

# County Council Ride On Budget Funding Testimony

Hello County Council and thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

My name is Demitrius Henriquez, I live in the Gateway Community of Gaithersburg. I am here representing the Ride On Transit Advisory Group (TAG)

I first want to start off by recognizing how blessed we are as a county to have a service like Ride On providing affordable and accessible transportation for all our residents. I have been in other suburbs where this level of service is unheard of, and every time I ride the bus, I am grateful for the freedom that taking the bus gives me. Not having to worry about parking, gas, not having the stress of traffic. I could go on but to get to the point, the county needs to continue investing in this service. For the well-being of our residents and our environment, we must prioritize transit and walkability.

The only way we are going to reach our safety and climate goals is going to be by reducing the number of cars on our roads. And the only way to get people out of their cars is by providing convenient and reliable alternatives. As it stands now, driving is still the most convenient mode of transport for most county residents. Just look at the driving times versus transit times on Google Maps. Most times, taking transit can be 2 or even 3 times longer, only getting worse the further Upcounty. And while even having options is a big win, we cannot stop there. Ride On and their staff have the capability to make the service the most convenient and reliable way to get around the county. We have the opportunity to become the suburbs of the future; a shining example of what well-funded transit looks like. We just need you to empower them.

To end, I'd like to thank the Council for your past support of Ride On. With your investment, they have been able to provide amazing service around the county. But we must not get complacent. Please give Ride On your full support.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to speak on this important topic.