



BALLSTON

May 5, 2022

The Honorable Canek Aguirre, Chair
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
2300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 230
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Support for NVTC FY2023-FY2024 I-66 Commuter Choice Program Candidate Project
Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance

Dear Chair Aguirre:

We are pleased to express our strong support for full Commission funding of Arlington County's \$4.5 million application for the Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance. This project is a critical component to our regional transportation hub and supports the Commuter Choice Program goals of maximizing person-throughput, improving mobility, supporting new and diverse travel options, and enhancing safety and reliability.

The Ballston-MU Metro station is a major multi-modal hub for the regional transit network in Northern Virginia serving the Metro Orange and Silver Lines. While the onset of COVID-19 and its variants has initially severely reduced ridership throughout the entire Washington Metrorail system, ridership will eventually return to (and will likely surpass) pre-pandemic levels. Pre-COVID projections estimated the Ballston Metro would reach 40,000 trips per day by 2040.

Here's why that will happen- Ballston has been and is still undergoing an explosion of multifamily housing construction, adding more than 2,800 apartment units alone over the last 7 years. And we have another 2,400 apartment units on the way at various stages in the pipeline for development. Indeed, we welcomed over 1,000 additional, new residents to Ballston over the last 18 months. The 2020 Census determined that Ballston now has the top 3 densest census tracts in the entire Washington DC Region.

Ballston continues to grow as a regional urban district and will soon have greatly improved direct transit access from western Fairfax County, eastern Loudoun County, and Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) with the opening of the Metrorail Silver Line Phase 2 expected later this year.

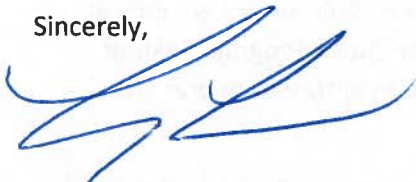
This west entrance project represents an opportunity to have the mechanism in place to more reliably, safely and efficiently transport people as metro ridership rebounds and grows.

The western entrance to the Ballston Metro will:

- Provide support for and help to increase metro ridership by creating a more accessible and compelling choice for transportation by Ballston residents, students, and commuters - and a particularly more desirable option for those living and working in the fast-growing, western end of Ballston;
- Increase rider safety by creating another point of egress in the event of an emergency;
- Relieve congested conditions at the current entrance and provide for more even distribution along the train platform, enabling more efficient loading/unloading and thus reducing passenger crowding on trains;
- Improve bus-to-Metrorail transfers for regional routes entering Ballston from Interstate 66; and
- Allow regional I-66 buses to reach Metro more efficiently, thus speeding up buses and increasing the number of bus stops (also making bus ridership more accessible).

We urge the Commission to fully fund Arlington's \$4.5 million request for the Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance in the FY2023-FY2024 I-66 Commuter Choice Program and continue the Commission's commitment to regional transit improvements and the Metrorail system.

Sincerely,



Tina Leone
CEO, Ballston BID