

HB 710
Favorable

TO: The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary Chair,
House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Elizabeth A. Hafey
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Johns Hopkins strongly supports **House Bill 710 – Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act**. This bill would enhance Maryland’s existing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) incentives helping to catalyze and create more equitable and inclusive communities. This bill will support TOD development by creating small, competitive grants and loans to support TOD planning and construction, coupled with an expanded incentive to encourage more jobs and affordable housing to be located near transit, bringing more of TOD’s benefits to Maryland residents and communities.

Johns Hopkins is a member of the Greater Washington Partnership (“The Partnership”). The Partnership is a civic alliance of leading employers in the Capital Region of Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond, who together employ more than 300,000 residents and are committed to making this region one of the best places to live, work, and build a business. In 2018, the Partnership released the [Blueprint for Regional Mobility](#), an action-oriented strategy to transform the Capital Region’s transportation system into an asset that ensures our global competitiveness. Additionally, we supported the region’s creation of the [Capital Region Rail Vision](#), a 25-year strategy to transform the regional rail network to better connect our diverse communities to jobs, opportunity and inclusive growth. SB 516 addresses key recommendations included in both the Blueprint and the Rail Vision.

The State of Maryland has invested significantly in its commuter rail and transit networks, but too many station areas lack the transit-supportive infrastructure, land use, and development that can provide the best return on investment for the state and its residents. In 2008, the Maryland legislature enabled an official TOD state-designation process whereby projects within official TOD sites could receive state support. However, the 2008 statute did not include tangible benefits or incentives to encourage more TOD around the state’s transit investments.

Government and Community Affairs

Developing around a transit station is often more expensive due to a combination of higher land costs, legacy developments and environmental hazards, and the need for supportive infrastructure to complement the transit station including sidewalk networks, station parking, etc. As the State's largest private employer, with more than 53,000 Marylanders in our employ, Johns Hopkins knows that adequate investments in Maryland's transportation system are critical to the economic competitiveness and livelihood of our state and region and in the lives of all our employees, students, patients, and visitors. Every day, they rely on public transit to get to work or school, to access healthcare, or to meet their needs. TOD improves public transit by creating more opportunities for investment.

With a strong presence in Baltimore, and growing presence in Washington, D.C., Johns Hopkins supports initiatives that create better rail connectivity throughout the region. Our continued success hinges on more TOD opportunities around Maryland's existing transit stations. Johns Hopkins urges a **favorable report on HB 710** to expand opportunities for Maryland residents through more accessible, connected, and inclusive communities to grow near the state's transit investments.