

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002**

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT STATION AREAS AS A KEY PLANNING CONCEPT
AND TOOL TO INFORM DECISION MAKING AND ACTION**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) comprises the region's 24 local governments and their governing officials, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and COG provides a focus for action on issues of regional concern; and

WHEREAS, area jurisdictions have a shared vision, *Region Forward*, for a more prosperous, accessible, livable, and sustainable future which has guided the region's evolution over the past two decades into a national leader in transit-oriented development; and

WHEREAS, the region has adopted a set of goals and targets to realize its aspiration for an equitable, prosperous, and sustainable region including in the areas of housing, climate change, and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the COG Board has articulated building transit-oriented communities as a multi-sectoral planning priority to achieve multiple regional goals including those in housing, climate change, and accessibility; and

WHEREAS, the region's Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in 2018 identified the need for additional housing units and bringing housing closer to jobs as land use and transportation strategies to advance the region's accessibility and climate change goals while also optimizing transportation system performance, and recommended that COG advance land use solutions to address this need; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the COG Board adopted regional housing amount, accessibility, and affordability targets, stating that at least 320,000 housing units should be added in the region by 2030, with at least 75 percent built in Regional Activity Centers (RACs) or near High-Capacity Transit Station Areas (HCTs), and 75 percent accessible to low- to middle-income households; and

WHEREAS, the region has a well-established system of HCTs that includes heavy urban and commuter rail, light rail, streetcar, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services; and

WHEREAS, local governments have supported these HCTs through their zoning and land use planning decisions, identifying them as good locations to concentrate future growth to promote desirable development patterns; and

WHEREAS, the TPB has identified 225 areas (occupying just 10 percent of the region's land area), which currently serve as or are planned to serve as HCTs by 2030 (to be updated periodically), as opportune locations to optimize land use and transportation system connectivity; and

WHEREAS, the COG draft Round 9.2 Cooperative Forecasts project that between 2020 and 2030 the region will add 406,000 jobs to the existing 3.4 million, 592,000 more residents to the existing 5.7 million, and 250,000 more households to the existing 2.1 million, and further that 55 percent of new job growth, 39 percent of new population growth, and 42 percent of new household growth will occur within one-half mile of the 225 HCT stations; and

WHEREAS, at the COG Leadership Retreat in July 2021, the board engaged in discussions on optimizing land use around the 225 HCTs, and connecting them to their surrounding communities, both to get the most out of the infrastructure investments already made and to build successful mixed-use, mixed-income transit-oriented communities as a means to achieve the region's housing, climate change, and accessibility goals in an equitable manner; and

WHEREAS, optimizing the land use in HCTs means building equitable and successful communities that have a variety of services and amenities, within walk, bike, or micro-transit distances, such as housing that is affordable at all income levels, jobs, access to fresh food, health services, education, and other needs through mixed-land use; and

WHEREAS, optimizing the land use in HCTs also means providing the community with safe and convenient access to HCTs, particularly those within an RAC, which can increase transit usage, reduce household transportation costs, particularly to the transit-dependent population groups, and provide a wider range of travel options for residents and workers (particularly essential workers); and

WHEREAS, the TPB has further identified two specific initiatives that support both the goal to provide better connectivity within and between transit-oriented communities and access to HCTs, one which includes removing barriers to walking to the HCT stations and the second to complete the National Capital Trail Network (NCTN), a 1,400 mile network of region-wide trails suitable for non-motorized use, of which about 50 percent exists today; and

WHEREAS, to plan for the expected growth in the region in a way that advances multiple regional goals and prioritizes opportunities for affordable and effective means of mobility for all people, the region must optimize its land use and transportation systems to develop communities that leverage current and planned assets.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

1. HCTs should be prioritized for special consideration in land use and transportation planning and programming decision making at local and regional levels to achieve our housing, accessibility, transportation, and climate change goals in an equitable manner.
2. COG committees and staff should discuss and consider strategies, as appropriate, to optimize land use and transportation systems in and around HCTs anticipated by 2030, in regional planning and programming activities.
3. Local governments should commit to provide safe and convenient walk, bike, and micro-transit access to HCTs as a means to make transit a viable mode of travel for all trip purposes and reduce automobile travel and related greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Local governments should commit to complete the NCTN as a means to connect communities in and around HCTs and provide active modes of transportation to access a variety of economic opportunities and help reduce automobile travel and related greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Local governments should strongly consider adopting local resolutions committing to optimizing access improvements to HCTs, including completing the NCTN, in all local planning efforts.

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