

SB 783 - Baltimore City – West North Avenue Develo

Uploaded by: Hayes, Antonio

Position: FAV

ANTONIO HAYES
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Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Hayes in Support of Senate Bill 783: Baltimore City - West North Avenue Development Authority

March 16, 2021

Dear Chairperson Kelley and Fellow Members of the Finance Committee,

The greater West North Avenue area is in dire need of revitalization. This community has great potential for economic development due to its geographical location and the inclusion of two major institutions of higher education in the vicinity. In addition, the 2015 uprising spurred on by the killing of Freddie Gray thrust this area and its inequities onto a national stage. Development of the West North Avenue region is long overdue.

It is our hope that the city and state stakeholders will be able to come together to create an overall vision for the future of West North Avenue. Impactful institutions such as Coppin State University and MICA have the potential to influence the development of the corridor. These institutions among others have the capacity to attract professionals to the area and increase the overall development of the region. The area has the potential to become a vibrant and economic boost for the surrounding community and all of Baltimore. What is needed to achieve this revitalization is strategic investment and oversight to ensure that the community benefits from such investment.

SB 783 seeks to establish a West North Avenue Development Authority to work in coordination with certain residents in order to create a comprehensive neighbourhood revitalization strategy for the area and its buffer zone. The plan will be targeted at benefiting the residents, housing, neighborhoods, economic development, and the transportation of both pedestrians and vehicles.

Membership of the Authority will comprise representatives from a variety of sources. Membership or a designee will be granted to: A Senator and Representative representing the area, the Mayor of Baltimore, the Baltimore City Council, and the Governor of Maryland.

Membership status will also be granted to the Maryland Secretaries of the Department of Housing and the Department of Transportation or their designees, in addition to the Directors of the Baltimore City Departments of Housing, Transportation, and Planning. This combination of stakeholders will ensure that all due-diligence is granted.

Two of the major education institutions in the area will have a role on the Authority. The Development Authority Chair will be the President of Coppin State University and the Maryland Institute College of Art will be granted membership status. These anchor institutions are vital to the success of the area and it's future economic prospects.

The Authority will work in coordination with the citizens within the targeted zone and buffer zone, aimed at having a higher level of transparency and constituent controlled policies- ensuring that the investment will be in the people who need it most.

The Authority will be required to report it's strategy to the Appropriations and Budget and Taxation Committees in the House and Senate respectfully, as well as the office of the governor, by October 1st of 2023.

Thus, I urge a favorable report on SB 783.

Respectfully,



Senator Antonio L. Hayes
40th Legislative District - MD

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SB0783/673820/1

BY: Senator Hayes
(To be offered in the Finance Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 783
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 8, after “residents;” insert “authorizing the Authority to modify certain boundaries, subject to a certain vote;”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 4, in line 13, after “(B)” insert “**THE AUTHORITY MAY, BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITY, MODIFY THE BOUNDARIES OF THE TARGET AREA AND THE BUFFER ZONE.**”.

(C)”.

sb0783f-743726-01.pdf

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SB0783/743726/1

BY: Senator Hayes
(To be offered in the Finance Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 783
(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 4, strike the first comma and substitute "and"; and in the same line, strike ", and staffing".

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 3, strike beginning with "**THE**" in line 13 down through "**(B)**" in line 15; and in line 18, strike "**(C)**" and substitute "**(B)**".

SB0783- FIN-FAV.pdf

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BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB 783

March 16, 2021

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill – 783 Baltimore City – West North Avenue Development Authority

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 783 with amendments.

Under SB 783 the North Avenue Development Authority would be required to develop a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan in partnership with local residents, to support affordable housing, healthy neighborhoods, accessible transportation and spur economic development in the target area. The focus of the Development Authority would include areas within 250 yards of the 600 blocks through the 3200 blocks of West North Ave.

The nearly 2.4- mile proposed corridor is the focus of millions of dollars of current and proposed investment, beginning with the redevelopment of the former Madison Park Apartments at the eastern boundary and terminating at Hilton Avenue. Through North Avenue Rising, this area has been the focus of a long-standing partnership between multiple City and State Agencies including the MTA, along with the Departments of Planning and Housing and Community Development, and on the City side, the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Community Development, and Planning.

This stretch of North Avenue includes the City's Westside Impact Investment Area, Walbrook Lumber site redevelopment, Coppin State University, the Black Arts District, and numerous communities that are likely to be part of a citywide Middle Neighborhoods strategy. A half-mile radius of North Avenue includes Dorothy Heights Elementary/Middle, a 21st century school, the new Westside Recreation Center. Baker Division homeownership, Etting Street Black Women Build, and Marshall Gardens.

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A dedicated Development Authority would provide a singular focus to ensure that efforts are coordinated and that neighborhood voices will be heard—a critical first step to developing an equity-driven implementation strategy. Agency and other stakeholder communication would be expanded and enhanced, improving opportunities for residents to understand and participate in the investment and changes directly affecting their blocks and their communities. Development authorities can serve as clearinghouses and resource centers, coordinating development opportunities and enhancing local participation.

The West North Avenue Development Authority would have a diverse membership of representatives comprised of State and City Officials as well as City agencies, including the Commissioner of Baltimore City DHCD. Representatives of local institutions of higher learning would also sit on the Authority to support the development of a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plan. MICA's presence on North Avenue further anchors the community as an arts district and on the west side, Coppin State University's state-of-the-art Science and Technology Center has transformed the 2500 block of West North Avenue.

BCA supports the creation of the West North Avenue Development Authority and the development of a comprehensive neighborhood plan to more effectively coordinate City and State investments to benefit the North Ave corridor. By building off of current assets, planned investments and with the advice and assistance of the members of the Authority, it is the BCA's hope that the residents of the target area will have improved access to affordable housing, healthier neighborhoods and increased economic development.

BCA supports the Sponsors amendments, which would give the Authority the ability to modify the target area and buffer zone by a majority vote of all members and would remove the requirement for the Department of Commerce to staff the Authority.

We respectfully request a report of **favorable with amendment** on Senate Bill (SB) 783.

SB 783_West North Ave Redevelopment Authority_LOI.

Uploaded by: Schulz, Kelly

Position: INFO



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.