

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
8TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND

COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
GOVERNMENT REFORM

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

1707 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5341

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
51 MONROE STREET, #507  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
(301) 424-3501

SUITE C-201  
6475 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE  
HYATTSVILLE, MD 20783  
(301) 891-6982

[www.vanhollen.house.gov](http://www.vanhollen.house.gov)

September 15, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

I am writing to express my strong support for the TIGER Discretionary Grant application submitted by Montgomery County, MD, for the Bethesda BRAC Multi-Modal Traffic Mitigation and Pedestrian Access Project. I can think of no transportation project that is of greater national significance than this one. It will help ensure the success of the newly-designated Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda, Maryland and provide our wounded warriors with access to the care they need.

BRAC expansion on the Bethesda campus of the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) will have a dramatic effect on traffic and mobility in the region, which has already been identified as the second most congested area in the nation. The success of the BRAC mission establishing WRNMMC, the crown jewel of military medicine, will depend on the ability of doctors, patients and emergency vehicles to access the campus in a timely manner. Gridlock would severely hinder that mission.

Today, several thousand people must cross Rockville Pike (MD 355) from the Medical Center Metro station to access the NNMC campus. Those numbers will more than double after September 2011. Vehicular traffic must compete with pedestrians for green signal time, causing backups up and down Rockville Pike, on adjoining roads, and on the NNMC and NIH campuses. Pedestrians who cross against the traffic signal cause further disruptions and safety concerns.

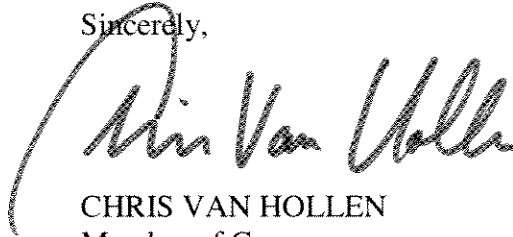
The Montgomery County Department of Transportation supports a cost-effective multi-modal solution that will provide safe and direct access to the Metro Station for all pedestrians and reduce gridlock caused by vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. This project will integrate various transportation modes – rail, bus, van and carpools that use the Metro Station as a transit center, as well as bicycle commuters and neighborhood pedestrians.

This project has long-range potential to further reduce gridlock in the region. With the consent of the Navy and NIH, the footprint of the pedestrian underpass can be used as a grade-separated vehicular roadway with a sidewalk and a bikeway to provide a direct connection between NNMC and NIH for emergency vehicles carrying doctors and patients, as well as pedestrians and cyclists. Short access roads would enable convenient vehicular ingress and egress for NNMC and NIH personnel while eliminating a gridlock-producing traffic signal.

A TIGER Grant for \$20 million would provide funds to initiate the design-build process, which would cost between \$36-40 million to construct. The TIGER Grant would leverage additional funds from the U.S. Department of Defense for completion. The Department of Defense has tentatively programmed \$20 million for this project in its FY2011 budget.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal to help ensure the viability of the federally-mandated Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, the crown jewel of military medicine serving our nation's wounded warriors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "H".

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
Member of Congress