

AGENDA ITEM #5  
July 15, 2008

Action

MEMORANDUM

July 11, 2008

TO: County Council  
FROM: <sup>GO</sup> Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Staff Director  
SUBJECT: **Action**—State transportation project priorities letter

**Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee (and Council staff) recommendation (2-0): Councilmembers Floreen and Leventhal recommend approval of the draft letter on ©7-9.** Councilmember Berliner was unable to attend the July 7 Committee meeting when this matter was discussed.

\* \* \*

Every year or two the Council and Executive transmit a joint letter to State officials with their funding priorities for currently unfunded State transportation construction projects and project planning studies in Montgomery County. The last joint letter was sent on February 6, 2007 (see ©1-3). That letter, and the past several versions of the letter, is in four parts:

1. A list of projects of statewide or regional significance that are programmed in the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) for planning and/or design, but not construction (©1). Typically these projects are not rank-ordered. Because most of them all multi-jurisdictional and all of them have large costs, the understanding is that they will proceed as funding and support exists statewide.
2. A list of projects of countywide significance funded in the CTP for planning and/or design only (top of ©2). These projects are rank-ordered. Once the State programs construction funding for a project, the project is removed from this list.
3. A list of potential non-transit—highway and/or bikeway—project planning studies that are not yet funded in the CTP's project planning (Development & Evaluation, or D&E) program (bottom of ©2). These projects are rank-ordered. Once the State programs project planning funds for a study, the study is removed from this list.
4. A list of potential transit project planning studies that are not yet funded in the D&E program (©3). These projects are rank-ordered. Once the State programs project planning funds for a study, the study is removed from this list.

**Planning Board recommendations.** The Planning Board reviewed State transportation priorities at its June 19 meeting (see the Board's recommendations in its letter on ©4-6). During this same time County Department of Transportation (DOT) staff, M-NCPPC staff, and Council staff have conferred. DOT and Council staffs concur on all points and differ from the Planning Board only on a few less significant points.

The Planning Board's recommended changes to the February 6, 2007 letter are noted below, as are the Council and DOT staffs' recommendations:

1. List of projects of statewide or regional significance

*Add the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program for the Walter Reed Army Medical Center/National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, as well as the Metrorail rehabilitation program. Council and DOT staffs concur.*

2. List of projects of countywide significance

a. *Delete the Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road interchange (ranked #1), since it is now funded in the Approved FY2008-2013 CTP. Council and DOT staffs concur.*

b. *Split the I-270/Watkins Mill Road interchange (ranked #2) project into two parts. The bridge over I-270, connecting the two segments of Watkins Mill Road that are under construction, would be the new #1 priority. These segments will be finished next year; once the bridge is erected the full Watkins Mill Road Extended will provide a local bypass of the congested Frederick Road/Montgomery Village Avenue and Quince Orchard Road/Clopper Road intersections, and provide more direct access to the Metropolitan Grove MARC Station from Montgomery Village. It should also improve mobility for the Montgomery Village/Airpark and North Potomac Policy Areas, which recently were placed in the 100% mitigation (i.e., moratorium) category by the Planning Board in its recent recalculation of Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR). Council and DOT staffs concur.*

c. *Raise Phase 2 of the Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway project—the bridge over the CSX tracks connecting to a new interchange at Parklawn Drive—from #9 ranking to #2. Now that the Council has programmed Montrose Parkway East, Phase 2 is needed to tie the sections of Montrose Parkway together. By connecting to Montrose Parkway East rather than back to Parklawn Drive, the State's unfunded cost is reduced by about half: from \$109 million (in FY07 dollars) down to \$53 million (in FY08 dollars). Council and DOT staffs concur.*

d. *Reduce the priority for the widening of Woodfield Road between Midcounty Highway and Snouffer School Road. The Planning Board believes that this segment is less important compared to a few other projects below it in priority. However, as the Board has recently placed Montgomery Village/Airpark in moratorium, this widening takes on a heightened importance. Council and DOT staffs recommend retaining this project as the #3 priority. If the Growth Policy is to continue to be used as a means to guide government's transportation investments, then this project should keep its high priority.*

e. *Reduce the priority of the balance of the I-270/Watkins Mill Road project—the ramps connecting the two roads—to a position just ahead of the Norbeck Road widening from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road. Council and DOT staffs also recommend reducing the priority of the ramps, but to a point a bit higher on the list: just ahead of the Spencerville Road widening in Burtonsville.* There are two reasons. First, the I-270/Watkins Mill interchange will help mobility in the Montgomery Village/Airpark and North Potomac Policy Areas, which are in moratorium; the Fairland/White Oak, Cloverly, and Aspen Hill Policy Areas (where the Norbeck and Spencerville Road widenings are located) are not in moratorium. Second, the interchange is in design while the two widenings are only in the planning stage, so the interchange is further along in the State Highway Administration's production schedule.

f. *Drop the Rockville Town Center intersection improvements from the list. Council and DOT staffs concur.* The CTP contains no funding in FY09 or later, so it should be relegated to the project planning priority list.

3. List of potential non-transit—highway and/or bikeway—project planning studies

a. *Delete the study of Georgia Avenue's reconstruction through Montgomery Hills (ranked #1), since the study is now funded in the Approved FY2008-2013 CTP. Council and DOT staffs concur.*

b. *Place the Rockville Town Center intersections on the study list just above the MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville. Council and DOT staffs recommend placing this study somewhat higher on the list, above the study of the Frederick Road widening in Clarksburg.* The congestion at Rockville's Town Center intersections is considerable and should have a higher priority on this list.

c. *Drop the Rockville Pike/Nicholson Lane interchange to the bottom of the list. Council and DOT staffs concur.* The Planning staff likely will recommend deleting this interchange from the master plan as part of its recommendations for the White Flint Sector Plan. But since neither the Planning Board nor the Council have acted on the plan yet, it would be premature to drop it from the list altogether.

4. List of potential transit project planning studies

*No changes. Council and DOT staffs concur.*



## Montgomery County Government

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

February 6, 2007

The Honorable Patrick J. Hogan, Chair  
Montgomery County Senate Delegation  
422 Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Charles Barkley, Chair  
Montgomery County House Delegation  
222 Lowe Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Hogan and Delegate Barkley:

We have recently updated the State transportation priorities we transmitted to you on November 2, 2005. This letter describes our latest sets of priorities for currently unfunded State transportation projects and planning studies.

With respect to the unfunded projects of regional and statewide significance, Montgomery County is guided by its commitment to sustainable development and smart growth. Accordingly, the two major transitways (listed alphabetically), the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) from Shady Grove to Clarksburg, and the Purple Line from Bethesda to Langley Park, extending east in Prince George's County to New Carrollton, receive our highest priority. Funding of federal and state mega-road projects must not delay these urgently needed mass transportation projects. Other regionally significant projects with high priority are the I-270 widening for high-occupancy-toll (HOT) or high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes north of Shady Grove, and the I-495 widening for HOT or HOV lanes between the I-270 West Spur and Virginia. While there are issues to be worked out on important aspects of some of these projects, decisions must be made and funding must be identified promptly to move them forward to completion.

There are many projects of local importance which require significant changes from what is shown in the Draft 2007-2012 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). These are high priority projects that have been previously identified by the Executive and Council to the State and/or Federal Delegations. We have already taken the unusual step of dedicating millions of dollars in County funds to keep several of these projects on schedule, including:

- \$22,375,000 in FY07 thru FY09 to construct a 1,200-space garage at the Glenmont Metro Station.
- \$8,239,000 in FY07 towards design and right-of-way acquisition for the Georgia Avenue (MD 97)/Randolph Road grade-separated interchange.
- \$5,000,000 in FY07 towards the design of a new southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station at the western terminus of the Purple Line.
- \$2,400,000 in FY07 towards the design of the I-270/Watkins Mill Road interchange.

Furthermore, we expect to act in the next several weeks to approve about \$14.4 million to forward fund the MD 355/Montrose interchange (to be reimbursed by the State in FY11 and FY12) and another \$6.1 million in FY08—to be matched by another \$6.1 million from the State—towards right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation for the Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road interchange. We have programmed yet an additional \$75 million of County funds which may be used for cost-sharing with the State to accelerate projects on our priority list.

The Honorable Patrick J. Hogan  
 The Honorable Charles Barkley  
 February 6, 2007  
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Our priority rankings for projects that will be ready for construction funding during the next six years and are currently in the design or project-planning stages are listed below. The funding to be programmed to complete each project is indicated as well.

1. <del>Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road: build grade-separated interchange</del>	\$58M
2. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended (Phase 1): build grade-separated interchange*	\$124M
3. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Hwy to Snouffer School Road**	\$65M
4. Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville	\$21M
5. Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$87M
6. Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park	\$42M
7. Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes from Old Columbia Pike to US 29	\$35M
8. Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road	\$94M
9. Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway (Phase 2): build bridge over CSX Railroad***	\$109M
10. I-270/Newcut Road: build grade separated interchange	\$77M
11. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road**	(see #3)
12. US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$78M
13. MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Rd to Old Columbia Pike	\$134M
14. Rockville Town Center intersection improvements	\$85M

\* Significant savings may be obtained by dedication of right-of-way by new development.

\*\* The total cost of #3 and #11 is \$65M. Segmented cost estimates are not yet available.

\*\*\* Significant savings may be obtained by coordination with the County's Montrose Parkway East project.

The total funding that needs to be programmed to complete these 14 projects is \$1.009 billion. MDOT is already investing over \$46 million to plan, design and buy land for these projects.

Our priority rankings for highway and bikeway projects to be added to the Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program are:

1. Georgia Avenue (MD 97): reconstruction in Montgomery Hills, from 16<sup>th</sup> Street to north of Forest Glen Road
2. Rockville Pike (MD 355): improvement from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including a grade separated interchange at Cedar Lane
3. Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road
4. Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
5. Intercounty Connector Hiker-Biker Trail: Shady Grove to Prince George's County
6. Great Seneca Highway (MD 119): flyover at Sam Eig Highway
7. Frederick Road (MD 355): widening from 2000' south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass
8. Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Nicholson Lane: grade-separated interchange
9. Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg
10. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade-separated interchange
11. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road
12. I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
13. MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville

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The Honorable Charles Barkley  
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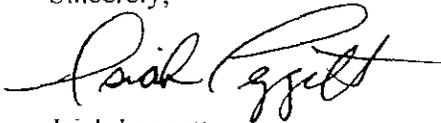
Our priority rankings for transit projects to be added to the D&E Program are:

1. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) Bus Rapid Transit: Rockville to Wheaton
2. Forest Glen Metro Station pedestrian tunnel under Georgia Avenue
3. Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Busway: Glenmont to Olney
4. University Blvd. (MD 193) Bus Rapid Transit: Wheaton to Langley Park
5. North Bethesda Transitway: Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall
6. Purple Line Connector: Langley Park to White Oak

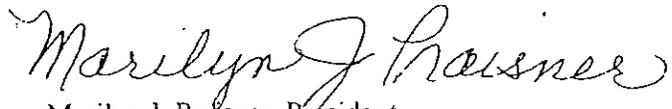
Studies #1, #3 and #4 in this list would be coordinated between the State Highway Administration and the Maryland Transit Administration. For these studies, we also request that a continuous bikeway be planned throughout their entire lengths.

If you need any clarifications about our recommendations, please contact us.

Sincerely,



Isiah Leggett  
County Executive



Marilyn J. Praisner, President  
County Council

IL:MJP:pn

cc: The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor, State of Maryland  
John Porcari, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Royce Hanson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board



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

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN**

June 24, 2008

Council President Michael Knapp  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Ave., 6<sup>th</sup> floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: State Transportation Priorities and the County's 10-Year Transportation program

Dear Mr. Knapp:

At our regularly scheduled meeting on June 19, 2008, the Planning Board voted to adopt the following comments on the County's State transportation priorities, and to adopt the enclosed list of priorities shown on Exhibit 1. The Planning Board's list includes a change from the recommendations in the staff packet in the ranking of the Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway Phase 2 project in the Construction program, which we believe needs to be a higher priority. Our staff's memo is also enclosed for your reference as Exhibit 2.

We believe that the County should add the BRAC improvements and WMATA funding to the overall list of County priorities. This category of projects is not intended to be ranked by level of importance, as are the other categories, and we have therefore shown it as a bulleted rather than a numbered list. While the four projects on the current list are important, we strongly believe that BRAC and WMATA are both urgent and immediate needs that should be highlighted to the State.

As you know, we are in a transitional period where people are shifting their normal travel modes and behaviors in how they get to work and other destinations because of the rapid rise in the price of gasoline. If gas prices stay high, as many sources predict they will, this may result in long-term changes in travel patterns that may cause the County to reassess what our priorities are. Our recommended priorities shown on the enclosed list do not reflect these potential changes but we will consider how such elasticities should be incorporated in our future planning efforts.

The Board appreciates the Council's consideration of our comments in your deliberations on the County's transportation priorities. If you have any questions about the Board's recommendations, please feel free to contact Larry Cole in Transportation Planning at 301-495-4528.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Royce Hanson".

Royce Hanson  
Chairman

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**EXHIBIT 1****PLANNING BOARD'S RECOMMENDED PRIORITY LIST FOR STATE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS, June 19, 2008**

## Overall County Priorities

- Corridor Cities Transitway
- Purple Line from Bethesda to Langley Park
- I-270 Widening north of Shady Grove
- I-270 & I-495 Widening from the I-270 West Spur to Virginia
- BRAC
- WMATA funding

## Construction Program

1. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended (Phase 1): build bridge over I-270 to complete the arterial connection between MD 117 and MD 355
2. Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway (Phase 2): build bridge over CSX Railroad
3. Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville
4. Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange
5. Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park
6. Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes from Old Columbia Pike to US 29
7. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Hwy to Snouffer School Road
8. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended (Phase 2): build ramps for grade-separated interchange
9. Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road
10. I-270/Newcut Road: build grade separated interchange
11. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and From Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road
12. US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange
13. MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike

## Development &amp; Evaluation (D&amp;E) Program for Non-Transit Projects

1. Rockville Pike (MD 355): improvement from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including a grade separated interchange at Cedar Lane
2. Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove
3. Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade separated interchange
4. Intercounty Connector Hiker-Biker Trail: Shady Grove to Prince Georges County
5. Great Seneca Highway (MD 119): flyover at Sam Eig Highway
6. Frederick Road (MD355): widening from 2000' south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass
7. Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg
8. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade separated interchange
9. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road

10. I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
11. Rockville Town Center intersection improvements
12. MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville
13. Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Nicholson Lane: grade-separated interchange

Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program for Transit Projects

1. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) Bus Rapid Transit: Rockville to Wheaton
2. Forest Glen Metro Station pedestrian tunnel under Georgia Avenue
3. Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Busway: Glenmont to Olney
4. University Blvd. (MD 193) Bus Rapid Transit: Wheaton to Langley Park
5. North Bethesda Transitway: Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall
6. Purple Line Connector: Langley Park to White Oak

July 15, 2008

The Honorable Rona E. Kramer, Chair  
Montgomery County Senate Delegation  
214 James Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Montgomery County House Delegation  
223 House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Kramer and Delegate Feldman:

In light of the Approved FY2008-2013 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) we have recently updated the State transportation priorities we transmitted to you on February 6, 2007. This letter describes our latest sets of priorities for currently unfunded State transportation projects and studies.

With respect to the unfunded projects of regional and statewide significance, Montgomery County is guided by its commitment to sustainable development and smart growth. Accordingly, the two major transitways (listed alphabetically), the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) from Shady Grove to Clarksburg, and the Purple Line from Bethesda to Langley Park, extending east in Prince George's County to New Carrollton, receive our highest priority.

Other regionally significant projects with high priority are: the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) transportation improvements for the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda and the rehabilitation of the Metrorail system, as well as the I-270 widening for high-occupancy-toll (HOT) or high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes north of Shady Grove; and the I-495 widening for HOT or HOV lanes between the I-270 West Spur and Virginia. (Funding of these road projects must not delay these urgently needed mass transit projects, however.) While there are issues to be worked out on important aspects of some of these priorities, decisions must be made and funding must be identified promptly to move them forward to completion.

There are many projects of local importance which require significant changes from what is shown in the FY2008-2013 CTP. These are high priority projects that have been previously identified by the Executive and Council to the State and/or Federal Delegations. We have already taken the unusual step of dedicating millions of dollars in County funds to keep several of these projects on schedule, including:

- \$22,375,000 in FY07 thru FY09 to construct a 1,200-space garage at the Glenmont Metro Station.
- \$8,239,000 in FY07 towards design and right-of-way acquisition for the Georgia Avenue (MD 97)/Randolph Road grade-separated interchange. Furthermore, we expect to act in the next several weeks to approve another \$6,123,000 in FY09 towards the cost of this interchange.
- \$2,400,000 in FY07 towards the design of the I-270/Watkins Mill Road interchange.
- \$60,000,000 in FYs 08-14 towards the design and construction of a new southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station at the western terminus of the Purple Line.
- \$14,463,000 in FYs08-09 to forward fund the MD 355/Montrose interchange (to be reimbursed by the State in FY11 and FY12).

For some of these projects, the County is ready to provide funding to the State, upon completion of MOU's. We have additional County funds which may be used for cost-sharing with the State to accelerate projects on our priority list.

Our priority rankings for projects that will be ready for construction funding during the next six years and are currently in the design or project-planning stages are listed below. The funding to be programmed to complete each project is indicated as well.

1. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: build bridge over I-270 (Note #1)
2. Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway (Phase 2): build segment from Chapman Avenue to Parklawn Drive, including a new bridge over CSX Railroad \$53M
3. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Highway to Snouffer School Road (Note #2)
4. Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville \$21M
5. Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange \$91M
6. Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park \$41M
7. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: complete interchange (Note #1)
8. Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes from Old Columbia Pike to US 29 \$30M
9. Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road \$95M
10. I-270/Newcut Road: build grade separated interchange \$88M
11. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road (Note #2)
12. US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange \$68M
13. MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike \$135M

Note #1: The total cost of #1 and #7 is \$140M. Segmented cost estimates are not yet available.

Note #2: The total cost of #3 and #11 is \$63M. Segmented cost estimates are not yet available.

The total funding that needs to be programmed to complete these 13 projects is \$825 million. MDOT is already investing over \$42 million to plan, design and buy land for these projects.

Our priority rankings for highway and bikeway projects to be added to the Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program are:

1. Rockville Pike (MD 355): improvement from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including a grade separated interchange at Cedar Lane
2. Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road
3. Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
4. Intercounty Connector Hiker-Biker Trail: Shady Grove to Prince George's County
5. Great Seneca Highway (MD 119): flyover at Sam Eig Highway
6. Rockville Town Center intersection improvements
7. Frederick Road (MD 355): widening from 2000' south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass
8. Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg
9. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade-separated interchange
10. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road
11. I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
12. MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville
13. Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Nicholson Lane: grade separated interchange

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Our priority rankings for transit projects to be added to the D&E Program are:

1. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) Bus Rapid Transit: Rockville to Wheaton
2. Forest Glen Metro Station pedestrian tunnel under Georgia Avenue
3. Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Busway: Glenmont to Olney
4. University Blvd. (MD 193) Bus Rapid Transit: Wheaton to Langley Park
5. North Bethesda Transitway: Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall
6. Purple Line Connector: Langley Park to White Oak

Studies #1, #3 and #4 in this list would be coordinated between the State Highway Administration and the Maryland Transit Administration. For these studies, we also request that a continuous bikeway be planned throughout their entire lengths.

If you need any clarifications about our recommendations, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Michael J. Knapp, President  
County Council

IL:MK:go

cc: The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor, State of Maryland  
John Porcari, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Royce Hanson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board