T&E COMMITTEE #2
March 12, 2020

MEMORANDUM

March 10, 2020

TO: Transportation and Environment Committee

FROM: Glenn Orlin, Senior Analyst

SUBJECT: Council/Executive joint State Transportation Priorities Letter[1]

PURPOSE: Worksession

The County Council and Executive periodically send a joint letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) with the County's funding priorities for transportation projects that are unfunded by the MDOT. Recommendations for this year's State transportation priorities letter have been proposed by the County's Planning Board and the Department of Transportation and comments have been received from some members of the Montgomery County Delegation in the Maryland General Assembly. The T&E Committee will be developing its recommendations for the letter in this worksession; the full Council—in concert with the Director of the County Department of Transportation (DOT), the Executive's representative—will develop the substance of the final letter in a worksession on March 17.

The following background information is attached. Some are public comments received in lieu of the cancelled Committee public forum that was to be held on March 9:

The following table shows the priorities in the 2017 letter and DOT's suggested priorities based on its November 11 draft as revised by its response to comments by the Planning Board and Delegation members. For each, the type of funding requested (planning, design, and/or construction) is noted:

[1] Key word: #Statetransportationprioriites

	2017 Letter	Proposed
Interstate Highway Program		
I-270 Corridor/I-495 west side improvements (©11)	1	Combined; add dedicated transit funding
I-495/I-270 East Spur improvements (©11)	2	
Other State Highways		
US 29 shoulder repairs for BRT - completed	1	N.A.
MD 355 widening from MD 27 to Stringtown Road – planning (©9)	2	2
US 29 safety & capacity improvts. – planning, design & const. (©10)	3	5
MD 97 improvements thru Montgomery Hills – design & const. (©9)	4	1
MD 198 improvements in Burtonsville – design & construction (©10)	5	6
MD 28 improvements between MD 97 & ICC – design & const. (©11)		7
MD 97/MD 28 interchange – design (©10)	6	8
Accelerated traffic signal modernization – design & construction (©10)	-	3
MD 117 improvements – design & construction (©10)	-	4
MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville – planning (©11)	-	9
WMATA		
Metrorail & Metrobus dedicated funding for improvts. – completed (©4)	1	N.A.
Metrobus priority corridor network – construction (©4)	2	-
White Flint north entrance & Forest Glen Passageway – const. (©8)	-	1
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)		
Corridor Cities Transitway – design & construction (©7)	1	Combined
MD 355 BRT – design & construction (©8)	2	
Veirs Mill Road BRT – design & construction (©8)	3	
New Hampshire Avenue BRT – planning (©8)	4	
North Bethesda Transitway – planning (©8)	-	
Pedestrian Facilities & Bikeways		
Pedestrian/bikeway improvts. on State highways – design & const. (©9)	1	1
Bikeshare program support – grants (©9)	2	3
BiPPA improvts. – planning, design & construction (©9)	3	2
ICC Multi-Use Trail – planning (©9)	4	4
Commuter Rail		
Boyds Station Expansion – design & construction (©8)	1	1
Midday & off-peak service, including 3rd track – planning, design, construction, & operating (©8-9, 20)	2	2
Shady Grove MARC station - planning	-	3
White Flint MARC station – planning (©8)	3	4
Local Operating Transit Support		
Support for electric charging stations at bus depots – funding (©8)	-	1

DOT also concurs with the Planning Board about that Vision Zero should have prominence in the letter. Specifically, DOT recommends a new heading on the first page the need for State engagement and a significant commitment of funding, noting projects where Vision Zero is a major factor.

Council staff generally concurs with DOT's proposed priorities in the prior table, with the following exceptions:

- **In the "Other State Highways" category, raise the MD 117 (Clopper Road) improvements to the #1 priority.** This project has been in the State Highway Administration's Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program for about 20 years, and it has been awaiting construction funding since then. It was the 4th highest priority in the Executive/Council letter of *October 2004*. With the soon-to-be-opened I-270/Watkins Mill Road interchange, traffic patterns will shift considerably, leading to increased use of Clopper Road and its intersections with Watkins Mill Road and Quince Orchard Road. Among the "other highways," this project is the most urgent. Planning Commissioner Patterson recommends raising its priority.

  The description of the project in the most recent MDOT Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) is on ©29. It is in two phases: Phase 2 is from I-270 to Metropolitan Grove Road, and Phase 3 is from Metropolitan Grove Road to Game Preserve Road. Council staff recommends that the scope of this priority is to include all of Phase 2 and the part of Phase 3 from Metropolitan Grove Road to Longdraft Road. **The priorities for the Georgia Avenue improvements through Montgomery Hills would become the #2 priority** (it was #4 in the 2017 letter)**, the widening of MD 355 to Clarksburg would become the #3 priority** (less important with the programming of Observation Drive Extended)**, and accelerated traffic signal modernization** (a new project in this joint letter) **would become the #4 priority.**

- **In the WMATA category, do not include the Forest Glen Passageway as part of the #1 priority for State funding.** It is already fully funded in the County's CIP. Including it would diminish the opportunity to secure funding for the White Flint Metro Station Northern Entrance, which is not currently funded. **Include, as a #2 priority, funding the implementation of MetroExtra service on Veirs Mill Road and MD 355 between Wheaton, Rockville, and Montgomery College/Rockville, as was anticipated in the 2017 letter.** This would be in advance of the Veirs Mill Road BRT, which is still several years away, at best.

- **In the "Commuter Rail" category, delete the Boyds Transit Center.** It is recommended to be fully County funded by the Executive (by FY25) and by the T&E Committee (by FY24). **The remaining three priorities in this category would each be raised by one spot in the ranking.**

- **In the "Local Operating Transit Support" category, add funding for the extension Ride On Extra service on MD 355 as the #2 priority.** Currently Ride On Extra follows the route of much of the eventual MD 355 BRT, which, like the Veirs Mill Road BRT, is many years away. Ride On Extra currently runs from Lake Forest Mall to the Medical Center Metro Station. **This proposal would request State funding to contribute to the extension of Ride On Extra north to Milestone via Observation Drive** (to serve Holy Cross Hospital, Montgomery College/Germantown, and the Seneca Meadows office park) **and south to the Bethesda Metro Station.**

Montgomery County Government
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

June 29, 2017

Peter K. Rahn
Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Drive, P.O. Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Rahn: / Pete

Montgomery County is a diverse community with many transportation needs. As always, we appreciate our cooperative relationship with the State of Maryland so that, together, we can meet the needs of our residents and businesses. We would like to thank MDOT for advancing important projects in our county, most notably the Purple Line, the Brookeville Bypass, the I-270 Innovative Congestion Management project, and the full scope of Watkins Mill Interchange.

With respect to the Purple Line, we appreciate your efforts to resolve the litigation that has delayed the project. We commend your commitment to the project and stand ready to support your efforts to secure federal funding and to move the project forward.

We are also appreciative of MDOT's support to WMATA as Metro works to restore its organizational health, operational safety, and customer service. We hope that, with your continued support, WMATA will restore public confidence and return to being a point of pride for the region.

MDOT has also been a critical partner, working with Montgomery County, to improve our pedestrian and bicycle networks. We appreciate your recent grants supporting our Bikeshare network, and your staff's commitment to participating in our Pedestrian Bicycle and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC).

As we look to the future needs of Maryland residents in Montgomery County, we have updated our priorities for state investment in transportation infrastructure. For the FY2018-2023 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), we have organized our priorities by emphasis area to aid in programming of future state resources toward the transportation needs in Montgomery County. The type of support requested is identified in parentheses after the project name.

(1)

Interstate Program

The major Interstates in Montgomery County are subject to long-span, recurring congestion and need significant facility renewal and expansion. Our top priorities for these facilities include:

1. ***I-270 Corridor/I-495 West Side Improvements***: (Planning) I-270 needs substantial investment to improve its performance. Investment in the Watkins Mill Interchange and the Innovative Congestion Management (ICM) projects represents a major commitment by the state; however more is needed. We request that MDOT complete the I-270/U.S. 15 Multimodal Corridor Study including advancement of the county-recommended reversible high-occupancy/toll lanes between Shady Grove Road and Frederick County, as well as a grade-separated interchange at I-270 and Little Seneca Parkway Extended. Additionally, we request that the state advance the study of capacity and operational strategies from I-270 and along I-495 into Virginia that address freeway performance along with transit, pedestrian, and bicycle connections over the Potomac River, including advancement of the county recommended high-occupancy/toll lanes between the I-270 West Spur and Virginia. The preferred outcome of these studies is a set of complementary short, medium, and long-term measures that provide for reliable travel on these critical corridors.
2. ***I-495 (Capital Beltway)/I-270 East Spur Improvements***: (Planning) Similarly, Montgomery County requests that the state explore congestion management strategies for the Capital Beltway from I-270 to I-95 and to evaluate whether bottlenecks can be improved either through innovative strategies like ramp metering and peak-period shoulder use, or through other spot improvements that are respectful of our natural resources and communities.

Other State Highways

The following projects represent our highest priorities for improvements to state highways:

1. ***U.S. 29 (Columbia Pike) Shoulder Repairs, Transit Reliability, and Congestion Management***: (System Preservation and Planning) Montgomery County is investing to implement BRT service on U.S. 29 in 2020. We request that the state repair the shoulders on U.S. 29 to improve the driving surface for transit vehicles. We also request state participation in evaluation of strategies to manage congestion and improve transit travel time reliability between Tech Road and Silver Spring. These improvements will complement programmed investment in transit stations and vehicles for Maryland's first BRT service and should improve non-auto driver mode-share on this corridor.
2. **MD 355 (Frederick Road) Improvements from MD 27 to Stringtown Road:** (Planning) The rapidly-developing Clarksburg area of the county is served by limited and congested transportation links. Expanding MD 355 and addressing intersection needs at Brink Road, West Old Baltimore Road, Little Seneca Parkway, Shawnee Boulevard and other intersections between MD 27 and Stringtown Road, consistent with the Clarksburg Master Plan, may be the most cost-effective and least impactful way of improving access to and from this community. In addition to capacity, the improvements need to address pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, access to schools, and transit needs.

3. ***U.S. 29 Safety and Capacity Enhancements***: (Planning, Design and Construction) Traffic operations at several locations on U.S. 29 between Stewart Lane and MD 198 in Montgomery County result in recurring congestion and safety concerns. Interchanges have been identified as solutions at a few of these locations, including Fairland/Musgrove Road and Tech Road/Industrial Parkway, but funding for design and construction has not been identified in the current CTP. Additionally, the proposed designs have not achieved community support. We request a more comprehensive assessment of the signalized intersections on the U.S. 29 corridor, taking into consideration community preferences, approved land use plans, BRT operations, pedestrian and bicycle needs, traffic safety and throughput. We expect that advancing concepts to a common level of design and defining a prioritized implementation program for the short and long term that addresses the interactions between the locations will be the best way to address the needs of this corridor while avoiding unintended consequences to our communities and businesses.

4. ***MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Safety and Complete Streets Improvements/Metro Station Pedestrian Access Improvements***: (Design) Georgia Avenue, between the Beltway and 16th Street, carries some of the highest volumes of any arterial in the county. Using county funds, the State Highway Administration is nearly complete with an alternatives assessment and NEPA documentation for improvements that address safety, operational, and access challenges, while also improving bus stops, and providing a dedicated cycle route. The county also conducted a facility planning study for a grade-separated pedestrian connection across Georgia Avenue so that existing residential areas and the Holy Cross Hospital can access the Forest Glen Metro station more safety. We request that MDOT include the pedestrian crossing in its preferred alternative and advance the combined project into design. When completed, this project will improve a major gateway into the Silver Spring Central Business District and improve safety and accessibility within the Montgomery Hills and Forest Glen communities.

5. ***MD 28/198 Improvements (Norbeck Road and Spencerville Road)***: (Design and Construction) The state recently completed an alternatives analysis for the 11-mile MD 28/198 corridor between MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) and I-95 in Prince George's County. Montgomery County requests that the state advance elements of this corridor into design and construction.

   Burtonsville: Concepts for improvements between Old Columbia Pike and U.S. 29 through the Burtonsville business district have been identified. The county requests that the state select and refine a design concept for this portion of the corridor that is supportive of the *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan (2012)* goals of fostering a sense of arrival and providing a multimodal, attractive Main Street character for this community while improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and roadway operations. Additionally, pedestrian, traffic safety, and intersection improvements are needed between Old Columbia Pike and New Hampshire Avenue.

   MD 97 to MD 200: At the west end of the corridor, we request that the state accelerate its ongoing efforts to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities along and across MD 28 between MD 97/Georgia Avenue and Wintergate Drive.

6. ***MD 97/Georgia Avenue and MD 28/Norbeck Road Interchange:*** (Design) The intersection of MD 97 and MD 28 is constrained and congested, particularly due to the proximity of the MD 200 Interchange just to the north and the intersection of MD 28 and MD 115 just to the west. Improvement to this location is important for facilitating access between Olney and Silver Spring and for the connection from Rockville to MD 200. We request that the state reinitiate design of an interchange at this location.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

The transit services provided by WMATA are essential to Montgomery County and require additional state support and investment.

1. ***Metrorail and Metrobus:*** (WMATA Funding) High quality and reliable Metrorail and Metrobus services are critical to easing traffic congestion as well as enhancing quality of life, reducing carbon emissions, and supporting Montgomery County's economic future. Less service and higher fares are counterproductive to attracting riders at a time of extended degraded service quality. We request the state to expand its support for Metro, including dedicated funding, in order to address the long-term degradation to the system that has occurred over many years and to provide the resources necessary to restore the system to world-class status without further burdening riders. Funding should be sufficient to allow rollback of the service cuts of June 2017 as soon as is feasible.
2. ***Metrobus Priority Corridor Network (PCN)Improvements***: (Construction) Montgomery County seeks state support for Metrobus service improvements and implementation of roadway improvements such as queue jumps, transit signal priority, and other measures to improve travel times and reliability on high priority transit corridors within the county.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Transit is a key element of the county's Master Plan. BRT on U.S. 29 – the first of its kind in Maryland - is advancing as a county-funded project and our priorities for state investment in BRT include:

1. ***Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT):*** (Design & Construction) The Corridor Cities Transitway is a foundational element of the Great Seneca Life Sciences Corridor. We appreciate the state's commitment to complete the preliminary design (30% design) and NEPA phase of the project and ask that the state identify a capital contribution sufficient to support an FTA New Starts and/or P3 implementation.
2. ***MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit***: (Design) This project will accelerate development in the White Flint, Rockville, Gaithersburg and Germantown portions of the county. BRT on MD 355, which has the highest projected ridership among the BRT corridors in the county's plan, will also provide a much-needed public transit service to the rapidly-developing Clarksburg area. We request state funding to complete preliminary design for this corridor, building upon to the county's planning process currently underway.

3. ***MD 586/Veirs Mill Road Transit Enhancements***: (Design, Grants). The state recently completed the planning study for BRT on Veirs Mill Road. The study found that substantial benefits for transit and general traffic can be realized through implementation of BRT elements and queue jump lanes. We request that the state advance these improvements into design. In the short-term, we also request that MDOT provide funding for WMATA to implement the Q9 MetroExtra service on MD 586 between Wheaton and Rockville.
4. ***MD 650/New Hampshire Avenue BRT Planning and Service Improvement:*** (Planning, Grants). BRT on New Hampshire Avenue is called for in the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (CTCFMP) and we request state engagement and planning support for this corridor. Additionally, we request that the state provide funding for the extension of the K-9 MetroExtra service from its current terminus at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to White Oak.

Pedestrian and Bicycle

Pedestrian and bicycle safety, the implementation of Bikeshare as a permanent component of our transportation system, and creating a safe and attractive walking environment in our key growth areas are critical needs for state support.

1. ***Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Implementation on State Highways***: (Design and Construction) We request that the state increase funding to address sidewalk gaps, crosswalk conditions, trail crossings, and other issues in support of the county's Pedestrian Safety Initiative and Vision Zero. Our highest-need locations are on state highways, including MD 118 (Germantown Road), MD 586 (Veirs Mill Road), MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue), MD 28 (Norbeck Road), MD 190 (River Road), MD 97 (Georgia Avenue), MD 182 (Layhill Road), MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue), MD 320 (Piney Branch Road) and MD 355 (Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Avenue/Frederick Road).
2. ***Bikeshare Program Support***: (Grants) Federal, state and private grants have been essential for Bikeshare in Montgomery County, a system that has now grown to 70 stations. Bikeshare contributes to achieving non-auto drive mode share (NADMS) goals in focus-areas within the county and provides an excellent complement to local and regional transit systems. Additional state capital and operating support for this system will help secure its long-term future and develop into a network that supports a broader geographic area.
3. ***Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas (BiPPAs)***: (Planning, Design and Construction) The county has identified over 30 BiPPA's and has prioritized five for early actions. To be effective, the county will need state cooperation and financial support to implement improvements to state infrastructure in these priority areas.
4. ***Intercounty Connector (ICC) Multiuse Trail:*** (Planning). A multiuse trail was constructed concurrent with the ICC for much of its length. We request that the state begin planning for completion of the gaps between Layhill Road and Notley Road and between MD 650/New Hampshire Avenue and Briggs Chaney Road.

Commuter Rail

The MARC system operated by MTA is important for moving commuters to Rockville, Silver Spring and Washington, D.C. and the system could provide even greater benefit though enhancements to the service and increasing the system's accessibility. Priorities for MARC enhancements include:

1. ***Boyds Station Expansion***: (Design and Construction) Parking at Boyds is limited and bus service to the station is challenged. If expanded, this station could provide new opportunity for Clarksburg and other Upcounty residents to access MARC, improving ridership from this station.
2. ***Midday and Off-Peak Service***: (Planning and Operating) MARC service provides an option for peak period, peak direction commuting. As travel patterns change and reverse commuting becomes more significant, providing more midday and off-peak trains will increase the value MARC service provides to Montgomery County and will increase the attractiveness of employment in Maryland for the growing population in the District of Columbia.
3. ***White Flint Station***: (Planning) The plan for White Flint includes a new MARC station to serve this emerging mixed-use community and we request that MTA advance study of the station.

Transportation Alternatives Program

Montgomery County relies on an extensive network of recreational trails through county parks, state lands, and National Parks. In addition to pedestrian and bicycle improvements to the road network in the county, investment in these facilities using Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds can improve off-road facilities and enhance the transportation and recreational functions they provide.

1. **C&O Canal National Historic Park Improvements**: (Grants) We request state support for the National Park Service's proposed restoration of deteriorated portions of the C&O Canal Towpath and re-watering of C&O Canal sections to improve the quality of this vital recreational and historic transportation resource.
2. **Montgomery County Off-Road Trails**: (Grants) Montgomery County enjoys an extensive trail network through the county and local parks. Many of these trails provide alternative connections between communities and run parallel to major state highways. State support for improvements to these trails will help them remain a vital component of our network.
3. **C&O Canal Byway**. (Planning) The C&O Canal is a significant draw for visitors in Washington, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties. A Byway Management Plan would help identify important resources and attractions on this corridor, define management strategies for the routes and resources that make up the Byway, and define federal, state and local priorities for management, maintenance, and investment in these resources to deliver a high-quality visitor experience and provide economic benefits to the state and communities along the route.

We thank you again for your continued partnership in meeting the needs of Maryland residents and businesses in Montgomery County. If you have questions about our priorities, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Roger Berliner
County Council President

cc: The Honorable Lawrence Hogan, Governor
The Honorable Nancy King, Montgomery County Senate Delegation Chair
The Honorable Shane Robinson, Montgomery County House Delegation Chair
Casey Anderson, Montgomery County Planning Board Chair

Draft 11/18/2019

January __, 2020

Peter K. Rahn
Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Drive, P.O. Box 548
Hanover, MD 21076

Dear Secretary Rahn:

Montgomery County is a diverse community with many transportation needs. As always, we appreciate our cooperative relationship with the State of Maryland so that, together, we can meet the needs of our residents and businesses. MDOT has continued to make significant contributions to the transportation network in Montgomery County, including providing needed funding for WMATA, completing the interchange of Randolph Road and Georgia Avenue, initiating the I-270 Innovative Congestion Management project, beginning construction of the Watkins Mill Interchange, partnering with the County for Vision Zero, and advancing construction of the Purple Line.

Notwithstanding these accomplishments, our County continues to need expanded investment in its transportation system. For the FY2021-2026 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), we have organized our priorities by emphasis area to aid in programming of future State resources toward the transportation needs in Montgomery County.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Implementation

Bus Rapid Transit is a key element of the County's Master Plan. FLASH on U.S. 29 – the first of its kind in Maryland - is advancing as a Federally and County-funded project, expected to open in 2020. Montgomery County will need MDOT assistance and cooperation to continue advancement our BRT system that is critical to expanding the economy of Maryland in Montgomery County.

The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), a long standing State project, needs to be restored as a project in the CTP. This project is a key ingredient to the success of the biotechnology industry in the Great Seneca Science Corridor and State engagement in its implementation is important to the economic strength of Maryland.

We thank the State for completing repairs to the shoulders on U.S. 29 and ask that the shoulder condition remain a high maintenance priority on this roadway. We request State participation in the implementation of strategies to manage congestion and improve transit travel time reliability between

Tech Road and Silver Spring to be determined through the ongoing County-led US 29 Mobility and Reliability Study.

Building upon prior MDOT planning activities, the County has initiated design of BRT on Maryland 355 between Clarksburg and Bethesda and on Maryland 586 (Veirs Mill Road) between Rockville and Wheaton. These to projects will unlock the redevelopment potential of White Flint and will improve transit service to the thousands of daily transit riders who depend on services connecting Wheaton and Rockville. As both corridors are State Highways, MDOT's engagement during design and construction and financial participation in these projects will be important.

In the next few years, planning will be initiated for the Maryland 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) corridor and the North Bethesda Transitway. BRT on New Hampshire Avenue is a candidate State-led project as it is located in Montgomery and Prince George's County and connects into the District of Columbia. In addition, this corridor provides vital links to the Food and Drug Administration White Oak Headquarters, a key economic engine for the East County. The North Bethesda Transitway will also provide a substantial economic opportunity by linking the Rock Spring area to White Flint.

Locally Operated Transit Support

We thank MDOT for its capital and operating support of the Montgomery County Transit System including Ride On, Ride On Extra, the Flex and, starting in 2020, the Flash. Sustained financial support from MDOT is critical to providing quality transit service in Montgomery County. Furthermore, the County is moving toward deployment of electric buses as a regular component of its transit fleet. To enable this transition from traditional fuels, we request State technical and financial assistance with the installation of electric charging infrastructure at the three County transit depots.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Investment

MDOT should be commended for providing major capital and operating support to WMATA. The County has identified that providing a northern headhouse at the White Flint Station and constructing a new passageway under MD97 (Georgia Avenue) at the Forest Glen Station are high priority improvements to WMATA Metrorail stations within the County. We ask for MDOT's advocacy to include these projects in the WMATA Capital Program. We also ask for State support of implementation of bus priority treatments as called for the in draft WMATA Bus Transformation Study Strategic Plan.

Commuter Rail Expansion

The MARC system operated by MTA is important for moving commuters to Rockville, Silver Spring and Washington, D.C. and the system could provide even greater benefit though enhancements to the service and increasing the system's accessibility. Priorities for MARC enhancements include:

1. ***Boyds Station Expansion***: (Design and Construction) Recently, the County acquired the property adjacent to the Station with the expectation of making facility improvements in partnership with MDOT/MTA.
2. ***Midday and Off-Peak Service***: (Planning and Operating) MARC service provides an option for peak period, peak direction commuting. As travel patterns change and reverse commuting becomes more significant, providing more midday and off-peak trains will increase the value

MARC service provides to Montgomery County and will increase the attractiveness of employment in Maryland for the growing population in the District of Columbia.

3. ***White Flint Station*** (Planning). The White Flint Sector Plan calls for construction of a new MARC Station and we request that MTA advance study of the station.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Facilities

Improving pedestrian and bicycle safety as highlighted in our Vision Zero Program, creating a safe and attractive walking environment in our key growth areas, and the implementation of Bikeshare as a permanent component of our transportation system are critical needs for State support.

1. ***Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Implementation on State Highways:*** (Design and Construction) We request that the State increase funding to address sidewalk gaps, crosswalk conditions, trail crossings, and other issues in support of the County's Vision Zero Action Plan. Many of our highest-need locations are on State highways.
2. ***Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas (BiPPAs):*** (Planning, Design and Construction) The County has identified over 30 BiPPA's and has prioritized five for early actions. To be effective, the County will need State cooperation and financial support to implement improvements to State infrastructure in these priority areas. A high priority activity within this program is to make improvements on access routes to the Purple Line and State funding for these improvements will help accelerate their construction.
3. ***Bikeshare Program Support:*** (Grants) Federal, State and private grants have been essential for Bikeshare in Montgomery County, a system that has now grown to 80 stations. Bikeshare contributes to achieving non-auto drive mode share (NADMS) goals in focus-areas within the County and provides an excellent complement to local and regional transit systems. State operating support for this system will help secure its long-term future.
4. ***Intercounty Connector (ICC) Multiuse Trail:*** (Planning). A multiuse trail was constructed concurrent with the ICC for much of its length. We request that the State begin planning for completion of the gaps between Layhill Road and Notley Road and between MD 650/New Hampshire Avenue and Briggs Chaney Road.

State Highways

The following projects represent our highest priorities for improvements to State Highways:

1. ***MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Improvements:*** (Design and Construction) We strongly encourage MDOT to advance the recommendations of its planning and NEPA study into design and construction. When completed, this project will improve a major gateway into the Silver Spring Central Business District and improve safety and accessibility within the Montgomery Hills and Forest Glen communities.
2. **MD 355 (Frederick Road) Improvements from MD 27 to Stringtown Road:** (Planning) Expanding MD 355 consistent with the Clarksburg Master Plan, may be the most cost-effective and least impactful way of improving access to and from this community. In addition to capacity, the improvements need to address pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, access to

schools, and transit needs. We look forward to reviewing the results of the initial planning that MDOT is now advancing and to defining a project that addresses the needs on this corridor.

3. ***Accelerated Traffic Signal Modernization:*** (Design and Construction) The State traffic signal system contains many locations with structural impairment, inefficient incandescent fixtures, underperforming detection, and pedestrian crossing configurations that do not meet today's needs. MDOT/SHA and Montgomery County would benefit from acceleration of traffic signal modernization in the County, including deployment of additional adaptive traffic signal controls on key corridors within the County.
4. ***MD 117 (Clopper Road) Improvements:*** (Design and Construction) After construction of the Watkins Mill interchange is completed, traffic patterns of MD 117 will change substantially. MDOT completed planning activities for improvements to MD 117 between the Seneca Creek State Park entrance and the I-270 southbound on-ramp. Montgomery County submitted a Chapter 30 funding application for this project in 2018 and 2019. With the opening of the Watkins Mill interchange, implementation of these improvements will be important to accommodate the changes in interstate access.
5. ***MD 97/Georgia Avenue and MD 28/Norbeck Road Interchange:*** (Design) The intersection of MD 97 and MD 28 is constrained and congested, particularly due to the proximity of the MD 200 interchange just to the north and the intersection of MD 28 and MD 115 just to the west. Improvement to this location is important for facilitating access between Olney and Silver Spring and for the connection from Rockville to MD 200. We request that the State reinitiate design of an interchange at this location.
6. ***U.S. 29 Comprehensive Plan:*** (Planning, Design and Construction) Traffic operations at several locations on U.S. 29 between Stewart Lane and MD 198 in Montgomery County result in recurring congestion and safety concerns. We request a comprehensive assessment of the signalized intersections on the U.S. 29 corridor, taking into consideration community preferences, approved land use plans, BRT operations, pedestrian and bicycle needs, traffic safety and throughput.
7. ***MD 28/198 Improvements (Norbeck Road and Spencerville Road):*** (Design and Construction) The State is still working on an alternatives analysis for the 11-mile MD 28/198 corridor between MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) and I-95 in Prince George's County. Montgomery County requests that the State complete the planning study and advance elements of this corridor into design and construction.

   <u>Burtonsville</u>: Concepts for improvements between Old Columbia Pike and U.S. 29 through the Burtonsville business district have been identified. The County requests that the State select and refine a design concept for this portion of the corridor that is supportive of the *Burtonsville Crossroads Neighborhood Plan (2012)* goals. In Burtonsville, the project should also identify ways to reduce the width of Old Columbia Pike north of MD198 to better match reduced traffic demands and to reduce the barrier formed by this roadway.

MD 97 to MD 200: At the west end of the corridor, we request that the State fill remaining gaps to complete the pedestrian and bicycle network along and across MD 28 between MD 97/Georgia Avenue and Wintergate Drive.

8. ***MD 108/Laytonsville Bypass:*** (Planning) The Town of Laytonsville has planned a bypass route for MD 108 around the west side of the town. This bypass, now partially constructed, will alleviate congestion at the intersection of MD 108 and Brink Road/Sundown Road, improving the character of the historic center of town.

Interstate Program

The County has been an active participant in the MDOT/SHA process for these projects. We agree with the need to improve the performance of these corridors, including expanded transit options, and we remain very concerned about the impacts of highway expansion, particularly where these are projected to be most acute. We are encouraged by the recent announcement of a coordinated approach between Maryland and Virginia to address the American Legion Bridge and to connect the proposed Capital Beltway modifications in Maryland to those planned by Virginia. Ideally, expanded facilities on the bridge will implemented at the same time as the I-270 facilities approved in 2019 by the Board of Public Works as the first phase of the Traffic Relief Plan Public Private Partnership (P3). We also encourage MDOT to include the Dorsey Mill Road bridge in Germantown and a new interchange and Little Seneca Parkway in Clarksburg into the I-270 project, for which we believe reversible lanes will be most effective. In all cases, the modification of the Interstate system needs to consider the performance of the local road network, include expanded transit services, and include bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on the crossings of the freeway facilities.

Montgomery County remains seriously concerned with the implementation of four additional toll lanes on I-495 between the east spur of I-270 and I-95 and requests that the State reconsider implementation of congestion management strategies like ramp metering and peak-period shoulder use, or other spot improvements that are respectful of our natural resources and communities on this facility. We believe MDOT should revisit its decision to eliminate the MD 200 alternative and other less environmentally-damaging alternatives between I-270 and I-95.

We thank you again for your continued partnership in meeting the needs of Maryland residents and businesses in Montgomery County. If you have questions about our priorities, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Nancy Navarro
County Council President

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(11)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

DEC 17 2019

December 11, 2019 DIREC

Mr. Christopher Conklin, PE
Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Council Office Building
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: 2020 County Transportation Priorities Letter

Dear Mr. Conklin: Chris

On December 5, 2019, the Planning Board reviewed your draft County Transportation Priorities letter and provided comments for your consideration. We are enclosing the staff report from the Planning Board item considered on December 5, 2019 and a copy of the presentation slides provided by Planning staff at that meeting. The Planning Board offers the following comments:

1. Identify and prioritize all Vision Zero projects on state highway corridors (highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian), including projects with Vision Zero components. Recent collaborative design work conducted on MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) in Wheaton and Aspen Hill between MDOT SHA and MCDOT should be used as a model for other state highway corridors.

2. Identify the need for a dedicated funding source for Vision Zero projects. No new revenue was added with HB855 when Vision Zero was adopted by the state of Maryland, and the financial commitment needed to fund Vision Zero efforts is significantly greater that the previous Toward Zero Deaths state policy.

3. Add a new Commuter Rail Expansion recommendation on page 3 of your letter as follows:

   #4 Shady Grove Station (Planning). The Shady Grove Sector Plan calls for the integration of new MARC stations into the MARC Rail network. We request that MTA advance study of the station.

4. Add a new State Highways recommendation on page 4 as follows:

   #3 16th Street (MD 390) Road Diet between Spring Street and MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) – Implement a road diet on 16th Street between Spring Street and MD 97 to provide two through lanes in each direction (one lane reduction in each direction), consistent with the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan and the Forest Glen Montgomery Hills Sector Plan.

5. Separate the State Highways recommendation for the MD 28 and MD 198 corridors (they are currently one MDOT project), as we anticipate that implementation will be conducted in phases as separate projects. Place the MD 198 project as recommendation #6 and the MD 28 project as recommendation #7.

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8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 Phone: 301.495.4605 Fax: 301.495.1320
www.montgomeryplanningboard.org E-Mail: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

6. Request that MDOT SHA consider, as part of the US 29 Comprehensive Plan project, the removal of some of the planned interchanges along US Route 29 (projects now on hold) from the Comprehensive Transportation Program. The Musgrove interchange, in particular, is in direct conflict with the Fairland Master Plan.

7. Request a commitment for more certain dedicated funding to Montgomery County for transit (like the VDOT I-66 Transform project) as part of MDOT SHA's Managed Lanes project/Traffic Relief Plan. This funding commitment is needed to support both construction activities and to improve person throughput once the Managed Lanes are complete and operational.

8. Move State Highways recommendation #5 – MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) and MD 28 (Norbeck Road) Interchange to the bottom of the list as recommendation #9.

9. Provide a numerical ranking of all transportation priorities in one table to accompany the draft letter.

Additionally, given the anticipated completion of the Watkins Mill interchange in 2021, Commissioner Patterson suggested placing a higher priority on the State Highways recommendation for improvements to MD 117 (Clopper Road).

Commissioner Cichy suggested adding a recommendation for the addition of a 3rd track on the Brunswick Line to the Commuter Rail Expansion recommendations on page 2 and 3, as well as a short-term option to consider the use of layover track sidings.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments on the County Priorities Letter and look forward to working with you and your staff. If you have any questions about the comments, please call Stephen Aldrich at 301-495-4528, or feel free to call me at 301-495-4605.

Sincerely,

Casey Anderson
Chair

CA:SA:aj

Attachments:
Staff report 2020 County Priorities Letter Review – Planning Board item 2 December 5, 2019
Presentation – 2020 County Priorities Letter Review

cc: Gwen Wright, Director, Montgomery Planning
Tanya Stern, Deputy Director, Montgomery Planning
Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director, Montgomery Planning

MCPB
Item No. 2
Date: 12/05/19

2020 Montgomery County Transportation Priorities Letter Review – Briefing from MCDOT

SA Steve Aldrich, Transportation Master Planner, FP&P, stephen.aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4528

JS Jason Sartori, Chief, FP&P, jason.sartori@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-2172

Completed: 11/26/19

Requested Board Action

Forward a list of comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation for consideration by the County Council and County Executive for inclusion in the 2020 Montgomery County Transportation Priorities Letter.

Background

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has prepared a draft letter for County Council and County Executive concurrence and execution. MCDOT is requesting comments from the Montgomery County Planning Board by December 20, 2019 to inform this process. The letter is expected by the Maryland Department of Transportation in April 2020. The draft letter is provided as Attachment A in this staff report. The letter has been formatted to address transportation priorities by mode, and the letter appears to be presented in priority order with Bus Rapid Transit and other transit needs discussed first, followed by pedestrian and bicycle needs, state highway (non-Interstate) needs, and finally Interstate needs.

Staff Evaluation/Recommendations

Planning staff is in general concurrence with the project priorities of the draft letter. It should be noted that most other Maryland Counties follow a different format providing priorities in numerical order. While the transportation needs of this County are more complex than most other Maryland counties, the lack of a priority ranking may make it difficult for MDOT to understand County priorities in the separate categories on a comparative basis, e.g., transit project #3 versus bike/ped project #1 or road project #1.

Staff Recommendations are as follows:

- Add a new Commuter Rail Expansion recommendation on page 3 as follows:

  #4 Shady Grove Station (Planning). The Shady Grove Sector Plan calls for the integration of new MARC stations into the MARC Rail network. We request that MTA advance study of the station.

- Insert a new State Highways recommendation on page 4 as follows:

  #3 16th Street (MD 390) Road Diet between Spring Street and MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) – Implement a road diet on 16th Street between Spring Street and MD 97 to provide two through lanes in each direction (one lane reduction in each direction), consistent with the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan and the Forest Glen Montgomery Hills Sector Plan.

- Separate the State Highways recommendation for the MD 28 and MD 198 corridors (they are currently one MDOT project), as we anticipate that implementation will be conducted in phases as separate projects.

- Table 1 below shows the State Highway Recommendations with recommendation #3 added as described above (shown in bold). In addition, planning staff is recommending changes in the priority order of several projects compared to MCDOT's ranking. The most significant changes are higher priorities from Planning for the MD 198 improvements and a lower priority from Planning for the US 29 Comprehensive Plan and the MD 97/ MD 28 interchange.

Table 1 State Highway Project Needs – Recommended Changes

State Highways Project Needs	MCDOT Rank	Planning Staff Rank
MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Improvements	1	1
MD 355 (Frederick Road) Improvements from MD 27 to Stringtown Road	2	2
16th Street (MD 390) Road Diet between Spring Street and MD 97 (Georgia Avenue)	-	**3**
Accelerated Traffic Signal Modernization	3	4↓
MD 117 (Clopper Road) Improvements	4	5↓
MD 198 Improvements - Burtonsville from Old Columbia Pike to US Route 29	7	6↑
MD 28 Improvements (Norbeck Road) from MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) to MD 200	7	7
US 29 Comprehensive Plan	6	8↓
MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) and MD 28 (Norbeck Road) Interchange	5	9↓

Note: Bold text denotes new recommended project. Arrows denote change in recommendation compared to MCDOT ranking.

- Provide a numerical ranking of all transportation priorities in one table to accompany this draft letter.

Attachments

A. Draft 2020 Montgomery County Transportation Priorities Letter

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Christopher R. Conklin
Director

February 25, 2020

Mr. Sidney Katz, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Katz:

Each year, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) compiles a Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP) that outlines the State's capital investment program. The projects included in the CTP are determined by MDOT based on their assessment of project priorities. A component of their analysis is letters provided by Counties and other jurisdictions that outline local priorities. Montgomery County last updated its priorities in 2017. Since that time, numerous factors have changed including the initiation of construction of the Purple Line and the US 29 Flash. Additionally, Vision Zero has been adopted by the County and MDOT has advanced a Traffic Relief Plan for I-270 and I-495. These significant changes, coupled with change of County Executive and Council indicate that it is time to update the County Priorities Letter.

On behalf of County Executive Elrich, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation began work on a new priorities letter in the fall of 2019. A preliminary draft was developed and refined to reflect the priorities of the Executive Branch, including MCDOT. This draft was provided to the County's State Delegation for review and comment and was provided to the Montgomery County Planning Board. In December 2019, the Planning Board was provided with a briefing and held a work session to discuss the preliminary letter. Additionally, several suggestions were received from members of our State delegation.

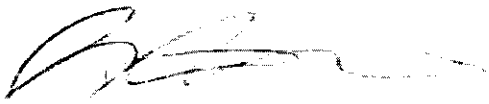
It is now time for the County Council to review the preliminary draft, with the benefit of the comments from the Planning Board and our Delegation. Once the Council has reviewed the letter and provided its suggestions, MCDOT will develop a new letter that is informed by the collective input, ultimately leading to a final version signed by both the Executive and Council President. To assist with the Council's review, the following items are included with this letter:

- The November 18, 2019 draft of the Priorities Letter circulated to the State Delegation and the Planning Board
- A matrix summarizing the comments received and the Department's recommendation regarding the comments
- The Planning Board's Comment Letter on the November 18, 2019 draft;
- The 2017 Priorities Letter now on file with MDOT; and
- MDOT's schedule for developing the CTP
- Transmittal memorandum to the State Delegation.

In addition to these specific suggestions, references to the I-270/I-495 Traffic Relief Plan/Managed Lanes Study project need to be updated to reflect the current status of these State projects as the letter is readied for signature.

MCDOT looks forward to working with you and your colleagues on the County Council to complete review of the letter. As indicated in the chart summarizing the MDOT CTP process, they are seeking our updated letter by April 2020 to inform the subsequent CTP. If you have any preliminary questions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Christopher Conklin, P.E., Director
Montgomery County Department of Transportation

November 18, 2019 Draft Priorities Letter Comments

State Delegation Comments

	Commenter	Comment	Department Recommendation
1	Del Carr	Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Improvements on State Highways. Add language asking MD SHA to accelerate retrofitting existing sidewalks along state highways to meet ADA requirements. MD SHA has fallen behind on this obligation which has contributed to pedestrian deaths in Montgomery County	Concur with adding this specific need to the Pedestrian Safety section.
2	Del Carr	Accelerated Traffic Signal Modernization, suggest tweaking the language to encourage MD SHA to *better prioritize* its traffic signal modernization.	Suggest retaining "accelerate" language and add "better prioritize"
3	Del Korman	Strengthen language about State obligation to engage in the MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) BRT planning	Concur with recommendation. This is a multijurisdictional state/interstate corridor
4	Del Korman	Mention State adoption of Vision Zero	Concur with recommendation.
5	Del Korman	Clarify/Separate MD28/198	Concur with recommendation.
6	Del P. Carr	Concur with letter	
7	Del Reznik	Need to clarify need for expanded commuter rail service either through CSX negotiations or third track implementation	Concur with comment
8	Del Reznik	Clopper Road improvements need to address congestion at Game Preserve Road and Waring Station Road	The focus of this project has been south of Watkins Mill Road due to the environmental resources bordering the northern segment. Recommend leaving the current language.
9	Sen Zucker Del Kaiser Del Luedtke Del Queen	Recommend moving MD 198 improvements from #7 to #3	Suggest moving ahead of MD97/MD 28 intersection (currently #5). There is an ongoing study effort and it may be more likely that MDOT advancing this project.

November 18, 2019 Draft Priorities Letter Comments

Planning Board Comments

	Commenter	Comment	Department Recommendation
1	Planning Board	Identify and prioritize all Vision Zero projects on State Highway Corridors (highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian) including projects with Vision Zero components.	Vision Zero is an overarching issue reflected throughout the various project categories within the letter. Vision Zero projects are relevant to most State and many County corridors. To emphasize the pressing need for Vision Zero coordination and implementation, we recommend a new primary heading on Page 1 "Vision Zero" that describes this priority and the need for state engagement and a significant commitment of funding. This section will reference particular projects where Vision Zero is a major factor.
2	Planning Board	Identify the need for a dedicated funding source for Vision Zero projects.	Incorporate into "Vision Zero" section described above, emphasizing the need for State investment in pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements.
3	Planning Board	Add Shady Grove Station (Planning) as a new Commuter Rail Expansion recommendation (#4).	Commuter rail connectivity at Shady Grove Station would represent a significant enhancement in multimodal connectivity, likely surpassing that of other potential stations. Understanding the physical and operational opportunities and constraints would be valuable. Suggest adding this as Priority 3 in this section.
4	Planning Board	Add MD 390 (16th Street) Road Diet between Spring Street and MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) as a new State Highways recommendation (#3).	Do not recommending addition of this project at this time. It is a relatively new master plan recommendation. This project is could be a candidate for a Facility Planning feasibility and concept study, which would guide its future prioritization. MCDOT is currently proposing to add sidewalks in this area as part of the Purple Line BiPPA project
5	Planning Board	Separate the 28/198 State Highways Recommendation for MD 198 as #6 and MD 28 as #7	Concur with this recommendation.
6	Planning Board	Request SHA consideration of removal of some planned interchanges, in particular the Musgrove Interchange) from the CTP as part of the US 29 Comprehensive Plan project (#6)	Concur. The intention of this priority is for a re-evaluation of past recommendations to instead maximize investments that improve functionality of BRT and benefit corridor operations as a whole.

November 18, 2019 Draft Priorities Letter Comments

Planning Board Comments (Continued)

7	Planning Board	Request a commitment for dedicated transit funding from the Managed Lanes/Traffic Relief Project.	With the recent Board of Public Works decision making this outcome more likely, suggest adding this to the introductory language of the letter and reinforcing it in the Interstate Program Section
8	Planning Board	Move the MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) and MD 28 (Norbeck Road) interchange from #5 to the bottom of the list	This interchange has been sought by stakeholders in this area for many years. Although its implementation is not highly likely, it should not be last in the list. Recommend placing it ahead of the Laytonsville Bypass
9	Planning Board	Provide a numerical ranking of all projects in one table to accompany the letter.	Do not recommend. The intended purpose of the funding categories is to allow flexibility to respond to changing state priorities and funding availability. A strictly-prioritized list may limit chances of state support for some projects.
10	Planning Commissioner Patterson	Place a higher priority on improvements to MD 117 (Clopper Road) given the pending opening of the Watkins Mill Interchange	Agree that this is a high priority project and has been submitted as a Chapter 30 application. However, recommend that its position in the list be retained.
11	Planning Commissioner Cichy	Add a recommendation for the 3rd track of the Brunswick Line and consideration of the addition of sidings	Recommend adding this language to the Midday and Offpeak service as these are the major limiting factor for implementing expanded service.

Orlin, Glenn

From: Dan Wilhelm <djwilhelm@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2020 3:40 PM
To: Hucker's Office, Councilmember; Glass's Office, Councilmember; Riemer's Office, Councilmember
Cc: Orlin, Glenn
Subject: State Priorities

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Greater Colesville Citizens Association
PO Box 4087
March 9, 2020

Council T&E Committee
Attn Tom Hucker, Chair
100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: State Transportation Priorities Letter

Dear T&E Committee Members

The Greater Colesville Citizens Association supports the draft letter to the State on Transportation priorities in general, but recommends some adjustments as follows:

BRT Implementation: The implementation of a quality BRT is key to addressing road congestion, addressing global warming, and encouraging economic development. We heard decades ago that the shoulders of US29 were not built for heavy vehicle travel, especially the weight of buses. Whether or not that is correct, SHA needs to give priority to maintaining them for use by the BRT vehicles.

We agree that SHA needs to work closely with and support MCDOT efforts for providing dedicated BRT lanes on US29 from Tech Road to Silver Spring Metro and in the design and implementation of other BRT corridors. Recall that the three BRT corridors in eastern Montgomery County (US29, New Hampshire and Randolph) are key to economic development at FDA and Viva White Oak.

State Highways: We agree with District 14 representatives that the priority for MD 198 should be moved from #7 to #3 and with the Planning Board that the MD 28 priority be separated and be built after the MD 97/MD 28 Interchange.

We also support the Planning Board recommendation to remove the interchanges on US29 from the Comprehensive Plan, especially at Fairland Rd. These four interchanges are very expensive and the funds can be better used for other projects in the Priority Letter. Also, the better solution for addressing congestion in this area is the implementation of all three BRT corridors and improved Ride On and Metro Bus service to provide feeder routes to BRT stations.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely

Daniel L. Wilhelm
GCCA President

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Robert Nelson's Testimony to the Montgomery County Council Transportation and Environment Committee at the Public Hearing on the State Transportation Priorities Discussion
March 9, 2020

I'm Robert Nelson, resident of Goshen and former Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board. A few years ago the state implemented the first phase of critically needed improvements on MD-124, Woodfield Road. The other phases were deferred and although MD-124 was included in previous state transportation priority letters, MD-124 does not appear in the current proposed draft. The needed improvements are between the Mid-County Highway and Snouffer School Road (which has recently undergone an extensive expansion project) and between Fieldcrest Road and Warfield Road. As you can see in the official documents attached with my testimony, there is significant congestion along this route during the morning and evening commuting periods. I'm not a traffic engineer, but it is obvious to me that a major factor contributing to the congestion is that along the two-lane road there are no turn lanes at either Warfield Road or East Village Avenue. Commuters as well as Ride-On buses daily experience the frustration of backed-up traffic. When such simple solutions as adding turning lanes would make such a significant positive improvement, why wouldn't we want MD-124 included in the transportation priority list? Further north near Brink Road there is a very sharp curve and a crumbling bridge that urgently need attention. Morning traffic congestion along MD-124 can back up from Brink Road all the way back to the street where my home is located, a distance of over one mile!

In the draft letter, there is already some discussion of the impact of the opening of the I-270 Watkins Mill Road Interchange. But it addresses only the west side of I-270. There should also be discussion of the impact of the new interchange on Watkins Mill Road as it enters Montgomery Village. One of the Montgomery Planning Board members told me that unless the Mid-County Highway is completed, Watkins Mill Road will become the defacto "Eastern Arterial." Do we want all this traffic passing four schools? The Western Arterial is state route 119. Why don't we request state funding to complete the Eastern Arterial? Where MD-124 intersects Montgomery Village Avenue, there are three left-turn lanes. With additional development in Montgomery Village bringing hundreds more homes to the town center and onto the former gold course, major traffic relief is critical and it's morally right to respect Master Plans and complete M-83 on the master plan route.

Statement on Montgomery County MDOT Priorities

I oppose widening of 495 and 270 for the following reasons.

- The major reason is the increased traffic will result in much greater air pollution
- Secondary roads that feed into these highways will be much more congested
- Much parkland will be destroyed such as Rock Creek Park and Sligo Creek Golf Course
- A number of homes will be destroyed and many will lose their backyards or portions of it.
- Blair High and Holy Cross Hospital will lose valuable property

The only exception regarding widening is as follows:

- Widening of the American Legion Bridge
- The 495 spur
- 270 between 370 and Frederick

Instead, I support a broad array of transit solutions, which are much better for the environment. These solutions include:

- Increased use of MARC
- Increased use of our current bus system
- Building the Corridor Cities Transitway
- Maximizing the use of a network of many Bus Rapid Transit lines
- Examining the pros and cons of Monorail

These transit solutions are:

- More cost-effective
- Much better for the environment
- Allow riders to do alternate activities rather than driving, such as reading

Tony Hausner

Thausner@gmail.com

Statement from DontWiden270.org
Submitted in Place of Testimony Intended for the March 9, 2020,
Montgomery County MDOT Transportation Priorities Meeting

Janet Gallant, Co-Coordinator
664 Azalea Drive
Rockville, MD 20850
jmbgallant@gmail.com
301-775-3377

DontWiden270.org is a boots-on-the-ground organization with over 1,000 members. We strongly advocate for congestion relief all along the I-270 corridor. We are in favor of fair, effective, multi-modal transportation, supported by evidence that it will actually work. That latter part, "**supported by evidence that it will actually work**" is critical to our organization.

The leaders of our group met with Comptroller Peter Franchot in Rockville Mayor Bridget Newton's office just a month before the Board of Public Works meeting in January of this year. We urged the Comptroller not to greenlight the Governor's I-270/I-495 toll lane plan without first seeing proof that the project would work and that taxpayers would not be at financial risk.

We wanted the Comptroller to demand and analyze the same data repeatedly sought – without success – by State Treasurer Nancy Kopp, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, state legislators, and others.

The data were never disclosed; the Governor's project received the go-ahead anyway. At this moment, the Governor's project is advancing behind closed doors. The key financials, including the all-important data on projected tolls, remain hidden away.

Throughout 2019, our organization conducted in-person outreach in key communities along the upper I-270 corridor, from Germantown to Frederick. What we heard again and again was frustration and anger that the promised "congestion relief" consisted of unaffordable tolls and continuing congestion in non-tolled lanes.

The people we spoke to believed that one way or another, we were all going to pay for the Governor's $11 billion plan: through tolls, through deals negotiated outside of tax-payers' view, through bailing out the builder. The State's continuing lack of transparency and responsiveness only reinforces that conclusion.

We ask that Montgomery County **not take a position** on the Governor's toll lane proposal until MDOT releases for public and expert analysis its key inputs, assumptions and projections, and proof that the project will actually work as they claim.

TAME

Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended

Testimony of Diane Cameron
For the TAME Coalition
Monday, March 9, 2020

Montgomery County Council
Transportation & Environment Committee
State Transportation Priorities Discussion

The Transit Alternatives to the Mid-County Highway Extended (TAME Coalition) is committed to meeting transportation needs in the Upcounty in a way that is people-centric and climate-sane, and this work must start with canceling the M-83 highway. We ask the Council, County Executive, and Planning Board Chair to remove the M-83 highway from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways. With a price-tag of $1.2 billion, M-83 highway would be a huge step backwards for climate and transportation justice. The M-83 highway would remove crucial floodplain forests, and divert resources away from rapid build-out of our Bus Rapid Transit network and other needed Upcounty transit projects.

By canceling the M-83 highway, you will free up resources to focus like a laser on people-centric transportation, with highest priority on transit projects and pedestrian safety. TAME asks you to give the Bus Rapid Transit network for our County – including BRT on Route 355 - the highest funding priority, in your request to the Maryland Department of Transportation (M-DOT).

The prior biannual request letter from the County to M-DOT, did not give the highest priority to transit projects. Instead, it focused on highway improvements for I-270 and I-495. With Governor Hogan's highway expansion plan dominating transportation funding in our region, highways are slated for the biggest investments, while transit budgets are relegated to the crumbs. This is unacceptable.

In your 2020 request to M-DOT for our County's transportation priorities, TAME asks that you make transit- and BRT within it – the highest priority for state funds. The County's planned BRT network includes BRT on Route 29; Viers Mill Road; and Route 355. Of these three BRT projects, the highest projected ridership is on the 355 corridor. Based on the most recent government estimates, the cost of the BRT-355 project is estimated at $475 million. Along with BRT on 29 and Viers Mill Road, our total BRT network demands a serious investment - one that will require heavy reliance on state and federal funds to add to Montgomery's own funds.

Transit and other people-centric, not car-centric, transportation projects are integral to meeting our climate justice commitments. Transit and pedestrian-safe streets – not more highways - are what we need to meet our Emergency Climate Resolution commitment of zero carbon emissions in 2035. Fully-funded transit and safe, walkable streets are integral to the County's new Racial Equity and Social Justice Policy.

While some elected officials are looking to the Governor's highway expansion plan, and the "ten percent from toll revenues" as the supposed cash-cow for Montgomery's transit projects, TAME sees this as unwise. From a climate justice lens, this approach amounts to building more fossil fuel infrastructure today – in the hopes that it

will provide partial funding for transit in the future. We can't predict what the toll revenue will actually be, so this source of transit funds is uncertain at best. We can predict that it will fall short of our transit needs in total amount, and in the delayed receipt of such funds. Full funding for county transit projects is needed now, not ten or twenty years from now.

As Dan Albert wrote in **Ride** by Kelley's Blue Book last month: "We may look back and wonder why, in 2020, anyone thought it was a good idea to add even one more mile of road to serve the automobile. Magical though they may be, the toll lanes can never be made to disappear. Once they are built, we will be living with them for generations."

Toll lanes are not magical, nor is any highway a "magic fix" that will solve our transportation problems. In fact, highway projects are long-term liabilities. Regardless of whether they are privately- or publicly-financed, highways always require an enormous public subsidy, including land dedication and environmental damage mitigations that rob transit projects of funding, planning and engineering staff time, and other resources.

Highways are part of fossil fuel infrastructure. Even with increased use of electric vehicles fueled with clean energy, it will be decades before all the fossil-fuel-burning vehicles are gone from the highways.

Highways are unsafe, with close to 500 pedestrian crashes in Montgomery County in 2019, and 13 pedestrian deaths. We attended a memorial service yesterday for a pedestrian killed on the MidCounty Highway in February.

By canceling the M-83 highway through removing it from the Master Plan of Highways, and by giving transit and pedestrian safety the highest priority for state and federal funding, you will demonstrate your commitment to climate justice.

Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring MD 20907 | admin@actfortransit.org

Testimony on State Transportation Priorities - Submitted to the Montgomery County Council Transportation & Environment Committee

The Action Committee for Transit (ACT) strongly encourages the Montgomery County Council to prioritize transit projects, particularly improvements to the MARC system, in its upcoming letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) regarding the Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP).

Montgomery County residents depend on access to public transportation for their day-to-day lives. According to Census data from 2017, over 15% of Montgomery County residents depend on public transit for their daily commute. On the 2017 Resident Satisfaction Survey, 39% of residents reported using public transportation rather than driving at least twice a month.[1] Congestion on our roads and environmental concerns will only drive these numbers higher in the future, provided Montgomery County and the State of Maryland continue to invest in our transit infrastructure.

While public transportation is essential to the economic and environmental health of Montgomery County, ACT believes that the 2017 Priorities Letter the Montgomery County Council sent to MDOT did not sufficiently emphasize transit projects, particularly improvements to the MARC system. While we agree that providing "more midday and off-peak trains will increase the value MARC service provides to Montgomery County[2]," the letter did not request that MDOT prioritize an additional third track in the Barnesville Hill area of the Brunswick Line. Such an addition would significantly increase the capacity of the MARC system and help move the system toward the goal of all-day, two-way MARC service, a major boon to Montgomery County businesses and commuters.

We have local evidence that this kind of service improvement can significantly boost ridership. In December 2018, WMATA ended the Grosvenor turnback on Metro's Red Line. Over six months, this resulted in an overall 4% increase in ridership, with some stations like Twinbrook experiencing an 8% increase in ridership.[3] Transit service improvements, like the addition of a third-track on the MARC Brunswick line, drive ridership. This type of infrastructure investment would significantly improve the ability of Montgomery County residents to move around the

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[1] Summary information available from CountyStat, "Easier Commutes."

[2] Montgomery County MDOT Consolidated Transportation Program Priorities Letter, 2017.

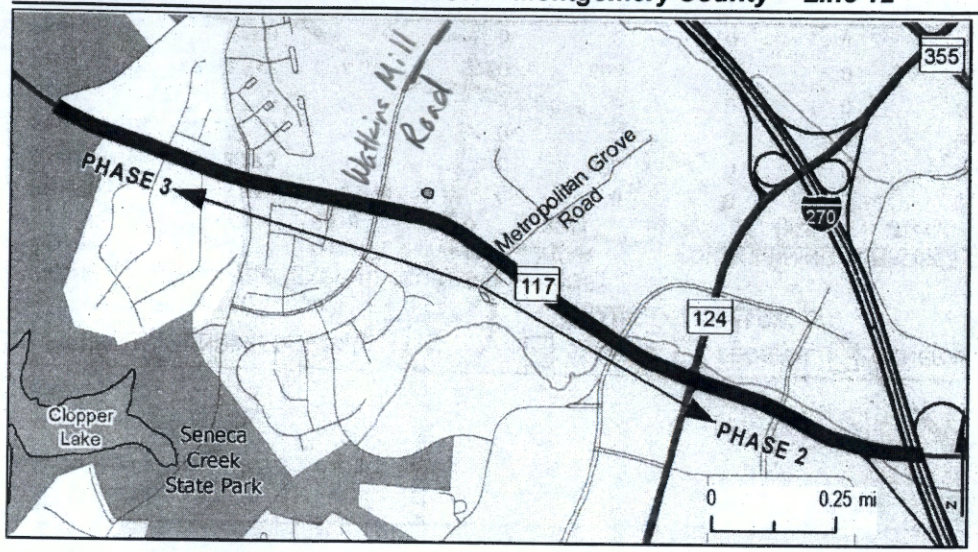
[3] Metro Safety and Operations Committee, "Affirmation of Red Line Peak Period Service", July 25, 2019. See pages 4-5.

county.

Additionally, ACT encourages the Montgomery County Council to prioritize transit projects in general. The 2017 letter saw highway and road projects given pride-of-place above transit priorities like Metro and MARC. Our county cannot pave its way out of traffic and congestion. We must increase both transit and highway capacity in a balanced manner, but that balance must give at least equal priority to transit projects and improvements that will do more to improve congestion and commutes than any highway widening.

Finally, ACT believes it is premature for the Council to take a position on the Governor's toll lane proposal, prior to receipt of the Traffic and Revenue Model and other information requested by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). In the past, the County has supported research on a variety of methods to reduce congestion along this corridor, and the County should continue this dialogue once the public is properly informed.

Our community depends on public transit. Every day, tens of thousands of Montgomery County residents use public transportation options, like MARC, to commute to their jobs, to get home to their families, even just to go shopping or eat at a restaurant. We must ensure that our public transportation receives at least as much attention as our highways. Prioritizing MARC improvements and expanding MARC capacity will improve the safety, economic opportunity, and quality of life for all Montgomery County residents.



PROJECT: MD 117, Clopper Road/Diamond Avenue

DESCRIPTION: Construct intersection capacity improvements from I-270 to Metropolitan Grove Road (Phase 2) and Metropolitan Grove Road to west of Game Preserve Road (Phase 3) (2.0 miles). Sidewalks will be included where appropriate, including a shared-use path. Wide curb lanes will accommodate bicycles.

JUSTIFICATION: MD 117 is a heavily traveled commuter route. Capacity improvements are needed to reduce congestion associated with planned and approved development in Germantown that will exceed the current capacity of the roadway.

SMART GROWTH STATUS: ☐ Project Not Location Specific ☐ Not Subject to PFA Law

- [X] Project Inside PFA
- [ ] Project Outside PFA
- [ ] PFA Status Yet To Be Determined

- [ ] Grandfathered
- [ ] Exception Will Be Required
- [ ] Exception Granted

ASSOCIATED IMPROVEMENTS:
I-270, Interchange Construction at Watkins Mill Road (Line 1)
I-270, Innovative Congestion Management (Line 2)
Traffic Relief Plan (Statewide - Line 5)

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STATUS: Project on hold.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGE FROM FY 2019 - 24 CTP: None.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE: [X] SPECIAL [X] FEDERAL [ ] GENERAL [ ] OTHER

PROJECT CASH FLOW

PHASE	TOTAL ESTIMATED COST ($000)	EXPEND THRU 2019	CURRENT YEAR 2020	BUDGET YEAR 2021	FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY ....2022....	....2023....	....2024....	....2025....	SIX YEAR TOTAL	BALANCE TO COMPLETE
Planning	1,030	1,030	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	1,909	1,909	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Right-of-way	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2,939	2,939	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal-Aid	546	546	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CLASSIFICATION:
STATE - Major Collector
FEDERAL - Minor Arterial
STATE SYSTEM : Secondary

Annual Average Daily Traffic (vehicles per day)
CURRENT (2019) - 30,700 - 51,500

PROJECTED (2040) - 38,000 - 53,800