



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

TOM HUCKER
Council President

Member, Public Safety Committee
Chair, Transportation & Environment Committee

MEMORANDUM

February 2, 2021

TO: Christopher Conklin, Director
Department of Transportation

FROM: Tom Hucker, Chair
Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee

SUBJECT: US 29 Mobility and Reliability Study and Amherst Avenue Bikeway Study

On January 27 the T&E Committee reviewed the results of first phase of facility planning for these projects.

Regarding US 29, the Committee recommends that the Department develop means to render the Median Lane BRT Alternative more cost effective, as was done for the Managed Lane (BRT/HOV) Alternative. Each alternative should include similar roadway/intersection, bikeway/pedestrian, and traffic management improvements so that a more accurate “apples-to-apples” comparison can be made. In the next three weeks we request the Department to provide us with a cost estimate to do this work, and an estimate of the time it would take to complete it. Furthermore, we urge you to explore with the State Highway Administration our desire to operate a “pop-up” bus lane northbound through Four Corners as a test to determine whether such a lane would result in backups on Colesville Road in the evening peak.

Regarding Amherst Avenue, the Committee endorses the Planning Board’s recommendation:

- Advance Alternative 3B Modified as the preferred alternative if the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) approves a protected intersection at the intersection of University Boulevard and Amherst Avenue, to ensure a safe crossing for bicyclists using the two-way separated bike lanes. Additionally, between Pritchard Road and Reddie Drive, rather than widening the road, travel lanes should be narrowed to 10.5 feet and the parking lane should be moved to the west side of the street to provide a three-foot bikeway buffer with parking protection.

- If this protected intersection is not approved by SHA, advance Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative and consider design changes to improve bicyclist comfort between Pritchard Road and Reddie Drive, potentially including roadway widening, removal of both lanes of parking, or removal of one travel lane. After additional public engagement on these issues, DOT should consider resubmitting this project to the T&E Committee and the Planning Board for deliberations on the appropriate bikeway treatment between Pritchard Road and Reddie Drive in advance of mandatory referral.

The Committee appreciates the work the Department of Transportation has completed for these studies, especially the efforts of Corey Pitts and Angel Cheng.

Sincerely,



Tom Hucker

Chair

Transportation & Environment Committee

cc: Councilmembers
Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board