

**Testimony by Francine E. Waters on September 26, 2013**  
**before the Montgomery County Council during their consideration of the**  
**Montgomery County Planning Department's**  
**Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan**

Good Evening, my name is Francine Waters and I am pleased to speak to you today on behalf of the White Flint Partnership (WFP), concerning their support of the vision for a Rapid Transit System (RTS) as it is presented through M-NCPPC's Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan.

The WFP is comprised of Saul Centers, Inc., Federal Realty Investment Trust, Gables Residential, The JBG Companies, White Flint Mall Redevelopment - Lerner Enterprises and The Tower Companies. The Partnership has been working with the residents and businesses of White Flint to implement the recently approved White Flint Sector Plan, which represents 430 acres along the White Flint corridor of Maryland 355.

Key to the White Flint Sector Plan success is the Rapid Transit System in dual dedicated lanes within Rockville Pike, which will have a significant impact on improving mobility, environmental health, pedestrian safety and travel time. It will enhance our ability to create and retain high quality jobs, balanced and sustainable economic growth, improve our fiscal health, as well as support our County's and the State's economic competitiveness with neighboring jurisdictions.

Much of the vision of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Boulevard, which was preliminarily in draft design by AECOM in the January 2011 document entitled "Rockville Pike Boulevard - - Alignment Study" (a copy of which is provided with this statement) is incorporated in the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan which you are now considering, but there are a few comments and concerns that we would like to convey to you. On Page 21 of Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, it explains the benefits of "median busway accommodation" along Md. 355 South, which is benefited operationally by the White Flint street grid network and high ridership projections. We are most concerned about the Plan's inclusion of "Mixed Traffic" accommodation for a portion of Phase 1, which in our judgment, will adversely impact ridership growth and utilization. The "mixed traffic" accommodation is not, by definition, "rapid"; it is subject to the same traffic delays as the current bus system. By contrast, the median accommodation, which allows the vehicles to operate outside of the traffic pattern, is the superior option.

However, what is before the Council is the designation of transit corridors within the County's road system, and the designation of right of way that may need to be taken for public use to accommodate the introduction of the proposed rapid transit system into our existing road network. We encourage you to adopt measures that will allow for a simple and easily comprehensible process to permit modification of the Functional Plan where appropriate and necessary to ensure high performance treatment. Every effort should be made to engineer a system that will provide the highest level of performance standards for the entire network.

As a member of the County Executive's Rapid Transit Task Force, we support the Task Force's testimony before the Council and echo that designation of specific treatments within recommended transit corridors should be described as "illustrative only". The adopted Functional Plan should acknowledge that system performance is critical.

The White Flint Partnership stands ready to work with the Montgomery County Council in its consideration, approval and support for the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. The best ridership model for the RTS Phase One in Montgomery County is reflected in the White Flint Sector Plan's rapid transit vision. We ask for your support and applaud your efforts to make this vision a reality in the near term throughout Montgomery County, Maryland.