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## North-South Corridor Study

1 message

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To: rtp@mta.maryland.gov

Mon, Nov 7, 2022 at 8:00 PM

There are a number of observations that I'm going to make regarding the North-South Corridor proposals.

### Overview

First let me say that the analysis and these proposals are based on are pre-pandemic workforce/educational practices, and regional development planning. The pandemic has turned that world completely upside down.

In an interview, Kevin O'Leary talked about assessing their office real estate portfolio as they planned to come out of the pandemic. His companies estimated that they could reduce their office space by 25%. In reality, 50% of their employees desired to, and continued to work from home.

On-line learning, work, and shopping have also reshaped the physical landscape that we are considering remolding transit. All of this analysis is based already outdated information. We need to stop, full stop, and sharpen our view on this new reality.

### Lawmaking

The Maryland State legislators passed a law which requires Statewide collaboration in the development of transit rather than the piece meal jurisdiction by jurisdiction methods in place.

What I do not see in the analysis is a fiscally prudent analysis of these and *other* options to meet current and the *new* future needs.

In many ways this seems to me to be a solution in search of a problem; a pot of money looking for just some way for it to be spent.

### Observations

1) The current Light Rail, and bus lines (RED, 93) in the area above Towson are virtually unused. All day long the buses travel north from Towson dead empty or with just a few passengers. I've never seen more the four (4) persons on a 60 passenger bus.

The Light Rail is similarly unused up as far a Hunt Valley. Multiple car trains are nearly empty with only a person or two per car. The park and ride lots are unused by but a few cars.

There seems to be in the area north of downtown Towson no rationale to support any additional investment in hard-core transit infrastructure.

2) The primary reason given to make these changes are reliability and time savings. The total time proposed by all these proposals is 11 minutes. These proposed options go where the Light Rail and busses already go. Yes, there are some extensions and spurs in the City that might benefit users but otherwise all these options go where transit already goes. Does a cost benefit analysis support the absolute need for this investment? I think not.

### Incentivizing and reinvigoating existing resources

So what other options are we missing in an attempt to leap forward to a future that no longer exists.

Say what were looking to do is shave 10 minutes off a trip.

Let's focus on ways we can accomplish this with primarily the transit infrastructure in place.

1) Institute mandatory off-board fare payment

- 2) Institute all door loading.
- 3) Institute signal priority.
- 4) Use larger buses and more frequent buses where warranted.
- 5) Create /Reinstitute Express point to point or limited stop runs to/from heavy usage areas, particularly where there are heavy N-S/E-W transfers.
- 6) Triple track or create sidings to allow express trains on the Light Rail to get to Union Station and transfer points downtown.
- 7) Collaborate with State Roads to make near intersection improvements. Just for instance: At Seminary and York there are backups in both N-S and W-E directions due to signal timing issues primarily caused by the funneling effect approaching the intersection from the west. Widen the road back to Norman Ave providing more lanes coming to the intersection, allowing more cars per cycle and reducing the N-S signal time.

Added benefit is that the N-S traffic will not back up past Margate, traffic exiting York Hill shopping center and the Carroll Fuel station will have an exit lane, and a visibility hazard exiting Norman Ave would be eliminated.

- 8) Use express shuttles from downtown Towson to the Light Rail, in combination with a Light Rail stop (not a Park and Ride) where this shuttle is just a drop off or pickup to/from Towson.

Most aligned locations seems to be at Malvern / Bellona or Bellona at the Riderwood Post Office (coming from Kenilworth Mall). Another less efficient option would be express shuttles to Falls Rd/Mt. Washington station.

There is a direct cause and effect to the lack of Light Rail stops in Ruxton /Riderwood, Express Shuttle service to other existing Light Rail stops, and the over use of the RED bus line.

#### Other Concerns

- 1) York Rd is two lanes both directions with a center turn lane. It is heavily used and as described above have some intersection issues which back up traffic through multiple signals.
- 2) The surrounding communities do not have sidewalks. There is no way to walk to York without walking in the street. There are even sections of York Road without sidewalks.
- 3) Lutherville Lab (Elementary) is in the 1700 blk of York. During student drop off and pickup the waiting cars queue up 20 deep onto York Rd.
- 4) The center turn lane is also used by several businesses for deliveries from automobiles to food.
- 5) There are not enough lanes to sacrifice a lane for a dedicated bus lane. Creating a funnel at York and Ridgley Road is only going to back traffic further up York Rd than it already does.
- 6) The community's road design is not one of boxed streets. If the York Road center turn lane is removed or left turns are prohibited, there are no triple right turns to bring you back to a left to place you on the other side of the road I. The opposite direction.
- 7) Certainly during the construction phase or there after more traffic will be forced into the communities.
- 8) There may be negative impact to services of the Lutherville Volunteer Fire Company on Bellona between York and Seminary as traffic backs up further into the community.
- 9) Lastly, there is significant concern about our local businesses and whether they could survive this kind of construction especially after the pandemic. Our experience with what happened to Howard Street in town just as they were on the edge of a rebirth is a testament to how this can all go very very wrong.

We sincerely hope you take into consideration all the concerns and suggestions we have offered.

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