



HUB West Baltimore
Community Development Corporation
HUBWestBaltimore.org

Baltimore-Washington Transportation Research Group's

WB **West Baltimore Project**
WestBaltimoreProject.org

SB0516 - Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act
FAVORABLE

(February 16, 2022)

Dear Senator Guzzone and esteemed members of the Maryland Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

Please accept the following testimony in favor of (2022) Senate Bill SB0516.

HUB West Baltimore is a soon-to-be launched community development corporation focusing on the 6-10 block radius around the West Baltimore MARC Station, arguably the most disinvested area of the entire State of Maryland. It grew out of a 2-year research, lobbying and planning effort by the Baltimore-Washington Transportation Research Group's West Baltimore Project, through which express MARC service was identified as the single most critical development tool available for rapid, equitable, transformational revitalization of the three neighborhood clusters around the MARC station.

Further, these areas - again, arguably the most disinvested in the state - are between 90-97% African-American, and are the virtual poster neighborhoods for Redlining and other institutional racism. So, when the MTA, MARC, the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland talk about directing transportation dollars toward the most "equitable" goals, there is no greater locus of "equity" need - and "equity" revitalization potential - than here in West Baltimore.

So, it is in the above context that we welcome and wholeheartedly support SB0516, for its ability to help catalyze dramatic change at one of the most promising Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) sites in the entire state: The West Baltimore MARC Station. Decades of disinvestment here, driven by racist policies like Redlining, and misguided transportation decisions like the "Highway to Nowhere", have left the area crippled economically.

But there's huge potential here too - with so much of hope centered around the MARC Station and its unparalleled (at least in the City of Baltimore) potentially 30-minute access to downtown Washington, DC, through MARC Express service. (See our amendment language submitted for SB0514.)

The station, and its TOD-adjacent areas could serve not just as a commuter hub in Central West Baltimore, but also as a sorely-needed and centrally-located commercial center, a force for unification of surrounding neighborhoods, and a western bookend for a reimagined "Highway to Nowhere" turned to parkland or other community use. And let's not forget, a restarted Red Line light rail system would connect directly into the station, creating one of the city's only true multi-modal hubs.

We believe SB0516 could help expedite the move toward all of this, so again, we support it. For more on West Baltimore TOD, please see here: <https://www.hubwestbaltimore.org/transit-oriented-development>

Yours in West Baltimore revitalization,

Jonathan Sacks
Steering Committee Lead, HUB West Baltimore *and* Lead, West Baltimore Project