



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Marc Elrich
County Executive

October 23, 2019

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

RE: Clarification of the County Position on the MDOT/SHA I-495/I-270 Managed Lanes Study

Dear Secretary Rahn:

In July, the County Executive wrote to Chairman Nohe of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments requesting inclusion of a new alternative for the I-495/I-270 Managed Lanes Study in the Visualize 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Air Quality Conformity Analysis. At that time, MDOT/SHA agreed to consider a similar alternative, calling it the Maryland 200 Diversion Alternative, and we appreciate your team's decision to add this alternative to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. Since that time, members of the community have approached County officials expressing concern that the County no longer supports reversible lanes on I-270 and that the County has endorsed an alternative for the MDOT/SHA Managed Lanes project. We want to be clear that this is not the case.

While we believe that the Maryland 200 Diversion Alternative is worthy of study, we have not endorsed any alternative for this project and remain concerned about the potential impacts of all of the project alternatives still under consideration. In particular, we maintain that the MDOT/SHA NEPA study dismissed the transit and transportation systems management (TSM) alternatives without adequate consideration of how these approaches could meet the transportation needs of the study area. Additionally, the alternative the County provided to the TPB includes several transit, transportation demand management (TDM), and TSM measures that complement the highway elements included in the MDOT/SHA Maryland 200 Diversion alternative. We believe these are essential elements of any congestion relief plan.

For I-270 specifically, the MDOT/SHA Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS) include reversible lanes (Alternatives 13B and 13C) and we support continued evaluation of reversible lanes for all of I-270 since this configuration should have a smaller environmental footprint compared to other ARDS. I have attached a revised map for your reference clarifying a preference for reversible lanes. While the preliminary MDOT/SHA analysis shows that a more efficient configuration of I-270 is possible within the limits of the existing highway, we remain very concerned about expansion of I-270 as planning and design progresses. Much like along I-495 where the County has clearly-stated concerns about impacts to communities and parkland, homes in many neighborhoods along I-270 are very close the highway and we do not support further expansion of the highway toward neighborhoods and sensitive resources.

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We would appreciate an update on your plan to communicate with affected communities while the NEPA Study advances. Many community members have indicated that they do not feel engaged in the study process and have expressed a great deal of uncertainty and fear regarding MDOT's plans for this project.

Additionally, we reiterate that transit needs to be part of the solution for meeting the transportation needs of the I-270 corridor. Your decision to eliminate the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) from the draft FY 2020 – 2025 Consolidated Transportation Program is troubling to us as it seems counter to the transportation strategy envisioned for this corridor for the last two decades and undercuts the potential for economic growth of the life-sciences sector in Maryland. We ask that you reconsider this decision and commit to developing multimodal solutions to meet travel needs along the I-270 corridor that include the CCT, MARC Rail, Bus Rapid Transit on Maryland 355 and other transit projects.

Sincerely,

Marc Elrich, County Executive



Sidney Katz, Council Vice President



Evan Glass, Councilmember



Will Jawando, Councilmember



Hans Riemer, Councilmember



Nancy Navarro, Council President



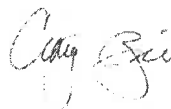
Gabe Albornoz, Councilmember



Tom Hucker, Councilmember










Craig Rice, Councilmember



c: Greg Slater, MDOT SHA Administrator
Kevin Quinn, MDOT MTA Administrator

Regional Transportation Improvement Plan

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

-  New Managed Lanes
-  Reversible Managed Lanes Preferred
-  Existing Variable-Priced Lanes
-  Local-Serving Transit
-  Active Traffic Mgt & Spot Improvements
-  MARC Improvements
-  Park & Ride Improvements
-  Added Activity Center Connections
-  VDOT I 495 Existing Express Toll Lanes
-  VDOT I 495 Untolled Lanes

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

PARK & RIDE IMPROVEMENTS

- Frederick
- Urbana
- Clarksburg
- Germantown
- Boys MARC
- Germantown MARC
- Metro. Grove MARC
- Rockville Metro
- Westfield
- Rock Spring
- Forest Glen
- White Oak
- Burtonsville
- Briggs Chaney
- Tech Road
- I-95 Terminus
- Konterra

LOCAL-SERVING TRANSIT*

- US 29 Flash
 - MD 355 BRT
 - Corridor Cities Transitway
 - Veirs Mill BRT
 - North Bethesda Transitway
 - New Hampshire Ave BRT
 - University Blvd BRT
 - Randolph Road BRT
 - National Harbor Metro Connection
- *example projects

