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July 28, 2009

Governor Martin O'Malley
 State of Maryland
 100 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Sustainable Transportation Corridors – Rockville Pike

Dear Governor O'Malley:

On July 13, 2009, Montgomery County (District 1) Councilman Roger Berliner sent you a letter requesting the establishment of a new program for "Sustainable Transportation Corridors." This program would "explore new legislation or regulations that would enhance coordination between state and local governments, harmonize land use and transportation objectives, and provide priority funding for Sustainable Transportation Corridors." The City of Rockville strongly supports Councilman Berliner's proposal.

In 2007, the City of Rockville began an extensive public involvement program to develop a plan for the 2-mile portion of Rockville Pike immediately south of our Town Center. The plan, entitled *Rockville's Pike: Envision a Great Place*, is nearly completed and will represent a fundamental shift in our approaches to land use, transportation and urban mobility on that stretch of the Pike.

The emerging vision is to convert the Pike into a grand boulevard. The goals that we hope to achieve are to protect and enhance the business environment; improve how the corridor functions for pedestrians, transit, automobiles and bicycles; improve the experience of living on the Pike; and make the Pike a "Green" and "sustainable" corridor. This vision is consistent with your "Smart, Green and Growing" initiative, in which economic development and environmental goals can be achieved together.

Rockville's great challenge for Rockville Pike is implementation. While Rockville does have the authority to regulate land use, almost all of the key transportation levers are controlled by other entities. Rockville Pike, as you know, is Maryland State Highway Route 355 and, as such, is owned by the State Highway Administration. The two Metro stations in Rockville (Rockville and Twinbrook) are owned and managed by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), as is a third that is just beyond Rockville's boundaries (Shady Grove). Public buses are managed by Montgomery County (Ride On) and WMATA. In addition, just south of Rockville, Montgomery County is developing a vision for the White Flint sector, which includes a very active public conversation regarding the conversion of its portion of Rockville Pike into an urban boulevard. In our planning process for Rockville Pike, we have included all of these entities, and we will continue to do so.

We believe the potential of Rockville Pike will be fully realized only if the State of Maryland makes it a priority. Councilman Berliner's formulation of the Sustainable Transportation Corridors initiative matches Rockville's goals. Commercial corridors such as Rockville Pike are where the Smart Growth "rubber hits the road." If we are

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to preserve existing strong neighborhoods, as well as Maryland's agriculture and open space, while continuing to promote economic growth, corridors such as MD355 will need to be transformed in a way that can accommodate growth while also addressing citizen concerns about traffic and environmental degradation. Rockville Pike already experiences significant traffic congestion during peak periods, making the accommodation of growth a particular challenge. Rockville will need a strong and ongoing partnership with the State of Maryland, WMATA and Montgomery County in order to make the Pike a great place.

We strongly encourage the State of Maryland to embrace this vision for the Rockville Pike Corridor and to make any legislative and regulatory changes, through a Sustainable Transportation Corridors initiative, that will facilitate the multi-jurisdictional coordination necessary to make Maryland and Rockville Smart, Green and Growing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan R. Hoffmann
Mayor, City of Rockville

Cc: Councilmember John Britton
Councilmember Piotr Gajewski
Councilmember Phyllis Marcuccio
Councilmember Anne M. Robbins
The Honorable Jennie Forehand
The Honorable Kumar Barve
The Honorable James Gilchrist
The Honorable Luiz Simmons
Richard Eberhert Hall, Secretary, Department of Planning
Beverly Swaim-Staley, Acting Secretary, MD Department of Transportation
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