

March 6, 2023

Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone:

ReBUILD Metro would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 874, which would establish Community Safety Works as an ongoing program within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Established as a budget initiative within the Department, Community Safety Works has already provided valuable assistance to nonprofit organizations, businesses and local governments through targeted investments in crime prevention that impact community safety.

ReBUILD Metro has created and rebuilt over 430 housing units in East Baltimore—including the rehabilitation of over 240 abandoned homes—and has reduced vacancy in our targeted reinvestment area by 90%, leading to a 30% increase in population and a 50% reduction in homicides in these formerly distressed high-poverty areas. Over 80 of our rebuilt homes are in a one-block area of Broadway East just north of Johns Hopkins Hospital. This area has been reborn as a growing community of opportunity, *but its newfound stability and growth hinges on whether its new homeowners and renters—and its legacy residents—feel safe.* Thanks to Community Safety Works, we are adding street lighting to this area to increase community connectivity and further deter any threats of criminal activity that could cause residents to want to leave the community again.

The Community Safety Works program has also provided critical funding to our partners at Rebuild Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization (RJSNO) for security and public safety investments in Johnston Square. Since 2015, we have been working closely with RJSNO to transform Johnston Square from distress and disinvestment into a model community in Baltimore where new and revitalized homes are surrounded by a network of parks, gardens, urban farms, streetscapes, public art, and other quality of life enhancements. *Again, these investments will only be successful if residents of Johnston Square feel safe in their community.*

Again, this is to request a favorable report on SB874 to continue this valuable program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jenny Guillaume
Director of Planning and Community Engagement
ReBUILD Metro