



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

Dear Senator Guzzone:

American Communities Trust, Inc (ACT) strongly supports Senate Bill 874. This bill 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.

ACT is a 501c3 public charity, whose mission is to create inclusive economic development strategies that bring growth and prosperity to low-income residents. ACT's philosophy is that economic development for low income residents must empower without displacement or dispossession. ACT's initiatives include serving as master developer for the Baltimore Pumphouse, an adaptive reuse strategy designed to bring jobs and investment to the working-class north-of-the-tracks neighborhoods of Baltimore, Maryland.

ACT is also working to convert the last mile along the rail line entering Baltimore City into a beautiful linear park and pedestrian walkway, called Last Mile Park. The goal is to unite the neighborhoods north and south of the tracks, creating a safe place to live and work.

There is a critical need for Senate Bill 874 in East Baltimore.

There is a critical need to deter crime and promote community safety in Broadway East and surrounding communities. According to the Baltimore Police Crime Map, there have been a total of 252 crimes within the past year. Given the size of its footprint, .440 square miles, this represents a high concentration of crime. Among all crimes, the most prevalent is aggravated assault, with 64. This is followed by larceny 40, burglary 31, auto larceny 30, auto theft 26, street robbery 20, shootings 19, homicide 7, carjacking 7, residential robbery 5, arson 2 and commercial robbery 2. Since 2016, there have been a total of 189 homicides in zip code 21213; 42% were in Broadway East.

Senate Bill 874 would support ACT's ongoing work to build a safer community.

ACT works to promote positive resident and officer engagement in north-of- the-tracks neighborhoods by supporting officer wellness and building on community initiatives that

support strong relationships and mutual trust between public safety officers and the communities they serve. Research demonstrates that the wellness and safety of officers is critical to public safety and effective crime prevention (Source: 21st Century Policing, 2015). Equally critical are strong relationships and mutual trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Supported officers are less stressed officers; less stress increases wellness, which in turn, increases competency and community relations.

Because public safety officers rely on the cooperation of community members to provide information about crime in their neighborhoods, residents are a critical partner in working with the police to devise solutions to crime and disorder. (Source: Importance of Police-Community Relationships, 2016). ACT focuses its public safety efforts on helping to build that community trust.

Senate Bill 874 is an invaluable, strategic tool for helping to support the delicate work building trust with local law enforcement and making communities safer. By supporting the permanency of this program, the General Assembly would also help build expertise among DHCD personnel and partnering agencies about what works to make communities safer and how public safety approaches can be effectively layered with community revitalization techniques.

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

Sincerely,
China Boak Terrell
China Terrell
CEO