



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Lyn Erickson, TPB Plan Development and Coordination Program Director
SUBJECT: Summary of Comments Received and Proposed Responses on an Additional Project Submission for Inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the constrained element of Visualize 2045 and the FY 2019-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
DATE: February 21, 2018

At the January 17 meeting, the board approved the project submissions and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis scope of work for the financially constrained element of Visualize 2045. The board was also briefed on a request from Montgomery County to include the New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which was not in the set of projects described during the initial public comment period. The board opened an additional 30-day public comment period that began on January 19 and closed on February 17.

Comments submitted have been posted on the TPB's website at www.mwcog.org/TPBcomment. This memorandum provides a summary of the comments received and responses provided by TPB staff. A compilation of the comments received as posted is attached to this memorandum.

The TPB will be briefed on the comments received and responses provided. Following that briefing, the board will be asked to approve the additional project submission for inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the constrained element of Visualize 2045 and the FY 2019-2024 TIP. The comments and responses will be included in the documentation of Visualize 2045.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Comments were received from five individuals and two governmental representatives. TPB staff have reviewed each comment and summarized their main points in this memo. Comments were received on the following projects and topics:

- A. New Hampshire Ave. BRT in Montgomery County
- B. US Route 15 widening in Loudoun County
- C. Bicycle/Pedestrian connections between Montgomery and Loudoun counties

A. NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE. BRT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Five comments were received in support of Montgomery County's proposal to include the New Hampshire Ave. BRT project in the air quality analysis. The comments make the following points:

1. **Comment:** The project will reduce pollution, increase access to jobs and services, and benefit lower-income communities.

TPB Staff Response: The collective impacts of this and the other projects included in the financially constrained element of Visualize 2045 on air pollution and access to jobs will be

modeled and projected in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis and the Performance Analysis that will be published in September. The analyses will not break out the impacts of individual projects.

2. **Comment:** The project is critical to achieve the goals of the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan, and the segment from White Oak to Eastern Avenue should be prioritized for completion before 2030.

TPB Staff Response: Staff have forwarded this recommendation to Montgomery County Department of Transportation. The project is currently planned for implementation in 2045, but this does not preclude Montgomery County from advancing the completion date of some or all of the project in future updates to the long-range plan.

B. US ROUTE 15 WIDENING IN LOUDOUN COUNTY

One comment was received in support of VDOT's proposal to widen US 15.

1. **Comment:** The project will improve safety and reduce congestion.

TPB Staff Response: The board approved the inclusion of this project in the air quality analysis at its January 17 meeting. The impact of this and all other projects included in the financially constrained element of Visualize 2045 on travel demand and congestion will be modeled and projected in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis and the Performance Analysis that will be published in September. The analyses will not break out the impacts of individual projects.

C. BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION BETWEEN MONTGOMERY AND LOUDOUN COUNTIES

One comment was received suggesting a bicycle/pedestrian crossing of the Potomac River between Montgomery County and Loudoun County.

1. **Comment:** Such a project would alleviate concerns about development and congestion while providing healthy alternatives and improvements to traffic.

TPB Staff Response: A project of this nature has not been proposed for inclusion in the constrained element of Visualize 2045 or as a study by any agency and is not a subject of the board's action at this time. A bicycle/pedestrian facility would not be included in the travel demand modeling used to perform the air quality conformity analysis.



Comments Received on the Additional Project Submission for Inclusion in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis of the Constrained Element of Visualize 2045 and the FY 2019-2024 TIP

New Hampshire Ave BRT project in Montgomery County

Submitted by: A Governmental Body or Representative

Ludlow, Suzanne *Takoma Park, Maryland 20912* *2/16/2018*
City of Takoma Park, Office of the City Manager

Subject: New Hampshire Bus Rapid Transportation Project, Visualize 2045

Attached please find comments from the City Manager of Takoma Park regarding the New Hampshire Avenue BRT proposal. (see page 3)

Kostiuk, Kacy *Takoma Park, Maryland 20912* *2/20/2018 8:10:39 AM*

Subject: Support for New Hampshire Ave BRT Project

I am writing to support the inclusion of Montgomery County's New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project in the Air Quality Analysis for the constrained element of Visualize 2045. The City of Takoma Park has strongly supported the County's plans for Bus Rapid Transit on New Hampshire Avenue for many years. This could serve an important role in connecting Takoma Park residents and residents throughout the region with jobs, shopping, recreation, and other opportunities, making it possible to travel more easily and smoothly in the region while providing a more environmentally friendly and cost-effective alternative to driving. Sincerely, Kacy Kostiuk Councilmember, City of Takoma Park Member, COG Transportation Planning Board

Submitted by: An Individual

Landy, Gail *,* *1/19/2018*

Subject: Rapid Transit Bus

The Rapid Transit Bus sited to run on the Route 29 corridor in Eastern Montgomery County will reduce pollution, and give residents access to sustainable jobs. Lower income people live in Eastern Montgomery County, and are limited in employment due to lack of vehicles for transit. Cars and trucks are the major source of air pollution in Montgomery County. As a Gaithersburg, resident I know that public transportation is a benefit to people in Upper Montgomery County. We depend on Metro and the Marc commuter train for cheaper and convenient transit to jobs in the county and DC. We also rely on Ride On and Metro Buses for daily transit. Why shouldn't Eastern Montgomery County have the same advantage.

Finnegan, Eileen *Silver Spring, Maryland 20903* *1/30/2018 10:21:52 AM*

Subject: New Hampshire BRT inclusion in Visualize 2045

The New Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit segment proposed by Montgomery County Department of Transportation is necessary to achieve the goals of the recent White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan. The first segment from White Oat to Eastern Ave/Fort Totten should be prioritized for completion before 2030. The balance of the route to Colesville should follow. The New Hampshire BRT route will serve a growing FDA, high-density development in New Hampshire corridor, the Purple Line at Langley Park and the heavy ridership from Takoma/Langley. It adds to the high-quality transit services in the Eastern Montgomery/Northern Prince George's county area. Please approve this late submission request of MoCo DOT to the Visualize 2045 long-range plan

Ditzler, Barbara *Silver Spring, Maryland 20910* *1/22/2018 11:10:44 AM*

Subject: BRT - New Hampshire Ave

More routes on the planned MoCo BRT Transit System is a big plus for the community. We need better and more transit to improve our daily lives, the air we breathe and our general environment. New Hampshire Ave line is a natural to help join our BRT system together and minimize congestion

Other Regional Transportation Issue

Submitted by: An Individual

Goodrum, David

Leesburg, Virginia 20176

2/7/2018 3:56:05 PM

Subject: Rte 15 widening: Thank You!

Thank you for the inclusion of Rte 15 in Visualize 2045, and the FY 2019-2024 Transportation Improvement Program. As a resident who lives on the section of Rte 15 along the stretch of road that this plan affects, I'm delighted to finally see that action is going to be taken after years and years of unsafe roads and the worst congestion in Loudoun County. The end result of this project will save lives and make the daily lives of people who live here, as well as the surrounding communities that are impacted, much better. Let me say it again: Thank You!!!

Eckstein, Michelle

Sterling, Virginia 20165

1/31/2018 2:45:29 PM

Subject: Potomac River Bridge

We need more effective transportation solutions between Montgomery and Loudoun counties. There is a lot of debate about creating new bridges north of the DC. To combat concerns of cost, sprawl, traffic, and pollution, I recommend a building "foot/bike only" bridge across the Potomac. This would allow environmentally friendly transportation which utilizes the existing C&O canal towpath and W&OD trail. People have flocked to other cities that have invested in a strong bike and pedestrian culture. For the health of DMV residents, improvements in traffic, and the future growth of the area please look towards adding bike paths and bridges which can be used for daily commuting. Michelle Eckstein

City of Takoma Park, Maryland

Office of the City Manager

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Takoma Park, MD 20912
www.takomaparkmd.gov

Suzanne R. Ludlow, City Manager

February 16, 2018

Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capital Street, NE, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002-4239

RE: New Hampshire Bus Rapid Transportation Project, Visualize 2045

The City of Takoma Park supports Montgomery County's request of the addition of the New Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit Project to the Montgomery County inputs to the constrained element of Visualize 2045.

This project provides for design and construction work related to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line on New Hampshire Avenue from the Colesville Park and Ride Lot to Eastern Avenue. Activity centers are located at Takoma/Langley Crossroads and at White Oak. Corridor recommendations, from north to south, include a mixed traffic transitway from Colesville Park-and-Ride to Lockwood Drive, and dedicated lane(s) from Lockwood Drive to the District line at Eastern Avenue.

The County Council approved the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, an amendment to the Master Plan of Highways and Transportation, on November 26, 2013. The New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Bus Rapid Transit project is a priority for both the City and County.

The City of Takoma Park has strongly supported the County's plans for BRT on New Hampshire Avenue for many years, along with other key investments in transit for the area such as the Purple Line, the Takoma/Langley Transit Center, and the K9 MetroExtra service improvements. The New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept plan was adopted by the City in 2008 to convert a 1.25-mile segment of New Hampshire Avenue into a pedestrian-friendly, multi-way boulevard. The plan specifically calls for "a rapid bus route with limited stops and frequency" for New Hampshire Avenue, reiterating the WMATA 2003 rapid bus priority corridor that identifies the New Hampshire Corridor for BRT. As noted in the Transit Corridors Master Plan, New Hampshire Avenue in Takoma Park is a prime candidate for early implementation of the BRT network and the City supports the County's effort to move forward on this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne R. Ludlow".

Suzanne R. Ludlow
City Manager