

Eileen Finnegan

April 7, 2026 Testimony for Montgomery County Council
FY27-32 CIP New Hampshire Avenue (P502714) Bus Rapid Transit

The New Hampshire BRT has been a very slow-moving project taking well over 15 years to finally make it to “stand-alone” status with this amendment to the FY27-32 CIP. As a past president of the Hillandale Citizens Association, a White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee member, I’ve been a long-time supporter and welcome the advancement of transit infrastructure along the New Hampshire corridor.

DOT’s preferred hybrid alternative being advanced appears to make sense in modeling, but it needs a major tweak in Hillandale, i.e. the Hillandale BRT stations. As proposed, the bus-only lanes from Powder Mill to almost Lockwood, will reduce general traffic lanes to two in each direction. The proposed Hillandale stations are “just north” of the Powder Mill intersection in a very-constrained area, impacting small local businesses. During the WOSG Master Plan, the community was told that the exact BRT station locations would be thoroughly reviewed, not just rubber-stamped as being “in the plan.” I ask that this review be done now, before detailed engineering is set in stone.

With the projected occupancy of HOC’s Hillandale Gateway (including ~900 parking spaces) in 2027 and a drive-thru coffee shop, the NH/PM intersection will have a huge increase in right turns from southbound NH. The southbound bus-only lanes will be clogged with right turns and BRT vehicles stopping at this station location will severely impact the lane’s operation. This problem will be further exacerbated with any future development of the Amalgamated Transit Union/National Labor College property. The only main access to that ~40-acre property is Powder Mill.

The alternative for stations in Hillandale is just to the south at the Elton Road. On the northbound side, the area in front of 10010 New Hampshire has right-of-way (and a right-turn-only lane), and on the southbound side there is right-of-way and an active Metro bus/Ride-On stop. The up-side to these locations is an improvement for pedestrian transit users now and in the future. Hillandale Gateway transit users will have easier access, and using the walk way through the Gateway, transit users from any potential development at ATU/NLC will have access. Additionally, the commercial area along Elton, now zoned for commercial/residential, including the hotel, Coke’s bottling plant and the entire Hillandale Shopping Center will have more convenient access verses traveling to and crossing at a congested Powder Mill intersection. Attached is the graphic from DOT’s hybrid layout with the Elton BRT stations requested in blue.

Please require DOT to reevaluate their proposed Hillandale Center BRT stations in light of current and future development. Thank you.

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