

September , 2013

Ms. Nancy Navarro,
President,
Montgomery County Council,
100 Maryland Avenue,
Rockville, MD, 20850

Re: City of Rockville Comments on the Planning Board Draft of the Countywide Transit
Corridors Functional Master Plan

Dear Ms. Navarro,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Planning Board Draft of the Countywide Transit
Corridors Functional Master Plan (CTCFMP).

The City supports the concept of increased public transportation options in the County and region.
We agree with the CTCFMP's central purpose, which is to identify optimum routes for a future
system and also to identify the rights of way that will be necessary to support them.

We have two main concerns about the current draft of the CTCFMP:

1. The Planning Board Draft recommends ten routes and seems to be focused too heavily on
only what can be achieved within a relatively short time frame. From a land use planning
perspective the plan does not appear to us to identify the rights of way necessary to develop
an integrated transit system that will serve the county well into the future. For example, the
plan recommends implementing less than optimal service initially, then potentially increasing
lane treatments as ridership demand increases. We believe that it should identify long term
needs for rights of way now, especially on the already heavily travelled MD 355 routes. To
do otherwise could seriously limit initial ridership, and may also result in shifting right of way
requirements over time, causing greater uncertainty for adjoining property owners.
2. The plan does not give sufficient justification for certain key recommendations. The
appendices indicate that very little, if any, analysis of traffic conditions has been conducted
for the MD 355 routes between Middlebrook Road and Grosvenor Station. Nonetheless,
the plan recommends lane repurposing for some portions of the MD 355 North Route and
leaves it to the cities to determine the appropriate number of lanes and the required rights of
way in the portions of the route under their jurisdiction. The odd result is that the MD 355
North route is proposed not as a unified whole, but rather as a series of uncoordinated
segments. A greater level of analysis and coordination could have prevented these
unworkable suggestions from becoming the foundation for the plan.

The City believes that the proposer of the system – the County – should bring the appropriate parties together to coordinate more closely on such a regionally significant, inter-jurisdictional endeavor. Part of the charter could be to conduct the required analysis so that the County, and the cities, have a basis on which to make decisions about the number of lanes that might be required, together with the rights of way to enable them.

The City of Rockville is committed to collaborating with Montgomery County in planning a transit system and would like to consider all options, including lane repurposing and one-lane reversible treatments, as part of a comprehensive purpose and needs study. We look forward to working together on the next step – that of implementing the CTCFMP and planning for an integrated transit system that will serve City and County residents well into the future.

Yours,

Mayor and Council of Rockville

Cc: Mr. Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
Ms. Françoise Carrier, Chairperson, Montgomery County Planning Department
Mayor and Council, City of Gaithersburg
Planning Commission, City of Rockville
City Manager, City of Rockville