



To  
The Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD

February 5, 2020

Sierra Club Montgomery County Testimony to Montgomery County Council  
Regarding FY 21 Capital Improvement Budget

Dear Council President Katz and Members of Montgomery County Council President,

Transportation is the largest contributor to climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions in the state, and vehicle tailpipe emissions also are a major source of nitrous oxide and other toxics which are very damaging to human health. Thus, Sierra Club looks at opportunities to promote more transit, bicycling and walking. Another major reason we advocate for safe biking and walking is because they are good for our health and lessen the number of people on the road.

We are concerned that there is no funding in 2021 (nor in outlying years) for the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) tunnel connecting trail users from the east side of Wisconsin Avenue to the Bethesda Metro/Purple Line stations on the west. The Purple Line opens in 2023 with a newly paved 12-foot wide hiker/biker trail connecting Silver Spring and Bethesda. But without the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, trail users must cross that busy roadway at grade. Please allocate money in the CIP for this long-pledged tunnel project that improves connectivity and safety.

Meanwhile, we are pleased to see funds included for Pedestrian Safety, critical to Vision Zero goals. Infrastructure improvements are needed to reduce deaths and serious injuries to zero by 2030 on all roadways. As bike commuting continues to grow, the county is moving to expand its bike/ped infrastructure, planning for Complete Streets and Safe Routes to Schools. Building the CCT tunnel along with the Purple Line is **highly supportive** of these goals and will connect trail users to schools, community centers, local retail and jobs, thus helping residents to be less car-dependent. Forcing trail users onto a surface crossing of Wisconsin Avenue is a recipe for more vehicle/people collisions.



Finally, the county's first BRT on Route 29 will open May 2020 – with dedicated lanes in the northern half of this 14-mile long corridor. This is a huge move forward in Green Transportation! But we still need dedicated (or managed) lanes in the southern half. This BRT project will enhance equity and transit mobility by connecting riders to high density housing and employment centers, including the new White Oak Science Gateway. We would expect this CIP to include some future funding to complete the dedicated lanes in the southern part of this BRT corridor.

Thank you for your consideration of the concerns and recommendations shared in this testimony.

Sincerely,

*Shruti Bhatnagar*

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