
Testimony to TPB re Henry Nice Bridge Project and Bus Transformation Study

July 24, 2019

Chairman Nohe and members of the TPB. My name is Sonya Breehey and I'm the new Northern Virginia Advocacy Manager for the Coalition for Smarter Growth. I'm here today to speak regarding – Item 11 – the Nice-Middleton Bridge and Item 12 – the Bus Transformation Study.

Regarding Item 11, we call your attention to the powerful letter in your packet to Governor Hogan from Eric Brenner. This letter is Mr. Brenner's resignation from Maryland's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, detailing serious and deep concerns about the State of Maryland's handling of the bridge study and their removal of the protected bicycle crossing from the project. We endorse his letter in its entirety.

We urge you to reject Maryland's TIP amendment because of its failure to explicitly include a protected bicycle and pedestrian pathway in the project.

We note that:

1. The project does not conform to the TPB's commitments to multimodal transportation.
2. You have not been provided cost estimates of the project with and without the protected pathway nor the potential economic benefits of providing this important Maryland to Virginia recreational, commuting and tourism investment.
3. We have a model in the Woodrow Wilson Bridge of inclusion of a protected pathway and the tourism, recreation, and economic benefits that can be realized.
4. When Maryland was seeking approval of the Intercounty Connector, the TPB was told by the State of Maryland and MdTA, that the project would have an adjacent barrier-separated path. Once the state had secured financing and regulatory approvals they broke the promise to the TPB and community and never completed the path. This reinforces our concern about MdTA and their vague language in their letter to you that your approval today would not preclude the inclusion of a protected path.

The only alternative to rejecting the project today would be to amend the resolution to make your approval contingent upon **explicit inclusion of a protected pathway** in the project and

to include the requirement that the state to return to the TPB with the final cost estimates for the project with and without the pathway to allow for your final review and approval.

Turning to Item 12. We serve on the Executive Committee of the Bus Transformation Study along with major business leaders. We urge you amend the TPB's letter to provide a much and stronger and positive endorsement of the major recommendations of the study. The survey of over 3000 residents and riders, and the performance data collected by the consultants, clearly shows that all is not well with our bus service. The riders don't care who operates the system, they just want more frequent, reliable, faster, more affordable service. Their top priority overall is for dedicated bus lanes, and for lower income riders it is free transfers and lower fares.

Please provide more specific endorsement of the many major service and consumer improvements proposed by the study.

Thank you.