

July 8, 2025 – Testimony before the Montgomery County Council

Good afternoon, my name is Diane Cameron, and I'm testifying on behalf of Transit Alternatives to Midcounty Highway Extended – TAME Coalition.

**1) We ask you to remove the proposed M-83 highway five-mile northern section from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways** – as recommended by the Planning Board.

**2) Removing M83 from the master plan is saving our forest parks - and enabling transit alternatives to thrive in the upcounty.**

**In contrast, keeping M83 in the master plan is protecting a fossil fuel project, enabling it to be built at any time, damaging our communities.**

> It would be a mistake to believe “*M83 is dead, so we can keep it in the master plan*” – many forests and streams were wrecked by highway projects widely seen as dead – until they were built.

**3) We are for transit - and transportation choice.**

> Traffic congestion is a real problem, and action to alleviate it is needed. M83 would make congestion worse, not better. That's why we urgently need to invest in transit in the upcounty.

> The Germantown, Lake Forest, and Shady Grove transit centers are hotspots in the Ride On Bus system. **Thank you for making Ride On Buses Fare-Free for All.**

> We support *Ride On Reimagined*, and its goal of making transit the first choice for mobility. More-frequent bus service is key. We also support MARC train service expansion; and are happy to report that MARC train ridership has surged in 2025.

> Often, we hear exciting plans for upcounty transit; then, we learn these projects are “stretch goals” pushed years into the future.

> Keeping M83 in the master plan takes attention away from transit programs, and starves them of funding.



**4) Today you're hearing from County residents and civic groups.**

>There's another group you'll be hearing from: the highway lobby - construction firms who profit from highway contracts and off-site "mitigations."

> While the highway lobby is counting on lucrative contracts, residents have a much larger stake in the Council's decision on M83: our public investment in transit, and our need for public forests and greenspaces for our health and well-being, that M83 threatens to damage and destroy.

**5) By removing M83 from the master plan, you'll be removing an obstacle to the transit investments we need to make *now*.**

**We ask you to remove the proposed M83 highway five-mile northern section from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways.**

Thank you.