



City of Rockville
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland
20850-2364
www.rockvillemd.gov

240-314-5000
TTY 240-314-8137

February 15, 2022

The Honorable Gabe Alborno, Council President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Alborno,

The Mayor and Council of the City of Rockville thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects and the Op Lanes Funds.

The City of Rockville supports Montgomery County's Transportation Project for the Veirs Mill and MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects for design and construction. Both projects will benefit the community in Rockville and surrounding neighborhood, not just as a transit improvement, but also for safety, health, economics, and environmental benefits.

Rockville appreciates the opportunity to provide input on those projects and their funding source, specifically the portion provided by the state's Op Lanes funds. As currently proposed, a significant portion of the Op Lanes funding is being used on BRT outside of the Op Lane's northern limit at I-370. The City has serious concerns about this approach and requests the County Council reconsider the use of the state's Op Lanes funds and revise the 355 Central BRT project limits and/or sequence.

The MD 355 Central BRT project is the only portion currently proposed for design and construction on MD 355 and has been identified as the portion between Montgomery College campuses in Rockville and Germantown. While 42% of the funds for this project comes from the Op Lanes project, the City of Rockville – the most impacted by the Op Lanes project – will get a negligible benefit from the MD 355 Central BRT project since only one stop out of ten falls within the City of Rockville. This is not an appropriate or fair distribution of the Op-Lanes funds. I ask the County reconsider the funds allocated for this project and to revise the MD 355 Central BRT project's limits.

Looking at the forecast passenger boardings for the MD 355 BRT project, it is clear that projected daily boardings for the northern three stations of the MD 355 Central BRT are very low compared to any station in the MD 355 South BRT project. The total projected daily boardings for the northern three stations of the MD 355 Central BRT project **combined** is approximately 1,000 boardings per day, while three out of the four northern stations of the MD 355 South exceed 1,000 boardings per day each (please see the attached graph). One of them (Twinbrook) actually exceeds 1,500 boardings per day, and the White Flint station exceeds 2,000 boardings per day. If the Op Lanes funds will be used to fund the MD 355 Central BRT project, the limits should include stations in Rockville, at a minimum the Rockville Metro station and down to Twinbrook or preferably White Flint stations. If it is not possible to add the Rockville Metro station and others from Rockville, then the city recommends shifting the MD355 Central BRT project three stations to the south. This will eliminate the northern three stations that have the lowest projected boardings and instead add the three northern stations currently in the MD355 (Rockville Metro, Mt. Vernon and Edmonston), which have much higher boardings.

MAYOR
Bridget Donnell Newton

COUNCIL
Monique Ashton
Beryl L. Feinberg
David Myles
Mark Pierzchala

CITY MANAGER
Robert DiSpirito

CITY CLERK/DIRECTOR OF
COUNCIL OPERATIONS
Sara Taylor-Ferrell

CORPORATE COUNSEL
Robert E. Dawson

The Honorable Gabe Albornoz, Council President
February 15, 2022
Page Two

Finally, the Op Lanes Work Group currently being formed by MDOT is supposed to be taking up the issue of prioritizing transit funding, therefore the proposed Montgomery County budget pre-empts the cooperative intent of that group. We further recommend that the County Council consider only funding the overall 355 BRT project and defer a decision on the exact alignment and stations in the first phase until after the Op Lanes Maryland Work Group confers.

This will ensure that a collaborative solution is implemented that serves more Montgomery County residents sooner and provides a more equitable distribution of Op Lanes Maryland funding to the neighborhoods most affected by the State project.

Sincerely,


Bridget Donnell Newton, Mayor


Monique Ashton, Councilmember


Beryl L. Feinberg, Councilmember


David Myles, Councilmember


Mark Pierzchała, Councilmember

Rockville Mayor and Council

cc: Montgomery County Council

MD 355 Central BRT



Forecast Passenger Boardings
Over 50% of passenger boardings are
in the Central section

Forecasted boardings by stop (2040)

