



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

October 12, 2017

Peter K. Rahn, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 548
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, MD 21076

FROM: Roger Berliner, Chair, Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee
Nancy Floreen, Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee
Tom Hucker, Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee

Dear Secretary Rahn,

Congestion in our community is one of the biggest detriments to our quality of life. Accordingly, while we appreciate Governor Hogan's focus on this top priority issue with the release of the state's Traffic Relief Plan last month, we need to understand more clearly what the plan will do and will not do. Please accept this invitation to join the Montgomery County Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee to discuss the Traffic Relief Plan on October 24 at either 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the County Council Office Building.

As you appreciate, I-270 and I-495 serve as the backbone of Montgomery County's highway network – and by extension the county's entire transportation system. In June, this Council and County Executive Leggett submitted to you the attached Transportation Priorities Letter for consideration in the development of the state's next Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). In the letter, the Council and County Executive identify the need to complete the study of two reversible high-occupancy/toll lanes on I-270 between Shady Grove Road and Frederick County as well as one high-occupancy toll lane in each direction on I-495 between the I-270 West Spur and Virginia in order to address traffic congestion.

Our Council also requested that the state advance the study of capacity and operational strategies from I-270 and along I-495 into Virginia that include transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections over the Potomac River and that the state address traffic congestion on I-495 east of the I-270 spur "through other spot improvements that are respectful of our natural resources and communities."

It will be important for the Council to get answers to the following questions regarding the state's Traffic Relief Plan, which proposes four additional toll lanes on all sections of I-270 and I-495 that run through Montgomery County:

- 1) Does the state plan to regularly and substantially consult with Montgomery County in the development and refinement of this plan? If so, what form will that consultation take? If not, why not?

- 2) Please provide any studies or analyses done before proposing this plan.
- 3) What, if any, assumptions were made as to the pricing of tolls necessary to fund the infrastructure contemplated in this plan?
- 4) The incomplete I-270/U.S. 15 Multimodal Corridor Study had focused on a multimodal approach to traffic congestion. What is the state's plan to implement the transit component of that study, especially the Corridor Cities Transitway from Gaithersburg to Clarksburg?
- 5) Did the state consider the Council's proposed solution to I-270 and I-495 west of the I-270 spur?
- 6) What spatial and cost analysis was done that supports the ability to add four lanes to I-270 and I-495, especially on I-495 east of the I-270 spur where neighborhoods, businesses and parkland are in close proximity to the existing highway?
- 7) Does the plan include adding capacity to the American Legion Bridge, and if so, will that additional capacity accommodate transit? If the plan does not include adding capacity to the American Legion Bridge, has the state assessed the magnitude of the increased congestion at this chokepoint?
- 8) Has the state considered high-occupancy toll lanes, which would tie into Virginia's plans to extend its existing high-occupancy toll lanes to the American Legion Bridge?

Please let us know if you or a representative would be able to join our committee to discuss these questions and this important proposal. If you or a representative is unable to attend, we would appreciate written responses to these questions before October 24. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Roger Berliner
District 1



Nancy Floreen
At-Large



Tom Hucker
District 5

CC: Gregory Slater, Administrator, Maryland State Highway Administration
Al Roshdieh, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Administrator, Montgomery County Council