

BOYDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION and BOYDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Joint Comment

September 13, 2022

Rebecca Park
Project Manager
Division of Transportation Engineering
Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Dear Ms. Park,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide additional comments on behalf of the Boyds Historical Society (BHS) and the Boyds Civic Association (BCA).

As you know, MCDOT held a public hearing on the Boyds Transit Improvements project on Tuesday, August 16, at 7:00 pm. BHS sent follow-up questions to MCDOT on Thursday, August 18, at 6:37 pm. We received MCDOT's responses on Friday, September 9, at 4:42 pm; we have attached the document to be included in the public record. The public comment period closes today, September 13.

MCDOT's responses were very helpful. We have used them as the basis for the following proposal of a shared vision for the Boyds Transit Improvements project, including the historic, county-owned Hoyle's Mill building.

A SHARED VISION FOR THE HISTORIC, COUNTY-OWNED HOYLE'S MILL BUILDING

- The Boyds community, the MARC Rail Community sector plan adopted by the Montgomery County Council, the Montgomery Planning Department Historic Preservation office (MPHP), and the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) have consistently supported rehabilitation and re-use of the historic, county-owned Hoyle's Mill building.
- Montgomery County is legally responsible for the ordinary and necessary maintenance of the historic, county-owned Hoyle's Mill building.
- MCDOT's proposed replacement-in-kind septic system, with a design flow of 380 gpd, provides capacity in excess of MCDOT's calculated total bus operator usage of 22 gpd.
- Thus, MCDOT and Montgomery County government can leverage the county's \$5.65 million investment into the Boyds Transit Improvements project to facilitate rehabilitation and re-use of the historic, county-owned Hoyle's Mill building, at negligible additional cost.
- The only thing MCDOT has to do is make a commitment that the scope of the Boyds Transit Improvements project includes access to the septic system and well and/or bus operators' restroom, by any rehabilitator/re-user of the Hoyle's Mill building, within the

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design flow of the replacement septic system. (However, it would also be helpful for MCDOT to include space for a connector, such as a covered walkway between the restroom building and the side door of the Hoyle's Mill building, in the design for the restroom building.)

- Once MCDOT has made this commitment, the Boyds community will work with Montgomery County councilmembers, the Montgomery County executive, the Department of General Services, MPHP, and MHT to get a Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) and eventual Request for Proposals (RFP) to rehabilitate and re-use the historic, county-owned Hoyle's Mill building and assume responsibility for its maintenance.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- Per MCDOT's responses from last Friday, we reached out on Monday to the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), as well as to the Well and Septic Division in the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS), to make sure we understand everything involved in MCDOT's proposal to replace the septic system and use the existing well that's in the basement of the Hoyle's Mill building. We have not yet received responses from DEP or DPS, and the comment period closes today (Tuesday). Therefore, in order to be timely, we are submitting this comment without that additional information.
- We are preparing a concept sketch for the restroom building, based on MCDOT's proposed design, that includes a connector between the restroom building and the side door of the Hoyle's Mill building.
- MCDOT's responses included an explanation of the calculations and assumptions used to conclude that the proposed replacement septic system will not allow community use of the historic, county-owned Hoyle's Mill building. MCDOT based this conclusion on a wastewater flow from building usage of 642 people per day. For multiple reasons, explained in the table below, we believe that these calculations and assumptions are flawed and do not support MCDOT's conclusion.

Component	Assumption	BCA/BHS comment
Gross square footage	3,000 sf	The building is 26' wide and 48' long, with 2 stories, plus a lower height crawl space with a dirt floor. The gross square footage calculation apparently includes this crawl space.
Building occupancy ratio	7 net square feet per occupant	According to the NFPA Fact Sheet for calculating occupant load*, 7 sf/person is for "concentrated assembly use", for example rows of chairs set up for a presentation. Since the building has 2 stories, that would be 2 presentations per event.

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Component	Assumption	BCA/BHS comment
		* https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Code-or-topic-fact-sheets/CalculatingOccupantLoadFactSheet.pdf
Allowable occupants	214 people	<p>According to the NFPA Fact Sheet for calculating occupant load, “The calculated occupant load is the minimum number of people for which the number and capacity of means of egress must be provided.” Since this is a historic building, egress is basically fixed to the existing doors and windows. Thus, occupant load should be calculated based on egress (i.e., how many people can get out via the existing windows and doors), instead of on building square footage and building usage (i.e., how many windows and doors are needed for people to get out).</p> <p>In response to an e-mail inquiry about occupancy limits, Ms. Patsy Warnick, Manager of Fire Code Compliance in the Office of the Fire Marshal in the Department of Permitting Services, has advised us, “It depends on what the building will be used for. I highly recommend you engage a registered design professional such as an architect to assist you with the design proposal. For example, for an assembly space the occupant load could be between 166 and 356 people, but a business space could be limited to 25 people... that is based on gross square footage of the two floors and not the basement which sounds unfinished.”</p>
Number of people per day	642 people	<p>This number seems highly unrealistic. Even with the most optimistic mode-share assumptions, where would there be enough car parking for one event with 214 people, let alone three 214-person events in one day?</p> <p>The design presented at the public hearing seems to include 3 short-term car parking spaces, plus 2 handicapped car parking spaces and 38 regular car parking spaces for MARC riders. There are also 15 car parking spaces for MARC riders in the existing lot. That’s a total of 58 car parking spaces, of which 55 are for MARC riders.</p> <p>The design also seems to include 12 short-term and 14 long-term spaces for bicycle parking.</p> <p>MCDOT’s calculations assume 12 buses per day, with 60 riders total. Based on previous information from MCDOT, these would be meet-the-MARC buses transporting MARC riders to and from the train on weekdays only.</p> <p>The Boyds MARC station also currently has 5 trains that run inbound-only (from Brunswick and Frederick) in the mornings, and 5 trains (6 on Fridays) that run outbound-only (from DC) in the afternoon/evening, on weekdays only.</p>

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4. MCDOT had previously indicated that the design vehicle for this facility is a 59-foot articulated bus. We don't know whether that is still the current design vehicle. In MCDOT's septic calculations, there are 12 buses per day and an estimated 60 riders per day (each using the restroom twice). If "riders" means "boardings," this is an average of 5 people per bus. If it means "people making round trips" (i.e., 120 boardings), it's an average of 10 people per bus.

Thank you very much for the additional opportunity to provide comments. We look forward to continuing to work with you on a shared vision for the rehabilitation and re-use of the historic, county-owned Hoyle's Mill building.

Sincerely,

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