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**SB0131**

January 17, 2023

**TO:** Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

**RE:** Transportation - Consolidated Transportation Program - Categorization and Equitable Distribution of Projects

**POSITION: Support**

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 131.

SB 131 requires the State Department of Transportation to categorize into four categories: highways and road projects, transit projects, bridge projects and miscellaneous. Additionally, SB131 modifies the weighting metric for projects in minority, rural and underserved communities by 45%. "Underserved community" means any census tract in which, according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau Survey: at least 25% of the residents qualify as low income at least 50% of the residents identify as nonwhite; or at least 15% of the residents have limited English proficiency.

As of the latest census, many communities within the City of Baltimore meet the standards of underserved communities and would stand to benefit from the effects of SB131, as transportation projects in this area will be weighted higher. In the most recent update on the Complete Street Annual Report, the Baltimore Department of Transportation drafted maps based on the U.S. Census Tracts with an above-average percentage of people of color and Baltimoreans who are below-average median household income. Those maps can be found on page two.

Based on the maps on page two, the following projects may have a higher equity weight, when being considered by DOT:

- West Baltimore United – Reconnecting Communities Program
- Potential Planning and Reconstruction of Hanover Street Bridge
- East – West Redline Planning and Construction
- RAISE - East – West Priority Corridor
- North – South Corridor Transit Study
- MTA Fast Forward Program
- Dedicated Transit Infrastructure and Technology (Transit Stops, Bus Lanes, and similar Transit Infrastructure)

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on SB131.

## Census Tracts with an above-average percentage of people of color (POC).<sup>1</sup>

- In 2019, 67% of the Baltimore City population were POC.
- 48% of Baltimore City's land area is comprised of census tracts with above-average POC population. 57% of Baltimore's overall population lives in these communities.
- The 2021 report will refer to these Census Tracts as "neighborhoods with above-average POC populations."

## Census Tracts with below-average median household income.

- The Baltimore City median household income for 2019 was \$50,379.
- 53% of Baltimore's land area is comprised of Census Tracts with below-average median household income. 54% of Baltimore's overall population lives in these communities.
- The 2021 report will refer to these Census Tracts as "neighborhoods with below-average household income."

