

**Montgomery County CIP FY 21-26,
Bus Rapid Transit**

To: Montgomery County Council

February 2020

Re: FY 21 Capital Budget and FY 21-26

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) is writing to you at this time because of a new financial proposal that has been put forward about Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) by the Coalition for Smarter Growth.

It is crucial that the first BRT project in Montgomery County be successful. We must be able to demonstrate to the public the many advantages and entice people out of cars and onto BRT. The most important element that can be incorporated into BRT is speed of travel in dedicated lanes; on Route 29 it would be built with reversible lanes. We understand a current proposal has been evaluated and has wonderful potential to fulfill this need of dedicated lanes on Route 29.

Our LWVMC positions clearly state that we support incentives which promote use of mass transit and alternative modes of travel that help abate emissions from mobile sources, reduce energy consumption, and protect natural resources.

The main problem for construction of BRT is obviously funding. Some creative rearranging of BRT funding has been proposed (as below) by the Coalition for Smarter Growth to help solve this problem and take dollars from planning and putting them into construction on Route 29.

- (1) \$16 million can be diverted from BRT design projects on Veirs Mill Road and New Hampshire Avenue
- (2) \$15 million can be diverted from the White Flint northern Metro entrance and preliminary BRT engineering on Route 355.

LWVMC supports construction dollars that are prudently spent to make BRT on Route 29 enticing. We all want this first BRT line to be a successful project that can be emulated on other county corridors. To make BRT successful, economically viable, and a magnet for environmentally friendly development, we believe Route 29 must be built to the gold standard with dedicated lanes.

We therefore urge you to evaluate a different allocation of dollars in the bus rapid transit system for the CIP.

Diane Hibino and Kathy McGuire, co-presidents
Bee Ditzler, chair, Transportation & Land Use Committee