



MID-COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Luisa Montero-Diaz
Mid-County RSC Director

November 17, 2016

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

The Honorable Nancy Floreen
President, Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: MD 586 Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit
Draft Corridor Study Report

Dear Council President Floreen and County Executive Leggett:

The Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) has historically supported the concept of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), thus we appreciated the opportunity to view and comment on the MD 586 Veirs Mill Road BRT Draft Corridor Study Report. Unfortunately, we find consideration of the costs/benefits of the project less than satisfactory. While we agree that a new, modern, level access bus system can be advantageous, and we also endorse the County's attention to advance our transportation infrastructure, we do not see that the alternatives proposed justify costs in capital and disruption impacts on the Veirs Mill corridor and the neighborhoods adjacent to the road.

The Study, according to its summary brochure, should result in a chosen option that:

- 1) Improves system connectivity
- 2) Improves mobility opportunities and choices
- 3) Increases transit demand and attractiveness
- 4) Improves livability along the corridor

In the end, if the project is completed based on this report, the actual improvement achieved would be the adoption of an option that would do little more than increase transit attractiveness. Even that attractive improvement involves investing in new vehicles, paying operating costs for duplicate services, and finding space to park and service the vehicles.


The Veirs Mill Corridor is already heavily served by WMATA and Ride On. We are concerned that those two agencies with their own budget demands, would modify their services with the addition of duplicate services by BRT, potentially affecting negatively transit users' ability to reach the Veirs Mill Corridor, and travel along it.

The Veirs Mill Road Corridor BRT, as currently conceived, is a closed 9 mile segment. Its usefulness is limited to serving the number of users able to access it for transit within that self-contained segment. If seeking to go beyond Rockville to the North or Wheaton to the South, users would have to transfer to another transportation option, compromising whatever gains in time that might be achieved on the BRT. Meanwhile the cumulative negative effect on cross traffic and nearby neighborhoods seem to be ignored in the evaluation, despite the ongoing, county wide history of difficulty going cross county: going from Olney to Rockville or across Aspen Hill Rd to Rockville, for example. Given the existence of the ongoing 355 Corridor BRT Study, we are concerned about the cumulative effect on all traffic movement inherent in the proposals. Since both studies suggest building in delays of brief duration at all intersections, effecting other traffic and mobility throughout the county, we question whether these negative effects will be offset by hoped for improvements in transit use and efficiency. Limiting access to and from neighborhoods due to roadway restrictions only adds to the negative effects on livability.

The Mid-County area does not want to be overlooked in terms of long term transportation and transit improvements, but we believe the Veirs Mill BRT plan, with its alternatives, as currently proposed is not the most practical, cost efficient option. We are also concerned about the potential negative impact to the communities living along the corridor. Any consideration of a BRT system along this road must include true connectivity to a larger area, with benefit for both public transit or non-transit users.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francisco Romero', with some scribbles and a horizontal line at the end.

Francisco Romero
MCCAB Chair

Cc: Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Montgomery County DOT, Rapid Transit System Development Manager, Joane Conklin
Laura Barcena, Consultant Project Manager, MD SHA