



Montgomery County Council PHED Committee
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville Maryland

March 04.2022

Re: Concerns regarding MoCo Economic Development Corporation transportation items in Strategic Plan.

Dear Chairman Riemer and Councilmembers Friedson and Jawando,

We are writing to comment on the transportation-related recommendations included in the draft Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan (pages 30-31). We apologize for missing the opportunity to comment at the Council's February 8, 2022 public hearing on the draft Plan. Only recently did we realize the draft includes transportation-related recommendations.

Sierra Club is supportive of the majority of the transportation recommendations. We agree that the County should "accelerate delivery of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to enhance transportation options," "reduce reliance on carbon-based gas emitting vehicles," support electric vehicles and walkable communities, and help local businesses and communities affected by the Purple Line construction interruptions. We also agree that the County should "[c]ontinue to provide east-west connections in both MidCounty and UpCounty areas for better access to jobs."

However, one recommendation troubles us, though it is written somewhat broadly and ambiguously so it is not clear what precisely it means. That recommendation is that the County should "[c]ooperate with state and federal resources to facilitate the expedient [sic] expansion of the American Legion Bridge, the Capital Beltway (Interstate 495) and Interstate 270."

We are concerned because this recommendation seems to express support for the Maryland Department of Transportation's plan to add toll lanes to the Capital Beltway and I-270, a project which the Sierra Club strongly opposes. As you know, the Sierra Club has undertaken extensive analyses of the MDOT plan and has submitted detailed comments on the draft Environmental Impact Statement. Our analyses demonstrate that the plan would not remedy our traffic congestion problems because it would not reduce congestion for most drivers, would further increase greenhouse gas emissions and harm the environment in other significant ways, and would harm communities and environmental justice populations in the adjacent areas. Furthermore, our analysis demonstrates that there are viable, beneficial alternatives, which were not adequately considered by MDOT. The Sierra Club's comments, joined by the City of Rockville and over 50 other organizations, may be found at [Maryland Sierra Club Comments on I-495 & I-270 Managed Lane Study DEIS](#)

We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,
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Sierra Club Montgomery County Group
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cc: Council members Albornoz, Glass, Rice, Katz, Navarro, and Hucker
cc: County Executive Marc Elrich