



October 16, 2018

City of College Park
240-487-3501
www.collegeparkmd.gov

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Office of the Mayor
and City Council
4500 Knox Road
College Park, MD 20740

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Mayor

Patrick L. Wojahn
5015 Lackawanna Street
240-988-7763

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Councilmembers

District 1
Fazlul Kabir
9817 53rd Avenue
301-659-6295

Kate Kennedy
9730 51st Avenue
202-400-1501

District 2
P. J. Brennan
4500 Knox Road
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Monroe S. Dennis
8117 51st Avenue
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District 3
Robert W. Day
7410 Baylor Avenue
301-741-1962

John B. Rigg
6809 Dartmouth Avenue
443-646-3503

District 4
Dustyn Kujawa
9238 Limestone Place
240-620-2105

Denise Mitchell
4500 Knox Road
301-852-8126

The Honorable Charles Allen
City Councilmember, City of Washington, DC
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 N. Capitol Street
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chair Allen:

I am writing to reiterate our letter of January 9, 2018, in opposition to the proposal initiated by the Maryland Department of Transportation to widen the Capital Beltway (I-495) and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD 295). As the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) considers final passage of Visualize 2045 and, in particular, the financially constrained element, I also write to encourage the Transportation Planning Board to pass an amendment to reiterate and reinforce the requirements of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) under the National Environmental Policy Act to consider the impacts on local communities that this project would have.

The City of College Park remains concerned about the impacts this project would have on our community. Although MDOT has stated that it intends to work within the existing State Highway Administration Right-of-Way, MDOT is currently considering options for expansion of I-495 that would add up to an additional four lanes of traffic around the entire stretch of I-495 within Maryland. It is difficult to understand how this could be accomplished within the existing right-of-way. Expanding the Beltway could have significant additional impacts on the communities surrounding I-495, including creating an additional traffic burden on local streets, creating additional noise and pollution, and further dividing communities already divided by the Beltway.

As expressed in our January letter, we are concerned that the harmful impacts created by Beltway expansion would outweigh minimal impact in reducing congestion. Significant studies have shown that highway expansion does little to address congestion in the long run – as development patterns follow highway construction, new traffic leads to further congestion. In order to ensure minimal impact on our community and the other communities surrounding the Beltway, College Park encourages MDOT to consider a more multi-modal approach including consideration of land use patterns. We are greatly encouraged by other strategies included within Visualize 2045.

TPB Chair Charles Allen
October 16, 2018
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Over the past several days, in close consultation with TPB staff, we have drafted proposed amendments to Resolution R5-2019, which would approve Visualize 2045, and now request that the TPB adopt these amendments. We crafted these proposed amendments in a way so that they would not disrupt the regional transportation planning or air quality conformity analysis processes. At the same time, the amended resolution would formally request that MDOT consider the impacts to local communities, abide by the state intent not to impact homes along the project right of way, and consider integration of multi-modal elements as part of the project. These provisions do not create any additional burden for MDOT beyond what is currently required by the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. section 4321 et seq., but would request that MDOT consider ways to reduce the impacts on local communities and report back to the TPB. Unfortunately, although the additional burden to MDOT in responding to these requests would be minimal, MDOT has not agreed to support these amendments.

We appreciate your consideration and the work of the Transportation Planning Board to address these important issues impacting our region, including congestion of our roads, while maintaining the high quality of life in our existing neighborhoods.

Sincerely,



Patrick L. Wojahn
Mayor

Enclosures: Proposed Amendments to TPB R5-2019
January 9, 2018 letter to Charles Allen, Chair, TPB
January 9, 2018 letter to MDOT Secretary Pete Rahn

Copy: College Park City Council
MDOT Secretary Pete Rahn
County Council Member Dannielle M. Glaros
County Council Member Mary Lehman
District 21 Delegation



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January 9, 2018

Charles Allen, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chair Allen:

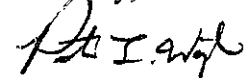
The College Park City Council is responding to the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) request for comments on the Maryland proposal to widen I-270, I-495, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. The Council provides the comments below regarding I-495 and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

The Council opposes the proposed widening of the Capital Beltway (I-495) and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD 295). While road widening often provides short-term congestion relief, studies have shown that in the long-term similar projects lead to more driving, trips, and sprawl. The 2012 Baltimore-Washington Parkway Feasibility Study concluded that additional lanes would accommodate more traffic, but also create more demand that would lead to similar levels of congestion to the level prior to the widening project.

Additionally, the Council is very concerned about the negative environmental impacts these widening projects would have, as well as the damage to neighborhoods adjacent to the roads. The Baltimore-Washington Parkway is an historic treasure and the character of the parkway should be protected.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this proposal, and thank you for the TPB's support of increased investment in transit systems and transit-oriented development as long-term solutions that create sustainable, healthy, and vibrant communities and economies.

Sincerely,


Patrick L. Wojahn
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Rushern Baker, Prince George's County Executive
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe, 21st District Delegation
The Honorable Barbara Frush, 21st District Delegation
The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, 21st District Delegation
The Honorable Ben Barnes, 21st District Delegation
The Honorable Dannielle Glaros, Chair and Prince George's County Council
The Honorable Mary Lehman, Prince George's County Council
Kanathur Srikanth, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments



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January 9, 2018

Secretary Pete K. Rahn
Maryland Department of Transportation
6 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Secretary Rahn:

The City Council respectfully opposes the proposed widening of the Capital Beltway (I-495) and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (MD 295). While road widening often provides short-term congestion relief, studies have shown that in the long-term similar projects lead to more driving, trips, and sprawl. The 2012 Baltimore-Washington Parkway Feasibility Study concluded that additional lanes would accommodate more traffic, but also create more demand that would lead to similar levels of congestion to the pre-widening level.

Additionally, the Council is very concerned about the negative environmental impacts these widening projects would have, as well as the damage to neighborhoods adjacent to the roads. The Baltimore-Washington Parkway is an historic treasure and the character of the parkway should be protected.

The City Council applauds your support for the Purple Line and for dedicated funding for our regions transit system. We respectfully request your administration to increase investment in the MARC Train and other mass-transit systems, as well as transit-oriented development as long-term solutions that create sustainable, healthy, and vibrant communities and economies.

Sincerely,

Patrick L. Wojahn
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Rushern Baker, Prince George's County Executive
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The Honorable Barbara Frush, 21st District Delegation
The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, 21st District Delegation
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