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COUNCIL OPERATIONS
Sara Taylor-Ferrell

CITY ATTORNEY
Debra Yerg Daniel

January 6, 2020

To: Board of Public Works – Governor Hogan, Comptroller Franchot, Nancy Kopp

From: Rockville City Mayor Bridget Donnell Newton, Councilmembers Monique Ashton, Beryl Feinberg, David Myles and Mark Pierzchala

Re: January 8, 2020 vote on the I-495 and I-270 P3 Program.

On behalf of the City of Rockville, we ask that this agenda item be removed from discussion and vote at the meeting on January 8, 2020.

Late Friday afternoon (01.04.2020), Rockville's Mayor and Council were stunned to learn from the Press that a BPW meeting was scheduled for Wednesday January 8th to confirm an agreement between Governor Hogan and Comptroller Franchot which would approve a P3 for I-495 and I-270. This plan is dramatically different from the previous plan and no one has had time to study the impacts these changes will have. We request that adequate time be allotted for public review, as well as discussion with the City of Rockville.

The City of Rockville will be the most critically affected municipality as the 12 lanes of I-270 directly abut homes on both the north and south sides, Julius West Middle School, the Rockville Senior Center, Rockville Baptist Church, Rockville Christian Church, and the Rockville Nursing Home. When the road was widened to 12 lanes in the 1980's, many homes lost much of their back yards – yet any relief from that widening was short-lived, perhaps as little as 5 years. The noise pollution our community suffers from the 24 hour traffic prohibits normal conversation at homes even ¼ mile away, and City staff and community members have been trying to get a much needed sound wall installed for over 2 decades.

The City of Rockville owns 2 of the 3 bridges spanning I-270 in Rockville - Wootton Parkway and Gude Drive. To reconstruct these bridges to accommodate a wider highway will not just be expensive and unnecessary – it will cripple the traffic on our already congested roadways. Traffic from east and west flows over these bridges making their way across the County. Have you studied the impact both the construction of the additional lanes and the closing of the bridges for reconstruction will have on our roads? We would like to receive an analysis of this impact as well as discuss the long- term maintenance that will be needed as a result of additional traffic.

Today's Washington Post has a very disturbing article regarding Climate Change in Antarctica. Why are we continuing to see cars as the only answer to congestion and not taking seriously the dangerous changes in our environment? Studies have shown that transit investments return 400% on the dollar – let's put transit options first – not last.

Finally, and no less importantly, where is the transparency and open dialogue? Why the rush to a vote less than a week after the plan is announced? There are a

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great many facts still to be determined surrounding this project. We stand ready to work together to create a plan that moves Montgomery County and the State of Maryland into the 21st Century. Please remove this item from your January 8 meeting and give all of us time to understand its implications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bridget".

Bridget Donnell Newton

Mayor

cc: District 17 Delegation

Mark Elrich, County Executive

Sidney Katz, President of the County Council

Montgomery County Council

Gaithersburg Mayor and City Council