



April 29, 2022

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,

On behalf of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, I am writing 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 improvement to the regional transit network and supports the Commuter Choice Program goals of maximizing person-throughput, improving mobility, supporting new and diverse travel options, and enhancing safety and reliability. We have advocated for this project for many years. As we move forward, its construction will be very important to the success of businesses in Arlington.

This project will construct a second entrance to the Ballston-MU Metrorail Station at North Fairfax Drive and North Vermont Street, nearly a quarter mile to the west of the existing entrance at the far eastern edge of the train platform. The new entrance will include stairs and street-level elevators connecting to the fare payment area (fare gates, fare vending machines, and an attended kiosk), an underground passageway, and a new mezzanine with stairs and elevators to the train platform. The new entrance will provide more direct access to communities on the west side of Ballston. It will 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. It will also provide additional egress during emergencies and improve bus-to-Metrorail transfers for regional routes entering Ballston from Interstate 66.

Metrorail ridership is estimated to make significant recovery progress toward pre-pandemic levels by the time the Ballston West Entrance is completed in 2026, so now is the time to award the funding required to complete the design and construction of the project. In Ballston, high-density redevelopment with lower building parking ratios continues, following on the new commercial developments along North Glebe Road completed during the last several years. Ballston continues to grow as a regional activity center 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.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Bates". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "K" and "B" being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the letters.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

CC: Arlington County Board; Arlington County Manager; Arlington County Department of Environmental Services, Transportation Division