



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

February 17, 2022

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

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 710 – *Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act* – Support

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 710, *the Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act*, which would double down on the efforts the State has been making to capitalize on the benefits transit-oriented development (TOD) offers. The bill sponsors seek to accomplish this by expanding to designated TOD sites existing incentives available to businesses that create new jobs in opportunity zones and by creating a new TOD Capital Grant and Revolving Loan Fund. Provisions in the bill that require annual reporting and the ability to modify the program will help establish accountability measures for outcomes.

The benefits to encouraging TOD as the preferred form of development around transit stations are numerous. They include economic development, reducing congestion, convenience, job accessibility, and housing. TOD makes so much sense. The State of Maryland recognizes this and has made efforts to support this preferred development pattern. However, there are a number of TOD sites that have fallen short of their potential for a variety of reasons. While the commuter rail and transit infrastructure is there, other supporting infrastructure is not. Therefore, the economic potential of the TOD is not being realized nor are many of the other benefits.

Of the 17 State designated TOD sites, two are located in Montgomery County – one in Wheaton and the other in White Flint. Both sites have great potential and the County is doing everything it can to ensure that these developments thrive. But both sites would benefit from additional State support – which House Bill 710 would provide – to ensure that the State's, the County's, and the private sector's return on investment is maximized and the goals of TOD are being met.

There is no time like the present to reevaluate our efforts and be willing to make changes going forward. The legislation before you does just that. Therefore, I urge the committee to act favorably on House Bill 710.