

SB 584 - Greater Towson Committee Letter of Suppor

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THE GREATER TOWSON COMMITTEE



February 16, 2022

Re: SB 584

Dear Distinguished Senators,

My name is Katie Chasney Pinheiro and I am the Executive Director of The Greater Towson Committee "GTC" as well as a Baltimore County Planning Board Commissioner. The GTC is a non-profit focused on smart development and revitalization within Towson's Core. I am writing you on behalf of the GTC and also as a Towson resident and parent.

There is no denying that Towson has experienced a significant amount of change and growth in the last 18-24 months with developments such as Avalon, Circle East, 101 York and Towson Row to name just a few. The developers of these projects, Greenberg Gibbons, Caves Valley Partners, Avalon and RPAI, are known for their exemplary commitment to the community that they serve and take pride in their developments and the surrounding common areas such as sidewalks, alleys and green spaces. We need to ensure that the same level of care and pride is taken with respect to the stretch of York Road that runs through Downtown Towson. This section of York Road serves as the main thoroughfare of Downtown Towson and yet the GTC, as well as many others in the community with whom we have spoken, feel that it could be greatly improved. The traffic patterns, infrastructure, street parking, bike lanes, sidewalk width, walkability, cleanliness and signage could all be improved dramatically. An improved York Road will lead to an improved Towson and in turn an improved Baltimore County.

Before we can begin to figure out how to improve all of the above mentioned items, we first need to study the problems and work together as stakeholders to figure out the best and most appropriate solutions. This is exactly what proposed SB 584 will accomplish. By assembling a Task Force consisting of community leaders and stakeholders, SB 584 will establish the framework by which we can ensure that York Road and Towson reach their fullest potential. This will, in turn, attract more visitors, businesses, pedestrians and cyclists to Downtown Towson and the surrounding areas. This will all help Towson in its growth and allow it to thrive as the economic and cultural center of Baltimore County.

THE GREATER TOWSON COMMITTEE



As noted above, Towson has experienced tremendous growth in the last few years. We do not want to see York Road continue to lag behind and drag down the area, as that will have a larger negative impact on Towson and discourage future growth. SB 584 is a great step towards ensuring that York Road and Towson thrives. As Executive Director the Greater Towson Committee, Towson resident and parent, I fully support SB 584 and I strongly urge that you vote in favor of the bill as the 1st step of many to guarantee Towson's success as the County seat.

Sincerely,

Katie Chasney Pinheiro

Executive Director

The Greater Towson Committee

Senator West - SB 584 York Road Task Force FAV.pdf

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February 16, 2022
The Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD, 21401
The Honorable Delores Kelly

Re: SB 584 – Task Force on Traffic Patterns and Infrastructure on MD Route 45 (York Road)

Dear Chairwoman Kelly and members of the Committee,

Maryland Route 45 (York Road) runs through the heart of central Towson. When I was a child growing up in Towson in the 1950s, it was a sleepy community, and York Road was a quiet, little-traveled thoroughfare. Not so these days. In the past 20 years, Towson has been completely transformed. A vibrant town, verging on city, has developed around York road with a plethora of amenities from restaurants and grocery stores, to retailers, office buildings, condominiums, high rise university student housing and the like. The density of population within two blocks of York Road yields a high volume of daily traffic. The high traffic volume presents infrastructure challenges relating to congestion, parking, and pedestrian traffic.

This situation presents exceptional difficulties because the five blocks of York Road in central Towson are literally a pinch point. South of central Towson, York Road is four lanes wide, and north of central Towson, York Road is four lanes wide. In between however, particularly as there is parking along both sides of the road, the traffic has to squeeze into a single lane in each direction.

Senate Bill 584 establishes the Task Force on Traffic Patterns and Infrastructure for York Road to study and make recommendations on specified traffic, parking, usage, and signage issues along the road.

The Task Force will examine traffic patterns and infrastructure on York Road, from the intersection of York Road and Fairmount Avenue on the north to the intersection of York Road and Stevenson Lane on the south, including all streets intersecting this section of York Road. Thus the study is limited to the stretch of York Road in the vicinity of central Towson; it will not cover the entire York Road corridor from the City Line through Lutherville, Timonium, Cockeysville and Hunt Valley to the Pennsylvania Line. The study will examine the effects and advisability of restricting or removing street parking along this section of York Road; the feasibility and advisability of creating a bike lane and expanding sidewalk width for increased walkability along this section of York Road; and the effectiveness of current signage in encouraging motorists to utilize the existing Bosley Avenue bypass and potential ways of increasing sign effectiveness.

Senate Bill 584 was requested by the Towson Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Towson Committee.

This bill was considered by the Baltimore County Senate Delegation on Monday, and a vote will be taken at our next meeting. Delegate Forbes has the cross-file of this bill.

If the vote is favorable, I will forward the Delegation's endorsement letter to the Finance Committee.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 584 and will be more than happy to answer and follow-up questions the committee may have.