



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 1

CHAIRMAN
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

June 10, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Wells,

The Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) recently proposed the elimination of three MTA commuter buses; Routes 202, 203, and 205 that assist hundreds of residents on a daily basis in getting to their jobs. These routes service Bethesda, in the district I represent, and provide a direct and vital connection to WMATA, Ride On, and other commuter facilities. If these routes are eliminated by MTA, it would severely impact not only my constituents, but any resident who relies on these buses as part of their daily commute.

As you may know, Bethesda is an extremely important economic center not only in Montgomery County, but also the state of Maryland. Hundreds of restaurants, offices, shops, agencies, and businesses are located here. Bethesda is also home to some of the nation's most important medical facilities, like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. These two facilities alone employ over 20,000 people.

Working with local communities, businesses, NIH, the Navy, our County Council, state and local agencies, a detailed and comprehensive mitigation strategy was devised for dealing with the traffic in the Bethesda area. These improvements involved more expansive Ride-On routes, increased bikeability, increased walking and pedestrian paths. In addition, the County has begun planning a rapid transit network that will in all likelihood have routes running in the Bethesda area. Despite all of these efforts, the traffic in the area is projected to only increase in the next twenty years.

I understand MTA's desire to reallocate its available resources, but Montgomery County needs all the transit options available and the elimination of the proposed routes would negatively impact our County's transit outlook. If ridership numbers are the sole reason for the proposed elimination, I would encourage you to ramp up your marketing efforts and collaborate with partners like Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

on targeted outreach efforts that may boost ridership on these routes. As you know, changing commuting patterns is not an easy task. Please give these routes more time and attention before cutting them prematurely.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Berliner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roger Berliner
Councilmember, District 1