



November 15, 2023

Mr. Christopher Conklin, MCDOT Director  
101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Director Conklin,

On behalf of the City of Takoma Park, I write to support the proposed draft network concept for the “Ride On Reimagined” Comprehensive Bus Network Study. Takoma Park is fortunate to have a well-connected network of Ride On bus routes at the juncture of so many jurisdictions, and we are pleased to see that the proposed network covers almost all of what we have today. Residents of Takoma Park rely on local bus transit to get to work, run errands, attend school, and visit family. We are excited to support any work to make these trips more convenient, affordable, sustainable, and safe for our riders.

The efforts of “Ride On Reimagined” directly align with the City of Takoma Park’s priorities regarding climate resilience and racial equity in all policies. Community members from all walks of life take the bus. This service is an essential means of getting around for many and an option that makes sense for others when it is as or more convenient and reliable than using a personal vehicle. A robust, connected local bus network improves transportation choices for our seniors, our youth, our disable community, and our community members without access to a personal vehicle. It also invites those with personal vehicles to explore multi-modal alternatives that reduces the number of cars on the road, and which adds climate, traffic safety, and roadway congestion benefits to the list of positive outcomes. We are optimistic that the draft network concept will help us ensure that all residents, regardless of background, have equal opportunity to get around the community affordably, safely, and efficiently.

In the draft network concept, we see route adjustments advocated for by our residents, such as better connectivity between our municipal facilities on New Hampshire Avenue and the Community Center at the corner of Maple Avenue and Philadelphia Avenue. We also see important connections to the Takoma Metro, Takoma/Langley Crossroads Transit Center, Long Branch Purple Line Station and Silver Spring Transit Center preserved or expanded.

The City still holds reservations related to bus frequency on some of the proposed new routes. The overall coverage of the proposed bus network remains nearly identical; however, when broken down by routes, some of our most densely populated and important thoroughways are seeing reduction in the number of bus lines that serve them. In particular, the draft concept map proposes reducing three routes to two serving Maple Avenue and two routes to one serving Flower Avenue. In exchanges with Ride On Reimagined staff, City staff were told that the frequency of buses on a given route would not be decided until further along in the process, when the budget impacts are determined. The City would like to see that the headways on these routes remain similar to or more frequent than the existing services, especially when providing Takoma Park residents access to key transit hubs such as Takoma Metro, Takoma/Langley Crossroads Transit Center, Long Branch Purple Line Station and Silver Spring Transit Center. Hopefully efficiencies gained in other route realignments would support this request.

We appreciate the thorough analysis and hard work of the staff working on this important planning effort. The proposed draft concept map for the “Ride On Reimagined” Comprehensive Bus Network Study tightly aligns with the work and goals of the City of Takoma Park. We applaud the bold vision for our public bus system, and are excited to continue working toward a reimagined bus network as a partner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ira Kowler', written over a horizontal line.

Ira Kowler  
Acting Director, Housing & Community Development

cc: David Eubanks, Acting City Manager  
Takoma Park Mayor & City Council