



February 25, 2019

Mr. Marc Elrich, County Executive  
Office of the County Executive  
101 Monroe Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Support for the Continued Study of the Hillandale LATIP Traffic Mitigation Plan

Dear Executive Elrich,

Please accept this letter from the *Friends of White Oak* (FOWO) in support of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's efforts to further study the traffic mitigation for the Hillandale Community. We ask that attention be paid to potential solutions for addressing problem intersections with New Hampshire Avenue: I-495 interchange, Elton Road, and Powder Mill Road as recently proposed by the Duffie Companies and the Department of Transportation; and approved by the State Highway Administration.

As you know, the County Council supported the Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) for White Oak in 2017. Under the LATIP, the traffic solutions may be constructed by the County using developer funds or by the developer directly, receiving credit for their LATIP contribution. At the time of Council approval, the upgrades necessary for the Hillandale Community were not conclusive and therefore Council chose a placeholder in the LATIP to be determined later.

The above-mentioned intersections are by far the worst in White Oak and their mitigation is imperative. In addition to the many residents who use those roads, there are numerous business entities using the roads such as Coca-Cola, Safeway, the Food & Drug Administration, the Amalgamated Transit Union and many small businesses. All these interested parties together generate thousands of trips which navigate the congestion in Hillandale, and several have large trucks that must maneuver the unsafe U-turn at Powder Mill Road.

Meanwhile, the development encouraged and afforded by the Master Plan is moving forward in White Oak. New trips are coming both from within the planning area and trips associated with growth from elsewhere (e.g. Howard County). Specifically, in Hillandale the Duffie Companies is building the new Hilton Home2 Suites Hotel which is to open this spring; and the Hillandale Gateway project (mixed use with HOC affordable housing for seniors) is navigating the Planning Department stages and Duffie will apply for permits by 2020.

Friends of White Oak

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As a result of a lack of County funding yet to be established in the LATIP for White Oak and Duffie being the first developer in the County being required to participate in the new program, the Duffie Companies did their own study and suggested improvements for the intersections. Duffie has offered to directly fund these efforts to the extent of and via a crediting of their LATIP fees and Impact Taxes. Both DOT and the SHA concluded the proposed improvements would effectively relieve congestion in Hillandale and thereby meet the need identified by the LATIP. After several meetings with the community, including a formal public hearing held by DOT (letters in support were 52 and in opposition were 7), DOT opted to move ahead with the Powder Mill changes but delay the most impactful improvement (namely the Elton Road and slip ramp modifications) in order to conduct a broader study of the Hillandale area.

To ensure the success of the White Oak Master Plan, the transportation infrastructure improvements must be made as expeditiously as possible. Efficient and reliable transportation options will increase the economic productivity resulting in long term employment creation and a competitive advantage in Montgomery County. These infrastructure upgrades should be a combination of vehicular routes in conjunction with BRT and new bike lanes for White Oak. It is urgent DOT conclude their expanded study of the Hillandale LATIP in a timely manner to alleviate the worsening traffic.

Thank you for your attention to this important community matter.

Sincerely,

Friends of White Oak

Barry Wides	North White Oak Civic Association
Brian Downie	BF Saul Companies
Chris Gillis	Montgomery Housing Partnership
David Feehan	Gatestone Townhomes
Elisse Wright Barnes	White Hall Square
June Henderson	White Oak Resident
Ken Jones	Burnt Mills
Kim Jones	The Nonprofit Village
Rachael Evans	White Hall Square
Shana Davis-Cook	Hillandale Citizens Association
Shane Pollin	Duffie Companies

Cc: Al Rashdieh, Director of the Department of Transportation  
Chris Conklin, Assistant Director of the Department of Transportation  
Peter Fosselman, Master Plan Coordinator

The FOWO is a community-based body focusing on the implementation of the 3,000-acre White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan, approved by the Montgomery County Council in 2014. FOWO Board Members include residents, business owners, and property owners who represent a broad diversity of backgrounds and interests; advocating for responsible development in White Oak.

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