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MAYOR

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**HB258**

January 30, 2025

**TO:** Members of the House Ways and Means Committee  
**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Government Relations  
**RE:** HB 0258 - Economic Development - West North Avenue Development Authority – Alterations

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 258.

House Bill 258 modifies the structure of the West North Avenue Development Authority to more closely align with a State economic development authority. The legislation makes changes to the composition, powers, and duties of the Authority as well as making the Authority a permanent body politic.

The 2.4-mile North Avenue corridor, from Reservoir Square to Hilton Avenue, is a key area for significant investment, with ongoing projects like North Avenue Rising fostering collaboration between City and State agencies, including MTA and Housing and Community Development. This corridor includes the Westside Impact Investment Area, Walbrook Lumber site, Coppin State University, and the Black Arts District, with community assets like Dorothy Heights Elementary School and the Westside Recreation Center.

The proposed changes to the Authority as outlined in HB 258 would further ongoing efforts, amplify residents' voices, and foster an equity-driven strategy to improve communication and align development opportunities. The Authority's work also closely aligns and is integrated with Reinvest Baltimore and the City's overall vacant reduction strategy.

We support the ongoing redevelopment efforts in the North Avenue area, including the Reservoir Square project and the new Mayor's Office of Employment Development headquarters, which are key to revitalization. The inclusion of the West North Avenue Development Authority in the Mayor's Neighborhood SubCabinet highlights the Administration's commitment to redevelopment and strengthens collaboration with community stakeholders.

We respectfully request a **favorable report** on House Bill (HB) 258.