



HUB West Baltimore
Community Development Corporation
HUBWestBaltimore.org

Baltimore-Washington Transportation Research Group's

WB **West Baltimore Project**
WestBaltimoreProject.org

HB0632 - Baltimore East-West Corridor Transit Study Requirements Act

FAVORABLE

(February 22, 2022)

Dear Delegate McIntosh and esteemed members of the Maryland House Appropriations Committee,

Please accept the following testimony in favor of (2022) House Bill 0632.

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.

The second most important development tool identified for that key central area of West Baltimore was completion of the Red Line East-West light rail system, and proper build-out of a multi-modal TOD center at the West Baltimore MARC Station, to include a light rail stop.

This bill would begin the process of reversing the disastrous scrapping, by current governor Larry Hogan, of the then-already approved and funded Red Line light rail project.

By our calculations (available on our website at this link: <https://www.hubwestbaltimore.org/red-line-eastwest-light-rail>), if Governor Hogan had never been elected, the state would be \$8-10 billion richer now from just better management of the Red Line and Purple Line projects alone, with thousands more jobs, and two functioning light rail lines already in operation. That equates to nearly \$1,700 for every man, woman and child in the State of Maryland that Governor Hogan has cost us, to say nothing of the hundreds of hours lost by countless Maryland citizens that volunteered time planning for the light rail's construction.

There are amendments currently circulating in this year's legislative session to introduce MARC Express service to Washington from West Baltimore (and BWI and Baltimore Penn), as well as to better fund Transit-Oriented Development initiatives, of the kind that West Baltimore would be a shining example. The missing economic development piece of the puzzle for West Baltimore, if both those bills pass, would be movement forward on the Red Line project. This bill would fix that omission.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the areas we focus on in West Baltimore are perhaps the state's greatest locus of "equity" need - and "equity" revitalization potential. Between 90-97% African-American, these neighborhoods are the virtual signal examples of places where Redlining and other government and institutionally-directed racism has had an outsized effect.

The governor's cancelling of the Red Line is perceived in much of West Baltimore as just another in a long line of slights that includes that history, as well as misguided highway projects like the infamous

“Highway to Nowhere.” So, to the extent that the State of Maryland seeks to factor in “equitable” goals in directing transportation dollars, this bill would be high-scoring in that regard.

So, it is in the above context that we welcome and wholeheartedly support HB0632, 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. And to dramatically increase connectivity, not just to and from the MARC Station, but for the entire West and East Sides of Baltimore.

Yours in West Baltimore revitalization,

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