

**Department of Housing &  
Community Development  
Response**

Case # 20-0052-I



June 9, 2021

Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General  
100 Holliday Street, Room 640  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
**RE: OIG Investigation, Case # 20-0052-I**

Dear Inspector General Cumming,

DHCD has reviewed the Office of the Inspector General's Report of Investigation dated April 30, 2021, regarding Case # 20-0052-I. The report probed an arrangement in which DHCD pulled certain properties into the annual bulk sale at the request of [REDACTED] and their partner developers to address vacancy and blight in neighborhoods of interest to [REDACTED]. DHCD would like to thank you and your team of investigators for performing this investigation.

The letter accompanying the report of investigation asks for DHCD to indicate, "what action has been taken or what action you intend to take regarding this matter." DHCD did not pursue the agreement described in the draft MOU and has not entered into any other such arrangements with other community organizations.

Under leadership from Acting Commissioner Alice Kennedy, and working with the Deputy Mayor for Community and Economic Development, DHCD will be:

1. Increasing the number of DHCD foreclosures on MCC-held certificates to vacant lots and buildings, and using its new in rem process, enacted by the Baltimore City Council in 2020 (Ordinance 20-393), and codified in Section 8.1.1, et seq. of the Baltimore City Code, to acquire vacant lots and buildings; and
2. Evaluating ways to more broadly, and transparently, work with community-based organizations and developers to pursue Tax Sale Foreclosures on vacant lots and properties as a key development tool. An internal working group has been established and has already met several times to address this issue.

DHCD believes that City ownership of these abandoned properties will provide DHCD with the greatest control over the blight elimination outcomes it desires. City ownership allows DHCD to control the type of redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts that are undertaken and the timing of such efforts through Land Disposition Agreements we enter when we sell the properties to developers.

We will utilize tools available to put vacant and blighted buildings into productive use that benefit the residents of Baltimore City.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

Alice Kennedy  
Acting Commissioner