

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

January 31, 2023

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee

***Re: Support for House Bill 0012
Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act***

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members,

On behalf of the signatories listed below, we are writing to express our support for House Bill 0012, which would enhance Maryland's existing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) designation to help catalyze and create more equitable and inclusive communities along the state's existing transit and rail infrastructure.

The State of Maryland has long recognized TOD as a preferred approach to development because of its many significant benefits, including increased transit ridership, reduced congestion, increased safety and convenience, adjacent economic development opportunities, environmental conservation, and better access to jobs, housing, and services. However, the state government has not adequately encouraged or facilitated equitable and smart development around its transit stations. Public incentives, and often direct support, are typically needed for such projects due to the complexities of TOD, including higher land costs, environmental conditions, and especially the need for critical supporting infrastructure, such as sidewalks and vehicle parking.

Despite a [long history of TOD as a central element of Maryland's smart growth strategy](#), too many station areas lack the adjacent economic development -- commercial and residential -- that would boost the return on our transit investments while also improving access to jobs and opportunities for Marylanders. Without public encouragement, incentives, and support, it remains easier for developers to build on "greenfield" sites that promote sprawl and contradict Maryland's smart growth and development law and policy.

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 sufficient tangible benefits or incentives to encourage more TOD around the state's transit investments. This bill strengthens the benefits of TOD designation by creating a state-run competitive grant and loan program for projects within TOD designated sites to support TOD planning and construction,

The undersigned signatories and organizations hope HB 0012 receives a favorable report because the bill will help accelerate the development of TOD and bring its benefits to more Maryland residents and communities.

BALTIMORE'S TRANSIT FUTURE

Sincerely,

Associated Catholic Charities	JBG Smith
Ballard Spahr	Johns Hopkins University and Medicine
Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce	MedStar Health
Baltimore MARC Riders	PNC Bank
Baltimore Collegetown Network	Southway Builders
The BWI Business Partnership	Towson University
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield	Transit Choices
Central Maryland Transportation Alliance	University of Baltimore
Gensler D.C.	University of Maryland, Baltimore
Greater Baltimore Committee	University of Maryland Medical System
Greater Washington Partnership	VHB
Howard County Chamber of Commerce	

About the Baltimore's Transit Future Campaign

The [Greater Baltimore Committee](#) and [Greater Washington Partnership](#) launched the Baltimore's Transit Future campaign to call attention to the urgent business imperative and need for the Greater Baltimore region to create a world-class public transit system that helps create shared economic prosperity and catalyzes inclusive growth. Since June 2022, more than 65 business, civic, and non-profit organizations, including many of the largest employers in the State, have joined the campaign encouraging regional focus on six priorities:

1. Address the transit system's repair backlog and operator shortage.
2. Establish frequent, reliable transit service to regional job centers.
3. Support regional coordination, decision making, and funding.
4. Implement a 10-year rapid transit expansion program.
5. Prioritize regional rail investment.
6. Catalyze equitable development at transit and rail stations.

The time for action is now. The residents and businesses of Maryland's largest city and surrounding suburbs deserve a world-class transit system. These six strategic priorities will set the course for a more equitable transportation system, making the Baltimore region a more attractive place to live, work, play, and build a business.