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**Mr. Rick Kiegel, PE
Project Manager
Corridor Cities Transitway
Maryland Transit Administration
Office of Planning
6 St. Paul Street, Suite 902
Baltimore, MD 21202**

Re: HOW TO PRESERVE THE BERM

Dear Mr. Kiegel:

I attended the September 30, 2014 meeting of the Washingtonian Woods HOA at which the Maryland Transit Authority ("MTA") reported on the status of the Corridor Cities Transitway ("CCT") project. A large number of local government officials were present, and yet I was appalled at the failure and refusal of the MTA representatives to respond to the very valid concerns of the residents who are negatively impacted by this project. The silence was deafening.

One of the issues not specifically elaborated upon at the meeting was the impending destruction of the Vistas berm, together with a large number of trees. This destruction would greatly diminish the beauty and serenity of the community because the berm and trees separate residents from the turmoil of traffic; it would create severe safety risks as rapidly moving busses would encroach within a few feet of where residents walk; it would generate a highly disruptive noise nuisance for the residents; it would greatly diminish property values; and it would give rise to complicated legal issues which may take years to be resolved in the courts.

Clearly, the destruction of the berm and trees must be avoided if possible. Based on my research of rush hour traffic at the site, I will demonstrate how this avoidance of destruction is not only possible but really quite easy.

The MTA documents on the CCT project indicate that the berm and trees will be destroyed in order to save an existing bus stop for local busses. This bus stop is located on the

south side of the east-bound lanes of Great Seneca Highway approximately 100 yards before the intersection with Muddy Branch Road. This bus stop serves only one bus line, which is bus 74 to Shady Grove Metro. To measure the magnitude of the concern here, I have done a count of the boardings of this bus at this stop during the morning rush hour. The result of this count was one boarding per hour. In other words, this bus stop is severely underutilized.

Of course even a single boarding is important, but the reasons why the bus stop can be eliminated and the now overly long right turn lane can be drastically shortened, thereby avoiding the destruction of the berm and trees, without harmful effect upon this or other passengers, are clear:

- (1) There are numerous alternative, and equally accessible, bus routes to the same destination. Routes 67 and 76, both headed for Shady Grove Metro, can be boarded at the bus stop on Muddy Branch Road which is just a short walk north of the Great Seneca Highway intersection.
- (2) The existing bus stop will be so heavily impacted by the CCT project that it will be unsafe to use. To use the existing bus stop after CCT is installed, one would have to walk on the sidewalk from the intersection all the way to the far end of the bus stop (because that is where the bus actually stops). Meanwhile, east bound vehicles on the highway and west bound busses on the CCT lane will be passing very rapidly within a few feet of the pedestrian. This will be very dangerous. Any passenger concerned with safety would far prefer the alternatives listed in the previous paragraph.
- (3) The CCT will impose a very difficult, and consequently very slow, crossing for car drivers going east on Great Seneca Highway and intending to turn right onto Muddy Branch Road and proceed south. The driver will immediately see the unevenness of the grading he must cross due to crossing over the two CCT lanes. It will be a major bump in the road right in the middle of the turn. But even more importantly, the driver of the car will have to see that no CCT busses are approaching which he may collide with as he crosses the CCT lanes. It may be nearly impossible to see if there are busses in his blind spot, or visible only with extreme craning of the neck. And all of this visionary difficulty will be on top of checking out the already very hectic automobile and pedestrian traffic which already occurs at this very busy intersection. Putting all of this together, it means that the driver turning right onto Muddy Branch Road may almost have to stop, or even wait a few seconds, before he can see that it is safe to proceed south on Muddy Branch Road. Therefore, the existing right turn lane, which is overly long, can easily be shortened to a length of approximately two car lengths without slowing down the right-turning traffic in the slightest.
- (4) This is not the only turn lane that will have to be eliminated or greatly reduced in order to accommodate the CCT lanes. The left turn lane on north bound

Muddy Branch Road as it approaches Midsummer Drive will also have to be eliminated or greatly reduced or there will not be room for the CCT lanes in the median strip of Muddy Branch Road. So the suggestion by MTA that all of the existing features of the highway system will be kept intact is simply not true.

- (5) If the bus stop on east bound Great Seneca Highway is eliminated and the overly long right turn lane is drastically shortened, the CCT lanes (as they approach Muddy Branch Road) can follow alongside the east bound lanes of Great Seneca Highway until they are within approximately 20 yards of the intersection, and then begin the arc of the turn south onto Muddy Branch Road. My research indicates that this scenario would probably still impact the east end of the berm to a small extent and would require the removal of a few trees, but the impact would be minimal by comparison with that under the current version of the CCT plan.

For all of these reasons we urge the MTA to modify its CCT plan to show the elimination of the existing bus stop, the drastic shortening of the right turn lane, and the total or almost total avoidance of the destruction of the berm and trees. Since there is virtually no downside to this course of action, and since this is vitally important to maintaining the outstanding appearance and integrity of the Vistas property, MTA must as a matter of conscience switch CCT in this direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. A detailed response by MTA in the near future would be much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn E. Nelson