



Larry Hogan | Governor
Boyd Rutherford | Lt. Governor
Kelly M. Schulz | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: March 16, 2021
BILL NO: Senate Bill 783
BILL TITLE: Baltimore City – West North Avenue Development Authority
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance

Statement of Information

Senate Bill 783 establishes the West North Avenue Development Authority (Authority) in Baltimore City. The designated target area is between the 600 block and the 3200 block of West North Avenue.

The Authority is to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy/plan for the target area, inclusive of the area within 250 yards of the stated boundaries. The plan is to benefit residents, housing, neighborhoods, economic development and transportation (vehicular and pedestrian). Outreach and coordination with the resident of the target area is required. The Authority's membership is outlined in the legislation, and the Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) would be designated as staff. A report on the Authority's comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy would be due to the Governor and the General Assembly by October 1, 2023.

While there is certainly an economic development aspect of the work to be done by the Authority, the bulk of this work is outside of the scope of Commerce's role. Commerce would need to hire staff with expertise in community organizing and planning in order to accomplish a task of this undertaking. This would likely include at least three new employees, or could necessitate the hiring of an outside consultant if Commerce is designated as staff to the Authority. For this reason Commerce agrees with the amendment the sponsor has indicated will be added removing Commerce as staff to the Authority.