
February 27, 2020

The Honorable Kumar Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 1159 – Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan and Commission – Alterations

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 1159 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 1159 requires the MDOT Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) to classify three of the corridors identified in the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan (the Plan) as early opportunity corridors and prepare feasibility studies on each by October of 2021. MTA must also submit a report on the implementation of the plan and the studies by October of 2022. Finally, the legislation mandates that the Central Maryland Regional Transit Commission continue to meet until 2025.

The Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan (RTP) was developed collaboratively by MDOT MTA and a range of partners, including the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan commission, local governments, transit providers, and area residents. This plan will serve as a long-term vision for transit in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Harford County, and Howard County. Identifying corridors of opportunity (those that could benefit from additional transit investment), is one of the top focus areas of the plan. MDOT MTA reviewed goals and prioritized strategies at the end of 2019, plans to review and publish the final plan by September 2020, and will be implementing the final plan beginning in 2021.

The RTP Commission currently consists of 11 regional representatives that have been tasked with the responsibility of developing the Plan's goals and a meaningful public involvement strategy. It is comprised of appointees from each of the five jurisdictions included in the Plan, as well as appointees of the Senate President, House Speaker, and the Governor. As the Plan shifts towards implementation, MDOT MTA recommends that the Commission be replaced with a workgroup consisting of transportation planners from each jurisdiction, representatives from MDOT MTA, and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. The MDOT MTA is confident that the combined experience of these proposed members would allow for a seamless transition from planning to implementation of the Plan.

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The MDOT MTA anticipates that the feasibility studies identified in the legislation will take two years; due to the requirements of the studies and the timeline of the RTP, MDOT MTA recommends that the due date of the studies be moved to October 1, 2022. Additionally, the legislation requires that MDOT MTA report on performance targets of the corridors for transit vehicle speed and on-time performance. As those items cannot be measured during a study, MDOT MTA recommends that they be removed from the reporting requirements.

MDOT supports the efforts of the RTP Commission and staff in the development of the RTP and looks forward to working collaboratively with all stakeholders moving forward. The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 1159.

Respectfully submitted,

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