

The Baltimore City Department of
HOUSING & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Michael Braverman, Housing Commissioner *MB*

Date: March 12, 2018

Re: **City Council Bill 17-0102 – Complete Streets**

The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 17-0102 for the purpose of requiring the Transportation Department to construct and operate a comprehensive Complete Streets Transportation System; creating a Complete Streets Coordinating Council to make certain recommendations and oversee certain activities regarding the Complete Streets Transportation System; establishing certain design standards and requiring the Transportation Department to use the latest and best design standards in constructing and operating the Complete Streets Transportation System; requiring the Transportation Department, in consultation with the Coordinating Council and after public notice and a public comment period, to adopt a Complete Streets Manual to carry out this Ordinance; requiring that the Transportation Director, in consultation with the Coordinating Council, to prepare an Annual Complete Streets Report, assessing the status of the Complete Streets Transportation System, and to conduct public meetings and other community engagement and outreach activities to present the Complete Streets Annual Report to the public and to solicit input; specifying that the requirements of this Ordinance apply to all project phases undertaken by, under the authority of, or subject to the supervision of the Transportation Department for the improvement of any street, subject to certain exceptions; defining certain terms; providing for special effective dates; and generally relating to the construction and operation of a transportation system, accommodating all travel modes, that ensures the safety, security, comfort, and convenience of all users.

If enacted, this bill would move the Department of Transportation towards the goal of designing, constructing and operating a safe and efficient transportation system in the City that would support access and mobility for people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders.

The bill supports an approach that integrates users and communities in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the transportation network to ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, balances the needs of different modes, and supports local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments.

The bill specifically requires the Department of Transportation to create a Complete Streets Coordinating Council, develop a Complete Streets Manual and prepare an annual Complete Streets Report.

HCD supports the intent of this legislation. We, however, believe it could be improved as follows:

- Clarify that Complete Streets should be part of the comprehensive transportation planning process with recognition that certain federal and state requirements will have precedence.
- Broaden the types of projects that are eligible for exclusion to include projects that are at a certain point in pre-development or are a part of prescribed approved/awarded federal redevelopment initiatives (Section 40-2 (C)).
- Broaden community engagement requirements so they are more compatible with equity policy and planning, i.e. requiring hard copies to be provided in public locations such as public libraries or community centers and be bi-lingual.
- Ensure that the bill allows the manual to be a flexible planning and policy tool and is incorporated as part of other citywide transit initiatives or mandates.
- Add a representative from the City Department of Housing and Community Development and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) because of their respective involvements with major redevelopment initiatives.
- Modify the project prioritization and project delivery processes to be less prescriptive and more flexible to insure they stay current and viable.

The Department of Housing and Community Development supports the concept of the Complete Streets Bill, however, HCD would like to see amendments to the bill to make it less prescriptive and encourage flexibility to guide the transition to safe streets in the City that balance of needs of communities, users, land uses and all modes of transportation. HCD welcomes the opportunity to work with the Department of Transportation as they move forward with the development of a manual.

MB:sd

cc: Ms. Karen Stokes, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*
Mr. Kyron Banks, *Mayor's Office of Government Relations*