

Greater Colesville Citizens Association

PO Box 4087
Colesville, MD 20904
March 1, 2024

Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Jamie Raskin
United States House of Representatives
2242 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Glenn Ivey
United States House of Representatives
1529 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable David Trone
United States House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Montgomery County Congressional Delegation:

I am writing to express the Greater Colesville Citizens Association's (GCCA's) strong support of the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs' (DHCA) proposed **Neighborhood Revitalization Section Pilot Program for the White Oak Commercial Area and Transit Center**.

GCCA represents 3500 households around the intersection of Randolph Rd and New Hampshire Ave. We have been active for over 40 years supporting development in the entire East County, seeking development that provides services and economic opportunity to citizens in the area. Currently, in looking at aging commercial infrastructure in White Oak, we are becoming increasingly aware of the need for upgrading the appearance and attractiveness that commercial area.

This proposed project will be in White Oak, one of the three centers/nodes identified in the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan, which was approved on July 29, 2014, by the Montgomery County Council. The plan provides the foundation upon which the area can evolve into a more vibrant, mixed-use, and transit-oriented community and offers local opportunities to live, work and play. The proposed project will benefit the East County and Montgomery County in many ways:

- The revitalization of the White Oak Commercial Area and Transit Center will physically improve this deteriorating old commercial area and an existing Transit Center. This includes signage, pedestrian lighting, connectivity, streetscape elements, improved pedestrian safety, and beautification with trees and greenery. DHCA has undertaken similar projects in Colesville, and Burtonsville with the resulting change being much more attractive centers.
- The County will partner with private business owners to improve facades and the transit center. This project will provide an incentive for property/business owners to invest in improving the exterior of their property. This additional funding will decrease the percentage the private/business owner is required to invest under the current Countywide Façade Easement Program which sets a 50%/50% split (County and Property Owner/Business).

- The White Oak transit center provides mobility and connections to employment centers and the Washington DC Metrorail system, and is served by Montgomery County's Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Ride-On systems, and WMATA Metrobuses. The improvements should improve the user experience and increase transit ridership.
- Improving the appearance of this commercial area will help attract other businesses to the White Oak Activity Center and to a lesser degree the other two nearby activity centers in this Master Plan area. The empty Sears store and auto service building is one area we want to see redeveloped. Also, efforts are underway to improve and expand the FLASH BRT service in the area.
- The FDA and AF Wind Tunnel are directly adjacent to this site, and the White Oak commercial area is one area where their employees can have lunch and shop. Improving the attractiveness of this center will thus benefit the government workforce as well as businesses.

We appreciate the Montgomery County Congressional Delegation's commitment to funding high-quality projects with visible and sustainable community benefits, and we urge you to support this worthy project.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Wilhelm
GCCA President

CC: Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive
Evan Glass, Montgomery County Council
Kristin Mink, Montgomery County Council, District 5
Scott Bruton, Acting Director, MC Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Rogers Stanley, Chief NRS Division, DHCA
Jewru Bandeh, Director, Montgomery County-East County Regional Office
Cicero Salles, White Oak Planning Manager