime contractors. When those goals are set and not met, the prime is deemed to be "non-compliant." Despite non-compliance, primes are often allowed to sustain a non-compliant contract and obtain new ones. The Office of the Comptroller can also require support greater economic inclusion by collaborating with the Minority and Women's Business Opportunity Office (MWBOO) and requiring a public review through the non-routine agenda of the Board to address non-compliant contracts and associated prime contractors, thereby holding the city to a higher level of accountability for achieving these important inclusion goals.

Immediate support should be given to applying minority and women's business requirements to contracts that are not competitively bid due to emergencies. Approximately \$125.6 million has been spent on core City services from March through September 2020, but very little appears to have been spent with MBE/WBE vendors⁵. Comptroller Henry should work with MWBOO to identify barriers for MBE/WBE vendors in obtaining emergency contracts and work with the Council and/or BOE to limit program loopholes, including waivers.

In the long term, Comptroller Henry should work with MWBOO, Procurement, and MBE/WBE vendors to review city policies and suggest updates to the code or pertinent regulations.

Advocate for programs and spending that prioritizes small business growth and local hiring

At the state level, the Board of Public Works has a small business reserve program, through which certain contracts are set aside to ensure that only businesses of a certain size are eligible to bid. Although there are allowances at the local level for individual counties to create their own set aside programs, Baltimore City has yet to enact a functioning version such a program. The Comptroller's Office should prioritize small business growth and local hiring by advocating for legislation to replicate the state's program.

⁵ Report from the DOF to the Baltimore City Council on May 13th, 2020.

CONCLUSION

Four major actors support purchasing within the City, the Office of Procurement, MWBOO, the BOE, and city agencies writ large. This spread of responsibilities creates barriers to contracts for local, small and minority and women's business enterprises. Comptroller Henry should advocate for and coordinate a strategy amongst agencies to support small, local, and minority and women's business enterprises and/or otherwise disadvantaged Black vendors.

Department of Audits

WORKGROUP FINDINGS

The DOA is larger than most other audit departments in similarly sized cities, placing it in the same grouping as Philadelphia, PA, and Austin, TX based on the standards of the Association of Local Government Auditors. This size can be attributed to the staff funding mandate in the City Charter, Article V, § 11(c). In other cities, a smaller number of auditors focus solely on performance auditing, with financial audits of agencies often performed by independently contracted auditors.

Independence and peer review are essential for maintaining a strong auditing function. However, in interviews and in previous audit reports, DOA shared that it has struggled to meet Government Auditing Standards (GAS), which call for a peer review every three years.

Interviews with agency leaders revealed apprehension and significant distrust of the Comptroller's Audits Department. To that end, the current City Auditor has spent significant time making improvements to ensure more timely and impactful audits. The DOA has also increased collaboration with city agencies on investigative audits seeking instances of fraud, neglect, and/or malfeasance. For example, in response to proposed legislation regarding commercial parking facilities, the DOA found discrepancies between the number of parking facilities and revenue generated in the City. An investigation conducted jointly with DOA revealed incorrect billing resulting in uncollected taxes and license fees. This effort may lead to the city's receipt of millions in revenue it would have otherwise not collected.

OPPORTUNITIES

Reallocate resources to focus on performance audits and “at-risk” services and systems that most need attention.

The DOA's charter-mandated approach to scheduled performance audits focuses on specific agencies, a timeline, and a scope that may not necessarily add value to the audited agency or residents. Ideally, all resources could be shifted from biennial financial audits to performance audits, and those agency audits would be scheduled based on a risk-based assessment determining whether the investment of auditing resources would have an impact and add value.

In lieu of a performance audit rigidly reviewing the performance of a specific agency, a systems approach that examines the intersection and impacts of issues and processes across agencies would add increased value by identifying barriers to equity, efficiency, and effectiveness. For example, a review of permitting or subdivision approval process would involve the Departments of Transportation, Planning, and Housing and Community Development, and could result in improved performance and lead to reductions in development and construction costs and in the future a potential reduction in rent.

The DOA should prioritize audits that assess the efficiency and effectiveness of city programs and evaluate whether public money is being spent fairly and appropriately.

Leverage DOA audit experience and knowledge to inform city budget performance metrics.

The City Auditor makes recommendations based on findings in biennial performance audits. When an agency is audited, staff members work between various departments and get an opportunity to conduct an in-depth review of operations. This in-depth work with agencies enables the DOA to be an ideal partner in creating performance metrics with Baltimore's Bureau of Budget Management and the Mayor's Office of Performance Innovation (MOPI).

Eliminate duplicate audit efforts and reporting.

The city's current approach to financial auditing is duplicative and wastes resources. Specifically, much of the work done preparing financial audits for the city's biennial financial audits duplicates work already done as part of the Single Audit. Financial transactions are kept by the Finance Department and not at the agency level. While some biennial financial audits have had notable findings, these are generally due to city accounting procedures, not agency misuse or fraud. If there are substantial allegations of government corruption, the City Auditor can and should refer those allegations to the Inspector General for investigation.

The DOA should work with the Biennial Audits Oversight Committee to waive the financial audit requirement, and the Comptroller's Office should work with the City Council or the Charter Review Commission to amend the Charter to reflect a repeal of the financial audit mandate.

Increase collaboration on investigative audits

Audits can be a strong tool in investigative collaborations, lending expertise in order and knowledge to maximize revenue collection. The DOA should partner with agencies including the Inspector General, Office of Civil Rights, the Health Department, and others with investigatory authority to identify ways in which audits can maximize the efficiency of operations and revenue collection.

Diversify staff expertise.

There are several auditor and audit manager positions that need to be filled. Filling vacancies will not only help the City Auditor manage workflow, they also present an opportunity to acquire the experience and skills needed to support an increased focus on performance auditing.

For example, the Charter mandates a biennial audit of Baltimore City Information & Technology. In the light of the 2019 ransomware attack on the City, an emphasis on experience that includes cybersecurity auditing would be beneficial.

Improve IT Infrastructure

Like many departments within the Comptroller's Office, the DOA has not received much needed upgrades to essential software. Information technology must be reviewed regularly to improve the ability of the DOA to collaborate with other departments and agencies and to efficiently track workflow. Any procurement of software must support the DOA's ability to electronically review and digitally stamp BOE documents digitally.

CONCLUSION

The DOA has strong leadership and a goal-oriented approach to improving performance, but the focus on fiscal audits is redundant with annual DOF operations and oversight practices, and the departments and agencies subjected to this duplication are frustrated. Eliminating duplicative financial audit work creates an opportunity for the Audits Department to adopt a broader focus more broadly and in greater service to the Comptroller's Office mandate to provide oversight, transparency, and efficiency in government services and spending. The strong synergy already existing among Audits, Finance, and the MOPI could lead to the collaborative development of much stronger systems of accountability and performance city-wide.

Department of Communications Services

WORKGROUP FINDINGS

The MTE is a 19th-century government function that has struggled to remain relevant to modern technology. MTE upgraded to VoIP in November 2016; however, the transition is still ongoing. The upgrade was funded by a third-party loan that will be paid off by the beginning of fiscal year 2023. All MTE phones now run on IP and network devices controlled by a server - but they remain under the purview of MTE instead of a centralized IT department.

The necessary technology upgrade is divergent from the rest of MTE. All City call center infrastructure is controlled by MTE but lacks modern abilities such as the ability to go remote.

The cost-effectiveness of managing telecommunications in house requires a deeper analysis.

The MPO yields postage cost savings for the city through a discounted rate on first-class mail of \$0.50 per piece (a 5 cent savings). At the time of this report, by pre-sorting mail, MPO sends mail at a rate of \$0.39 per piece. In addition to postage rates, MPO also charges \$0.17 per piece for overall postage/mailing costs.

The cost-effectiveness of MPO services requires a thorough analysis and business assessment.

OPPORTUNITIES

Separate MPO and MTE into two separate departments.

In the 21st century, there is no functional reason to group the MPO and the MTE under the Department of Communication Services. Instead, these offices should be separated, and with both report independently to the Deputy Comptroller.

Conduct a business analysis of both the MPO and the MTE to identify efficiencies, value, and opportunities for improvement.

Municipal Post Office

Both the Department of Communications Services and Modernization & Restructuring workgroups have attempted to more fully understand the financial cost-benefit of the MPO. There is an opportunity to do a deeper analysis and assess the true cost-benefit of the City running its own MPO. For instance, one key question is whether additional savings could be had on the pre-sort rate of \$0.39 cents, given that the cheapest bulk rate available is \$0.19 cents. Another question is whether an external mail house could provide mail housing services more cost-effective service than the MPO. This analysis would need to consider complex factors such as logistics, workflow, and the need for pickup and mail delivery from agencies.

MPO interviews identified the need to upgrade mail sorting technology to improve MPO operations and that the typical operating surplus the MPO generates supports investment in new equipment. Finally, after a thorough business analysis, MPO should look for other clients among quasi-city agencies such as Baltimore City Schools, the Enoch Pratt Library, and Visit Baltimore. Providing mail house services to more organizations could help lower costs for everyone and bring in additional revenue for modernization.

Municipal Telephone Exchange

The MTE faces a philosophical quandary driven by the broad agreement that BCIT and MTE need to work more closely together. The MTE performs functions that could be better provided within a modern telecommunications department structure that combines all city IT infrastructure needs. This new structure might include BCIT, as well as functions such as franchises for antennas and towers currently handled by the DORE and/or Cable TV25 currently managed by the Mayor's Office of Cable Communications.

CONCLUSION

The MPO and MTE are under-utilized and under-scrutinized assets. The Comptroller should work with the Mayor to request an external audit of the MPO and MTE to determine these departments' futures, assessing cost-effectiveness, pay scales, and growth opportunities.

Department of Real Estate

WORKGROUP FINDINGS

To better understand the various functions of the DORE, a matrix was devised to categorize the department's functions. For each function, the matrix attempts to do the following:

- Determine if the function derives from the Charter or Code
- Identify the client(s)
- Define if the function is passive/active/not occurring
- Determine if there are there current staff assigned
- Identify challenges
- Identify opportunities
- Determine who else inside or outside of city government is or could be responsible

Function	Charter/Code	Clients	Passive/Active	Current Staff	Challenges	Opportunities	Who else could do?	Existing Database?
Acquisition <i>Preparing options, ordering title searches, reviewing appraisals</i>	Yes, but limited	city agencies	Mostly passive	Yes	Slow, redundancy	Add appraisers, market analysts, title agents	Agencies, private brokers, Law Department	CoStar, MRRS
Disposition <i>Surplus city property, unredeemed Tax Sale certificates</i>	Yes	city agencies, if surplus property – private sector	Passive	Yes	Valuation, LDA compliance monitoring, limited marketing, lien releases, Vendor Lien process	Add appraisers, market analysts title agents, marketing professionals	Agencies, private brokers	CoStar, MRRS
Leasing <i>Agency and non-profit space needs, license agreements with telecommunications</i>	Yes	city agencies, DGS, telecom firms	Passive	Yes	Improvements to due diligence, cumbersome approval process, light poles aren't real estate	Move to DGS	DGS	DGS
Communications/Marketing	No	public, city	Passive	No	Transparency, equity	Add marketing professionals	Contract out	Contract out
Analytic/Technical Support	No	BOE, BOF, public, city agencies	Passive	Walter Horton	Analytical and communications skills and outlets, understand real estate transactions	Better oversight and transparency	Department of Audits	No
Maintain Central Database <i>Inventory of all City-owned property</i>	Yes	city agencies, Public, private sector	Doesn't exit in one place	No	Agencies have their own versions to meet their needs	Improved coordination and efficiency	DGS, BCIT, HCD, Planning	Not centralized
Harbor Master	?	?	?	?	Figuring out what it is and does			

Functions were identified in staff interviews and listed regardless of any known Charter or administrative mandate. For instance, the preparation of telecommunications license agreements is a significant activity demanding approximately 70% of one real estate officer's time, despite this not being a Charter mandated function for the real estate office. Other functions such as communications/marketing and analytical/technical support are more generic, cutting across several areas, but still considered essential. In some cases, the department's work and role have changed as the city's real estate needs have evolved. For example, where staff once played a more active role in identifying private sites and negotiating property acquisition for public facilities, the office's current acquisition role is often one of support or of an intermediary in the acquisition process. The role now might entail reviewing an appraisal or engaging with the Law Department to prepare an option agreement on behalf of another office or city agency. The DORE also reviews real estate related submissions for the BOE.

The workgroup found that other agencies do not perceive the DORE as a player, important actor, or resource. Extensive interviews made clear that DORE staff are not being included in brought into real estate decision making conversations early enough and many times not at all. Some notable examples include the process around the disposition of surplus schools and evaluating the need for TIF legislation.

There is a need for significant technology investment in the DORE. Staff in the department maintain records and data in Excel spreadsheets and back up that information on thumb drives. There is no central server or cloud storage available. This is extremely cumbersome and inefficient, and it makes data analysis more difficult. For example, the transition committee workgroup made a request in September 2020 to obtain the current listing of 2019 and 2020 Mayor and City Council unredeemed tax sale certificates. The Real Estate Officer had to request this information in the form of an Excel spreadsheet from BCIT. The workgroup made multiple attempts to obtain the spreadsheet with the appropriate fields visible. The workgroup did not receive this information until November.

The lack of even the most basic, off-the-shelf software has hindered the productivity and credibility of the DOF in 2001. New computers, laptops to enable teleworking, and revised workflow systems to track the status of projects and items that will ultimately come before the BOE will be essential to a revamped DORE.

A lack of asset management software makes the Charter mandate of maintaining an inventory of city-owned property difficult. Other agencies are using more sophisticated software applications to track and manage agency real estate assets. A major initiative to develop a centralized asset management database called the Real Estate Information Management System (REIMS) was undertaken by the Comptroller's Office and the DOF in 2001. However, this development did not come to fruition. Like the rest of the Comptroller's Office, the DORE is still reliant on hard copy paper communications for the majority of its workflow processes.

The staff has requested the ability to use electronic signatures with an off-the-shelf product. Inordinate amounts of time are spent acquiring manual signatures for documents and typing deposit slips for lease and license payment. Tax sale payments are made by check, and the department is not set up to conduct wire transfers.

Most other processes are also paper dependent, which hinders productivity. For example, bids for Tax Sale certificates could be submitted electronically, documents e-signed, and fees paid online without the need for laborious and time-consuming processes involving paper, the physical transport of documents, and the need to maintain hard copy files.

Tax sale certificates available for sale on the department's website are from 2018, and requests for information about how many certificates have been previously sold and their status is not readily available. In reviewing the spreadsheets provided for 2019 and 2020, there were roughly 4,100 unredeemed tax sale certificates that are the department's responsibility to market and dispose of. There is currently an internal policy or rule that limits the number of certificates any one investor can acquire. The policy's explanation was that the Department wants to ensure a fair and transparent disposition process that doesn't favor large investors. However, according to a 2016 study of Baltimore's tax sale system by the Center for Community Progress, most of these certificates re-circulate through the system in subsequent tax sales, municipal liens grow out of proportion with value, and the negative effects continue to plague neighborhoods.

Other processes are administratively cumbersome. For instance, the department is responsible for processing interagency leases for the DGS, which provides basic property management services to City agencies. There are currently approximately 200 leases maintained by DGS, and each year those leases must be renewed, which includes review by the Law Department and approval by the BOE. This is a cumbersome process using significant staff administrative time; moving to year-to-year rollovers may be more efficient.

The Real Estate workgroup found other agencies have developed asset management tools that the DORE could utilize. The DGS has developed a robust database of public facility conditions. The DHCD has also begun the development of its own system. Furthermore, the DOP and the DOF are developing a data management system to track public facilities and public infrastructure conditions across agencies for the purpose of capital improvement planning. The DHCD's CoDeMap system, while not designed specifically for asset management,

was originally developed as a code enforcement tool and has now evolved into a valuable tool for community development planning down to the block level. CoDeMap shows the spatial distribution of tax sale properties along with the ownership and assessment information for individual parcels. Since most of the necessary information required to track the unredeemed certificates for which the department is responsible already reside in the CoDeMap system, there may be a way for department staff to utilize this tool to enhance the efficacy of the disposition process while also better aligning it with a city-wide community development framework.

The DORE has had persistent position vacancies and inadequate funds appropriated for salaries. The department has been without a staff appraiser for some time. An appraiser is a critical position within the department because other agencies rely on the department to review third-party appraisals. Attracting and retaining experienced and qualified professionals will be important for the department into regaining trust and credibility, and appropriate salary ranges will be essential to attracting the professional staff needed.

The DORE is not a participant in discussions of an overall city-wide community development framework. While the department is not and should not be an implementor or driver of community development and economic development strategies city-wide, the department is rarely included in discussions about real estate activity that will need to be managed by the Comptroller's Office and culminate in BOE actions. Being part of these discussions would give DORE a better understanding of the goals and objectives of various activities, enabling it to be a partner and facilitator with specific expertise. The DORE should be positioned to lead fundamental process improvements in acquisition and disposition for the city and agency partners.

Interviews with leading community development corporations revealed the potential for conflicting goals between the department/Comptroller and community developers. CDCs/non-profits are often prioritizing long-term benefits such as affordable housing or green space over maximum appraised value in a property sale.

OPPORTUNITIES

Reestablish the DORE's role providing objective and "arms-length" reviews of real estate transactions proposed or presented by the Executive and Legislative branches of city government.

The department must be staffed, trained, and equipped to independently evaluate real estate policy decisions and transactions and ensure that the rationale and public costs of those decisions and actions are made transparent and accessible to Baltimore's residents. To achieve this, the workgroup recommends the following:

- Align DORE's mission with a city-wide community development framework
- Set clear and measurable goals for the department

Many of the real estate functions of the city government can and should be aligned around a common community development framework. With resources scarce, investment priorities need to be established by working closely with community stakeholders and all branches of government. While it is not the Comptroller's role to lead such discussions, the DORE needs to be an active participant and partner in setting those priorities. There are numerous examples of recent initiatives, studies, and reports that have advocated for more strategic, equitable, and efficient city processes to establish a land bank, reforming aspects of the tax sale system, disposing of vacant buildings and land, and creating a community development framework. In its role as steward of city property, and in taking on a more expansive view of its role, the department should be a valuable and supporting partner in those efforts.

Play a leading role with city agencies in developing public facilities plans that prioritize scarce capital investment dollars and flag potential surplus and sales opportunities.

The City faces significant, ongoing challenges maintaining its inventory of public buildings and facilities. Many buildings have aging, obsolete systems and suffer from years of deferred maintenance. While the DGS has begun to develop its own database and working to rank the buildings it manages according to a physical conditions score, there is still much work to be done city-wide. The DOP and the DOF is undertaking an effort to catalog all City real property assets and develop a capital budgeting tool. One missing element is that front-line, direct service-delivery agencies do not have the staff or training to assess and strategically plan for their own comprehensive facility inventories.

Refocused as a resource for other City agencies, the DORE could play the role of guiding and advising individual agencies in their public facilities plans. Additionally, it could develop a standardized tool for inventory, evaluation, and planning to maximize scarce capital dollars, and the department could think creatively about new ways to meet capital financing needs or repurpose surplus space.

Proactively market city surplus properties and tax sale certificates available for redemption

Interviews with other agency officials indicated room for improvement in marketing city surplus properties and that major initiatives like the marketing of surplus city public school buildings had not been well-coordinated. There is no one place that persons interested in acquiring available city properties can search for accurate information. Several different agencies advertise for Expressions of Interest (EOIs) or for Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and bidders must go to those individual agency websites for information and documents. The workgroup therefore recommends replacing the requirement for a paper bound book of city assets with a digital database.

Play the role of a realtor in identifying leasing opportunities for city uses and private lessees for city-owned properties and evaluate those opportunities and proposed lease terms using industry-standard due diligence.

The department can support city agencies by finding leasable space for municipal needs. That space might be available within the city's own inventory or identified via a search of private sector sites. Ideally, the department would negotiate the most favorable terms and provide some level of analysis to the BOE, ensuring that a particular lease rate was reasonable and justified based on comparable rates and terms. One example drawing the workgroup's attention was the recent lease negotiated for the relocation of the Central Police District to the former Baltimore Sun site on Calvert Street. Often the agency itself, and not DORE, find the space it believes it needs and negotiates its own deal with little oversight or involvement from the Comptroller's Office, drawing into question whether the public interest is best served.

Similarly, standard due diligence practices for vetting a city building's potential lessee are often not followed when politics intervene. For instance, an interview with DGS revealed that several city buildings are granted rights of entry or are being leased to non-profit organizations that have little or no ability to pay operating expenses. Those operating expenses inevitably become a cost to city taxpayers.

The workgroup recommends eliminating the onerous process of annual renewals for interagency leases and transitioning to Memorandums of Understanding with year-to-year rollovers that avoid unnecessary administrative burden.

Enhance DORE's information technology and data management systems.

Upgraded technology is needed as quickly as possible to enhance efficiency and performance and to meet the department's information management mandates. The lack of appropriate digital technology has hindered the department's ability to be a resource for other agencies and has impacted its credibility. These systems enhance the efficiency of the staff's administrative work and new systems could also be designed, aligned, or shared with the department's clients and with the public in mind.

Reinvigorate DORE with team building and training.

To effectively serve its role as a central resource of professional real estate services for city agencies and as a source of information for the public, the DORE must have the flexibility to promote and reward staff for performance and recruit new talent. This will require an increased budget a closer relationship with the city's Department of Human Resources and the DOF to act quickly on human resource matters. Such changes will improve staff morale and foster a new focus on creating and maintaining an internal culture that values innovation, service, and accountability. Some tasks may lend themselves to an internship program or relationships with local colleges and universities, such as through the University of Baltimore's Real Estate Program, which could augment the Department's work capacity and also serve as a pipeline for new talent.

CONCLUSION

After years of inattention, the DORE functions are ripe for examination and updating. Although subject to certain external factors, such as budget and personnel constraints, many of these functions are within the Comptroller's direct control.

The DORE should be repositioned to play a more prominent role in City real estate decisions and policymaking by pulling together many uncoordinated and fragmented real estate practices and initiatives in various agencies into a more cohesive whole with an eye towards cost savings, transparency, and accountability. The election of Comptroller Henry represents an opportunity to elevate the department's role in important policy discussions around neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and the future direction of investment in public facilities.

Under Comptroller Henry's leadership, the DORE can reclaim its central role as the public steward for city real estate assets generally grouped into two categories: (1) "core" assets relating to governance and services and (3) "non-core" assets representing tax delinquent or other potential revenue-raising properties, especially assets that can advance the city's community development and revitalization priorities.

Unlike many of the more internally focused and administrative functions of the department, consequential improvements in property acquisition, disposition, leasing, and asset management will require a city-wide approach that includes, but cannot be limited to, the Comptroller's Office. While the Comptroller is an essential factor in these activities according to Charter, Code, and practice, many other entities are necessarily involved, including DHCD, Finance, Planning, Law, BDC, the Mayor's Office, and City Council. A team approach, including all these agencies, ideally with the addition of non-City stakeholders from the private and non-profit sector, is essential. Such an approach will only be successful if the new Comptroller, Mayor, and President of the City Council agree on a common vision for change, share a mutual respect for each other's roles and hold an unwavering commitment to serving the residents of Baltimore.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to prioritize the substantial amount of work ahead of the Henry administration, the Transition Team has organized recommendations for evaluation and potential implementation in the first 100 days, the first year, and the first term. Each recommendation is categorized by the value driving it. Some recommendations have already been implemented or are in progress and regular status updates are planned.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT SCORES

First 100 days: These are recommendations for changes that could be implemented relatively quickly and easily because of existing infrastructure or technology that can be expanded in scope or sequence, ready and willing agents of change in place, or straightforward and widely agreed upon solutions.

First year: These recommendations have relatively straightforward solutions but have additional associated complexity, such as personnel changes, research and development efforts, or procurement processes; there may not be active resistance to these changes but additional training or buy-in is required.

First term: These recommendations are the most complex and likely involve major structural and/or budgetary changes that will require the cooperation and coordination of the Mayor's Office, City Council, Finance, and other major agencies beyond the purview of the Comptroller's Office; these recommendations are likely to face the most significant resistance to change and/or may require a lengthy procurement process, implementation of systems, major change management, etc.

Note: Special thanks to Jess Gartner for developing this change management scoring system.

FIRST 100 DAYS

BOE

- Propose adoption of a formal BOE abstention policy⁶
- Convene a task force inclusive of the Mayor's office, City Council and City agencies to explore optimization of BOE processes, transparency and accessibility
- Post and publicly announce the BOE schedule on the Comptroller's website and Legistar
- Improve the BOE protest process by extending the window for filing objections
- Require registration and disclosure documents from all lobbyists speaking before the BOE on behalf of clients
- Publicly post information regarding meetings between the Comptroller and lobbyists, including the precise purpose for the meeting
- Draft and recommend by-laws for the BOE
- Propose a resolution that requires a unanimous vote of the BOE members to waive any Regulations on Procurement, Protests, and MBE/WBEs

Office Wide

- Meet with Mayor Scott and Council President Mosby to present transition team recommendations⁷
- Obtain technology necessary to move all office staff to teleworking capabilities

⁶ This recommendation was implemented on December 16th, 2020.

⁷ This recommendation was implemented on January 14th, 2020.

- Mandate ethics training for all executive staff
- Mandate anti-racism training for all staff
- Post all required staff financial disclosures on the Comptroller’s website
- Provide a continuously updated archive of the Comptroller’s position statements, press releases and media appearances
- Assign the duties of Equity Officer to the Chief of Staff⁸
- Hire an IT Manager for the entire Comptroller’s office⁹
- Hire a Director of Constituent Affairs to foster relations with community groups and field constituent requests¹⁰
- Maintain an office e-newsletter highlighting staff achievements, colleague profiles, new and updates and important Human Resources information
- Fully utilize Bonfire to digitize electronic bid submissions
- Meet with agencies and define real estate service needs
- Support MWBOO in achieving greater compliance with MBE/WBE goals
- Collaborate with the Office of Equity & Civil Rights and MWBOO to produce quarterly reports on MBE/WBE compliance and other recommendations that promote use of a racial equity lens in evaluating business that comes before the BOE
- Post all MPIA requests and responses on the Comptroller’s website
- Provide the Comptroller’s public schedule to the press and public every week

FIRST YEAR

BOE

- Digitize the entire BOE process eliminating paper submissions and excessive printing of copies
- Standardize BOE workflows and implement digital signatures for all reviewers
- Collaborate with Procurement to create a dedicated web-based public resource detailing processes for vendor certification, registration, etc. and linking to all relevant resources within city procurement and MWBOO
- Create an open expenditure dashboard to track payments, like Checkbook LA or Checkbook NYC
- Post all audio and video recordings of board meetings in an easily accessible location on the Comptroller’s website

Office Wide

- For each department, develop vision and mission statements along with performance goals and metrics
- Establish staff development goals and opportunities
- Create by-laws and/or rules and regulations for any committees that are a function of the Comptroller’s Office; urge other committees on which the Comptroller sits on to do the same
- Create a “Residents Advisory Committee” to advise the Comptroller on department services and other public impacting decisions
- Develop a dashboard display of useful City metrics and comparison to peer cities
- Explore initiating a Comptroller's Office Audit Academy, modeled after the Department of Planning’s “Planning Academy,” to educate the public on the Baltimore-specific audits processes
- Establish a concentrated, well-developed social media presence
- Hire an appraiser for the DORE

⁸ This recommendation was implemented December 8th, 2020.

⁹ This recommendation was implemented December 8th, 2020.

¹⁰ This recommendation was implemented December 8th, 2020.

- Conduct compensation surveys all departments to establish industry-competitive compensation rates
- Digitize/automate real property sales inquiries and review processes through webforms to collect, sort, and evaluate
- Hire a Director of Policy to lead the development and evaluation of the office's policy work, overseeing both analysis and advocacy, inside and outside of City government
- Create a Media Relations Position to grow and sustain a focus on media relationships
- Conduct competitive process and select a vendor for the new website
- Conduct competitive process for external audit of the entire Comptroller's Office
- Implement a cost-benefit analysis of MTE functions, revenue and partnership opportunities
- Implement a cost-benefit analysis of MPO functions and revenue opportunities
- Implement a cost-benefit analysis of DORE functions and partnership opportunities
- Collaborate with the Law Department to provide annual status reports on compliance with terms of City Land Disposition Agreements
- Collaborate with the DOF to conduct a review of all projects using city discretionary tax credits and incentives and develop an updated "but-for" analysis to guide review of future tax credit and incentive requests
- Collaborate with Procurement to evaluate vendor complaint policies
- Advocate for legislation establishing a Baltimore City land bank

FIRST TERM

BOE

- Digitize all BOE archives
- Provide a publicly available and accessible analysis of real estate transactions coming before the BOE and/or the Board of Finance
- Reformat and include the DORE's cost benefit analysis of real estate transactions in the BOE agenda

Office Wide

- Create an Accountability Ombudsperson position to act as primary a point of public and interagency contact receiving reports of waste, fraud, and other issues of concern
- Conduct an internal equity assessment of existing and proposed policies and practices of the Comptroller's Office and across all operations
- Provide the Comptroller's public schedule to the press and public every week
- Explore a joint strategic plan among BCIT and other providers of the City telecommunications services.
- Eliminate biennial fiscal audits to reduce duplication of efforts with Finance and the CAFR
- Conduct a risk-assessment based review of all agencies and a comparison to the current Charter audit mandates to determine if others should be included, removed, or reprioritized in the audit schedule for less or more frequency
- Increase the DOA's capacity to audit city capital expenditures and capital projects.
- Create a publicly accessed comprehensive searchable database of all city real property that includes leasing status, current occupancy, market value and other information to support proactive marketing of city-owned development opportunities
- Reposition the DORE as the lead agency for issuance of all real estate RFPs
- Perform audits of the procurement system to increase accountability in the following areas: geographic allocation of the city's resources, payment to and utilization of minority vendors, agency MWBOO participation, and reflective analysis on previous or prospective TIFs & Payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTS)