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July 10, 2019

Mr. John Orrick  
President  
Carderock Springs Citizens' Association  
Post Office Box 237  
Cabin John MD 20818

Dear Mr. Orrick:

Thank you for providing Carderock Springs Citizens' Association's (CSCA) comments on the recommended alternatives to be retained for detailed study for the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study (MLS). Your comments and concerns are important to me.

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are the lead agencies in developing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the I-495 and I-270 MLS. This EIS is being developed in full and careful compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Last year, MDOT SHA and FHWA established the MLS purpose and need after a public scoping process, consideration of public and agency partner comments, and the evaluation of the corridor transportation needs identified in local, State, and regional studies. The MLS is looking to provide a travel demand management solution that addresses congestion, improves trip reliability, and enhances existing and planned multimodal mobility and connectivity along I-495 and I-270.

Since the purpose and need was established, MDOT SHA has been engaged in the alternatives development process to identify alternatives that are reasonable in meeting the purpose and need of the MLS and to be studied in detail in the EIS. The regulations related to NEPA require that alternatives that are found to be reasonable and meet the purpose and need must be rigorously explored and objectively evaluated in the EIS. As the various managed lane alternatives with two lanes in each direction were found to be reasonable in meeting the purpose and need, MDOT SHA must perform the detailed study to fully evaluate the alternatives and document the detailed study in the EIS. In selecting our preferred alternative, we will balance the viewpoints of communities along the corridor and the environmental impacts with meeting the I-495 and I-270 corridor transportation needs.

As CSCA's concerns are important to MDOT SHA and to me, I want to address the specific comments you outlined. We are developing this study in an environmentally responsible manner and working extremely hard to reduce property needs and impacts to community and environmental resources. We understand personally that we are talking about families, neighborhoods, and communities that have value and memories associated with them. We are committed to working with communities, neighborhoods, and property owners to ensure these property and environmental resource concerns are addressed as the MLS is developed.

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As part of the ongoing environmental analysis, MDOT SHA is conducting a noise analysis and are identifying properties that would be considered impacted by noise under the proposed build alternatives. These properties were shown on the mapping at our recent public workshops. This information is also available on our program website. The Carderock Springs community does have properties that are considered impacted by noise.

The federal regulations define noise impacts as either reaching or exceeding 66 weighted decibels (dBA) for residential and school uses, or a 10 dBA increase from existing to build conditions. A 10 dBA increase is generally experienced when a highway is built on a new location or is shifted significantly closer to a community, not when lanes are added to an existing highway. Free-flowing traffic volumes along I-495 would need to double, which has not occurred since our prior noise analysis was completed for your community, in order to achieve a 3 dBA increase. The noise analysis underway is considering the worst-case future traffic conditions in order to evaluate impacts. Usage of the prior noise model, updated with both current and projected future traffic based on the approved regional model, is an accurate representation of the noise conditions projected within your community.

We are currently evaluating the reasonableness and feasibility of noise mitigation through sound barriers construction for your community, including Carderock Springs Elementary School. This analysis will consider the lane configurations and ramps for each alternative. The results of this analysis will be summarized in the Draft EIS and detailed in a noise technical report, both currently under development. If your community qualifies for a sound barrier, it would be identified in the EIS and provided as part of the construction, if a build alternative is selected in the Final EIS and Record of Decision.

We understand that air quality is a concern of your community. An air quality analysis is being conducted to identify air quality impacts associated with the proposed build alternatives. The report will include an analysis of ozone, carbon monoxide, mobile source air toxics, and greenhouse gases. The results of this analysis will be summarized in the Draft EIS and the full report will be included with the Draft EIS.

As part of the MLS, MDOT SHA has been involved in extensive community engagement including eight public workshops and over 20 community and stakeholder meetings over the last few months. Public comments and concerns have been and will continue to be considered at each stage of the MLS. As part of the development of the Draft EIS, MDOT SHA is actively conducting consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to consider effects to historic properties, including the Carderock Springs district. If you would like to be involved in the Section 106 process, please provide MDOT SHA with a point-of-contact, including email address.

Many of the details you are seeking will be provided in the Draft EIS and technical reports, including traffic, noise, and air among others. This information will be provided for public review and comment in December 2019. Public hearings will also be held on the Draft EIS in early-2020. After your review of this detailed information, we would welcome any additional comments you may have. The MDOT SHA will continue to work with your community to address any comments on the Draft EIS as we develop the Final EIS.

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The MDOT SHA values your feedback and will continue to provide CSCA and the public opportunities to be involved in this important environmental study, including meeting with your community at your convenience. Questions or comments on the MLS or I-495 and I-270 Public-Private Partnership (P3) program may be provided anytime via the I-495 and I-270 P3 Program email at 495-270-P3@mdot.maryland.gov and updated information is available on the I-495 and I-270 P3 Program website at www.495-270-P3.com.

Thank you again for providing your comments and concerns. We appreciate hearing from you. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact Jeffrey T. Folden, P.E, DBIA, MDOT SHA I-495 and I-270 P3 Office Deputy Director, at 410-637-3321 or via email at jfolden1@mdot.maryland.gov. Mr. Folden will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



Lisa B. Choplin  
Director, I-495 and I-270 P3 Office

cc: The Honorable Andrew Friedson, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council  
The Honorable Marc Korman, Maryland House of Delegates  
The Honorable Susan C. Lee, Senate of Maryland  
The Honorable Sara Love, Maryland House of Delegates  
Mr. Jack R. Smith, Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools  
Jeffrey T. Folden, P.E., DBIA, Deputy Director, I-495 and I-270 P3 Office, MDOT SHA  
Mr. Gregory Slater, Administrator, MDOT SHA