

Sierra Club testimony to MoCo Council
Veirs Mill Corridor BRT Preliminary Engineering
July 16, 2019

Good evening, I'm Tina Slater, Montgomery County Sierra Club Transportation Lead. Sierra Club supports FY20 funding for preliminary engineering of both the Veirs Mill Corridor BRT and the 355 BRT. My remarks will address the Veirs Mill Road plan.

The approved Veirs Mill Road (VMR) Corridor Master Plan seeks to establish VMR as multi-modal complete street for people who walk, bicycle, take transit and drive motor vehicles. VMR is an important corridor in the county, as it provides a direct connection between the commercial centers of Rockville and Wheaton, connecting two ends of WMATA's Red Line; it also provides one of the few East-West connections in the southern part of the county.

Among the reasons we urge pushing forward with this project is Climate Change. We want to increase transit ridership and reduce transit travel time, thereby attracting more riders and enticing people out of their cars. Queue jumps at busy intersections and transit signal priority (TSP) will reduce the bus travel time 33% over the current trip time. This is a very transit-dependent area, with lots of affordable housing. BRT transit will increase transit reliability for the residents and employees of the plan area.

Another vital part of the plan is improving safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. We need this, as there have been multiple fatalities and many roadway injuries along this corridor. Please construct all sidewalks and interim bikeways (many on existing adjacent roadways), as well as protected intersections to provide safe access to BRT stations.

Finally, to improve compliance with the existing Bus/Right Turn Only lanes, painting the lane to denote Bus Only, plus enforcing right turns by mounting cameras on buses, could assist in enforcement --- much like cameras on school buses have done.

We hope you will fund preliminary engineering of this plan in FY20.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Tina Slater, MoCo Sierra Club Transportation Lead
301-585-5038
Slater.tina@gmail.com