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February 9, 2022

Mr. Chuck Bean
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002
BY Email to HAPP@mwkog.org

Re: City of Alexandria Expression of Interest in Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Housing Affordability Planning Program Grant

Dear Mr. Bean:

The City of Alexandria (City) is interested in applying for a Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Housing Affordability Planning Program (HAPP) Grant. If successful in its application, the City will use the HAPP funds to conduct third party economic development feasibility analyses and preliminary design and/or engineering studies for the development of net new affordable housing at three transit hub locations in the City of Alexandria – the Van Dorn Metro Station, the Eisenhower Metro Station, and the Southern Towers Apartments future Bus Rapid Transit Center station (Attachment). Future development of these sites to include affordable housing as part of a joint development agreement aligns with the current Amazon-WMATA initiative, and the City believes there is great potential in accessing resources staked through this initiative, and in other potential public/private partnerships to elevate their potential consideration. Conducting an economic development feasibility analysis and initial design and/or engineering studies for the sites will allow the City to evaluate if the locations provide merit for further exploration, a public planning process, and potentially, additional City financial investment.

Actively exploring opportunities to develop new affordable housing units within these transit-rich locations furthers the City's 2013 Housing Master Plan Principle 4, "Key Factors in the future distribution of affordable housing include: access to transportation and services, strategic preservation or location opportunities, and geographic distribution of affordable rental housing to mirror overall rental housing distribution". This approach is also consistent with the principles of the 2019 COG Regional Housing Initiative which aspires to locate new committed affordable and workforce housing near transit and activity centers identified by COG.

In endorsing COG's Regional Housing Initiative (RHI), the Alexandria City Council has adopted a goal of creating 2,250 additional affordable and workforce units here and the three transit hubs proposed for study via the grant are in neighborhoods that currently lack a substantive inventory of Committed Affordable Housing Units (CAUs). The Van Dorn Metro Station is located in the southwest portion of the city addressed within the award-winning 2015 Eisenhower West Small Area Plan. Emphasizing multiple transit connections and improvements to link this part of Alexandria, which is adjacent to Fairfax County, the Plan identifies the Van Dorn Metro site as an important "node" to capture and

leverage activity and enhance vibrancy typical of urban development. The Eisenhower Metro Station is in the southeast portion of the city in the fast growing high-density residential, office, and commercial Eisenhower East Small Area. A 2019 Plan Update enabled substantial additional residential development in Eisenhower East, however, the neighborhood's current housing inventory includes just 1.5% of the City's rental CAUs. Lastly, the future Bus Rapid Transit station at Southern Towers Apartments – a sprawling high-density market-affordable rental community – is in the Beauregard Small Area where only 3.2% of all housing units are rental CAUs but has the highest percentage of local and regional public transit usage/bus ridership in the city.

The City recently conducted a similar analysis of the Braddock Metro Station with the aim of evaluating that transit facility for redevelopment through a public/private partnership with Amazon to build new multifamily affordable housing units onsite. At the City Manager's request, the Office of Housing convened a working group of City staff from relevant departments and agencies (planning and zoning, city architect, transportation and environmental services, economic development, equity, housing, non-profit housing developer, etc.) to identify existing site conditions, environmental and land use constraints, zoning requirements, public and civic goals (such as promoting the City's *All Alexandria Racial and Social Equity* policy), and, in consultation with WMATA and DASH, the local bus service agency, created potential development scenarios, development costs for each scenario, and explored potential funding opportunities (including Amazon's Housing Equity Fund). Using local funds, a consultant was procured to conduct an economic feasibility analysis to determine the amount of City subsidy and other gap funds required to support each of the development scenarios. Using the HAPP grant funds – and continuing to leverage the funds with City staff expertise and input – the City now hopes to replicate this process for the three proposed transit hubs identified and determine potential next steps based on this internal exploration.

We think Alexandria is a strong candidate for the \$75,000 HAPP grant fund as we have demonstrated our ability and commitment to be good stewards of both our own public funds as well as third-party funding in support of the development and preservation of affordable housing. The City is focused on reaching its 2013 Housing Master Plan goal of developing or preserving 2,000 affordable housing units prior to the 2025 timeline and has already identified a pipeline of potential projects to reach the MWCOC target of creating an additional 2,250 new units of affordable and workforce housing by 2030. In fact, over the next 10 years, it is anticipated that, if funding can be identified to supplement City resources, Alexandria can support the development or preservation of approximately 3,591 affordable and workforce housing units, in partnership with at least eight non-profit or market rate developers.

Thank you for your consideration, and for expanding the resources to enable planning to support jurisdictions achieving their RHI target. We look forward to working with MWCOC on the HAPP grant opportunity. Please contact me at 703-746-3088 if you have questions, or if I can provide other information prior to our submission of a full application for HAPP funds.

Sincerely,

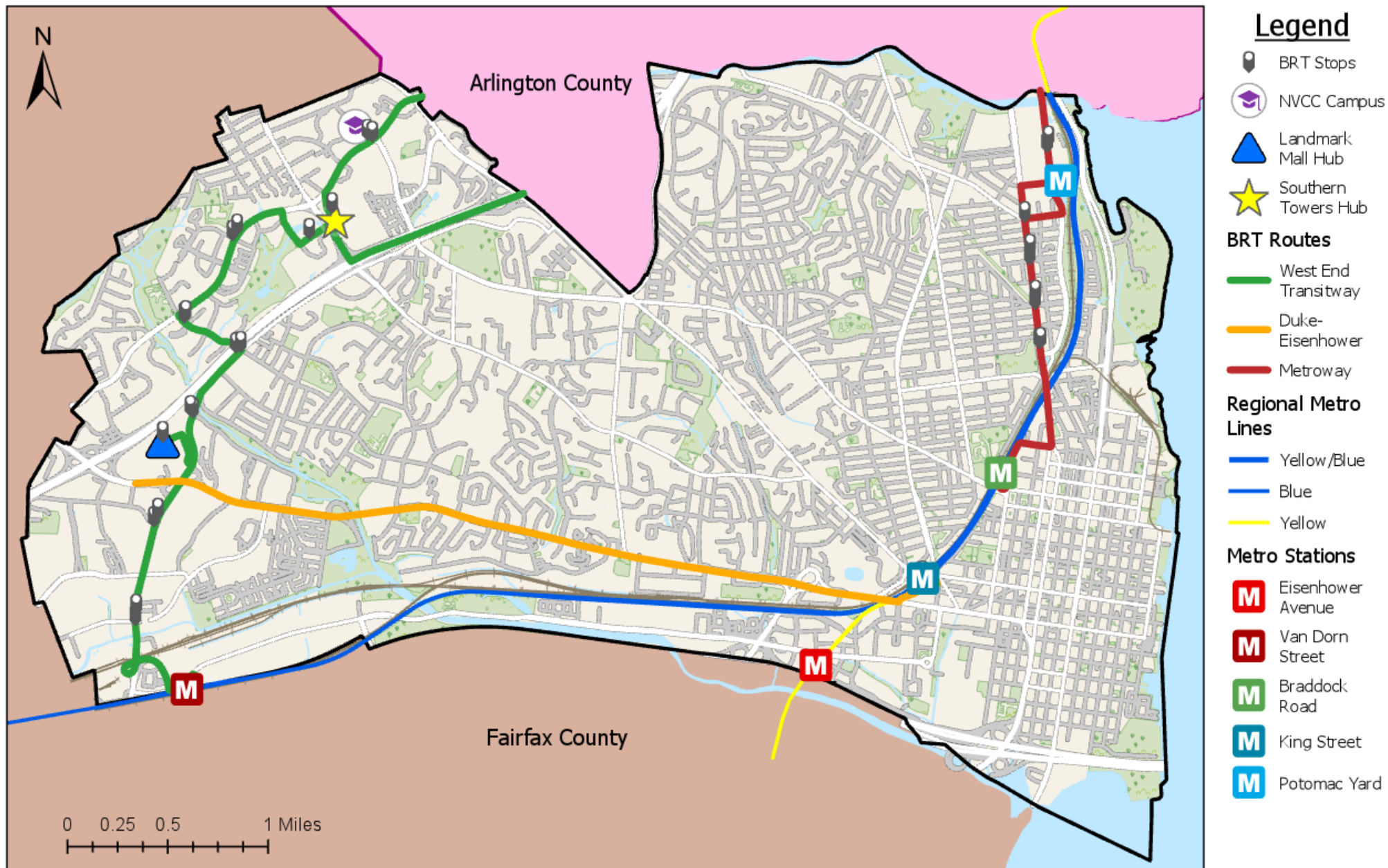
Brandi D. Collins

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Housing Program Manager

Cc: Helen S. McIlvaine, Director, Office of Housing
Eric Keeler, Deputy Director, Office of Housing

Enclosure: City of Alexandria Map of Proposed HAPP Study Areas



City of Alexandria HAPP Study Areas

Metro Stations in red are study areas; ones in green have already been studied; and ones in blue are not of interest at this time.