



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

February 22, 2017

Mr. Al Roshdieh  
Director  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)  
Executive Office Building (EOB)  
101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor Conference Room  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Subject: US 29 Bus Rapid Transit Study and Project

Dear Mr. Roshdieh:

The Montgomery County Planning Board was briefed by your staff and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) on February 16, 2017. The briefing included a review of the US 29 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Draft Corridor Planning Study and the MCDOT US 29 BRT Project planned for implementation in early 2020. The Planning Board is in full support of the Executive's and Council's policy related to the expedited introduction of BRT service on US 29 and see it as a critical first step to attaining the overall vision of the White Oak Science Gateway Plan. The Planning Board also believes it is important to continue to plan for additional enhancements to BRT in the corridor.

One purpose of the briefing was to provide an opportunity for the review and discussion of the Draft Corridor Planning Study, which served a valuable purpose in informing the plans for implementation of BRT in 2020, but will now be placed on hold without proceeding toward the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative to be advanced into preliminary engineering. The Planning Board's comments on the Draft Study Report are provided below:

1. Note the improvements that are being implemented as part of the County Executive's 2020 BRT Plan.
2. Include narrative on why managed lanes require additional analysis or why the additional analysis cannot be conducted now.
3. Note when MDOT intends to finish the analysis of the managed lanes, choose a preferred alternative, and advance the preferred alternative as originally planned.
4. Provide background on the decision to include HOV-2 as part of two of the build alternatives.

5. Subsequent analyses should begin to address the potential network effect on forecast ridership so that higher end treatments are not automatically eliminated from consideration as alternatives are refined.

6. The Study has not adequately addressed part of the Purpose and Need for the project. If the existing bus service has poor reliability operating in mixed traffic, the Study should document the extent to which the BRT build alternatives would improve system reliability in 2040.

7. Consider whether VISSIM could be used to evaluate reliability, possibly by breaking out the components of the local bus and BRT trips to compare stopped delay, running time, boarding and alighting time (which should increase with more ridership), and simulation events (having to wait through an entire signal cycle length to proceed).

8. Identify studies of successful BRT systems where pre/post-studies that have been conducted to quantify the effect of reliability on travel time.

9. All alternatives appear to have park impacts as well as impacts to the streams. Once more advanced design for the selected alternative is available, Montgomery Parks will provide detailed comments, including opportunities to improve stormwater discharge into streams on parkland. Montgomery Parks staff should be included in interagency coordination meetings regarding more detailed design of the selected alternative. In addition, any work on parkland will require a park permit.

10. The following four cultural resources were identified in the Study: Polychrome Historic District, Robert B. Morse Water Filtration Plant, Silver Theater and Silver Spring Shopping Center, and Montgomery Arms are County designated sites or districts listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation:

- Polychrome Historic District
- Robert B. Morse Water Filtration Plant
- Silver Theater and Silver Spring Shopping Center, and Montgomery Arms

Two additional resources (Old Silver Spring Commercial Area and the J.C. Penney Co Building) are identified in the Locational Atlas.

These resources are protected under Chapter 24A of the County Code. The study included no analysis of the potential impact to cultural resources, but acknowledges that future studies will need to assess the project's impact on identified cultural resources consistent with Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Maryland Historical Trust Act of 1985 (as amended).

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I would like to close by thanking you again for your work and the work of your team and the MTA in advancing the US 29 BRT Corridor planning and implementation. It is a significant first step toward achieving the recommendations first envisioned in the County's 2011 BRT Feasibility Study and the subsequent adoption of the County's 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact Tom Autrey (301-495-4533) of our staff with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Casey Anderson', written in a cursive style.

Casey Anderson  
Chair

CA:TA:aj

CC: Gwen Wright  
Jacquelyn Seneschal - MTA  
Chris Conklin - MCDOT  
Joanna Conklin - MCDOT  
Allison Davis - WMATA  
Rose Krasnow  
Pam Dunn