

January 22, 2023

Re: Transportation Priorities comments

I am writing comments as an individual although as chair of League of Women Voters Montgomery County (LWVMC) transportation and land use committee and the lead for the League's state (LWVMD) transportation program these are issues that are followed closely. And of course, all transportation areas will depend on how the new administration will act with transportation, the new Secretary of Transportation, and their effects on MDOT.

Bus Rapid Transit – The county has made strides with its own funding and funding from the federal government and it's beyond time for the state to also help fund BRT projects. The various BRT lines are literally a backbone for economic development and the state should be part of its implementation.

Vision Zero – The state and county have not made the progress that should occur. We have not seen a decline in deaths or injuries that should have happened as people were driving less. A point that should be emphasized is that [Hoboken New Jersey](#) has had zero deaths for FOUR years. As we build more amenable places for bikes and pedestrians, this is increasingly important.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities – As we change master and sector plans to accommodate bikes and peds, the state should encourage and not discourage changes to roads and paths.

Locally Oriented Transit Support – As part of the Better Buses coalition, I see buses as an important option for all people and not just people who can't afford to own a car. On a recent ride (which was actually on a METRO bus) it was packed! Often times people see buses go by that are nearly empty which give the impression that buses aren't used as much as they should be. Developing a frequent and reliable system is key to encouraging more people to ride. Electrifying the fleet is important to our climate goals and the sooner that can happen with better cooperation with the state, we can see improvement. Where is the red paint for bus only lanes? Other jurisdictions are implementing this low cost improvement.

Commuter Rail Expansion – We often bemoan the poor transit options to our upcounty residents. Here is an area that is so ripe for investment and change. The state passed a bill last year to enable rail expansion both within the state and extensions to other jurisdictions. Rail and bus travel is not just during what used to be commuting for job hours. We need to recognize that all forms of transit need to run all day, every day, and in all directions to accommodate the county population and our growing land use patterns of development.

State Highways – Shall we say that the scariest roads in the county come under SHA's jurisdiction? It is difficult to make safety changes like paint, patterns, signal changes, construction, etc. along any road that is controlled by SHA. Better communication, then action between local jurisdictions and the state are essential to making roads safer.

Interstate Programs – PLEASE change this document so it reflects local input for the proposed expansion of I-495 and I-270. Now is the time to include so many alternatives that were automatically excluded in the evaluation of these roads. Transit, including the expansion of MARC, our [Great Seneca Plan](#), our [Corridor Forward Plan](#) were all excluded from any proposal. The fact that these proposals weren't even considered among alternatives shows short-sight. The P3 agreement with Transurban was never

transparent. Just because Virginia has used Transurban (an Australian company that is privately held so stockholders benefit) is no reason for Maryland taxpayers to be monetarily funding them. As the state and county have environmental standards and goals that must be reached, let's incorporate those standards into this project. What are some alternatives to the proposal? [Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation](#) (MAST) recently came out with a list of some possibilities. Please look at alternatives that don't include expansion and induced demand.

Just as each county bill has a review and vetting system to accommodate the county's diversity of economics and races, energy and building standards, our environment and numerous other lenses that each bill must be viewed within, let's do the same for this document.

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