

Hillandale Citizens Association, Inc.
Silver Spring, Maryland
January 30, 2020

Council President Sidney Katz
Montgomery County Council
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Subject: FY 21-26 CIP: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System Development P501318
Funding for New Hampshire Avenue BRT Planning

Dear President Katz and fellow Councilmembers,

The Executive Board of the Hillandale Citizens Association is writing with an appeal to approve the funding to plan the New Hampshire Avenue BRT beginning in FY22 with completion in FY24. We further encourage Council to consider accelerating this planning effort. With development plans now going forward in Hillandale, transit improvements are critically needed for our suburban area.

The 2014 White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan (WOSG) granted added density/development opportunities to transform the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor based on having the BRT. This BRT line will serve the growing Food and Drug Administration White Oak Campus on New Hampshire Avenue along with supporting the large transit oriented Hillandale Gateway project, the first of many planned developments in the area that is currently in the approval phase. Now is the time for the County to begin to fulfill its promise of transit infrastructure to support the area's development which is not constrained by staging requirements.

The New Hampshire BRT route provides an important link in the East County transit network by connecting the Route 29 BRT in White Oak with the Purple Line station in Langley Park and terminating at Metro's Green & Red Lines at Fort Totten. Connecting these key transportation hubs will improve opportunities and transit times for East County residents and workers.

Adding to the urgency of moving the New Hampshire BRT forward is providing a transit solution to the current traffic conundrum on New Hampshire Avenue in Hillandale. The County's Planning Commission is in the process of reviewing plans for the Hillandale Gateway project, the current plan for which has been expanded beyond the Master Plan and base zoning to accommodate bonus density for affordable housing and additional commercial space. The expanded density will increase the traffic burden without efficient transit options for both the many anticipated new residents along with existing residents. The obvious disconnect between the infrastructure and the development must be addressed in order to support the County's Vision Zero, pedestrian and bike master plans.

Given the dearth of transit options in the New Hampshire corridor, residents rely on auto transportation primarily, causing the overcrowding and resultant accident rate on New Hampshire Avenue. Given the imminent development in the Hillandale area, moving ahead with planning and development of the New Hampshire BRT is critical in order to support the County goals for safety and livability.

This transit investment is necessary to begin to achieve the transformational goals of the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan. Please approve the requested funding, and if possible, accelerate the timing.

Thank you for considering our request and thoughts on this important infrastructure issue.

On behalf of the Hillandale community,

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