



Barcroft School and Civic League

**800 S. Buchanan Street
Arlington, VA 22204**

May 30, 2016

Ms. Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Ms. Garvey:

The Barcroft School and Civic League (BSCL) would like to express its concerns regarding the most recent publicly available version of the county's Transit Development Plan (TDP) and its proposals for premium and limited stop bus service along Columbia Pike. As currently proposed, it appears the TDP would create substantial gaps in premium and limited stop coverage at South Buchanan Street and at South Oakland Street—areas where limited stop bus service already exists. These two stops are in some of the most densely populated parts of the Columbia Pike corridor, and the potential service gaps far exceed the optimal spacing between bus stops. The BSCL opposes any such service gaps.

According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the maximum distance bus riders should be asked to walk between stops is 400 meters. Eliminating premium and limited service at Buchanan and Oakland creates 1-kilometer service deserts between George Mason Drive and South Dinwiddie Street and between Glebe Road and George Mason Drive. As a result, riders along large stretches of Columbia Pike who are unable or unwilling to walk more than 400 meters cannot take a "one seat ride" from their homes.

The service deserts would also occur in areas where premium bus service is most needed. The Buchanan stop is in one of the most densely populated census tracts along the Pike. The Oakland stop is in the middle of a Neighborhoods Area Plan Study Area. Arlington County expects both of these areas to see significant density growth in the coming years. Moreover, both stops are located along the western portion of Columbia Pike, which contain most of the corridor's market and committed affordable housing; Arlington should not deny premium and limited bus service to residents who most need it.

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The goal of premium bus service is to provide no more than a two-seat ride for most riders. Premium and limited service provides the first part of that vision, but only if all Pike residents have proximate access to that service. When the county asks residents to transfer to premium and limited service, they must accept two-seat (and often three-seat) service to most destinations, because a rider must take a local bus to a stop serving a premium bus and often transfer yet again to Metrorail. This poses an unreasonable burden on Pike residents.

As the county addresses transit needs along the Columbia Pike corridor, those plans must serve the welfare of the entire corridor. Similarly, to the extent that Arlington seeks to offer premium and limited stop bus service along Columbia Pike, it must offer that service to all people living on the Pike. The BSCL respectfully asks that the county board insist upon premium and limited bus service at both the South Buchanan and South Oakland locations at your upcoming TDP work session on May 31.

Sincerely,

/s/

Christopher T. Kupczyk
President

cc: Members of the Arlington County Board
Dennis Leach, Deputy Director of Transportation
Chris Slatt, Chair, Transportation Commission