



Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street, Inc.
a 501(c)(3) community organization and
a Baltimore Main Streets Initiative
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Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 6, 2023

re: Support for Senate Bill 874 (Community Health and
Safety Works Grant Program and Fund-Establishment)

Dear Chairperson Guzzone:

I write to express the support of the Hamilton-Lauraville Main Street organization (HLMS) for SB0874, which would establish Community Safety Works as an ongoing program within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

By way of background, HLMS is a not-for-profit program that has worked for over a decade to assist existing businesses, bring in new businesses, facilitate facade grants for business and commercial property owners, improve streetscaping, and support the communities and neighborhoods surrounding our Main Street, which includes approximately 1.5 miles of Harford Road (MD 147) in Northeast Baltimore City. Our mission is to help Main Street businesses and our community thrive by creating opportunities for local businesses and providing quality of life experiences that retain residents and attract new neighbors.

The budget initiative within DHCD that established Community Safety Works has already provided valuable assistance to HLMS and other nonprofit organizations, as well as businesses and local governments, through targeted investments in crime prevention that impact community safety.

The two separate target areas within our community whose safety and crime issues are now being addressed by projects that are possible thanks to Community Safety Works grants illustrate the importance of this program to communities like the seven wonderful,



diverse, and eclectic middle neighborhoods within HLMS's catchment and the additional connected neighborhoods nearby; specifically:

- Community Safety Works funds are helping us complete a vibrant community gathering space with equipment that will encourage daily use by all members of our community of a formerly-vacant property on our Main Street in the 4500 block of Harford Road, thereby adding "eyes on the street" and other crime prevention measures to the area and allowing this property to act as a bridge between two established retail areas in the 4300-4400 and 4600-4800 blocks. Prior to HLMS's project, this block had not seen the development that the other two areas have seen due to a number of factors, but largely related to various safety factors that include loitering, large-scale vacant buildings, and activities that include drug dealing at a corner in the center of the block; as a result, this block has been discouraging foot traffic between the other areas, hampering further development in those areas while the 4500 block itself continued to suffer. After the project began, (1) two local business owners from another area of the City began development of a new business in a vacant property that they purchased almost across the street from the HLMS property, and (2) a major developer purchased several parcels on the block and is already in the process of designing and obtaining permits for a game-changing residential project that will provide a much-needed influx of students and young professionals from nearby Morgan State University and, with HLMS acting as a partner/co-developer, a commercial space that will have street-facing retail and other uses that we are currently planning with the assistance of a team of MSU graduate students in the City & Regional Planning Program.
- A separate Community Safety Works project has created a new Community & Public Safety Facilitator position within our organization and empowered this position with funds to install lighting and cameras based on business owner and resident input in the Hamilton and Hamilton Hills portions of our Main Street, which have disproportionately suffered from the City/Nation-wide uptick in crime, particularly in the area's core at the intersection of Harford Road (5400-5500 blocks) and Hamilton Ave (2900-3000 blocks), exacerbating the challenges at this entire end of our Main Street and hampering our efforts to assist the business community in their growth and recovery from the pandemic; for example, in the 2 quarters preceding HLMS's application under the Community Safety Works initiative alone (4/1-9/30), crimes in this community center included a quadruple shooting that lead to at least one death, a daytime armed robbery, a carjacking, and multiple burglaries, larcenies, and auto thefts. Importantly, this position and the solutions to be created by it will be grounded in community input, including input at a meeting scheduled next week in which business owners and residents will assist HLMS in creating the position description and hiring process plans.



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HLMS continues to work with residents, business and property owners, and community partners to identify additional areas of concern and potential solutions that can equitably address these concerns in a way that helps our community as a whole, and we are prepared to begin more specific planning on additional projects as soon as we know that the program can continue; indeed, I recently met with one potential nonprofit partner and, because of our discussion about a possible community safety and intervention project and HLMS's progress under the existing Community Safety Works initiatives, began reaching out to DHCD to ask if they could give me an indication of when we might anticipate additional rounds of applications for this and other grants.

Again, this is to request a favorable report on SB874 to continue this valuable program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

X

Daniel P. Doty
HLMS Exec. Dir.

Daniel P. Doty,
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cc (via email): Sean Stinnett, Director, Baltimore Main Streets
Hon. Mary Washington, District 43
Hon. Cory McCray, District 45