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BILL NO.: **HB 510**

TITLE: Business Façade Improvement Program – Eligible Funding Recipients

SPONSOR: Delegate Stewart

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: **Support with Amendments**

DATE: February 13, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** House Bill 510 – Business Façade Improvement Program – Eligible Funding Recipients. This legislation expands the eligibility for the State Façade Improvement program created last year as being available to local jurisdictions to now include community development organizations, a recognized category for nonprofits eligible for several other neighborhood revitalization programs administered by the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Baltimore County Department of Planning supported the creation of this program last year. The program offered funds for neighborhood revitalization, and the County’s Department of Planning was awarded \$430,000 of those funds. There are several organizations within the County that could apply for funding from an expanded budget, and the ability to seek these funds will complement the \$500,000 in County funds for façade improvements that is now awarded to nine county-based organizations working with businesses.

Baltimore County Community Planners have also worked with several communities to create design guidelines for their commercial areas to encourage better quality renovations. Eligible businesses can access Baltimore County’s Architect on Call program for free design assistance. The expansion of the Façade Improvement program will continue to address the reinvestment needs within our county’s commercial corridors. Baltimore County would request an amendment specifically making Chambers of Commerce eligible for these funds, as they are eligible to apply for the state DHCD’s other revitalization programs.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 510 from the House Environment and Transportation Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.