

Attachment 1: Summary of Public Comments

Issues	Testimony or Comments	Staff Response
Expansion of MARC Rail	<p>Coordination with CSX may not be realistic as it has been a challenge for a long time.</p> <p><i>Steve Silverman</i></p>	<p>While enhancements to the MARC Rail Brunswick Line are not included in the Public Hearing Draft's proposed network, the Draft Plan recommends maintaining the existing service and supports the long-term potential of the MARC Rail Brunswick Line. The Draft Plan includes two recommendations and associated actions to support the long-term potential of the Brunswick Line, included on page 24 of the Public Hearing Draft.</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan's proposed network and supporting recommendations, including the role of MARC Rail during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
	<p>The state started work on a capital program for the Brunswick Line to position for federal funds and enhance frequencies, bi-directional service, and all day service over 20 years.</p> <p><i>Greater Washington Partnership</i></p>	
	<p>Expand MARC rail service to DC, including increased flexibility and bi-directional, daily service. It would support individuals who live in rural areas with access to urban areas. The expansion can start immediately, and it would be cheaper than a Red Line extension. Support for the Red Line and MARC should not be mutually exclusive.</p> <p><i>Separate comments received from Action Committee for Transit. Katharine Blackman, Noelle Angevine, Jay Choudhary, Sherry Dillon, Nicolas Kotschoubey, Steven Kraft, Shaima Nasiri, Jane Pontius, Steven Tise, Elizabeth Malone, Anne Sturm, Joshua Bokee, Daniel Marcin, Marty Brown, Patrick Fitzgerald, Robert Williamson, Melinda Salzman, John Fay, Marisa Van Saanan, Rodolfo Perez, Tina Slater</i></p>	
	<p>The recommendations on MARC stations do not have adequate supporting analysis. Need to address technical constraints and how this would impact low-ridership stations.</p> <p><i>Montgomery County Department of Transportation</i></p>	
	<p>We suggest that some form of MARC Brunswick Line improvements, like those in the Greater Washington Partnership's Capital Region Rail Vision, may offer a more cost-effective solution to the needs of the I-270 corridor than the Red Line extension.</p> <p><i>WMATA</i></p>	
	<p>The staff draft tries to fit transit into the status quo. Walkable downtowns of Fredrick, Hagerstown, and Brunswick are ignored. There is a low-cost opportunity to extend MARC to Hagerstown. MARC analysis is not accurate and assumes CSX remains opposed to change/cooperation.</p> <p><i>MD Transit Opportunities Coalition (Ben Ross)</i></p>	

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Red Line Extension	<p>The transportation needs of upcounty have largely been ignored despite population increases. The Red Line extension and BRT system would reduce VMT and provide an opportunity to bring people from around the region into Germantown.</p> <p><i>Separate comments received from Andrew Saundry and Erik Harron, and Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (Marilyn Balcombe)</i></p>	<p>The Draft Plan’s proposed network was developed through an iterative planning process, which evaluated transit options through a series of strategic, financial, economic and implementation performance metrics. The Draft Plan’s technical analysis suggests that the Red Line Extension offered the greatest opportunity to improve quality transit service for areas of the county with significant and growing population densities, increase regional transit trips, decrease vehicle miles traveled, connect people to jobs and potentially influencing growth patterns.</p> <p>The Draft Plan is direct in stating that the recommendation for a Red Line Extension is an ambitious, long-term recommendation, which has many challenges. These challenges are noted in the Draft Plan’s Executive Summary (page 7), Chapter 5 (page 42), and in Chapter 6 (page 49).</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s proposed network and supporting recommendations, including the recommended Red Line Extension during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
	<p>The Red Line extension is not adequately supported by the analysis and lacks the appropriate degree of feasibility study for inclusion as a primary recommendation of the Plan. The costs for the project exceed the benefits. If included in the Plan, recommend two changes – flexibility in alignments (e.g., consider Lakeforest) and a feasibility study as part of implementation.</p> <p><i>Separate comments received MCDOT, City of Gaithersburg, and Action Committee for Transit</i></p>	
	<p>MARC and BRT may be a more cost-effective solution; Plan acknowledges thresholds are not met and not close; annual operating subsidy increases must be capped, generally, at 3 percent; independent study required to understand impact of the proposal on capital assets and O&M; be more clear about OMF facility location challenges; please do something about BRT to solidify real estate opportunities at Shady Grove and Rockville; extension should be affordable in lifecycle; CSX coordination will be a challenge.</p> <p><i>WMATA</i></p>	
	<p>Metro Red Line expansion is neither reliable nor desirable.</p> <p><i>Robert Skip Williamson</i></p>	
Elimination of CIP Funding for New Travel Lanes	<p>The recommendation is not a viable option and seems misplaced. Strongly disagree with a blanket recommendation to eliminate existing capital improvement road projects.</p> <p><i>Separate comments received by MCDOT and Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (Marilyn Balcombe)</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s recommendations and actions to enhance transit’s competitiveness during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>

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Corridor Cities Transitway	<p>Dismayed to see that the master planned Corridor Cities Transitway is re-envisioned without a direct through line from Shady Grove, through the life science center, Gaithersburg, Germantown, and ultimately to Clarksburg. The transit line should move between residential hubs and commercial hubs all along the corridor, not necessarily a commuter connection from Point A to Point B. Eliminating the CCT also eliminates a critical north-south transit connection between Gaithersburg and Germantown.</p> <p><i>Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (Marilyn Balcombe)</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s proposed network and supporting recommendations, including the recommended Corridor Connectors during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
	<p>We are hesitant to endorse specific changes until we are fully confident that the alternatives proposed adequately serve the transit needs of the area. Specifically, we suggest that the newly proposed alignment along Gude Drive be reconsidered to be on Shady Grove Road or Redland Boulevard, both of which have more supportive transit land use. Additionally, the draft’s implementation plan needs to make clear that the responsibility for implementation of connectors such as the Great Seneca and Life Sciences should be a state responsibility as a continuation of work on the CCT.</p> <p><i>MCDOT</i></p>	
	<p>I am opposed the CCT. I don't see that the population in the Great Seneca Science Corridor will support a billion-dollar dedicated busway. The plan threatens this suburban lifestyle. The conversation about the CCT should be tabled entirely until we are healthy as a country; that means comfortable returning to public transit.</p> <p><i>Lisa Cline</i></p>	
Stormwater	<p>Projects that increase impervious surfaces must address stormwater management. There should be an increased emphasis on stormwater management solutions when considering changes to the I-270 corridor.</p> <p><i>Luxmanor Citizens Association (Sheri Steisel)</i></p>	<p>Comment received. Specific recommendations to address stormwater management are typically determined through subsequent design and engineering.</p>
Purple Line Extension	<p>Consider Purple Line expansion to Westbard. Keep Purple Line in mind. It has been the future and should remain in the Plan.</p> <p><i>Robert Lipsky</i></p>	<p>The Draft Plan includes the following recommendation: “Study extensions of the Purple Line to understand if and where extension(s) of the county’s light rail service may be warranted.” (Page 22)</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s recommendations and actions during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>

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Repurposing Lanes	<p>In the Plan's right-of-way tables on pages 40-41, it is unclear what is meant by the footnote "provision of transit lanes required" on these roadways. Required when? And why is this a requirement rather than a recommendation given that no traffic analysis or engineering has been done to verify a specific requirement on these corridors?</p> <p><i>MCDOT</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan's recommendations to enhance transit's competitiveness, including the recommendation to convert existing general -purpose travel lanes to dedicated transit lanes on targeted streets, during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
	<p>It's not too early to work with impacted communities to identify how to address auto capacity changes.</p> <p><i>Andrew Saundry</i></p>	
	<p>The BRT options included in the plan need to assume construction of designated travel lanes and not be conditional on repurposed lanes.</p> <p><i>Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (Marilyn Balcombe)</i></p>	
	<p>It should be noted, though, that BRT implementation, especially converting existing general-purpose lanes, could result in unintended consequences such as increased vehicular congestion and rerouting of vehicular trips via both regional routes such as I-270 and local routes and communities not intended to serve non-local tripmaking. Ultimately, the County, MDOT SHA where applicable, and other stakeholders will need to determine the appropriate balance.</p> <p><i>MDOT SHA</i></p>	
	<p>The report promises to "limit the addition of non-transit travel lanes" (p. 10) and recommends that the county "convert existing auto travel lanes to dedicated transit lanes" (p. 45). But a footnote on page 40 renders these words utterly meaningless: "Ultimate number of lanes and right-of-way width to be determined by traffic study." Allowing a "traffic study" to determine the size and design of a city street -- let alone a transitway-- is the negation of sound planning.</p> <p><i>Action Committee for Transit</i></p>	
Transit Hub at MD 124 and I-270	<p>We suggest language be added to clarify that this recommendation is contingent on feasibility studies for the Red Line extension feasibility.</p> <p><i>MCDOT</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan's recommendations and actions, including the recommended multimodal transit hub, during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>

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Dedicated Bus Lanes along Great Seneca Highway	<p>Buses are lightly used on Great Seneca Highway. Why add dedicated bus lanes if buses are used by few riders? Employers already have shuttles, so what would workers want to use buses. It would not be a wise decision to add bus lanes on Great Seneca Highway in Gaithersburg</p> <p><i>Suzanne Leonard</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s roadway and transitway recommendations during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
Right-of-Way Dimensions	<p>Right-of-way widths are much too large for transit-oriented development. No recommendation to reduce design speeds. Proposed roadways do not attract riders. Reconsider the need to have walkability around the stops.</p> <p><i>Separate comments received from MD Transit Opportunities Coalition (Ben Ross) and Action Committee for Transit</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s roadway and transitway recommendations during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
I-270 Outside of Montgomery County	<p>Narrowed down regional scope. What is the problem trying to be solved? Broaden the scope and consider how do we get cars off the road north of Montgomery County. Red Line Extension may not have regional support because it is geographically limited to Montgomery County.</p> <p><i>Separate comments received by Shoshanna Staffone, Steve Silverman, MD Transit Opportunities Coalition (Ben Ross)</i></p>	<p>While the Draft Plan’s proposed network is focused within Montgomery County, the Draft Plan includes recommendations to strengthen the potential to advance regional transit connectivity. Planning staff note the jurisdictional limits of Montgomery County’s planning authority.</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s recommendations, including the travel demand along the I-270 corridor, during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
	<p>Many employees of metro businesses and agencies travel from Washington County, and other points west, daily into both Baltimore and Washington, clogging highways. These highways cannot continue to be widened as a solution to traffic from a land use and air pollution perspective. The option of MARC service would further reduce carbon emissions and provide your solution with a wider audience from elsewhere in the state.</p> <p><i>Linda Irvin-Craig</i></p>	
Monorail	<p>No reason to exclude this option. The analysis shows that it has value. If the goal initially was to try to figure out how to reduce congestion up north (of county) this option should not be excluded. Removing costs associated with land makes projects more feasible (see Purple Line as an example). Consider elevated mode with smaller footprint with lower construction costs, less time, and lower risks. MDOT study concluded monorail is viable. Comparison with light rail shows monorail advantages.</p> <p><i>Separate comments received from Steve Silverman and High Road Foundation (Bob Eisinger)</i></p>	<p>The Draft Plan includes the following recommendation: “Explore a direct transit connection between the WMATA Red Line Terminus and Frederick County.” (Page 25)</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s recommendations and actions during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>

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Land Use	<p>Transit investments will be successful if they are paired with changes to land use and development regulations. Specifically, upzoning around new and planned transit stations is needed, as well as removing parking requirements in those areas. Abolishing historic zones around MARC would permit more housing to be built. Need walkable urbanism.</p> <p><i>Erik Harron</i></p>	<p>While the Draft Plan is a Functional Master Plan that is focused on transit, the Draft Plan includes recommendations to support transit access and connectivity. The Draft Plan includes a recommendation to “update relevant land use plans and guidelines to support master planned transit facilities,” as well as several actions. (Page 44)</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s recommendations and actions during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
	<p>The ridership model assumed that future jobs and population in the downcounty downtowns of Silver Spring, Rockville, and Bethesda are constrained by current zoning. This is not a reasonable assumption for a study that predicts 2045 ridership, let alone for infrastructure upgrades that will shape land use for a half-century and more.</p> <p><i>Action Committee for Transit</i></p>	
Additional and Transit Services	<p>Additional information and priority should be provided regarding the Great Seneca Transit Network and North Bethesda Transitway as these are active projects. More information should be included related to bus service on I-270 in the Managed Lanes, and the Plan should evaluate how best to use those lanes.</p> <p><i>MCDOT</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s recommendations and actions, including currently master-planned and advancing projects, during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
	<p>The Plan has not taken into account the role of RideOn Reimagined, the MDOT 50-Year Statewide Transit Plan</p> <p><i>City of Gaithersburg</i></p>	
Germantown/ Clarksburg Dedicated Lanes	<p>Each branch of a line can directly affect the bus frequency along the trunk of that line, and the MD355 BRT project to date has not considered buses accessing the trunk line from feeder locations.</p> <p><i>MCDOT</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s proposed network and supporting recommendations, including the recommended Corridor Connectors during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
Jurisdictions	<p>Many of the recommendations go through or disproportionately impact the City of Gaithersburg. The Plan does not take into account comprehensive plans for Rockville and Gaithersburg. The Plan often reads as if the context of and impacts to the City are of secondary importance to the Plan’s goals for the unincorporated areas.</p> <p><i>City of Gaithersburg</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s proposed network and supporting recommendations, including the jurisdictions’ planning authority, during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>

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Messaging	<p>City Staff support many of the themes and aspirations goals expressed in the Plan. The concern is the muddled messaging presented. The Plan does not clarify in singular narrative sections the challenges, timing, and impacts of all its recommendations. The Plan itself is a difficult, disjointed read and should be organized to be more user friendly.</p> <p><i>City of Gaithersburg</i></p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
Project Costs	<p>Recommends responsible agencies develop a more in-depth understanding of how these plan recommendations affect fiscal constraint—what revenue is anticipated and what costs are anticipated—within the more general scope of funding availability over future years and TPB Visualize 2045.</p> <p><i>MDOT SHA</i></p>	<p>As discussed in the Draft Plan’s Appendix 3, Corridor Forward employs a benchmarking approach in its cost analysis, using national and local data to inform planning-level cost estimates used for the purposes of comparison, and represent ballpark figures to allow relative comparison. It is atypical for master and functional plans to delve into the level of financial detail included for Corridor Forward, and staff concurs that additional cost analysis will be necessary in subsequent phases of planning and design.</p>
Role of VMT as Metric	<p>This draft plan’s recommendations for future BRT and lane repurposing largely are driven by reducing VMT, which alone may not be an appropriate metric. VMT can be, among other things, a measure of population and employment growth and economic activity, upward or downward. Reducing VMT does not, though, inherently equate to improved operations of any given transportation mode.</p> <p><i>MDOT SHA</i></p>	<p>The Draft Plan’s proposed network is based on several considerations, including strategic, financial, economic, and implementation performance metrics as well as policy considerations.</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s proposed network and supporting recommendations, including the Corridor Connectors and repurposing lanes, during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
Incremental Implementation	<p>Encourage consideration of interim or ultimate BRT options that operate in mixed traffic if it may ease or speed implementation and/or realize similar travel time and ridership results.</p> <p><i>MDOT SHA</i></p>	<p>The Draft Plan also supports incremental implementation, as discussed on page 45 of the Public Hearing Draft.</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan’s proposed network and supporting recommendations, including incremental implementation during the Planning Board’s work session(s).</p>
Dorsey Mill Overpass	<p>We do not want to inhibit future connectivity across I-270. This connection has value beyond a transit connection – specifically for automobile. This bridge provides an important, multi-modal east-west connection between existing and planned residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments.</p>	<p>This overpass has yet to be constructed and remains one of the most financially challenging components of the currently planned Corridor Cities Transitway. The Draft Plan does not remove a recommendation for an</p>

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	<i>Lerch Early Brewer</i>	<p>interchange at this location; however, in amending bus recommendations allows transit planning to advance regardless of the interchange's status.</p> <p>Staff will discuss the interchange and Dorsey Mill connectivity during the Planning Board's work sessions.</p>
COVID-19	<p>Future iterations of this plan and/or efforts to implement this Draft Plan's recommendations fully account for current and future travel patterns, which are evolving based on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent changes to workplace arrangements. These impacts are especially acute concerning telework arrangements at federal agencies that employ a significant number of persons in the Washington region and that traditionally encouraged transit use through fare subsidy programs.</p> <p><i>MDOT SHA</i></p>	<p>Corridor Forward is a long-range plan that will prioritize transit solutions for the present and for future. The COVID-19 pandemic has reaffirmed our values and demonstrated that transit will be increasingly important as we recover and move forward. The three values of a resilient environment, equity and economic health were important before the pandemic and are even more urgent now.</p> <p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan, including the context in which the Plan was drafted, during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>
I-270 Toll Lanes	<p>The M-NCPPC has been on the record for consistently pursuing the comparative (not separate) study of transportation alternatives, and pursuing the goal of making communities along the I-270 corridor less auto-centric. The Corridor Forward Plan is contrarian to those goals and entrenches the status quo by totally depending on toll revenues.</p> <p><i>Rodolfo Perez</i></p> <p>All of the lanes on I-270 should be tolled.</p> <p><i>Daniel Marcin</i></p> <p>Strongly oppose adding lanes to I-270 and oppose re-purposing its current HOV lanes to become toll lanes.</p> <p><i>Sierra Club Montgomery County</i></p>	<p>Corridor Forward focuses on prioritizing transit projects, regardless of the State's Managed Lanes project. The Plan does not make tolling recommendations for the highway or comment on the State's ongoing work.</p> <p>Staff will discuss the role of Corridor Forward and the project's relation to the State's managed lanes project during the Board work sessions.</p>
Equity Focus Areas	<p>There are additional opportunities to address the critical need for transit connectivity for other Equity Focus Areas that would require minimal but impactful changes to the Plan. Two such communities are census tracts containing The Willows and Emory Grove Village in Gaithersburg, MD.</p>	<p>Staff will discuss the Draft Plan's proposed network and supporting recommendations, including the recommended Corridor Connectors during the Planning Board work session(s).</p>

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	<i>Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County</i>	