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**Remarks for the Maryland Transit Administration**  
**Gaithersburg, MD – June 6, 2013**

- Good evening. For the record. I am Phil Alperson, BRAC Coordinator in the Office of Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett.
- I am here to share the County Executive's opposition to the proposed elimination of three commuter bus routes along the ICC. These routes provide service to two of the state's largest employment centers, in Bethesda and the Shady Grove Life Sciences.
- **By eliminating ICC commuter bus service, thousands of Marylanders would lose significant access to rapid transit. And by eliminating this service, collaborative efforts by state and county governments and community stakeholders to mitigate congestion will suffer.**
- BRAC stands for Base Realignment and Closure. For Montgomery County, BRAC added 3,600 personnel to the 8,000 that were already located at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, bringing the total personnel there to 11,600. These moves were completed in the fall of 2011.
- It is important to note that this **45 percent increase in personnel** at Walter Reed-Bethesda took place directly across Rockville Pike from the National Institutes of Health which has **18,000 personnel**. And, significantly, since 2011 visits to the Walter Reed campus have doubled from 500,000 per year to one million visits per year, most by car.
- **Bethesda is one of the most significant employment hubs in Maryland, with infamous traffic congestion that demands greater use of rapid transit alternatives rather than a reduction in service.**
- To respond to the increased transportation demands caused by BRAC, the Maryland and Montgomery County Departments of Transportation collaborated with the Defense Department, NIH, and the local community to devise a comprehensive traffic mitigation strategy to increase transit ridership, improve vehicular mobility, and promote pedestrian safety at Walter Reed-Bethesda.
  - The biggest project which is just about to get under way is the Multimodal Crossing Project at the Medical Center Metro Station, which will provide safe and convenient access to bus and rail transit and promote increased transit ridership.

- Unfortunately, in spite of these collaborative efforts and MDOT's commitment to help ensure that Walter Reed patients would not be denied access to the campus because of gridlock, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has proposed eliminating three MTA bus commuter routes that all serve the facility.
  - Route 202 connects Fort Meade to Gaithersburg
  - Route 203 connects Columbia to Bethesda
  - Route 205 connects College Park to Germantown
- **All three routes serve Bethesda commuters from Howard, Anne Arundel, and Prince George's Counties via the InterCounty Connector.** Route 203 comes directly to the Bethesda Medical Center, and Routes 202 and 205 serve the Shady Grove Red Line Station. All three routes serve Metrorail or MARC rail stations and Kiss & Ride lots, thus providing direct connections to Bethesda.
- In addition, the Great Seneca Science Corridor in Shady Grove is a rapidly-growing employment center on the I-270 corridor. The Master Plan calls for the full build out for 17.5 million square feet of commercial space along with 9,000 housing units. This vision requires a substantial investment and use of rapid transit to achieve its full potential that would create over 52,000 jobs.
  - Development of the Master Plan depends on transit. Losing the ICC bus routes that provide east-west mobility to the I-270 corridor will make it more difficult to achieve the triggers that will achieve Master Plan goals.
- It is important to note that thousands of federal employees at Walter Reed, NIH, and numerous other federal facilities in Montgomery County qualify for a transit subsidy that encourages them to get out of their cars and onto transit
- Montgomery County appreciates MTA's need to make better use of its resources. At the same time, the County needs additional transit opportunities for its residents and workers, and to encourage more drivers to get out of their cars.
  - There may be opportunities to attract more riders through schedule modification, targeted outreach efforts, or a redesign of services. I encourage you to consider redeploying these resources, and I ask that you consider putting additional transit resources to the Bethesda BRAC and Shady Grove Life Sciences areas.
- Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments.

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