

## FY 2019 – 2022 Transportation Improvement Program Public Comments with BRTB Responses

**Comment:** I sure hope these funds will be put to good use to improve upon the sorry crappy MTA system that we currently have. The Baltimore Link service is still operating on a poor customer service schedule.

**Response:** One year ago, MTA implemented an overhaul of the transit system that contained some older routes that connected to “outdated” job centers and didn’t serve emerging populations. Some older routes were also too long to manage reliably. The MTA acknowledges that, while more customers are served with the overhaul, it has also changed patterns for some riders who have expressed dissatisfaction. The MTA is committed to addressing as many issues as possible to provide safe, efficient, and reliable transit. To better address your concerns, we encourage you to contact Mr. Tom Hewitt, Director of Service Development at MTA. Mr. Hewitt can be reached at [THewitt@mta.maryland.gov](mailto:THewitt@mta.maryland.gov) or 410-454-7257.

Meanwhile, the MTA continues to build on the success of BaltimoreLink by implementing innovative technologies:

- Real-time tracking of bus routes through a partnership with the Transit app – June 2018
- A yearly bus replacement schedule that aims to replace buses with ages of 14 years or less
- Installation of transit signal priority (TSP) at intersections, allowing traffic signals to sense approaching buses, thus providing more reliable route timing by up to 22%
- Continuing to assess corridors for needed enhancements

In addition to these bus-related commitments, the MTA is also working on other modes:

- Light Rail vehicle midlife overhaul – currently underway
- Metro railcar signal system and fleet – to arrive in 2020
- Emphasis on preserving assets in order to provide a world class transit system that is safe, efficient, and reliable

**Comment:** As a resident of Columbia Town Center, I applaud all the efforts to maintain and improve the transit systems and road infrastructure as detailed in the 2019-2022 TIP. I would like to highlight four TIP projects that are important to improving quality of life in Howard County and the Baltimore region: 1.) 60-9903-29 Areawide Transportation Alternatives Projects, 2.) 16-1410-41 Snowden River Parkway: Broken Land Parkway to Oakland Mills Road, 3.) 16-1901-42 US 29/Broken Land Parkway Interchange and North South Connector Road, and 4.) 60-9506-38 Areawide Environmental Projects.

**Response:** Howard County thanks you for your support of each of those projects but especially the Snowden River Parkway and the US 29/Broken Land Parkway Interchange/North South Connector Road projects.

Regarding **60-9903-29** Areawide Transportation Alternatives Projects all members of the BRTB value the TA program to provide funding for a category of projects beyond highway and transit to increase options for folks to participate in the transportation option of their choosing. In particular, Howard County has applied for and received funding on numerous occasions through the highly competitive TA program.

Regarding **16-1410-41** Snowden River Parkway: Broken Land Parkway to Oakland Mills Road. The improvements to Snowden River Parkway are being advanced as Howard County capital projects. These two projects will address the intersection of Broken Land Parkway/Snowden River Parkway and the length of Snowden River Parkway from the Broken Land Parkway/Snowden River Parkway Project boundary to Oakland Mills Road.

The Snowden River Parkway – A widening project that will complete design and land acquisition in FY 2019 while the intersection project's final design is expected to be completed in FY 2019 with construction expected in FY 2021.

Regarding **16-1901-42** US 29/Broken Land Parkway Interchange and North South Connector Road. The US 29/Broken Land Parkway Interchange and North South Connector Road project is being designed and constructed by Howard Hughes as part of Downtown Columbia's infrastructure improvements and they are working with the Maryland Department of Transportation to secure permits and approvals. Howard Hughes is forecasting completion in FY 2023.

Regarding **60-9506-38** Areawide Environmental Projects: The Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) shares your concerns about safety on Maryland's highways and is investigating ways to reduce the impact of highway transportation on wildlife while increasing safety for the travelling public.

Regarding wildlife crossing projects, in order to reduce animal vehicle collisions (AVC), MDOT SHA typically utilizes underpasses such as pipes, culverts, and bridges, in conjunction with fencing to direct animals to safer crossing locations. The MDOT SHA also uses deer reflectors to redirect light from vehicles' headlamps so that deer stop while vehicles pass. The MDOT SHA also uses turtle fencing, which is short fencing that diverts turtles to safer nesting grounds or crossing locations. Lastly, MDOT SHA uses signs to alert motorists of wildlife crossing locations. Each of these measures has specific applications that are dependent on the road type, number of entrances and intersections and the adjacent land use. Other MDOT SHA efforts to identify AVC "hot spots" or animal corridors include statewide collection and analysis of AVC data, and documenting use and effectiveness of countermeasures.

Some recently completed MDOT SHA wildlife mitigation efforts include the MD 200 Inter County Connector (ICC) in Montgomery County, the MD 30 Hampstead Bypass in Carroll County, and MD 331 Dover Bridge replacement in Talbot County. Current projects under consideration for wildlife mitigation include MD 32 widening in Howard County and MD 213 at Urieville Lake in Kent County. In Baltimore County, MDOT SHA has piloted the use of roadside light reflectors as deer crossing mitigation deterrents on MD 25 (Falls Road). While Falls Road has been identified as an area of high vehicle/animal (deer, raccoon, opossum, fox) collisions, mitigating efforts remain a challenge as the corridor is largely residential and the number of driveways make it difficult or impossible to fence.

We understand your concerns for wildlife mortality and appreciate the suggestion to incorporate more wildlife crossing structures. The MDOT SHA is sensitive to the impacts of AVC, as we continue to evaluate the need for cost-effective wildlife protection measures while balancing safety issues on our roadways. Reducing AVC will create safer roadways, reduce vehicle damage, and protect animals from harm or death.

**Comment:** I hope that these projects are done with serious consideration to complete streets. I hope that pedestrian, bike, and bus facilities are not second fiddle to cars. That means wide sidewalks, bus lanes (when applicable), high quality bus stops, and protected bike lanes. This is especially important on the bridge projects that are not easily adjustable later.

**Response:** BRTB members have increased emphasis on extending all projects a multi-user view that takes into account your comment. For bridges, in particular, we recognize their lifespan is longer and the opportunity to make improvements for all users needs to be considered during rehabilitation or replacement. Many stakeholders represent the view that you have expressed and considerable effort is being made to provide a system that serves all users.

**Comment:** It appears that the TIP has changed rather drastically for Harford County's NB I-95 Section 200. We are and have always been concerned about loss of the Rt 152 Park & Ride and its eventual placement. If people want to pay to drive, that's up to them. But placement of the Park & Ride can cause serious problems for those of us who live in Joppa.

**Response:** The TIP reflects the scaled down version of Section 200 that went through a public review in March 2018. Over the next 2 months, the BRTB has been asked by MDOT MDTA to incorporate the project that the Governor announced on June 15, 2018. There will be a public review period and meeting announced in the near future.

Regarding the MD 152 Park-&-Ride Lot (P-&-R), it will be impacted by the expanded I-95 Northbound Extension Improvements and cannot remain at its current location. Harford County has confirmed that the preferred location of a new P-&-R is consistent, and not in conflict, with the Harford County Development Envelopment. Harford County has also confirmed that the new P-&-R is not inconsistent with the Development Envelopment for the other sites under consideration. The MDTA is in discussion with property owners for the preferred relocation site. Based upon discussion with the property owners, MDTA will move forward with the Preferred Site or another location identified within the Site Selection Report.

**Comment:** The residents of the Town Center Community Association have expressed many concerns about this intersection (Broken Land Parkway and Twin Rivers Road). We want to ensure the safety of pedestrians and drivers and the current situation is a recipe for disaster. This intersection should be assessed for a traffic light, interim stop sign, and consideration of other innovative solutions. That is the safest option.

**Response:** The Howard County Department of Public Works has installed stop signs at this intersection and has completed studies related to the installation of traffic signals. However, the intersection, at this time, does not meet the criteria for installation of traffic signals. A new traffic signal analysis could be undertaken as more of Downtown Columbia is developed and the new apartment buildings adjacent to the intersection are completed and fully occupied.

Regarding the suggestions, the County and state are required to follow federal guidelines on the design of traffic control devices (including signals and All-Way Stops). Federal Highway Administration guidelines do not allow for "innovative solutions" as they would deter from uniformity, however signal interconnect/coordination would be included with the design at the point it meets federal guidelines.

Finally, for the signal timing at Town Center Boulevard and Broken Land Parkway, the Howard County Office of Transportation has informed the Howard County Department of Public Works Traffic Engineering Division of this operational issue of the light staying red for BLP traffic for more than a

minute when there is no cross traffic or pedestrian cross walk and they have ordered a new detection system, which will address the issue.

**Comment:** I do have something significant to note which may affect the success of future transportation projects. This is from a publication called: *The Hill*, "GOP mega-donors Charles and David Koch are pouring money into efforts to kill public transport projects across the country, The New York Times reported on Tuesday. The Koch-financed conservative group Americans for Prosperity (AFP) has campaigned against seven local or state-level ballot initiatives for public transit and opposed more than two dozen other transit measures since 2015, according to the report. Those efforts include fighting state proposals to raise gasoline taxes."

**Response:** Awareness of outside influences is important in the dialogue and should not be the only voice heard. This is why the BRTB continues to encourage robust public participation by residents and community organizations/businesses in the transportation planning process. Thank you for your continued involvement.

**Comment:** I do not believe the TIP has been updated to reflect what MdTA is planning at this point in time. I am disappointed that MdTA's only solution in their quest to 'improve' I-95 still appears to be to widen the highway, cordon off more lanes and destroy more land.

**Response:** The 2019-2022 TIP reflects the scaled down version of Section 200 that went through a public review in March 2018. Over the next 2 months, the BRTB has been asked by MDOT MDTA to incorporate the project that the Governor announced on June 15, 2018 into the regional TIP and Plan. There will be a public review period and meeting announced in the near future.