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**SB 854**

February 27, 2020

**TO:** Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
**FROM:** Matthew Stegman, Deputy Director of Government Relations  
**RE:** SENATE BILL 854 – Baltimore City – Speed Limits – Establishment

**POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 854 **with amendment** to clarify the scope of the authority conferred by the bill.

SB 854 would provide Baltimore City the authority to establish maximum speed limits on highways under the jurisdiction of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (DOT) based on desired target speeds, without conducting a traffic study. Amendments that have been requested by the bill's sponsor clarify that the legislation does not apply to controlled access highways, such as I-83. Baltimore City is unique among Maryland jurisdictions in that it maintains responsibility for maintenance of state highways within our jurisdictional borders.

SB 854 is a companion to Baltimore City's local Complete Streets ordinance, which is one of the most progressive and comprehensive programs in the country. DOT is currently developing the City's Complete Streets Manual, which will categorize city streets by typology and set target speeds based on recognized best practices and research. This legislation permits Baltimore City to set speed limits by typology, rather than conducting a traffic study on each individual roadway to be changed.

The measure would assist tremendously in the City's efforts to implement our comprehensive local Complete Streets ordinance and help us achieve our goal of becoming a Vision Zero city. Both initiatives are designed to slow traffic, reduce the

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city's dependency on cars, and make our public corridors safer and more reliable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of public transportation. Further, Baltimore would have the authority to pursue innovative speed management technologies such as varying speed limits and implement best practices that other cities across the globe have initiated. As an example, the City of Boston recently established its default speed limit as 25 mph on city streets and saw significant safety gains as a result. A similar measure in Baltimore not implemented without the passage of SB0854.

Baltimore City remains by far the most densely populated jurisdiction in the State of Maryland, and making our corridors safer for Baltimore City residents and visitors is in the best interest of our city and our state.

For the reasons above, we respectfully request a report of **favorable with amendment** on SB 854.