



Marc Elrich
County Executive


Christopher R. Conklin
Director

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MEMORANDUM

December 8, 2021

TO: Casey Anderson, Chair
Planning Board

FROM: Christopher Conklin, P.E., Director, 
Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

SUBJECT: Corridor Forward: the I-270 Transit Plan
MCDOT Comments on Public Hearing Draft

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Fall 2021 Public Hearing Draft for Corridor Forward: the I-270 Transit Plan ("Corridor Forward" or "the Plan"). Over the last several months, MCDOT staff has been working closely with Planning staff on many aspects of this plan. We greatly appreciate the time and effort that the Planning team members have dedicated to work collaboratively with us to strengthen the final product to facilitate eventual implementation by MCDOT. We strongly support many aspects of this plan, including the prioritization of the MD 355 and Veirs Mill BRT lines as well as the prioritization of other transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements in the corridor.

However, we have some concerns with the recommendations in their current form and believe further refinements are necessary. As we have been meeting with Planning staff over the last several weeks, it is our understanding that these issues will be discussed during the upcoming work sessions, and we are hopeful that many of them will be resolved and addressed in the Planning Board draft. The comments below summarize our most significant concerns.

1. **Additional Transit Services:** The Plan presents conflicting or absent information on important existing projects. Notably, the Great Seneca Transit Network and the North Bethesda Transitway are both in active development and should be reflected as near-term priority transit services. The North Bethesda Transitway is included in the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) and the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan.

Office of the Director

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In addition, its implementation has been accelerated by Council in the CIP due to its importance as an east-west connector between MD355, White Flint, Rock Spring, and potentially Northern Virginia via I-270. Facility Planning on this project began this year, and it should be treated as important a connector as the other new connectors identified in the Plan's near-term transit network. While support for the North Bethesda Transitway is included as a supplemental recommendation in the Plan, we feel strongly that it should be given a higher priority and included in the recommended near-term transit network.

Similarly, the plan largely ignores MCDOT's Great Seneca Transit Network (GSTN) project, which has been funded by Council for advancement of the first two service lines into construction. This project is critical to further development of the life sciences center, and support for it should be emphasized in the Plan's recommendations. GSTN is incorrectly described seemingly as an afterthought in the Plan as an "operational improvement" but it includes infrastructure investment relevant to Corridor Forward such as dedicated transit lanes, transit signal priority, and upgraded bus stations. We strongly urge the Planning Board to include GSTN more prominently either in the near-term transit network or as a supporting recommendation.

Information on the North Bethesda Transitway also appears to establish the eastern terminus at White Flint, despite past efforts choosing to leave this option open between White Flint or Grosvenor until the two could be more fully evaluated during Facility Planning. We recommend that the eastern terminus not be established as part of this plan's efforts.

2. **I-270 Express Bus Service:** The Plan presents conflicting or absent information on operating bus services along I-270, such as in the State's proposed Managed Lanes (recently renamed "Op Lanes"). The County has been advocating heavily with the State to include transit in the proposed project, and it is important that Corridor Forward reinforce the importance of providing transit service if the project moves forward.

The Plan should evaluate how to best use these lanes, such as identifying activity centers, potential Park & Ride locations, dedicated bus access along local roadways, and associated right-of-way needs to support these uses. It is also important to identify right-of-way requirements at points crossing I-270 and potential facility connections needed at interchanges and on bridge structures.

With or without the Op Lanes project, there is a market for highway-running express bus service and park-and-ride access in the corridor to serve upcounty residents who do not live within practical distance to a BRT or future Red Line station. The transit solution for this corridor will necessitate a wide variety of options, including support for express bus services.

3. **Red Line Extension:** The Plan's recommendation for a Red Line extension is not adequately supported by the analysis and lacks the appropriate degree of feasibility study for inclusion as a primary recommendation in the Plan. As mentioned in the Plan, there are significant technical hurdles to realizing this recommendation, many of which have not been studied in any level of detail to realistically support the recommendation. For example, it is unclear whether an additional 100+ feet of right-of-way would be able to be dedicated along the CSX track, or if CSX would even allow for a parallel heavy rail service along their line. Operational considerations, such as downstream capacity, have not been studied or considered in any meaningful way. In addition, given the substantial maintenance backlog, WMATA is appropriately focused on state-of-good repair, so it is unclear if they would support a system expansion.

Notwithstanding these and other significant technical constraints, the analysis shows that the costs of a Red Line extension far outweigh the anticipated benefits. The estimated cost is \$1.6-2.5 billion, and the project is only anticipated to generate about 5,000 new transit trips in the county by 2045 (increase of 0.14% transit mode share), a VMT reduction of 157,000/day (-0.07% of the County's daily total VMT), and an increase of 2,000 jobs (+0.1% impact to County). By means of comparison, the MD355 BRT project, with an estimated cost that is half that of the Red Line Extension, is expected to increase transit ridership in the corridor by 8,000 to 9,000 per day and reduce daily VMT by more than 700,000. The results of the Corridor Forward analysis seem to indicate that investment in high-quality, bus-based transit provides a higher return-on-investment than rail expansion.

While MCDOT is concerned with the wisdom of this recommendation, if the Planning Board decides to keep the Red Line extension in the Plan, we request that the following changes be considered with regard to this recommendation:

- Add flexibility to consider other potential alignments and station locations (such as an alignment to Lakeforest, which is slated for major redevelopment and could have potential for a transformative transit-oriented development project).
 - The implementation plan item for this recommendation should be to conduct a feasibility study, which could include items A-E currently listed in the plan. Items F and G should be deleted, as it is premature to generate advocacy for the concept (and one could argue this is not appropriate to be included in a master plan), and it is also premature to recommend anything related to NEPA or inclusion in the CLRP at this time.
4. **Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT):** The CCT has already obtained right-of-way dedication and accommodating design commitments from developers, notably at the Belward and PSTA sites. This plan as drafted would remove the requirement for transit

infrastructure through these future developments, seeming short-sighted and not aligned with goals to promote transit-oriented development. There are also communities and major generators served by the original CCT that are no longer served by the Corridor Forward proposal, such as the Universities at Shady Grove, King Farm, and Crown Farm/RIO. While we are open to considering modifications to the CCT, 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.

5. **MARC Stations:** The recommendations regarding MARC stations do not appear to have adequate supporting analysis. They need to more directly address technical constraints of a potential MARC Station at Shady Grove, as well as how the addition of two new stations would affect lower-ridership stations such as Washington Grove or Garrett Park. This draft also presents some unclear information as to the role of the Metropolitan Grove station in relation to the proposed transit hub at I-270 and MD 124 and recommends relocating this station to align with the proposed Red Line extension. We suggest language be added to clarify that this recommendation is contingent on feasibility studies for the Red Line extension feasibility.
6. **Germantown / Clarksburg Dedicated Lanes:** The Plan proposes several branches to the MD 355 BRT line. It is important to bear in mind that 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. While Planning staff indicates that Corridor Forward is a plan for infrastructure and not for transit service, the proposed configuration included in the Plan could result in necessary changes to accommodate service levels for a project that is currently in design.
7. **Treatment of Right of Way:** 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? In addition, we believe the recommendation in Table 15 to "eliminate capital improvement projects that support the addition of new travel lanes and turn lanes" is overly restrictive and confusing (and, in some cases, in conflict with Planning Board's project prioritization for projects such as MD355 widening and Observation Drive construction). This recommendation may also conflict with or restrict minor roadway and intersection modifications needed to optimize and support transit operations. The purpose of the Plan is to "analyze the corridor-serving transit options and identify the options that warrant planning, design, and implementation as funding

opportunities become available.” The recommendation in Table 15 falls outside of the purpose of this plan and should be deleted. The ROW requirements are already specified earlier on pages 40-41 as they relate to transit, so that should be all that is needed.

We appreciate the Planning Board’s consideration of these concerns, and again, we would like to thank Planning staff for continuing to work with us on improvement of this very important plan that is likely to inform investment in I-270 corridor transit improvements for years to come. Should you have any questions regarding our comments on the Plan, please feel free to contact me or Ms. Hannah Henn, Deputy Director, at hannah.henn@montgomerycountymd.gov.

cc: Hannah Henn, MCDOT
Gary Erenrich, MCDOT
Andrew Bossi, MCDOT
Corey Pitts, MCDOT
Joana Conklin, DGS

McGowan, Jesse

From: Matt Baker <MBaker4@mdot.maryland.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 9, 2021 1:23 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Cc: McGowan, Jesse; Reed, Patrick; McVary, Jessica; Tim Smith; Leonora Conti; Erica Rigby; Derek Gunn; Kandese Holford; David Schlie
Subject: RE: Public Hearing Draft Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan
Categories: Tracked To Dynamics 365

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chair Anderson-

Please find MDOT SHA's written comments on the *Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan* public hearing draft below.

General Comments

- As noted in the draft plan, the six retained transit options and the three retained for further evaluation—Managed Lanes Enhanced Commuter Bus, Red Line Extension, and the CCT—all include trade-offs in which implementing one or more options may increase ridership on some existing and proposed transit services while decreasing ridership on others. (As do the already-in-planning MD 355 BRT and Veirs Mill Road BRT projects.) Ultimately, if the County's and draft plan's goal is to shift travel preferences from single-occupancy vehicles to transit choices, it will be critical to understand the overall impact of a given recommendation or combination thereof to ridership and travel times and consequently to reducing vehicular travel, both at a regional/countywide level and in specific smaller geographies proposed to be served.
- This draft plan acknowledges further progress toward implementing plan recommendations will require more in-depth analysis. MDOT SHA recommends, at the appropriate time, 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* within the more specific scope of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) *Visualize 2045* long-range transportation plan, inclusion in which will be necessary if federal funding is to be sought.
- Plan recommendations that include converting general purpose lanes (on both MDOT SHA and County roadways) to bus-only lanes for purposes of BRT will need to be justified through various performance metrics, including peak-period speeds and peak-period travel time for all travel modes as well as the percentage of VMT operating in congested conditions. 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.

MDOT SHA encourages future iterations of this plan and/or efforts to implement this draft plan's recommendations support options that increase person throughput, which BRT can provide if implemented appropriately. 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. (This draft plan acknowledges the need for more specific studies on p. 45.)

- Existing BRT operations in Montgomery County operate variously in mixed traffic and in dedicated lanes due to operational and right-of-way issues. While MDOT SHA understands the draft plan's desire to focus on dedicated BRT lanes, MDOT SHA also encourages the plan to consider interim or ultimate options that operate in mixed traffic if it may ease or speed implementation and/or realize similar travel time and ridership results.
- While possibly outside the specific scope of this draft plan, MDOT SHA recommends consideration be given to what provisions should be made for bicycle infrastructure and how it may interact with dedicated bus lanes, which may present competing needs for limited right-of-way as well as conflicts that raise safety-related concerns.
- MDOT SHA recommends 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.
- MDOT SHA recommends future iterations of this plan and/or efforts to implement this draft plan's recommendations consider ongoing modal shifts toward the use of ridesharing, bicycle/scooter sharing, and other on-demand services that may affect fixed-route transit service ridership. (This draft plan acknowledges the need to account for infrastructure for such users on p. 44, table 13.)

Chapter 4 – Initial Evaluation

- p. 19, footnote 1 – While the state, represented by MDOT, plays a key stakeholder role in developing the “Constrained Long-Range Plan,” this document actually is developed and maintained by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). Please replace “state’s” with “National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board’s.” In addition, TPB no longer refers to the Constrained Long-Range Plan by that name. Since the adoption of its current long-range transportation plan, *Visualize 2045*, TPB refers to the “constrained element” of *Visualize 2045*.
- p. 22 – Regarding the draft plan's proposed Purple Line Extension, projected ridership (5,500 trips per day) may not justify the cost to construct the line itself or construct a new American Legion Bridge in such a manner as to accommodate rail infrastructure. Limited available right-of-way on the Maryland side of the bridge also present complications. Managed Lanes Enhanced Commuter Bus service (pp. 26-27) may be a more practical and realistic solution to providing a transit connection between Maryland and Virginia.
- pp. 22-23 – This draft plan's discussion of enhancing MARC Brunswick Line service focuses solely on needs to and from upcounty and Frederick County destinations. The line also serves points west of Point of Rocks, including Brunswick and Martinsburg, West Virginia, and proposals have been voiced to extend service to other point north and west. While likely outside the scope of this draft plan, please be aware any alterations to MARC Brunswick Line service south and east of Point of Rocks may have impacts—potentially negative—to provision of services north and west of Point of Rocks.
- p. 23 – Clarify that CSX Transportation owns the Old Main Line Subdivision, which is used by MARC Brunswick Line service to Frederick between Point of Rocks and Frederick Junction, at which point the MDOT-owned Frederick Branch extends into Frederick, itself.
- pp. 25-26 – This draft plan recognizes better transit solutions may exist than the existing separated-roadway CCT concept. Consider whether this plan agrees with past and current County transportation priorities, especially as stated in the County's transportation priorities letters submitted to MDOT as well as the County's advocacy that a portion of managed lane revenues be used to design and/or construct the CCT. Is this plan suggesting that such revenues be used toward a modified CCT option, is this plan not in agreement with the County's previously espoused priorities, or is this plan suggesting the County's priorities have evolved?

- pp. 27-28 – The proposed Red Line extension to Germantown Town Center, in some ways, duplicates MARC Brunswick Line service. Consider how these two services may compete for limited right-of-way while providing partially overlapping service needs and whether pursuing one option may preclude pursuing another. (This draft plan appears, on p. 49, ultimately to recommend extending WMATA Red Line Metrorail to Germantown is preferable to increasing MARC Brunswick Line service.)

Chapter 5 – Proposed Transit Network

- p. 32 – MDOT SHA supports options that reduce and/or eliminate the need for additional infrastructure, i.e., an I-270 interchange at Dorsey Mill Road/Century Boulevard, through alternative routing options.
- p. 35 – MDOT SHA encourages Great Seneca Connector options that reduce impacts associated with new infrastructure “where no roadway exists today” and recommends future coordination between implementing agencies and MDOT SHA concerning the best manner in which to use the existing I-270 park-and-ride lot at MD 124 to support future transit services.
- pp. 38-40 – Repurposing existing MDOT SHA roadway lanes, including along MD 27, MD 28, MD 118, MD 119, MD 121, and MD 124 for purposes of dedicated bus lanes would require additional analysis as recommended previously.
- p. 42 – When roadways are reconstructed or reimagined for purposes of BRT and dedicated bus lanes, MDOT SHA supports and encourages, whether on MDOT SHA or County roadways, provisions be made to accommodate all vulnerable users in line with the State’s and County’s Vision Zero policies.

Chapter 6 – Implementation Strategies

- p. 45-50 – While this draft plan presents staged strategies by which to implement its recommendations, it does not propose specific timelines—likely due to full funding for project development and implementation not yet having been identified. Consider whether timeframes, especially for more near-term improvements, should be included, whether ranges or specific years by which this draft plan envisions completing specific improvements.
- p. 49 – If this plan ultimately recommends extending WMATA Red Line Metrorail service and not enhancing MARC Brunswick Line service, consider stating this as such, especially given potentially competing needs for the same rights-of-way.

Thank you for providing MDOT SHA the opportunity to comment. If you, the Planning Board, Planning Department staff should have any questions, please contact Mr. David Schlie, MDOT SHA Regional Planner, at 410-545-5674 or dschlie@mdot.maryland.gov. Mr. Schlie will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

Matt Baker

Matt Baker

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December 7, 2021

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board, M-NCPPC
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

RE: Corridor Forward

Dear Chair Anderson,

The City of Gaithersburg appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the Corridor Forward I-270 Transit Plan Public Hearing Draft (Plan). Upon review of the document and following discussions with Montgomery Planning staff involved in the development of the Plan, Gaithersburg staff (Staff) offers the following comments for the Planning Board's consideration. Staff supports the intent of the Plan to increase beneficial transit options that connect residents to jobs. Staff also appreciates and supports the Plan's advocacy for the MD 355 bus rapid transit (BRT) as the Near-Term priority project for continued advancement beyond the current 15% design.

However, Staff does have questions and concerns regarding the Plan. Staff notes that with the change in scope of the Plan from a Frederick County to Virginia via I-270 analysis to essentially a MD 355 corridor study, many of the recommendations go through or disproportionately impact the City of Gaithersburg. These impacts coupled with the intent that the Plan will be used by the State and County to determine funding priorities, Staff would have appreciated more engagement in the development of the Plan's recommendations and given more time for review and comment. We have worked with Montgomery County Planning Staff to request specific changes to the document, but will not see their recommended changes prior to submission of our comments based on the understanding that there will be no Planning Board record (opportunity to further comment) following the close of the public hearing on December 9th.

Overall, Staff has concerns regarding the messaging of the Plan and how information is presented. We believe that it is important that the document be balanced in its tone and present all of the opportunities and constraints when reading the options. The current document does not adequately note the difficulties in achieving one of the primary recommendations, extension of the Red Line. In addition, it does not look at a phased or targeted improvement approach related to improvements along the MARC Corridor.

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Staff is also concerned that the Plan has not taken into account several existing and under development key planning initiatives, aside from the pending Thrive plan and the Op Lanes South Phase I plan, or discuss how the Plan might be revised once these other key planning initiatives are completed. For instance, there is no mention of Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) RideOn Reimagined effort, the MCDOT Great Seneca Transit Network, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) 50 year Statewide Transit Plan effort, the MDOT MARC Cornerstone Plan, or the Cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville comprehensive plans. How does the Plan reflect, integrate, or influence these efforts? These should be referenced in the opening “Corridor Forward in Context” section.

Below are specific comments related to each chapter of the Plan.

Chapter 1:

- “This Plan re-envision the master planned CCT as the Corridor Connectors, a network of more buildable dedicated bus lanes” – This is confusing throughout; is this meant to be a single phased option creating the re-envisioned CCT, or a collection of independent systems linked into a holistic network, including MARC etc.? The Plan, depending upon chapter seems to vacillate between the two.
- Table 1, the Puzzle Piece infographic becomes confusing as to meaning as one continues in the document. Clearly stating the priority would assist in helping the reader understand the priorities.
- Connectors not delineated or identified in Figure 1 with one graphic appearing to be a realigned CCT Phase I
- What does Near-Term and Long-Term mean, throughout the document and appendices the 2045 analysis horizon is cited. This leads a reader to infer the Red Line will be done in 23 years. These undefined terms may lead to unrealistic expectations.
- It should be noted in the summary that the Red Line extension does not meet WMATA standards and that is a major challenge
- Although it was not the intent, Table 2 reads as a sequential priority action list. Again this is messaging confusion for the reader. For example it appears that MARC items are of lesser importance. Further, “3. Develop a new multimodal transit hub near the intersection of MD 124 and the CSX tracks” is solely within the City of Gaithersburg. The City has independent zoning authority and Montgomery Planning staff and the Planning Board should not be approving land use decisions in areas where they have no authority or acknowledge in the Plan the role of coordination with the City. Further, why is this listed a primary priority when its purpose is based upon a Red Line extension that may never occur?
- Revise Table 2: 4. rather than reference much later tables or chapters, make clear this only applies to County owned roads and not to municipality owned roads. Language should state “support limiting” regarding State roads.
- Currently the plans makes recommendations regarding the City of Gaithersburg Comprehensive Plan. Is there an expectation for Cities with independent zoning authority to update their comprehensive plans to reflect the Plan? What if this does not occur?

Chapter 3:

- Overall, Chapter 3 should end on page 15 and then just reference the Appendices 2 and 3 for more information. The additional Tables and discounted mode discussions distract from the Plan's actual recommendations.

Chapter 4:

This is a poorly organized chapter for the reader that presents information in a confusing manner. Specifically:

- Table 5 is misleading. The metric qualifiers are not discussed and every mode is presented as an “apples to apples” analysis, which is not the case. The subsequent narrative on each alternative do not clarify or justify the Table evaluations. This table should be removed as it subjectively skews toward the Red Line extension.
- While we understand the intent of the puzzle piece infographics in the tables, they lend little help in the readability of the document. It would be better to clearly state the priority and champion. Each option discussed should have a recommendation table (Red Line) even if it only states “to not move forward” or “removed from scope.”
- Staff is concerned with the way Enhanced MARC Service is discussed. The Plan recommends maintaining the existing MARC service and supports the long-term potential of the Brunswick Line, but it is not a priority within the Plan's recommended transit network.
- The Plan itself acknowledges, “Enhancing MARC service would impact other modes. Because the Brunswick Line offers some redundancy with segments of the Red Line, Metro service could lose as many as 7,600 trips in 2045 if MARC was to be improved without concurrent transit enhancements to other modes. On the other hand, if the county and/or state were to pursue the studied Red Line Extension, Frederick Rail Connection, or Enhanced Managed Lanes Commuter bus options, the existing MARC service would potentially lose riders, with the more direct Frederick Rail Connection receiving the greatest number of current MARC riders.” Staff notes the other options, in addition to Red line extension, are needed to minimize MARC effectiveness, one of which – the Frederick Rail Connection – the Plan states, “...do not justify significant financial support from the county given that the option provides greater mobility benefits to Frederick; however, if others champion...Plan recommends county cooperation and support for their efforts.” Is Frederick going to move forward with option? If not, does this enhance the MARC option?

It appears the concern is that MARC would conflict with the Plan's preferred Red Line extension. Staff notes – the Red Line extension and MARC would have the exact same stations from Shady Grove to Germantown, would have the exact same travel times to Shady Grove, that MARC already accommodates transfers to the Red Line at Rockville, and that the MDOT MARC Cornerstone Plan is phased with mid-day and reverse trips occurring with the 3rd line phase ending at Boyds. The Plan's discount of MARC is based upon a full 3rd track to Frederick. The Plan should consider the phased approach to Boyds. It is Staff's understanding that MARC expansion will be an emphasis in the 50 Year Statewide Transit Plan.

- Based upon the Plan's narrative, the Managed Lanes Enhanced Commuter Bus, the most likely service in the Near-Term with the approved P3 contract, must be included in the

Plan's recommended network due to its defined benefits. It is currently not included in the recommended network.

- As to the Red Line extension narrative, Staff notes in the MARC discussion emphasis, "Most importantly" was placed on the complexity of an additional 25 feet of right-of-way (ROW) needed from CSX. The Red Line would need 62 feet additional ROW. The same language should be used in this section as the emphasis on challenges. Staff notes, using the 62 feet discussed at-grade, the Red Line extension would impact the City of Gaithersburg as follows:

Land Use	Properties Affected	Total
<u>City Wide</u>		
Nonresidential	40	
Residential	42	
		Total 82
<u>Within Equity Focus Area</u>		
Nonresidential	25	
Residential	42	
		Total 67

The 42 residential properties impacted in Equity Focus Area includes among others a full take of an income restricted multifamily rental complex with 199 units. The Red Line section should again include notation of not meeting the WMATA standards in the primary challenges paragraph.

Chapter 5:

- Beginning with the North Bethesda Transit Way narrative and Table (identified as 9. on Table 2) is awkward in reader flow and would be better incorporated into the chapter later on.
- Define Near-Term (and Long-Term) into realistic year ranges
- Why wasn't Table 10 included in the CCT discussion in Chapter 4?
- Figure 2 should clearly delineate graphically where each referenced Connector segment is located beginning and end.
- The Great Seneca Dedicated Bus Lanes figures should include the MCDOT Great Seneca Transit Network routes, otherwise the question will be loss of access to Washingtonian/Rio and Crown provided by CCT.
- The Lakeforest Connector narrative should acknowledge the City's Lakeforest Mall Master Plan and its recommendation for an enhanced and relocated Lakeforest Transit Center.
- The Regional Benefits of Proposed Connectors should be moved prior to the Connector narratives.
- Do the proposed MD 355 BRT dedicated lanes proposed reflect MCDOT's current design plans?
- Define long-term year ranges for Red Line.

- Staff notes the first time WMATA standards are discussed is on page 42 (of 51 total) of the Plan
- Staff notes, aside from City's role having independent zoning authority, regarding the proposed multi-modal station narrative, the Fairgrounds does not intersect with MD 124. Furthermore, the City of Gaithersburg has an approved sketch plan that may require further City Council action to amend incorporating a transit center. Staff, in discussion with MDOT, were informed that the State intends to expand the Metropolitan Grove MARC station and Park and Ride as part of the OP Lanes Phase II (I-270 North) managed lanes improvements. Additionally, the properties between the Metropolitan Grove MARC station and MD 124 west of the CSX tracks are all owned by MDOT. Staff questions why the Plan does not recommend or mention leveraging State owned lands for an expanded multi-modal station; especially given that the County and State are seeking to locate a BRT O&M facility off Metropolitan Grove Road, the immediate TOD residential density built in the Parklands, and the biotech employment hub located along West Watkins Mill Road.

Chapter 6:

- The organization of the tables seem to conflict with the contents priorities. For example, Table 14 reads as if these should be the first actions, yet are labeled as a future need or consideration. Tables 14 and 15 should be reversed in order, by priority.
- Table 15: Remove "A. Within the corridor, eliminate capital improvement projects that support the addition of new travel lanes or turn lanes." This statement is too broad with possible unforeseen negative implications. This reads that the County should never support any State or municipality road project including these elements within the greater corridor.
- Discussion of the Great Seneca Transit Network should occur before page 48 given its significant service role.
- Staff has concerns with the advocacy of I-270 North direct access ramps to the managed lanes at MD 124 (B.). This will not work from a geometry standpoint. The City's discussions with MDOT (with MCDOT) have involved direct access ramps at Metropolitan Grove Road extended or the Watkins Mill Interchange, either further supporting the Metropolitan Grove MARC station location.
- Staff recommends actions A.-E. in advancing the Long-Term vision, be combined into an actual comprehensive feasibility study for said Metro extension, such as is being done in Virginia. This study's goal will determine if it is actually worth pursuing based upon numerous factors and not just the Plan's evaluation or public sentiment.

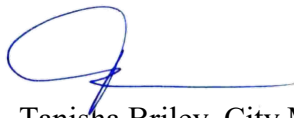
Summary:

Again, City Staff support many of the themes and aspirations goals expressed in the Plan. The concern is the muddled messaging presented. Staff understands that the public may focus upon the "flashy" recommendations such as Red Line extensions without context or feasibility, and lose sight of or support the actionable near term options. 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. Specifically, while Gaithersburg is an incorporated city, it is also a valuable part of Montgomery County. 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. Staff also has concerns with the appearance of lack of

coordination or reflections of current State, County, and City projects and policies. If the Plan is to guide federal, State, and County funding moving forward, we must all make sure the recommendations serve the best interests of the entire region.

As noted earlier we have worked with Montgomery County Planning Staff and hope that many of the comments contained here within will be included in their recommendations in the December 9 staff report. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on the Corridor Forward I-270 Transit Plan Public Hearing Draft. We look forward to the continued coordination between our organizations in creating a better Montgomery County.

Sincerely,



Tanisha Briley, City Manager
City of Gaithersburg

Cc:

Mayor & City Council

Planning Commission

Dennis Enslinger, Deputy City Manager

Tom Lonergan-Seeger, Assistant City Manager

John Schlichting, Director, Planning & Code

Tony Berger, Director, Public Works

December 7, 2021

Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902



Re: Metro's Comments on Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan
Public Hearing Draft

Dear Mr. Anderson,

On behalf of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) we are submitting comments on the Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan ("the draft plan"), Public Hearing Draft. Metro appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft plan.

The draft plan recommends the following investments, among others:

- Prioritizing MD355 and Viers Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects,
- Recasting the Corridor Cities Transitway as a "corridor connector,"
- Supporting MARC Brunswick Line right-of-way acquisition,
- American Legion Bridge improvements to allow rail transit (to support a possible Purple Line extension),
- Updated supporting master land use plans, and
- An extension of the Metrorail Red Line to Germantown Town Center, with two intermediate stations at Old Town Gaithersburg and MD124.

Metro applauds the intent to advance high-capacity transit solutions throughout the region and is currently working collaboratively with jurisdictions to advance major initiatives. We appreciate county planning staff's coordination with us and inclusion of some of Metro's priorities in the public hearing draft report. Metro is willing to consider its support of the plan with the Planning Board and County's additional consideration and responses to our comments below.

Metro would also like to emphasize the following points for your consideration.

- We suggest that some form of MARC Brunswick Line improvements, similar to those envisioned in the Greater Washington Partnership's Capital Region Rail Vision, coupled with planned BRT investments and focused master planning, may offer a more cost-effective solution to the needs of the I-270 corridor. Given that the MARC Brunswick Line already serves much of the corridor, enhanced bus, BRT and MARC service, including 15-minute peak and all-day bidirectional service called for in the Rail Vision, may offer more robust benefits to the higher growth and equity mid- and east-county communities noted in the draft plan. Moreover, if MARC service is eventually extended into Virginia via a new planned Long Bridge crossing, additional Brunswick Line trips to L'Enfant Plaza, Crystal City and beyond, would expand job access opportunities for communities on both sides of the Potomac beyond those assumed in the draft plan. Regarding the implementation challenges and other concerns noted in

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Metropolitan Area
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the draft plan, the county could engage with MTA and regional stakeholders refine the assumptions in the Cornerstone Plan and Rail Vision to better reflect the county's needs.¹

- With respect to discussions surrounding extensions to Metrorail, Metro has indicated [previously and consistently](#) that any further extension of Metrorail can only be contemplated after solutions and funding commitments have been made that remedy Metrorail's existing core capacity issues. Metro remains committed to this position.
- The envisioned Red Line Metrorail extension does not meet the Authority's minimum guidelines for density, ridership, and connectivity, as noted in the report. For the proposed Red Line extension to be a responsible and effective regional investment, the corridor's proposed station areas would need to accept significant land use changes and increases in population and employment density.
- Metro is legislatively required to keep annual operating subsidy increases at or below three percent with certain exemptions.² Although the first year operating subsidies resulting from major capital projects, such as Metrorail extensions, are excluded from the three percent cap, subsequent operating subsidy payments resulting from such projects are not. As a result jurisdictional financial capacity will likely constrain the region's ability to financially support major new investments and additional operating and maintenance costs beyond Metrorail's current footprint for the foreseeable future.
- Prior to advancing any future Metrorail extension, Metro staff will need to conduct an independent study to understand impact of the proposals on the agency's capital assets and operations and maintenance needs.
- The proposed Metrorail Red Line extension would require significant capital investments and entail considerable implementation risks. As the plan notes, a new railyard would need to be built adjacent to the corridor at or near the proposed terminus, resulting in a locally unwanted land use along an already modestly developed corridor. Based on the draft plan's assumed alignment, implementation would require successful negotiation with and right-of-way acquisition from CSX Transportation, the Brunswick Line's owner, for use of the railroad corridor at their sole discretion. The report should make clear that locating a new rail yard facility adjacent to the corridor and acquiring new right-of-way from CSX would be a challenging and expensive undertaking.
- We encourage the county to arrive at consensus decision regarding BRT in the I-270 corridor. These proposed BRT routes are important to advancing the county's land use goals at the Shady Grove and Rockville Metrorail stations, where the services could have major connections. Due to capacity limitations at these locations, the transit facilities may need to be reconfigured to support the BRT services, which could add significant costs and may require additional space and reduce the land area that could be available for development. The advancement of real estate development opportunities will be dependent upon finalizing the transit facilities program.

The following are Metro's specific comments on elements of the Public Hearing Draft:

Chapter 1 – Executive Summary

¹ Aside from MTA's Cornerstone Plan noted in the draft plan, see the Greater Washington Partnership's Rail Vision found here: <https://greaterwashingtonpartnership.com/capital-region-rail-vision/>

² Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's Three Percent Cap Report can be found here: http://www.novatransit.org/uploads/WMATA/NVTC_3PctCap_FullReport_WEB.pdf

Metro appreciates that the study clearly identifies many of the challenges and constraints associated with extending Metrorail in this corridor, as briefly noted in the Executive Summary and documented in more detail in Chapters 4 and 6. These are critical considerations that should be highlighted during any Metrorail extension discussion. To highlight their importance for policy makers, Metro recommends these specific considerations be included in the Executive Summary.

- Funding commitments³ must be made for Metrorail's core capacity needs – determined by Metro's documented evaluation – prior to advancing any new extensions,
- An extension must meet or exceed Metro's station area land use density, ridership, and connectivity targets,⁴
- An extension's complete lifecycle investment – capital investment and ongoing operations and maintenance needs – must be financially affordable for the State of Maryland and the Metro Compact members,⁵ and
- An extension must be able to navigate implementation challenges, such as building a new corridor railyard facility and acquiring right-of-way from of corridor majority owner CSX Transportation.

We appreciate that the draft plan notes the need to support transit recommendations with master plan changes and appreciate the inclusion of Metro's guidelines for density, ridership, and connectivity. Understandably, many suburban and exurban communities lack the density needed to support Metrorail and land use change takes decades. However, Metro asks that the Executive Summary be clear about the magnitude of land use changes that the county would have to implement – and the community would have to accept – along the corridor for the proposed Metrorail Red Line extension to meet Metro's guidelines.

Chapter 4 – Initial Evaluation

While we understand that the draft plan was intended to evaluate and recommend transit options to meet county goals and address challenges for an expansive I-270 corridor, we suggest that the draft plan include a more robust alternatives discussion about the appropriate roles of each mode in meeting these goals. This would allow a more nuanced understanding of land use and ridership targets for high-capacity transit (bus rapid transit, commuter rail, etc.) versus Metrorail service.

For example, the draft plan's proposed 7.8-mile Red Line extension forecasts about 8,000 riders in 2045, which assumes over two decades of corridor growth. In context, Metro's Expansion Guidelines suggest the extension should target an average daily ridership of between about 27,000 and 55,000 riders to be a financially sustainable for Metro and the region, a target three to seven times above the draft plan's forecast. While additional station area master land use planning could enhance corridor population, employment and ridership, policy makers today should be clear to the community and other stakeholders about the magnitude of changes required beyond current plans. For a regional example of how to address land use targets, we would point to Virginia Department of Rail and Public

³ Funding commitments entail Metro Board-endorsed solutions to modify the Adopted Regional System, funding commitments included in the Transportation Planning Board's adopted Long-Range Plan, and accompanying line items in jurisdictional budgets

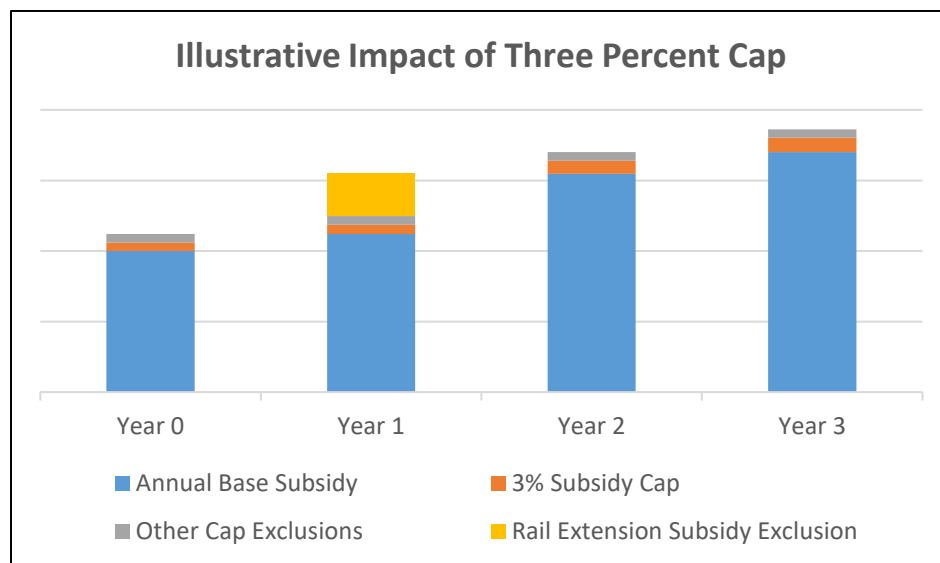
⁴ Metro's Transit Corridor Expansion Guidelines can be found here: <https://planitmetro.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Task-5-Final-Report-2015-03-25.pdf>

⁵ Metro Board policy assigns capital funding responsibility for new Metrorail extensions to the jurisdiction(s) where the project is located and assigns the resulting ongoing operating subsidy and maintenance funding responsibility to all Metro Compact members.

Transportation's 2015 Route 1 Corridor Study which highlighted land use changes needed to accompany a proposed Metrorail Yellow Line extension to Hybla Valley in Fairfax County.⁶ This is important context for making an informed decision about the type of mobility solution best suited for the corridor.

Other Considerations

The three percent cap creates pressure to minimize current and future operations and maintenance (O&M) costs, even if Metrorail extension first year operating subsidies are exempted. Metro's growing capital program is mostly focused on repairing and modernizing the existing system. However, the addition of future major new capital projects would add asset ownership and operational responsibility on top of Metro's existing state of good repair backlog, unfunded capacity needs, financial obligations, and legislative mandates.



For example, as shown in the graphic above, operating subsidies resulting from the first year of operation for a Metrorail line extension would be exempt from the three percent cap. However, in every following year these resulting rail operating subsidies would become part of the baseline cap calculation. Additional subsidies such as these create external financial pressure on the agency's budget and the region, constraining Metro's ability to consider alternative investment choices. These factors, among others, necessitate the expansion prerequisites and independent evaluation process noted above.

Metro appreciates the work undertaken to date and the opportunity to comment on the draft plan. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the comments, please contact Jonathan Parker at jhparker@wmata.com or 202-962-1040.

⁶ The reference to the plan is discussed here: <https://planitmetro.com/2015/10/29/metrorail-core-capacity-needs-and-the-challenges-of-outward-expansion/>. The plan itself is here: <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/transit/planning/route-1-multimodal-alternatives-analysis/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shyam Kannan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Shyam Kannan
Managing Director, Office of Planning

Cc:

Regina Sullivan, WMATA
Charlie Scott, WMATA
Steven Segerlin, WMATA
Allison Davis, WMATA
Jonathan Parker, WMATA
Melissa Kim, WMATA
Jessica McVary, Montgomery Planning
Jesse McGowan, Montgomery Planning
Patrick Reed, Montgomery Planning
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery DOT



Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring, MD 20907

"Corridor Forward" Plan for Transit in the I-270 Corridor

Testimony to Montgomery County Planning Board, December 9, 2021

For 60 years, Montgomery County planners have tried to create walkable, transit-oriented new towns north of Rockville. For 60 years, they have failed. But the staff draft Corridor Forward plan makes no effort to change course. Rather than trying to correct the mistakes of the past, it preserves the policies and practices that create auto-oriented suburban sprawl. Even where it proposes new bus lanes, it runs them along pedestrian-hostile high-speed highways where buses will never be attractive alternatives to driving.

The draft recommends prioritizing a Red Line extension to Germantown over MARC. This project would require an entirely new right of way and does not meet WMATA criteria for Metrorail projects. MARC service, unlike the Red Line extension, can be increased incrementally as funds are available. The practical effect of prioritizing the Red Line would be to reject any new rail transit service in the upcounty for the indefinite future.

The rationale given for this recommendation is cost-effectiveness. The project consultants calculated that spending \$1.2 billion on MARC will yield 3800 added transit rides per weekday, while spending \$1.5 billion on the Red Line will yield 8400 new rides. But estimates of cost and ridership are quite uncertain at the study's level of analysis, and the consultants' analysis (summarized on pages 21-27 of Appendix 3) is heavily slanted to favor the Red Line over MARC.

We believe that a realistic analysis would show MARC expansion to be more cost-effective. And beyond that, MARC expansion has great advantages that cost-effectiveness analysis does not capture. Expanded MARC service should be the highest priority for transit upgrades in this corridor, both short-term and long-term.

Cost

The number of new MARC trains you get per dollar of new track is the outcome of a negotiation with CSX, rather than a direct outcome of the engineering. The study says \$1.2 billion will get you only 16 added round trips per day. This is very pessimistic. The 2007 MARC Growth & Investment Plan said \$530 million gets you that many round trips or more.

The MNCPPC consultant's assumptions for the MARC third track seem to be based on the MTA's MARC Cornerstone Report, which we see as largely an exercise in coming up with excuses for not expanding MARC service.

The 2007 MARC plan assumed third track is needed only from Point of Rocks to the Beltway. The Cornerstone Plan, like the consultant report, assumes it must go all the way to Union Station. Not only that, it lists the track between Silver Spring and Union Station as the first critical-path item for added service. Since this is the most difficult and expensive section to build new track, it basically rules out sequential improvements. It is also contrary to common sense, because you would think a passing track would be most useful to CSX in the middle of the two-track section between Brunswick and Ivy City, not at one end. (To preserve the option of maintaining current freight capacity by turning off-peak trains around before they reach the two-track section, Corridor Forward should amend the White Flint master plan to provide right of way for pocket tracks at the future White Flint MARC station.)

While overstating the likely cost to run MARC trains, the consultants low-balled the cost of a Red Line extension. They first estimated this cost at \$1.8 billion. But they reduced this number to \$1.5 billion, contrary to their own opinion, at request of MCDOT (see appendix p 26). The effect of prioritizing the Red Line is to postpone any added rail service into the indefinite future. The upcounty deserves more train service.

Ridership

The study assumes (see appendix p 6) I-270 is widened north of Shady Grove, with 4 southbound and 5 northbound lanes between Clarksburg and I-370, and 4 lanes in each direction between Clarksburg and Frederick. MDOT's contract with Transurban makes this widening very unlikely without a giant state subsidy.

With the assumed widening of I-270, 39% of the new transit trips predicted for a Red Line extension to Germantown are from people who live outside Montgomery County (see p 38 of this staff report). However, if I-270 is not widened north of Germantown, MARC trips originating in Frederick County would be much more attractive and driving on I-270 to a Germantown Red Line station would be less attractive.

Moreover, even if Transurban eventually builds HOT lanes to Frederick, it will manage the tolls to keep traffic highly congested at the Clarksburg merge point. We doubt that the consultant's traffic modeling took this into account.

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. Master plans for the county's built-up downtowns only designed to accommodate growth for 10 or 20 years and are regularly updated to reflect growing regional population and the increasing demand for walkable urbanism. All-day MARC service will significantly upgrade transit access to Rockville and Silver Spring, whereas a Red Line extension would not add rail service anywhere south of Shady Grove. Ridership predictions for MARC should reflect residential and job growth in the downtowns that get new service.

Perhaps as a result of these assumptions, the consultants estimate added MARC ridership in 2050 at only 20% of the new seats. This seems very pessimistic when the Brunswick Line was running close to capacity before Covid.

Other benefits of all-day MARC

This highly uncertain cost-benefit calculation is entirely the wrong basis for a transportation choice that will play out over decades. No one can say with any confidence today whether a Red Line extension or a MARC third track will attract more new riders per dollar. The plan should start from our overall planning goals, decide which of these two transit lines best serves them, and then examine what needs to be done to make that choice cost-effective.

From this point of view, all-day MARC service is clearly the superior alternative. Advantages not considered in the study include:

- By creating another axis of all-day transit service, it would strengthen the transit-oriented nodes of Silver Spring, White Flint, and Rockville and create new nodes in Kensington, Gaithersburg, and Germantown by making car-free living far more convenient.
- Expansion of MARC service can begin now, with more trains added sequentially as sections of new track are built. Prioritizing Red Line extension, which requires one giant expenditure, postpones any action into the indefinite future. The upcounty should not wait decades for more train service.
- Two-way MARC service would give Montgomery County transit riders access to the walkable downtowns of Frederick and Brunswick, and potentially to Hagerstown.

Even with its slanted assumptions, the study predicts 26 new riders per new train trip for the Red Line extension versus 119 per new train trip for MARC. This is further evidence of MARC's effectiveness in serving the county's land-use planning goals.

Bus upgrades

Like many past planning documents, Corridor Forward promises change in lofty generalities and then entrenches the status quo in its specifics. Its proposed bus lane network exemplifies this problem.

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. Traffic studies design roadways to avoid traffic congestion. This inherently privileges drivers over pedestrians and transit riders. Traffic jams in urban places are a sign of success; a downtown with no traffic backups is a failure. In a transit-oriented area, and especially along a transitway, streets must be designed primarily for walkability and only secondarily for the movement of private motor vehicles.

Another symptom of Corridor Forward's automobile-first orientation is the excessively wide transitway rights of way. Even "business district streets" are 100 to 136 feet wide -- wider than

Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Bethesda. Wide multi-lane highways are a barrier to pedestrian movement.

A bus that stops along a 6-lane highway with traffic whizzing by at 40, 50, or 60 miles per hour will always be second-class transportation, with few riders other than those who can't drive or can't afford to drive. Bus lanes and fancy bus shelters will not fix that. Corridor Forward must amend existing master plans to make the transitways true transitways. That requires narrower rights of way, design speeds of 30 mph or less, elimination of plans to add lanes to existing highways, and a ban on slip lanes, extra right-turn lanes, and double turn lanes.

In one area, Corridor Forward does recognize and correct past mistakes. This is the alignment of the Corridor Cities Transitway. We support the plan's revision.

Conclusion

Just five months ago, the Planning Board passed judgment on past efforts to make the upcounty transit-oriented. These words were included in the Great Seneca Science Corridor Minor Master Plan Amendment:

Development has not achieved the urban style form envisioned; the form of the built environment remains relatively unchanged. New development, although it employs best design practices like high quality construction materials and infill redevelopment of surface parking lots, remains primarily suburban and auto-centric in form.

Corridor Forward, as now written, perpetuates the bad choices that caused this failure. It pushes expansion of rail transit off into the indefinite future by ruling out any added MARC train service. And it envisions buses as a second-class form of transportation, fated to carry a disadvantaged minority of travelers. The upcounty needs a much more ambitious transit plan, centered on all-day MARC service.

Robert G. Brewer, Jr.*Attorney*

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ecrogers@lerchearly.com

December 8, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Corridor Forward – I-270 Transit Plan
Testimony of Lerner Enterprises

Dear Chair Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

Our firm represents Lerner Enterprises, LLC, the owner and master developer of Black Hill – a multi-phase, mixed-use development located on approximately 107 acres north of the Germantown Town Center, and just south and east of Black Hill Regional Park (the “Property”). The purpose of this letter is to provide the Planning Board with comments on the Public Hearing Draft of the Corridor Forward Plan (the “Public Hearing Draft”), particularly as it relates to recommendations for the Corridor Connectors.

The Public Hearing Draft “re-envision[s] the master planned [Corridor City Transitway] as the Corridor Connectors, a network of more buildable dedicated bus lanes, which connect I-270 corridor communities to the county’s existing and planned rapid transit network.” (See page 6). The Corridor Connectors include six different components that collectively provide service to Germantown, Clarksburg, Great Seneca, Lakeforest, and Montgomery Village. The Property would be served by the “Manekin West Connector.” The Manekin West Connector provides service between the Germantown Town Center, and ultimately the MD 355 BRT line, and appears to terminate at or near the Property.

We support the Public Hearing Draft's objective to implement the purpose of the CCT by bringing transit options to Up-County in the nearer term in a manner that overcomes certain barriers. However, we want to ensure that the Public Hearing Draft does not unnecessarily impede future connectivity across I-270. The Public Hearing Draft recommends eliminating "the expensive grade-separated interchange planned for Dorsey Mill and Century Boulevard," given that the interchange is "no longer necessary" and its elimination will "reduc[e] implementation cost of rapid transit." (See page 32). The Public Hearing Draft goes on to state that "[w]hile vehicular access is no longer necessary" over I-270, "pedestrian/bicycle connective over or under I-270 [should] continue to be explored." (See page 32).

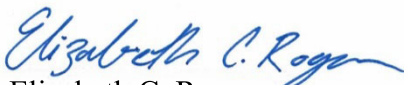
Simply because the Dorsey Mill Road bridge connection is no longer "necessary" for transit use does not mean that this connectivity is no longer desirable for general vehicular connectivity. Lerner Enterprises has invested a considerable amount of money in engineering and designing this grade separate interchange – in fact, Lerner Enterprises spent \$2,039,426 for which it has certified transportation impact tax credits through an agreement with MCDOT in February, 2019. Furthermore, the Dorsey Mill Road bridge is included in the County's current Capital Improvements Program. This bridge provides an important, multi-modal east-west connection between existing and planned residential, commercial and mixed used developments, as well as parks and recreational areas, on both sides of I-270 in Germantown.

Given the significant financial investment that has already been made by Lerner Enterprises in the design and engineering for this crossing, we urge the Planning Board to include explicit language in the Corridor Forward Plan that recognizes the importance this Dorsey Mill Road bridge crossing will have for vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, even if this connection is no longer deemed "necessary" for the current transit network. We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Brewer, Jr.



Elizabeth C. Rogers

Cc: James Policaro



10400 Detrick Avenue
Kensington, MD 20895-2484
(240) 627-9400



December 9, 2021

Via Email - mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

The Honorable Casey Anderson, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan Public Hearing

Dear Chairman Anderson,

On behalf of the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County staff, thank you for the opportunity to share comments and affirm our general support for the direction of Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan. We thank the Planning Board and staff for working to create a cohesive strategy for connecting communities along the I-270 corridor. As Montgomery County's housing authority and one of its most active and invested developers and operators of affordable housing, we are supportive of Corridor Forward's broad commitment to community equity in alignment with the county's social equity principles and the specific goal to create affordable housing in areas where new transit may increase rents.

We are furthermore encouraged by the steps Planning has taken to prioritize Equity Focus Areas in transit planning – recognizing the responsibility it bears to develop plans, policies, and regulations that benefit all community members and reduce or eliminate inequity. The Corridor Forward plan clearly embraces that focus on equity in prioritizing the MD 355/Frederick Road BRT services and the Lakeforest and Montgomery Village Connector, which will create critical service connections for the Montgomery Village Equity Focus Area, including HOC's Cider Mill property. As you may be aware, HOC acquired Cider Mill in 2018 to ensure those units were preserved as affordable for the long-term and to alleviate the rent burden that many under resourced households in that community faced.

As housers, we know that leveraging transportation infrastructure and public transit investments is a key component of developing vibrant communities and helping people reach their fullest potential - giving residents robust transit options close to home increases their access to employment and other resources across Montgomery County. While we applaud the efforts to identify and improve the Montgomery Village community's regional access via the Corridor Forward recommendations, we believe 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.

The Willows in Gaithersburg is in a designated Equity Focus Area where 61.1 percent of residents are low income and 92.9 percent of households are families of color. The area serves many low to moderate-

income households, including affordable housing at HOC's property, The Willows, as well as numerous voucher households and nearly 1,000 naturally occurring affordable units. As it stands, the route for the new proposed dedicated BRT lanes misses this entire community and a substantial opportunity to serve low-income and families of color with transit where they live. We strongly recommend rerouting toward I-270 to reach this Equity Focus Area directly or prioritizing a long-term solution that will provide a connection to the substantial transit hub planned on the west side of I-270 at Route 124.

Emory Grove Village in Gaithersburg is also located in a designated Equity Focus Area where 31.7 percent of households are low income and 64.8 percent are families of color. Moreover, the history of urban renewal which failed to deliver on the promise of investment in communities like Emory Grove still stands to be corrected. While HOC and others are prepared to support future community investments here, creating a spur to serve this community with rapid transit options will constitute a significant step toward advancing equitable solutions for communities that have experienced disconnection and disinvestment by past planning and development decisions.

We urge Planning to carefully consider these suggestions as they are key changes that will serve to correct historic social and racial inequities and bolster Corridor Forward's commitment to advancing community equity.

HOC greatly appreciates the opportunity to share these comments with the Planning Board and looks forward to collaborating with staff on this and other efforts that serve the residents of Montgomery County.

DocuSigned by:

Respectfully,



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Kayline Brown

Acting Executive Director

EISINGER TESTIMONY TO DECEMBER 9TH HEARING BEFORE THE PLANNING COMMISSION ON THE 270 CORRIDOR FORWARD STUDY

I believe determining the viability of a transportation corridor requires just one issue to be resolved at the very beginning: whether the ground is Available, and here is why.

The ground determines about 30% of the total cost of a transportation project, whether it is an expansion outside the right of way of an existing system or acquisition of a new right of way.

The ground constrains:

1. The timing of the project, i.e. when it will be started and completed and opened
2. The environmental effects of the project, which are usually always negative re SWM
3. The type of transit mode available for the project: Metal wheel Light/heavy rail or rubber wheel BRT or some other rubber wheel technology
4. The amount of underground utilities it will affect and the cost of relocating same
5. And as I stated: It significantly increases the Total Construction Cost

If you remove these ground variables from the cost of the transportation project, one spectacular element occurs:

You significantly reduce the construction costs, time required to complete and the budget contingencies.

The PURPLE line has been stalled for exactly these contingences: ground acquisition extended the schedule, coordinating ground utilities caused additional specific costs and extended the schedule, all scheduling issues led to a large increase in the interest costs. Minimizing schedule and finance risks is key to a successful project, removing ground issues does this.

Let's ignore the environmental storm water elements, the anticipated opening date uncertainty, and the underground utility cost and just talk about one aspect: Total Cost.

I have a Commercial Development company. If we could remove 30% of the total cost from each project, ever project we did would be a financial home run, but boy, if you could remove the ground costs that is exactly what you do!

Well, guess what, that can be done by elevating a transit mode over an existing publicly owned transportation corridor. You can remove more than 30% of the construction costs from the Outset. All you need to do is elevate it over ground you already own. Air Rights! Heard of that?

In Virginia they elevated portions of the Silver Line over existing public ground. You also can dodge underground utilities in certain cases and with certain modes by doing that.

Now metal wheel transit is very heavy and requires a lot of width and a lot of concrete support structure. The cost and environmental effects of that can be enormous. But what if a technology existed that had one third of that weight and one third of the support structure and was rubber wheel? What if the technology requires smaller structure footprints and caused significantly less environmental stormwater damage? What if it was flexible as to where you put the supports, so you dodge underground utilities easily and what if the structure was built off site and then erected at night, reducing the negative impact during construction on existing traffic..... Wouldn't that be a blessing???

What if your own state MDOT had done a study which showed that this rubber wheeled transit mode was viable, even using the wrong and inappropriately negative input assumptions? And I can attest that they did use erroneous data which significantly reduced the benefit of the mode, without any doubt, yet they still concluded that the mode was economic and equally cost comparable to light rail.

In our opinion, and the opinion of experts in the field, and the bulk of your constituency that we have met with, here is your least expensive, shortest construction time, and highest capacity transit Network for the entire county and environs:

A Monorail network:

1. Frederick to SG Red Line
2. Metropolitan Grove thru LSC to SG RED Line on southern CCT
3. SG Red Line down Rockville Pike to Bethesda
4. Strathmore thru Rockledge across the AL Bridge to Tysons.
5. Metropolitan Grove to The Muirkirk Station across the ICC
6. This cross connects Frederick to Metro, and the MARC rail and the Silver Line with Metro and the MARC rail and connects two separate MARC systems

*You own or control almost all the ground now, at least 98% of it.

*It will be totally grade separated from all existing traffic, and therefore has

*Minimal interference with existing traffic during construction and after construction

*It has limited ground disturbance and minimal to no impact on underground or overhead utilities

*Topography is not an issue, we engineered it to make sure the 6% grade limitation was attainable for the entire system

*The cost can be budgeted to within 95% of true cost at the very beginning

*You limit the land acquisition contingency from your budget and the timing variables

*You are not reengineering and spending exorbitant design dollars on reconfiguring highway intersections which increases the construction time and cost, of a BRT for example

*You are not causing storm water runoff

*You have complete flexibility in where you want it in the existing right way, it can be moved from side to side of the highway at will depending on the existing r planned density in the corridor

*The entire system can be constructed in 10 years, subject to regional approval process

*It is essentially independent of weather year-round and therefore reliable

*It has a useful life of at least 50 years, while infrastructure can be designed for a 100-year useful life.

*Because it can be accurately budgeted at the outset, the P3 structure can be successfully implemented without unacceptable contingencies and more easily financed

*It will provide the best image possible to attract employers and workers to the County and the region

And most importantly: It will set an example nationally of an Environmentally sensitive and cost-efficient transportation system that is State of the Art and showcase the legitimacy of Montgomery County as a leader nationally in land planning.

There is no other transit mode that offers these characteristics.

Interim BRT can be utilized to span the 10 years on existing right of ways, without modifications to existing interchanges and impacts on existing traffic. The useful life of a BRT is about 10-12 years anyway.

1. Building the first Monorail leg, down from Frederick starts the network. This implements the Corridor Forward Vision that your staff is looking for, much better than any of their recommended options

Once that leg is built, It, by itself, creates the passenger demand and loads the second segment:

2. The Lower CCT of Metropolitan Grove thru the LSC (modified to connect the Universities at SG) to the SG Red Line without a separate bus loop

Those two Passenger loads then push toward the third segment:

3. SG Red Line down Rockville Pike to Bethesda

And then that segment loads the fourth segment:

4. Strathmore thru Rockledge across the AL Bridge to Tysons.

While a supplemental fifth segment can be implemented at will:

5. Metropolitan Grove across the Intercounty Connector to the Muirkirk Metro Station which cross connects the two MARC Rails with the Monorail and with the Metro Red Line.

One last thing: MDOT determined that the cost per mile of a monorail is equal to or less than a surface light rail system, and three times LESS expensive than heavy rail. That does not include ground costs, so remove another 30% from the cost of a monorail. Supplement that with the fact that a monorail carries 5 times the number of passengers per hour than a light rail, and about the same number as a heavy rail metro.

If we had made the Purple Line a monorail, rather than a surface light rail, you would have achieved a system that carried 5 times the number of passenger per hour for the same cost, therefore 1/5th cost per passenger enhancing its ability to reduce fares and at the same time, provide incredible future capacity to a system that will now have to be replaced at public expense sometime in the future. But don't forget, it also would have dodged the utility relocation costs: the initial contractor described the Purple Line project as nothing more than that: a utility relocation project. Also don't forget, you would have built the structure offsite and significantly reduced the pedestrian and traffic interference and the safety of the system during and after its construction. You could have also taken the mode directly into the lobby of the new library in Silver Spring, like the Hotel at Disney world, since it is electric and does not require overhead canary wires and has no air quality concerns., in lieu of cutting an exterior section out of the building and running the mode alongside it outside, we could have had the first state of art example in Montgomery County.

The staff's recommendations all require significant ground acquisition. In fact, most it may not even be able to be acquired, as the CSX right of way to Germantown. The thought or recommendation of such an extension is literally a waste of effort and has delayed any thought of having a system in place for the public in the foreseeable future.

Their further recommendation of keeping all transit extensions within the county is completely flawed. The traffic coming down from Frederick is penetrating our local roads and impacting our congestion. If you ignore Frederick, you have totally lost all planning rationality, IMHO.

In summary, our public sector here is not thinking appropriately, rationally, economically, nor practically, and you are completely missing reality. Why in the world would you guide your staff to anything so environmentally insensitive as the only recourse being to force the state to widen the footprint of I 270, and further damage our Ag Preserve, or create recommendations that "can-never happen in our lifetimes", like the extension of Metro to within the county only? Why?

When you have available an international team of experts on all transit modes that have analyzed all of it, prepared traffic studies, fare studies, demand study, economic studies, and concluded the fastest to market, less expensive, longest life span option, significantly less expensive PER PASSENGER of any option is MONORAIL?

And then the staff discarded it. Not real smart in my humble opinion. Sorry.

From: [Joe McAndrew](#)
To: [McGowan, Jesse](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [McVary, Jessica](#); [Reed, Patrick](#); [Anderson, Casey](#); [John Hillegass](#)
Subject: RE: Public Hearing Draft Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan
Date: Thursday, December 9, 2021 5:08:29 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Montgomery County Planning Team –

My apologies for missing the timeframe for providing public testimony or being able to attend the important public discussion re: the Corridor Forward Plan. First, job well done for taking on such a large task. Thank you for providing the Greater Washington Partnership the opportunity review and provide feedback on the Draft for Corridor Forward: the I-270 Transit Plan (“Corridor Forward”). We support many of the aspects of this important plan, including support for the MD 355 and the Veirs Mill BRTs.

We are concerned/alarmed with the findings that devalue the opportunity before the county and the state from enhancements to MARC’s Brunswick Line. While we see issues with the data the underpin the findings in the draft pertaining to MARC and Metrorail, I want to focus on the regional and federal support that is waiting the county and state when we are ready. There is real leadership being shown by the General Assembly and the federal delegation to ensure we are able to press the state to do their utmost to secure as much of the \$66 billion for rail included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also known as the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act). This leadership by the General Assembly has materialized in the state recently starting work to create a capital program for the Brunswick Line to position the state for larger federal investments and enhance service frequencies, bi-directional service, and all day service over the next 20-years. The state is expected to generate near-, medium-, and long-term capital projects that will generate incremental gains during this period. This is in line with the [Capital Region Rail Vision](#), a product of the Partnership, but developed through supported and buy-in from a broad regional leadership group.

Expansion of MARC’s service also provides great benefit to Upcounty, as well as Frederick County and Western Maryland. It will not just provide new transportation options into the DMV’s central core, but also enable new economic development and employer relocation/location decisions through TOD near each of these stations. These suburban station locations are ripe as employers are examining dispersed employee worksite decisions post-pandemic.

We believe a re-examination of the potential benefit from frequent bi-direction seven day per week MARC service is warranted before this product is finalized.

Best Regards,
Joe

From: McGowan, Jesse <jesse.mcgowan@montgomeryplanning.org>



Sierra Club Montgomery County,
P.O. Box 4024, Rockville, MD 20849

December 9, 2021

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

Re: Corridor Forward Plan

Dear Chair Anderson and Planning Board members,

The Sierra Club Montgomery County Group supports moving forward briskly with improved transit in the I-270 corridor!

Sierra Club is a strong supporter of Smart Growth. We have enunciated a number of Smart Growth principles that serve as the foundation for our position on specific plans, such as this one.

Pertinent here are these key principles –

- Encourage investment in a variety of transit (including Metro, MARC, light rail, BRT, RideOn and other buses);
- Encourage programs and policies that make transit more safe, convenient, pleasant, frequent;
- Discourage any investment in building new roads.

Thus, we strongly oppose adding lanes to I-270 and oppose re-purposing its current HOV lanes to become toll lanes.

We also believe that it is not sufficient for us to oppose a bad plan (such as Governor Hogan's ill-conceived 270 expansion). We also need to advocate for a sensible and responsible alternative.

In this case, we strongly support creating a robust transit alternative that will truly give upcounty folks a fast and pleasant option to get where they want and need to go for many daily and weekly trips.

The 270 Corridor Plan presents two such transit proposals --

- The immediate creation of BRT on 355 and the neighboring Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT); and
- The longer-term extension of Metro's Red Line to Germantown.

We heartily support the proposal to create a BRT on 355 and to build out the CCT.



Sierra Club Montgomery County,
P.O. Box 4024, Rockville, MD 20849

We have reviewed a recent Action Committee for Transit (ACT) analysis of the proposed Red Line to Germantown. ACT suggests that perhaps an expansion of MARC service might turn out to be more cost-effective than Metro extension to Germantown.

Based on that analysis, we urge the Planning Dept and Planning Board to give the ACT perspective serious consideration.

In particular, when comparing Metro extension vs. MARC expansion, please bear in mind the difference in the timing of impact. We find compelling the argument that Metro expansion will take many years to offer improved transit to riders; in contrast, improvements in MARC service can be phased in over time, with some benefits kicking in immediately.

Transportation investment to provide significantly improved transportation options along the 270 corridor is important.

By far the wiser investment – with substantial benefits for residents and the climate – is moving forward with transit proposals (such as those spelled out in this plan). In contrast, Governor Hogan's Lane expansion proposal will have no benefits for improving transportation options for residents and will have negative impacts on the climate.

In sum, Sierra Club commends the 270 Transit Plan; and we urge that it be re-evaluated and updated quickly and then passed along to the County Council and implemented. There's no time to waste for residents stuck in traffic and for saving our planet from the ravages of climate change.

Thank you,

Shruti Bhatnagar, Chair
Sierra Club Montgomery County
Shruti.bhatnagar@mdsierra.org



910 Clopper Road, Suite 205N, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878 (301) 840-1400, Fax (301) 963-3918

CORRIDOR FORWARD: The I-270 Transit Plan Working Draft
PUBLIC HEARING – Planning Board
December 9, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the working draft of the Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan. The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce has engaged in the public process and is very interested in increasing transportation capacity in the I-270 corridor. We appreciate your commitment to finding viable solutions to our transportation needs.

Unfortunately, we are unable to attend the public hearing as the date conflicts with the Chamber's annual dinner. That is in no way a reflection of our interest in this plan.

We would like to comment on several aspects of the plan.

1. Red Line Metro to Germantown – We understand that this is a long-term transit option and agree that the option of adding metro to Germantown would greatly increase transportation capacity.
2. Corridor Cities Transitway – The Chamber has been a steady advocate for the CCT for the past fifteen years. A significant amount of time and money has been spent planning this transit project. The right-of-way exists to move this project forward. It is disappointing to see the project chopped in half, with no direct through line from Shady Grove, through the life science center, Gaithersburg, Germantown, and ultimately to Clarksburg. We understand the criticism that the original planned route may not be the most efficient way to get from Clarksburg to the Shady Grove Metro, but the CCT was envisioned to be so much more than that. The importance of this transit line is moving between residential hubs and commercial hubs all along the corridor, not necessarily a commuter connection from Point A to Point B. While the replacement "corridor connectors" make sense, eliminating the CCT also eliminates a critical north-south transit connection between Gaithersburg and Germantown. The proposed BRT on the East side of I-270 does not take the place of the CCT.

There is also a disconnect between this working draft and the transportation priorities of the County. As recently as the Montgomery County Road Show, both the County Council and our State Delegation were advocating for full funding of the CCT as it is currently designed.

3. Repurposing Lanes – We question the underlying assumption that existing general-purpose travel lanes will be repurposed solely for transit. As staunch advocates of the CCT, we wholeheartedly agree that BRT is most effective with designated travel lanes. We also know that it will be extremely difficult to repurpose auto lanes to make that happen. We understand that

future traffic studies will determine whether repurposing lanes is feasible. Anecdotally, anyone who drives these roads on a daily basis will tell you it is impossible. The BRT options included in the plan need to assume construction of designated travel lanes and not be conditional on repurposed lanes.

4. Elimination of CIP Funding for New Travel Lanes (Chapter 6, Table 15) – We fully support the need for transit and continue to advocate for increased transit capacity. But we also need roadway improvements. Given the residential geography of the Upcounty, we rely on both. The recommendation to eliminate CIP funding for new travel lanes is not a viable option and seems misplaced in this document. This plan basically circumvents the County's budgetary process. Given the severe lack of transportation funding, it can be assumed that if a road project is already in the CIP it has been fully vetted and determined warranted. We strongly disagree with the transit plan having a blanket recommendation to eliminate existing capital improvement road projects.

Thank you for your consideration.

Contact: Marilyn Balcombe, mbalcombe@ggchamber.org

Email

FW: Agenda #4: Corridor ...

Owner

 MC...

Email

From

 catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

FW: Agenda #4: Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent

Date Received

12/10/2021 10:36 AM

From: LC <lisajeane@aol.com>

Sent: Thursday, December 9, 2021 8:51 PM

To: Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>; Anderson, Casey <Casey.Anderson@mncppc-mc.org>; Asare, Isaac <Isaac.Asare@montgomeryplanning.org>; Broullire, Bridget <Bridget.Broullire@montgomeryplanning.org>; Cichy, Gerald <Gerald.Cichy@mncppc-mc.org>; Coleman, Delisa <delisa.coleman@mncppc.org>; Eatmon, Jake <jake.eatmon@mncppc-mc.org>; Frymark, Nick <Nick.Frymark@montgomeryplanning.org>; Kronenberg, Robert <robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org>; MC-AuditoriumStaff <AuditoriumStaff@montgomeryplanning.org>; MC-WHQ-02-200-AUD-CAP200 <MC-WHQ-02-200-AUD-CAP200@mncppc-mc.org>; Mills, Matthew <matthew.mills@mncppc.org>; Moise, Clara <clara.moise@mncppc-mc.org>; Myers, Allison <Allison.Myers@mncppc.org>; Olson, Shannon <shannon.olson@mncppc-mc.org>; Parsons, James <James.Parsons@mncppc-mc.org>; Patterson, Tina <tina.patterson@mncppc-mc.org>; Peifer, Christopher <Christopher.Peifer@montgomeryplanning.org>; Stern, Tanya <tanya.stern@montgomeryplanning.org>; Thompkins, Melissa <melissa.thompkins@mncppc-mc.org>; Vaias, Emily <Emily.Vaias@mncppc.org>; Verma, Partap <Partap.Verma@mncppc-mc.org>; Wright, Gwen <gwen.wright@montgomeryplanning.org>; Reed, Patrick <patrick.reed@montgomeryplanning.org>; McGowan, Jesse <jesse.mcgowan@montgomeryplanning.org>; McVary, Jessica <Jessica.McVary@montgomeryplanning.org>; Sanders, Carrie <carrie.sanders@montgomeryplanning.org>; Sartori, Jason <Jason.Sartori@montgomeryplanning.org>; stacee@nealrgross.com; schedule@nealrgross.com; adsaundry@gmail.com; 3magmom@gmail.com; christinedibble@outlook.com; Steve.silverman@ssgovrelations.com; sesaaw@gmail.com; davidwsears@aol.com; president@thehighroadfoundation.org; lpa@hocmc.org; erikherron@gmail.com; director@obgc.com; cindys369@gmail.com; leonard.suzanne@gmail.com

Cc: Eatmon, Jake <jake.eatmon@mncppc-mc.org>; Olson, Shannon <shannon.olson@mncppc-mc.org>; Thompkins, Melissa <melissa.thompkins@mncppc-mc.org>; Parsons, James <James.Parsons@mncppc-mc.org>

Subject: Re: Agenda #4: Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan Public Hearing

my sincere apologies for missing tonight's meeting. My mother's doctor called and I had to make that a priority. I hope you understand.

I am opposed to portion of the 1-270 Transit Plan involving the CCT. I don't see that the population in the Great Seneca Science Corridor will support a billion-dollar dedicated busway.

I am pro-transit and find it suitable for cities, but our Ride On buses are undersubscribed (severely, I might add) along Great Seneca Highway and Muddy Branch Road near where I live.

I have been studying this project for years and have met numerous times with the architects of the CCT (when it was being managed by the State). The alignment was so severely flawed (it would actually add 4 minutes to a one-way trip compared to taking the Ride On) that a legislator outright laughed when I showed him this finding. The state dumped it for a reason.

Mostly, however, the plan threatens this suburban lifestyle (which is why we moved here — less traffic, more green space, less pollution). I don't see these things to be luxuries, but choices.

Density is fine for the city, but to carve up our landscape, cut trees and pave green space in exchange for bus exhaust and noise is tone-deaf to what residents here want and blind to future ridership projections.

This quote from [Mass Transit](#) summarizes the issue. I would be interested to know how the Planning Board responds:

**"The ridership world we had on March 13, 2020, is not coming back," said Katharine Eagan Kelleman, CEO of the Port Authority, in an interview with the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.
"Ridership may continue to grow somewhat, but it will look different. We don't even know what that might look like yet."**

Elsewhere, the [APTA dashboard](#) indicates a severe dip in ridership due to the pandemic.

As such, I feel the conversation about the CCT should be tabled entirely until we are healthy as a country; that means comfortable returning to public transit.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

**Lisa Cline
420 Upshire Circle
Gaithersburg**

-----Original Message-----

From: Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>

To: Anderson, Casey <Casey.Anderson@mncppc-mc.org>; Asare, Isaac

<Jessica.McVary@montgomeryplanning.org>; Sanders, Carrie <carrie.sanders@montgomeryplanning.org>; Sartori, Jason <Jason.Sartori@montgomeryplanning.org>; Stacey Douglas (NRGCO) <stacey@nealrgross.com>; schedule@nealrgross.com <schedule@nealrgross.com>; Lisa Cline <lisajeane@aol.com>; adsaundry@gmail.com <adsaundry@gmail.com>; 3magmom@gmail.com <3magmom@gmail.com>; christinedibble@outlook.com <christinedibble@outlook.com>; Steve.silverman@ssgovrelations.com <Steve.silverman@ssgovrelations.com>; sesaaw@gmail.com <sesaaw@gmail.com>; davidwsears@aol.com <davidwsears@aol.com>; president@thehighroadfoundation.org <president@thehighroadfoundation.org>; lpa@hocmc.org <lpa@hocmc.org>; erikherron@gmail.com <erikherron@gmail.com>; director@obgc.com <director@obgc.com>; cindys369@gmail.com <cindys369@gmail.com>; leonard.suzanne@gmail.com <leonard.suzanne@gmail.com>
Cc: Eatmon, Jake <jake.eatmon@mncppc-mc.org>; Olson, Shannon <shannon.olson@mncppc-mc.org>; Thompkins, Melissa <melissa.thompkins@mncppc-mc.org>; Parsons, James <James.Parsons@mncppc-mc.org>

Sent: Wed, Dec 8, 2021 5:08 pm

Subject: Agenda #4: Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan Public Hearing

Please do not forward this invitation.

Agenda #4: Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan Public Hearing

Please join the meeting at 6:15PM for setup. The meeting will begin live streaming at 6:30PM.

Mute yourself when you are not talking.

Please use your webcam when you are speaking or being spoken to.

For Applicants and members of the community: All presentations and/or exhibits must be sent to catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org or mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org prior to your scheduled agenda item.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Join with a video conferencing device

<https://teams.microsoft.com/join/1158619812>

Video Conference ID: 115 861 981 2

[Alternate VTC instructions](#)

Or call in (audio only)

+1 443-961-1463,,950003400# United States, Baltimore

950 003 400#

Joshua Bokee
1024 Dulaney Mill Road
Frederick, MD 21702
Jbokee@gmail.com

December 9, 2021

Mr. Casey Anderson
Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I am writing to the Montgomery County Planning Board to submit comments regarding the proposed staff draft of the Corridor Forward: I-270 Transit Plan as presented for public hearing on December 9, 2021. The Corridor Forward plan is both thoughtful and innovative in presenting future transit options that would maintain a strong focus on equity, tie together the future residential and economic needs of the area as well as offer vehicular traffic relief for a growing region.

I am a resident of the City of Frederick; however, I work throughout the region and like many know firsthand the challenges of today's traffic environment. I also serve as a member of Frederick County's Transportation Services Advisory Council (TSAC) whose purpose is to make formal recommendations to the County Executive and the County Council about all modes of transportation, with a specific focus on transit related objectives. Please note that my written comments are my own and I am not representing TSAC or any other business or organization.

As a former member of the City of Frederick's Board of Aldermen (city council) as well as prior resident of Montgomery County; I am strong believer in taking a regional approach to transportation solutions. The Corridor Forward plan is holistic in its thinking to the challenges of the 270 corridor, especially in its focus on how each transit option would help solve the unmet needs of Montgomery County as well how each would have positive regional benefits as well.

For your consideration, I would recommend that both the Red Line extension to Germantown AND Enhanced MARC Rail be included together as your recommended long term (15 years+) transit options. It is understandable why staff would recommend the Red Line option as the best long term 'bet' for reducing vehicular miles driven by connecting via rail the Up County with Rockville, Bethesda and

ultimately Washington, D.C. A Red Line extension would have the benefit of potentially increasing density within Germantown, creating a true post-suburban town center environment.

Normally, I would concur that only one long term option should be considered. However, adding Enhanced MARC Rail to your 15 year+ recommendation has the benefit of pulling in regional support for a transit solution that has both meaningful impact (ridership) as well as reasonable cost affordability (as compared to other considered options). Including Enhanced MARC Rail in the final Corridor Forward recommendations would have the added benefit of helping to serve as a signal to Frederick County that it would have a partner in advocating for much needed improvements to this rail line.

Including BOTH the Red Line Extension and Enhanced MARC Rail as Corridor Forward's 15 year+ recommendations would complement the stated objectives both within and surrounding Montgomery County.

Montgomery and Frederick counties are inextricably linked together – indeed, the City of Frederick and Bethesda are both, respectively, the northern and southern anchors of the “270 Technology Corridor.” The Corridor Forward plan builds on that interconnectedness now, and into the future. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joshua Bokee

Joshua Bokee
jbokee@gmail.com

Email

MARC SERVICE EXPANSION

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Jane Pontius

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

MARC SERVICE EXPANSION

Date Sent

Date Received

12/3/2021 10:26 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chair,


Please give full consideration to expansion of the MARC train service to DC. I was a train rider daily for years. It is economical to expand service compared to Metro expansion. It is the best way to get cars off I 270 to points south.

I had to stop riding the train once I had young children due to the lack of a more flexible schedule.

Thanks,

Jane Pontius

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		
There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.		

Email

MARC trains

Owner

 MCP-Chair #

Email

From  Noelie Angevine

To  <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  janesos@aol.com;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject MARC trains

Date Sent **Date Received** 12/2/2021 6:18 PM


[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My son has a disability and is unable to drive. Because of the availability if the MARC line, he has been able to take classes, go to his doctors, go to galleries, etc.. When COVID is gone, hopefully he will be able to return to those activities.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the needs of your vulnerable constituents.

Noelie Angevine
13501 Clear Morning Pl, Germantown, MD 20874

Attachments

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Email

Please include expanding t...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Katharine Blackman

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Please include expanding the MARC in Corridor Forward

Date Sent

Date Received

12/2/2021 12:45 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

I am a resident of Boyds and am writing to encourage you to reverse the flawed recommendation against expanding MARC service as a part of the Corridor Forward plan.

Six-years ago, my husband and I were considering leaving our home in DC for a more peaceful setting where we could raise our future family. We settled on historic Boyds for many reasons but the biggest thing that kept us in Montgomery County rather than headed into Northern Virginia or Frederick was the access to the MARC.

The MARC train is clean, reliable, and a pleasure to ride, a VERY different experience to riding metro. The only downside to the MARC is that the service needs to be expanded to 7-days a week, two-way. What a boon to our family to be able to live in this beautiful place and have access to the city and to even more natural spaces further out towards Harpers Ferry.

In light of the climate crisis, I cannot begin to understand the decision to not expand access to an *existing* public transit option that would serve the upper portion of the county that is often left out of planning decisions. Expanding 270 is a reckless proposal and is unconscionable knowing it a) won't relieve traffic and b) doesn't encourage travel by public transportation.

I spent some time living in London and the ability to travel by train from bustling cities to natural spaces was, sadly, shocking to me. Why can't we have that here using *existing* infrastructure?

I know the pandemic has greatly impacted ridership on the MARC but this plan looks at the next 30 years of growth. I know as soon as my little ones can be vaccinated, we would absolutely use the MARC to travel into DC to show them all that the city has to offer, but we would also be inclined to visit restaurants in Gaithersburg and antique shops in Kensington that flank the MARC stations. Don't let our current, temporary, situation make us lose sight of our larger picture.

In addition to these personal reasons for wanting to expand access, the Action Committee for Transit has also alerted me to these excellent points that you should consider:

The expansion can start immediately. It only requires an agreement between the freight railroad CSX and the county/state to add trains in return for public investments in track capacity. In contrast, a Metro Red Line extension would take decades, like the Metro

Silver Line or (unfortunately) the Purple Line.


All-day, two-way, seven-day service would connect walkable communities all along the whole length of the MARC line, including Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Frederick, Brunswick, and Harper's Ferry.

Even according to the flawed study, expanded MARC service would attract 4.5 times as many new riders per train trip as a Metro Red Line extension.

Thank you,

Katharine Blackman
Boys, MD

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
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0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1

Please expand MARC trai...

 MC...

From

To

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Please expand MARC train service rather than metro or highway

Date Sent**Date Received**

12/8/2021 9:57 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hi,


As a Montgomery County resident who has commuted to The District for many years from Germantown, Takoma Park, Silver Spring, and Garrett Park, the MARC train is by far the best option available in terms of efficiency and cost compared to driving or Metro.

I'm concerned to learn that the expansion of MARC train service along the Brunswick line is not being given high priority consideration by the planning board. As a commuter, MARC train saves me time and money and is more uniformly reliable than Metro.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marty Brown
Garrett Park, MD

Attachments

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<div></div> <p>There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more</p>		

Email

MARC Train Expansion

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Jay Choudhary

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

MARC Train Expansion

Date Sent

Date Received

12/3/2021 8:32 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

As a long time commuter from Frederick County to Montgomery County, I was surprised to hear that MARC train expanded service is not being considered along side a red line expansion.

It seems that MARC expanded service could be a near term solution until a red line expansion could actually happen. The MARC stations are already in place and the track is already on the ground.


I urge you to reconsider including MARC train expanded service into your planning.

Thank you,

Jay Choudhary
New Market, MD

Sent from my mobile

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		

Email

Trains

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 sherry dillon

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Trains

Date Sent


Date Received

12/3/2021 8:32 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

We need more Marc Trains, I truly believe that if the trains had more flexibility to them and not locked to a certain schedule More people would take advantage of them. If would be great to make appointments Please consider expanding Marc Service

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		
There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.		
0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1

Email

MARC expansion

Owner

 MC...

Email

From

 John Fay

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

MARC expansion

Date Sent

Date Received


12/2/2021 11:58 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

MARC is here! Use it, expand it. Establish full day service at least up to Frederick. Don't spend the next five years arguing about it or extending the Red Line, and then another 40 years building the Red Line extension.

John Fay
12505 kuhl Rd.
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-946-5599

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
<div></div> <p>There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.</p>		
0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1

Email

Please Expand MARC Trai...

Owner

 MC...

Email

From

 Patrick Fitzgerald

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

 Albornoz's Office, Councilmember;  Councilmember Friedson

Bcc

Subject

Please Expand MARC Train Service in Maryland

Date Sent

Date Received

12/8/2021 7:35 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Board,

I'm writing to ask that you expand MARC service in Maryland. It is an important service in our neighborhood of Garrett Park Estates and we truly must invest more in rail service than our roads. I also remain opposed to the expansion of I-270 and the Capital Beltway. Please consider the following:

- The expansion can start immediately. It only requires an agreement between the freight railroad CSX and the county/state to add trains in return for public investments in track capacity. In contrast, a Metro Red Line extension would take decades, like the Metro Silver Line or (unfortunately) the Purple Line.
- All-day, two-way, seven-day service would connect walkable communities all along the whole length of the MARC line, including Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Frederick, Brunswick, and Harper's Ferry.
- Even according to the flawed study, expanded MARC service would attract 4.5 times as many new riders per train trip as a Metro Red Line extension.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Patrick Fitzgerald
5102 Flanders Ave
Kensington, MD

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

Email

In Support of MARC expa...

Owner

 MC...

Email

From

 Marisa Van Saanen

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

In Support of MARC expansion

Date Sent

Date Received

12/8/2021 9:37 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Greetings,

I am a resident of Garrett Park, Maryland, and am strongly in favor of increased MARC expansion. I would like to see more stop times in Garrett Park. This is a wonderful way to get more people taking public transportation and encourage fewer cars on the road. Please expand MARC service.



Thanks so much.

All the best,
Marisa

--

Marisa B. Van Saanen
(301) 792-9072

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		

Email

MARC Service to Hagerst...

Owner

 MC...**Email****From** Linda Irvin-Craig**To** <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org**Cc****Bcc****Subject**

MARC Service to Hagerstown vs. Red Line to Germantown

Date Sent**Date Received**

11/20/2021 11:25 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

As a former County Commissioner in Washington County, Maryland, who remains concerned about the transportation options for our citizens, I urge your Planning Commission to look at the far more expanded implications of increasing MARC service over the extension of a more limited and possibly more expensive solution with the Red Line.

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.

Each of these proposals are expensive in the near and long term, so you need a greater advocacy for the funds from across the state. Washington County has long been the stepchild when it comes to transportation funding. Interstates 70 and 81 intersect here. Both remain four-lane nightmares.

A 2011 plan for the widening of I-81 has languished for money to complete our 12 miles of this highway, to match what both Pennsylvania and West Virginia have completed. This 10-year delay has cost body counts and funding to our first responders, who deal with this daily.

Both the City of Hagerstown and the Town of Williamsport shut down to local traffic when I-81 is blocked for clean up. US Route 11, the alternate route for hundreds of big rigs passes through both towns. We know what it is to wait beyond a reasonable time for funding.

Linda Irvin-Craig
301-739-1481

Attachments

File Name

File Size (Bytes)



Email

Testimony on the Corrido...

Owner

 MC...

Email

From

 Rodolfo Perez

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Testimony on the Corridor Forward Plan

Date Sent

Date Received

12/8/2021 12:16 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I oppose the current Corridor Forward Plan for the reasons explained herein. The only element of the plan that I support is the Corridor Cities Transitway alignment.

Respectfully,

Rodolfo E. Pérez, P.E.
6 Manor Spring Court
Silver Spring, MD 20906

The Corridor Forward Plan Contradicts the Goals of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

In the Frequently Asked Questions portal of the Corridor Forward Plan, its authors say that the plan does not propose transit alternatives to the I-495/I-270 Toll Lanes Project, and will not compare the potential of transit with highway projects as these are studied separately. The authors add that the Corridor Forward recommendations (likely to be completed before the toll lanes construction) *may be a reference to future negotiations to potentially direct toll revenues to either build transit facilities or to pay lump sums to the impacted jurisdictions.*

Such caveats turn the Corridor Plan into a pro forma exercise contingent to future negotiations, and contradict the goals that the M-NCPPC stated in its non-concurrence with the Toll Lanes Project. The M-NCPPC unequivocally stated that the toll lanes preferred alternative lacks specific, binding, and adequate multi-modal and transit elements essential for reducing the need for additional road capacity, such as the MARC rail improvements. Further, the M-NCPPC considered the TransUrban \$300 million contribution and other proposals for running buses on the toll lanes as simply inadequate tokens.

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.

(50% more).

For example, the plan created benefit-to-cost ratios (BCR) that favored the Red Line Extension with a methodology different from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) cost guidelines. This raises questions because the Red Line had the highest BCR of the transit options, but without accounting for right-of-way, operations, and maintenance facilities costs. It is also problematic since any Metro extension will depend on a federal Full Funding Grant Agreement that requires full adherence to FTA guidelines.

The plan incorrectly asserts that extending 7 miles of the Red Line, at a cost of \$1.7 billion is a better investment than improving 45.8 miles of track and associated infrastructure for MARC, at the lower cost of \$1.3 billion.

The plan also justifies spending \$115.5 million in 42 additional railcars for the Red Line Extension, over the lower cost of \$79.9 million for 9 locomotives and 39 railcars for MARC, and assumes that the Red Line would yield higher ridership and better regional benefits. These assumptions are improbable due to the following challenges:

The Metro Extension requires complex grade separations, 20 acres of right of way to meet safety requirements, and 70 acres of land for operations and maintenance facilities with costs not included in the estimates above.

Washington Metro is reluctant to build new extensions because it is focused on bringing its built network back to a state of good repair, and has far more pressing safety and capacity needs to address.


The purported ridership gains are moot considering the decades that it would take to build an expensive extension facing these challenges.

In contrast, the MARC improvements, already defined and planned, can start immediately as these only require agreement between CSX and the state to add train service in return for public investments in track capacity.

All-day, two-way, seven-day MARC service would connect walkable communities along the whole length of the line, including Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Frederick, Brunswick, and Harper's Ferry.

With seven stations north of Germantown, the MARC provides more regional travel benefits than an uncertain 7 mile Metro extension. The MARC already carries 95% of commuting trips, offers 70% of its passengers easy driving access to the stations, and connects to over 1.3 million jobs within a 30-minute walk or transit trip to the stations.

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		
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0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1

Email

More MARC Trains Please

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Nicolas Kotschoubey

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

 Ronit Dancis

Bcc

Subject

More MARC Trains Please

Date Sent

Date Received

12/3/2021 11:23 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board,

Please include MARC service expansion in Corridor Forward!

Some benefits of expanding progressive public transport in this time of climate emergency are:

- The expansion can start immediately. It only requires an agreement between the freight railroad CSX and the county/state to add trains in return for public investments in track capacity. In contrast, a Metro Red Line extension would take decades, like the Metro Silver Line or (unfortunately) the Purple Line.
- All-day, two-way, seven-day service would connect walkable communities all along the whole length of the MARC line, including Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Frederick, Brunswick, and Harper's Ferry.
- Expanded MARC service would attract 4.5 times as many new riders per train trip as a Metro Red Line extension.

Thank You,

Nic

Nicolas Kotschoubey
n.kotsch@ix.netcom.com
1-202-251-9699

Email

MARC service expansion s...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Steven Kraft

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

MARC service expansion support

Date Sent

Date Received

12/2/2021 3:40 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello MCP-Chair,

I am writing to you to support MARC service expansion, The expansion can start immediately. It only requires an agreement between the freight railroad CSX and the county/state to add trains in return for public investments in track capacity. In contrast, a Metro Red Line extension would take decades, like the Metro Silver Line or (unfortunately) the Purple Line.

- All-day, two-way, seven-day service would connect walkable communities all along the whole length of the MARC line, including Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Frederick, Brunswick, and Harper's Ferry.**
- Even according to the flawed study, expanded MARC service would attract 4.5 times as many new riders per train trip as a Metro Red Line extension.**

By expanding MARC, we reduce traffic congestion, pollution, and CO2 emissions by giving commuters expanded choices in how they move about Maryland. We also would giving remote workers expanded opportunities to live in lower cost of living communities, such as Frederick.

Thank you for your consideration,

-Steven Kraft

--

Steven Kraft

From: [Reed, Patrick](#)
To: [Reed, Patrick](#)
Subject: FW:: Explore MARC expansion before committing to Metrorail extension CRM:0345006
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 3:35:16 PM

----- Original Message -----

From: catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>;
Received: Tue Dec 07 2021 14:39:27 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)
To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>; MCP-Chair # <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>; <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>;
Subject: FW:: Explore MARC expansion before committing to Metrorail extension

From: liz5025@aol.com <liz5025@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 1:19 PM
To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Subject: Explore MARC expansion before committing to Metrorail extension

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

"Corridor Forward" has not realistically considered what appears to be a cheaper and more rapid implementation option to extending Metrorail beyond Gaithersburg: the expansion of MARC service. Instead, your office has relied on the shaky conclusions of a flawed study. As a faithful Metro rider for many years, I am by no means opposed to its expansion BUT a viable, faster, cheaper option--MARC--would definitely be preferable. At the very least, this option should be seriously explored (i.e., not dismissed out of hand or based on unrealistic estimates). Considering the wait time of the Metro option--including the possibility that delays such as those on the Dulles extension and on the Purple Line construction--as well as the overall cost, your office needs to move forward with a comparative analysis of the MARC and Metro options that considers a range of criteria and estimates.

Elizabeth L. Malone
423 Mansfield Rd.
Silver Spring, MD 20910.

From: [Reed, Patrick](#)
To: [Reed, Patrick](#)
Subject: FW: Transit plans CRM:0345005
Date: Tuesday, December 7, 2021 3:28:40 PM

----- Original Message -----

From: Anne Sturm <annets1@aol.com>;
Received: Mon Dec 06 2021 16:31:32 GMT-0500 (Eastern Standard Time)
To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>; MCP-Chair # <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>; <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>;
Subject: Transit plans

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

We need more public transportation in bus service, metro rail offerings and MARC trains. There is a huge need for more offerings in the time of day that trains run from Brunswick. There has to be a way to get the government to persuade the trains (or subsidize) to run more offerings every day - not just an early train on Fridays.

If that does not work, then we need a serious look at the monorail from Shady Grove to Frederick with stops in between.

Thank you,

Anne Sturm
P.O. Box 341
Barnesville, MD. 20838

Email

The Corridor Forward plan

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Shaima Nasiri

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

The Corridor Forward plan

Date Sent

Date Received

12/2/2021 4:26 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

My name is Shaima Nasiri. I live in Rockville at 1018 Baltimore Rd. I'm writing to urge you to prioritize the expansion of MARC train service for the next 30 year transit plan in the I-270 corridor. Two-direction, 7-day a week MARC service has the potential to transform the communities along the I-270 corridor. Expanded MARC service, together with local bus transit, bus rapid transit, and real progress in improving pedestrian and cyclist safety are needed to ensure that Montgomery County communities are attractive to people of all ages, families, and businesses.

Two-direction, 7-day a week MARC service has many positives. By creating another axis of all-day transit service, it would strengthen the transit-oriented nodes of Silver Spring, White Flint, and Rockville and create new nodes in Kensington, Gaithersburg, and Germantown by making car-free living far more convenient. Two-way MARC service would also give Montgomery County transit riders access to the walkable downtowns of Frederick and Brunswick, and potentially to Hagerstown.

It would also provide another transportation option, alleviating the commuting chokepoints that occur when there are Metro system disruptions or major roadwork and other incidents on I-270. Currently, we have a single point-of-failure mass transit system (Metro's Red Line) which any engineer will tell you is poor design.

One of the greatest benefits is that a phased expansion of MARC service could begin immediately because the tracks already exist. More trains could be added and service expanded sequentially as sections of new track are built. In contrast, prioritizing extension of Metro's Red Line would require giant expenditures as well as an incredible amount of work which would postpone any service far into the indefinite future (the Silver Line is a pointed example).

Montgomery County should prioritize passenger rail and expand MARC service. It would benefit residents, commuters, and businesses throughout upcounty and downcounty and help the county meet climate goals.

Sincerely,
Shaima Nasiri

Email**FW:: Please Expand MARC...**

Owner

 MC...**Email****From** catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org**To** <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org**Cc****Bcc****Subject**

FW:: Please Expand MARC Service

Date Sent**Date Received**

12/7/2021 2:42 PM


From: Melinda Salzman <salzmanmsw@starpower.net>**Sent:** Friday, December 3, 2021 4:42 PM**To:** MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>**Subject:** Please Expand MARC Service

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please move forward with expanding MARC service. Expanded service will provide access to riders all along the line, and reduce auto traffic in D.C. We can make these trains available quickly, without approval of new projects and years' long construction.

Best,
Melinda Salzman
1707 Black Oak Lane
Silver Spring MD 20910

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

Email

MARC Expansion--Please p...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Tise, Stephen (OS/ASPR/EMMO)

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

MARC Expansion--Please promote and expand its use

Date Sent

Date Received

12/3/2021 8:32 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.


I am writing in favor of expanding MARC service to DC. I have been a long time user of the MARC Brunswick line and have found it a quick and convenient means of getting from home in Germantown to Washington DC. I used to work in Rockville and commuted using Ride-On and the Metro and the time spent embarking and disembarking from the bus and train resulted in my commute being almost as long as my current commute downtown—and that's including the time it takes me to walk from Union Station to Work.

The train also is better for the environment and reduced congestion for those who, for whatever reason, must commute by car.

Giving the rapid growth in housing North of Germantown, transportation down the I270 corridor will only get worse. Please strengthen the MARC train system and promote it's use. Once people try it there is no going back.

Steve Tise
20812 Clear Morning Ct.
Germantown, MD 20874

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		
Page 1		

Email

FW:: Corridor Forward

Owner

 MC...

Email

From

 catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

FW:: Corridor Forward

Date Sent

Date Received

12/7/2021 2:42 PM

From: Daniel Marcin <dsmarcin@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, December 3, 2021 9:17 PM

To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>

Subject: Corridor Forward

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I would like to make two recommendations for "Corridor Forward" about I-270.

- 1) Expanding MARC service is good
- 2) ALL of the lanes of I-270 should be tolled.

Thank you for your service and have a great holiday season.


--

Daniel Marcin

Economist

dsmarcin@gmail.com[Homepage](#)

Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

Email

Put MARC at the center o...

Owner

 MC...

Email

From

 Robert Skip Williamson

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Put MARC at the center of transportation expansion

Date Sent

Date Received

12/8/2021 11:47 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I urge you to put MARC at the center of transportation expansion as you work on a draft plan ("Corridor Forward") for transit in the I-270 corridor for the next 30 years. MARC train service is already a vital transportation link between Maryland generally and D.C., especially along the I-270 corridor linking Montgomery County and DC. **We need more MARC** – more trains per day, including weekends.

The popularity and growth of MARC service over the years proves it is a popular and well-used means of transportation, moving large numbers of people over existing tracks. It is a terrific way to move more people with minimal impact on land use or emissions, unlike widening I-270 or extending Metro. **MARC expansion can start immediately.** It only requires an agreement between the freight railroad CSX and the county/state to add trains in return for public investments in track capacity. It serves a far larger number of communities than Metro, even if Metro were extended. All-day, two-way, seven-day service would connect communities within Montgomery County and all along the whole length of the MARC line, including Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Frederick, Brunswick, and Harper's Ferry. And the County's study says that **MARC service would attract 4.5 times as many new riders per train trip as a Metro Red Line extension.**

The past 20 years demonstrates that **Metro expansion is neither reliable nor desirable.** The Silver Line and the (hoped for) Purple Line show that it would take decades at best. A Metro extension would require the agreement of all jurisdictions, which is dubious. Even when capital funding has been approved to build tracks and stations, the number of cars and maintenance have not kept up with the needs. So even if an extension were built. the result would be a few



Don & Tina Slater
402 Mansfield Road
Silver Spring MD 20910-5515

To: Chair Anderson and Planning Board Commissioners
Subject: Corridor Forward Testimony
Date: December 9, 2021

Dear Chair Anderson and Commissioners:

I'm sending this testimony, speaking as an individual.
The Corridor Forward Plan is smart and needed now.
I agree with the plan's crucial first step -- **Dedicated Bus Lanes** on 355 and Veirs Mill.
This will move us closer to our goal of 80% GHG reduction by 2027.

More transit = less congestion
The most critical step we can take is to create *dedicated bus lanes*.
We must prioritize transit, even if it means taking an existing car lane.
Why do we prioritize drivers? Let's prioritize the environment.
A bus moving in its own dedicated lane is an "advertisement" to solo drivers sitting in traffic.

Transit is sustainable – driving cars is not.
GHG emissions degrade our health and environment.
Taking transit saves households money. AAA says the cost of owning a car is \$10,000 a year.
Transit users walk more and reduce their chances of obesity. CDC says 42% of Americans are obese.

Good transit rewards lower-income households.
The median annual household income of a Ride On rider is \$35,000, while the median annual household income of a county resident is \$108,000.

Extending the Red Line is a very, very long way off.
Acquiring land (in some places) for additional third track for MARC is a more near-term solution.

I appreciate the Planning Board working on a Transit solution for mid- and up-county. It is sorely needed.
Expanding 270/495 and signing a 50-year contract with an Australian firm who's in it for tolls is pure folly.

Sincerely,

Tina Slater
301-585-5038 home/landline
Email: slater.tina@gmail.com