

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.

I respectfully offer this testimony in context with my forty years of transportation engineering experience, and my pro bono service in the Montgomery County Transportation Policy Task Force from 2000 to 2002.

Rodolfo Pérez, P.E.

The Corridor Forward Plan equivocally recommends a Red Line Extension instead of improving MARC Rail.

The plan concludes that in the long-term, the only cost-effective solution is to extend the Metro Red Line to Germantown. The analysis supporting this conclusion is flawed, and lacks an objective comparison with MARC improvements which have been in the books for many years. The cost for the MARC improvements is \$1.403 billion, while the costs of the recommended Red Line Extension is \$1.826 billion (30% 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 such costs as right-of-way, operations, and maintenance facilities. This methodology is also problematic because 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 justifies spending \$115.5 million for 42 additional railcars for the Red Line Extension, over the lower cost of \$79.9 million for 9 locomotives and 39 railcars for MARC. The plan also 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 rail 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 Metro 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 planned MARC improvements 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.

The Corridor Forward Plan contradicts the goals of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and relies on dubious promises.

The M-NCPPC has been on the record for pursuing the comparative (not separate) study of transportation alternatives, and pursuing the goal of less auto-centric communities along the I-270 corridor. The Corridor Forward Plan is contrarian to those goals and entrenches the status quo by depending on highway toll revenues.

In the Frequently Asked Questions portal of the Corridor Forward Plan, its authors say that the plan does not propose transit alternatives to the 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 empty promises make the Corridor Plan a pro forma exercise contingent to future negotiations, and contradict the goals that M-NCPPC stated in its non-concurrence with the Toll Lanes Project. The M-NCPPC unequivocally stated that the Toll Lanes Project lacks specific, binding, and adequate multi-modal and transit elements (like MARC rail improvements) essential for reducing the need for additional road capacity. Further, the

M-NCPPC considered the TransUrban \$300 million contribution and other proposals for running buses on the toll lanes as simply inadequate tokens.

President Biden's ambitious infrastructure plan includes far more tangible funding for transit than the aleatory crumbs that this plan promises. For example, the FTA announced this month that \$5 billion in transit formula funding is available to transit agencies and states to support public transportation, and public transportation jobs throughout the county.