

**Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary
House Ways & Means Committee
Written Testimony HB 258
January 30, 2025**

To: Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair

Support Background: House Bill 258 to approve alterations to the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) and its role to support the revitalization of areas within the corridor to benefit commercial development or redevelopment and invest in economic development and safety for the West North Avenue community.

Written Comments: The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) is located in Central Baltimore on the edge of the West North Avenue corridor. As an anchor institution, MICA has a responsibility to the State of Maryland to support the vitality of our community and to thrive locally. The College is committed to building partnerships which support our educational mission and to encourage talented artists and designers to move to Maryland to study, work and live. Building a robust, safe and economic vital community surrounding our campus is key to attract future innovators to the city and state.

The WNADA is working to establish the authority to meet the needs of investment and redevelopment of this corridor, which will create new opportunities for businesses, investment, development and entrepreneurship. Through collaborating with our neighbors in West North Avenue, MICA is supporting a comprehensive and formalized community-based strategy to serve Maryland. The College has established the Ratcliffe Center for Creative Entrepreneurship as well as the Baltimore Creatives Acceleration Network (BCAN), which empowers creatives, from all backgrounds in our city, to develop and launch new ventures. Through this work, MICA can partner with WNADA to find opportunities to locate new creative businesses within the catchment area and support their development and scalability. In addition, MICA has developed anchor buildings on North Avenue including the Lazarus Center for our graduate school and worked in concert with Johns Hopkins University (JHU) to locate our filmmaking programs at Center Theater. In partnership with JHU and The Parkway Theater, MICA is facilitating expanded programming in film, editing and animation to build on Maryland's creative economy. The shared partnership with WNADA and its new authority will help MICA in its goal to support the role of creatives in bolstering the economy of the city and the state.

For these reasons, the Maryland Institute College of Art asks for a favorable report on HB 258.

Respectfully submitted by: Cecilia McCormick, President, Maryland Institute College of Art

The mission of the Maryland Institute College of Art is to EMPOWER students to forge creative, purposeful lives and careers in a diverse and changing world. THRIVE with Baltimore. MAKE the world we imagine.