



Village of North Chevy Chase

December 16, 2019

Via Email

Mr. Peter Franchot
Comptroller, State of Maryland

Dear Comptroller Franchot:

As residents and elected officials of the Village of North Chevy Chase, we strongly urge you to reject the Governor's recommended reversal of the decision taken by the Board of Public Works on June 5, 2019. We and our residents vehemently oppose any effort to move proposals for Montgomery County Beltway Expansion from Phase II to Phase I of the I-495 & I-270 P3 Program.

Our Village will suffer severe negative consequences from the construction of proposed toll lane ramps on Connecticut Avenue and from the widening of I-495, given that Connecticut Avenue and the Beltway constitute the Village's western and northern boundaries. Connecticut Avenue already experiences unbearable congestion during significant portions of the day with a failed traffic intersection at Jones Bridge Road. Construction of additional lanes along Connecticut Avenue for access to and from the Beltway toll lanes will exacerbate that congestion considerably. Additional adverse consequences from that include increased exposure to vehicular air pollutants for Village residents and an increase in cut through traffic on Village streets.

We are also disturbed by the total lack of transparency associated with key aspects of the project. For example, SHA recently sent letters to a number of Village residents informing them that SHA field personnel will need to access their property over the next year in order to conduct surveys in connection with the I-495 Managed Lanes Study. But when the Village attempted to find out from SHA which residents had received this letter, in order to be able to better understand the scope of potential impact on the Village, SHA refused to provide this information. Taking this as an indication of how SHA intends to operate going forward, it raises even greater concerns about decisionmaking on such key issues as to what property would be



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subject to eminent domain action and how the toll roads are to be operated once service has commenced. Rather than allowing and welcoming public input on these vital decisions, we are instead faced with an unprecedented rush to judgment to move forward in a manner contrary to the decision taken just six months ago. It appears as though the State's underlying philosophy on this is simply to make it up as we go along.

The decision to place the Montgomery County Beltway Expansion in Phase II was based on multiple significant concerns that had been raised with respect to the widening of the Montgomery County portion of I-495, and would allow additional time to consider the significant deleterious effects, which widening that portion of I-495 would have, including adverse community impacts on municipalities like the Village of North Chevy Chase. Yet a mere six months later, the Board is about to consider backtracking from that decision. Such a move would be nothing less than a blatant breach of trust, reflecting an unwarranted rush to judgment on a range of important issues.

Finally, the timing with which this has all unfolded is a further source of concern. It was extremely distressing that this new proposal first surfaced essentially over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, with the initial plan to seek approval of it the following week. We certainly appreciate your efforts to forestall that and afford additional time for appropriate consideration, but we nonetheless view this as part of a concerted effort to push this through in the dark of night, and strongly urge that you oppose this measure.

Council of the Village of North Chevy Chase

Adrian Andreassi, Chair
Brian Hoffner, Vice Chair
Maury Mechanick, Secretary
Chas Stuart, Treasurer
Fern Lapidus, Member



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cc: Maryland House of Delegates Representatives Carr, Shetty and Solomon
Maryland State Senator Waldstreicher
Montgomery County Executive Elrich
Montgomery County Council Representatives Friedson, Albornoz, Glass,
Jawando and Riemer
U.S. Congress Representative Raskin
U.S. Senators Cardin and Van Hollen
Maryland Governor Hogan
Maryland Treasurer Kopp