

Tips for testifying in support of transit before the Montgomery County Planning Board



Sign up to testify in advance

1. **To testify in person, sign up online** – visit http://www.montgomeryapps.org/planning_board/testify.asp, and select “5/16” in the drop down menu. That will automatically select “11-Public Hearing – Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan”. Fill in the rest of your information and click “Submit”.
2. **Submit written comments:** If you cannot attend the hearing but would like to submit written testimony to the Planning Board, you can send your comments by email at MCP-Chairman@mncppc-mc.org or fax to 301-495-1320 at least 48 hours before the hearing.

What to expect

- You will have three (3) minutes to testify if you are registering as an individual. If you formally represent your community association, you will have five (5) minutes. Be sure to be prepared, and stick to your allotted time.
- Testimony will be taken in the order that people sign up.
- The Planning Board will generally listen attentively to what you have to say. Occasionally they'll have questions, although that's not common if there are many people testifying.
- Bring at least one copy of your testimony to submit to the clerk for the official record, and to help you if you don't have your testimony memorized cold!

General tips and for testifying effectively

- **Tell them who you are, and why you care.** State your name, where you live, and any other details about yourself and your unique perspective on this issue that you would like to share. The more you can share about what motivates you to speak out, the stronger your testimony. Consider sharing details about how you, your family, or your community get around, and how this proposal would help.
- **Overall statement of support:** Let the Planning Board know where you stand, and demonstrate your support for new rapid transit investments.
- **Discussion:** The focus of the discussion at this point is 1) *which* corridors to designate for a Rapid Transit System, 2) where additional right of way will be needed, and 3) general station locations. Specific operational questions will be dealt with later. In addition to sharing the reasons you support the overall proposal, you may want to share your thoughts on your specific needs, and perspectives on the routes and proposed stops in your neighborhood. Local knowledge and input is important as they design this system.

Sample Talking Points



- **We have the worst traffic in the nation.** Traffic and gridlock are an ever-increasing threat to our quality of life in Montgomery County. We waste more hours in traffic, away from family and home, than any other region in the country. Our average commute time in Montgomery is 70 minutes a day – 20 minutes more than the national average.
- **Doing nothing is not an option – traffic will only get worse.** Our current transportation infrastructure simply cannot handle the current number of cars. In the coming years, the county will add more than 200,000 new residents and a similar number of jobs - that's hundreds of thousands of additional cars on roads that are already gridlocked and overburdened.
- **Building roads doesn't solve the problem.** Building new roads and widening existing roads is too expensive, harms our neighborhoods, and as we have seen, doesn't actually solve our traffic problems.
- **A Rapid Transit System is the best, most affordable solution to connect many of the growing areas of the county with high quality transit service.** The estimated cost to build a Rapid Transit System is approximately \$17 million/mile, as compared to \$250 million/mile for Metro and \$75 million/mile for light rail, and \$30 million to \$100 million for a single interchange.
- **Give transit priority where it is the more efficient use of our public roadways.** A Rapid Transit System can move significantly more people per lane as compared to cars, greatly increasing the efficiency of our transportation network and reducing the number of cars on the road. Dedicated lanes for transit should be used on as much of the proposed network as possible.
- **The Rapid Transit System complements our transit infrastructure.** The Planning staff has spent a year modeling the corridors with the highest ridership, and has determined the 10 routes which show the greatest potential to provide a complimentary high quality transit service to our Red Line Metro service, and coming Purple Line.
- **Rapid Transit is frequent and reliable:** I support a Rapid Transit System because it provides a higher quality transit service that will come very 5-10 minutes, allowing more people to rely on transit to get to work, school, and more.
- **Preparing for the construction boom:** RTS is a smart investment because the construction boom of new condos, apartments, and stores along roads like Rockville Pike means we'll need more transit options. An RTS system supports compact walkable communities and less reliance on cars for those who choose to live there, particularly the younger generation. This will reduce growth in traffic.
- **Cleaning up our air:** Investing in RTS can contribute to substantial reductions in local air pollution from car emissions, a major source of asthma and other illnesses, and a major contributor to climate change.
- **Increasing Social Mobility:** RTS can provide working families and those just starting out with more affordable transportation choices and better access to jobs.
- **Staying Competitive:** DC, Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax are all building new transit systems. Montgomery's RTS is critical to attracting companies and young, high-tech workers, and keeping Montgomery competitive regionally and nationally.