



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

May 24, 2013

Mr. Ralign T. Wells, Administrator
Maryland Transit Administration
6 Saint Paul Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202-1614

Dear Mr. Wells:

Recently the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) scheduled public hearings on the proposed elimination of three MTA bus commuter routes that utilize the Inter County Connector (ICC): Routes 202, 203, and 205.

This is a matter of great importance to hundreds of Marylanders who commute to some of Montgomery County's largest employment centers. These routes serve Bethesda and the Shady Grove Life Sciences and provide a direct rapid transit connection to Metro's Red Line. By eliminating ICC commuter bus service, hundreds of Marylanders would lose significant access to rapid transit.

Bethesda is one of the most significant employment hubs in Maryland, with traffic congestion that demands greater use of rapid transit alternatives rather than a reduction in service. With the passage of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) law in 2005 that established the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, 3,600 personnel have relocated from the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. It is important to note that this 45 percent increase in personnel at Walter Reed-Bethesda took place directly across Rockville Pike from the National Institutes of Health which has approximately 18,000 personnel.

Collaborating with the Navy, NIH, and the local community, the Maryland and Montgomery County Departments of Transportation worked together to devise a comprehensive traffic mitigation strategy that had three key elements to improve mobility and pedestrian safety near WRNMMC. Those elements included: projects to provide short-term operational improvements to nearby major intersections; long-term improvements to provide greater access to and promote greater use of transit; and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities for safe, walkable communities near the medical center. The biggest project which is just about to get under way is the Multimodal Crossing Project at the Medical Center Metro Station, a project that will encourage greater use of bus and rail transit by creating new and safer entrances.

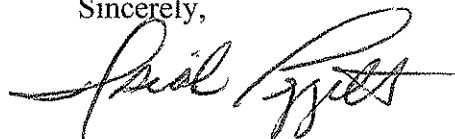
Mr. Ralign T. Wells
May 24, 2013
Page 2

The Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan in the Shady Grove area envisions a vibrant and dynamic live and work community that provides growth opportunities for research, medical, and bioscience interests. The Master Plan calls in the full build out for 17.5 million square feet of commercial space along with 9,000 housing units. This vision requires a substantial investment and use of transit to achieve its full potential that would create over 52,000 jobs. The loss of the regional ICC bus routes that serve the I-270 corridor and the east to west mobility will make it more difficult to achieve the triggers required to realize the Master Plan goals.

I understand and appreciate MTA's need to make better use of available resources. The County continues to need additional transit opportunities for its residents and to encourage more drivers to get out of their cars. There may be opportunities to attract more riders through schedule modification, targeted outreach efforts, or a redesign of services. I encourage you to consider redeploying these resources, and I ask that you review and consider putting additional transit resources to the Bethesda BRAC and Shady Grove Life Sciences areas.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isiah Leggett", written in a cursive style.

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

IL:pa

cc: Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director, MCDOT