



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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February 3, 2021

Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of HB 114: Maryland Transit Administration – Funding (Transit Safety and Investment Act)

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the Committee

The importance of the increased State investment in the Baltimore Region's transportation system cannot be understated. I am pleased to join with other local elected officials in the Baltimore Region in requesting your support for HB 114 – The Transit Safety and Investment Act.

Howard County residents have a shared interest in solving our transportation challenges in the Baltimore Region. Nearly 60 percent of our residents commute in and out of Howard County every day. Despite our location between two major metropolitan areas, the MARC Camden Line is the only all day, long distance transit service in the County. While we have many local plans and initiatives underway to improve our local transportation system, we can't begin to address our needs for improved connections to both the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas if the transit system in the Baltimore Region continues to be challenged by under investment in State of Good Repair needs. Our Region needs both a well-run and adequately funded system if we want to improve the quality of life and opportunities for our residents and businesses.

We are making strides within the County to create a more multimodal transportation system by:

- Investing in bus replacements and bus stop improvements to improve reliability;
- Leveraging technology to provide real-time bus information and mobile payments and improve the convenience of the Regional Transit Agency (RTA) system serving Howard and parts of Anne Arundel and Prince George's Counties;
- Adopting a Complete Streets Policy and Pedestrian Master Plan to compliment the record investments we made in the Bike Howard Express Plan last year; and,
- Advancing planning and design efforts with Montgomery County to expand the US 29 Corridor Flash bus service from Burtonsville to Columbia.

Over the past two years, we have increased our involvement with the MTA and regional partners to adopt a Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan at the direction of the Maryland General Assembly. Over the next year we will continue to work closely with the MTA, Baltimore County and Baltimore City on one of the eleven high priority corridors identified in that plan. It is our hope, that continued regional efforts will result in:



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- Improving access to institutions and services for underserved population centers of our County;
- Improving the ability of high-tech employers in Columbia to compete for high skilled workers living in DC and Baltimore; and,
- Reducing the reliance on single occupancy vehicle trips which negatively impact our environment and cause congestion and the loss of our valuable time

No matter where we are in the region, the trips to and from our neighbors in the Baltimore Region need to be safe and reliable before we have a chance at meaningful expansion. We look forward to increased regional collaboration on our mutual transit needs – to ensure reliable and accessible infrastructure for our residents. In order to make the most of our efforts, we need the General Assembly to prioritize adequate investment in the Baltimore transit system, just as you did in 2018 with funding provisions for the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA).

For these and many other reasons, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 114.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive