



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – February 13, 2019 Agenda Item 3

Voting Session

Resolution Opposing Widening of the Capital Beltway

Recommended Council Action

Consider and vote on the resolution.

Context with Key Issues

The Maryland Department of Transportation is undertaking the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study to examine various forms of Beltway widening as well as transit improvements. A proposal under consideration would add four express toll lanes to the Maryland portion of the Capital Beltway.

Additional lanes on the Capital Beltway would have adverse environmental impacts and would likely result in more traffic on regional and local roads. The City Council wishes to go on record in opposition to widening of the Beltway and in support of alternatives that reduce the number of individual cars and improve transit options. Having adopted this position, the City Council, staff and legislative advocate will be able to support, oppose, or seek amendments to legislation regarding widening of the Beltway.

Council Priority

Environmentally Sustainable Government

Environmental Considerations

A variety of adverse environmental impacts would result from adding lanes to the Beltway, including an increase in vehicular traffic, increased greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants, loss of homes and habitat, and an increase in stormwater runoff.

Fiscal Considerations

State or federal funds that would go toward widening the Beltway would be better utilized in support of transit and other options that would decrease dependence on cars and trucks.

Racial Equity Considerations

Increased traffic, pollution, and loss of homes and businesses could potentially have a greater impact people of color.

Attachments and Links

- Draft Resolution Opposing Widening of the Capital Beltway

Introduced by:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2019-XX

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING WIDENING OF THE CAPITAL BELTWAY

WHEREAS, there is a proposed plan to widen the Maryland portion of the Capital Beltway (I-495) with four express toll lanes, and the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is undertaking the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study to examine various forms of Beltway widening as well as transit improvements; and

WHEREAS, widening the Capital Beltway for toll lanes would result in destruction of private property and displacement of people from their homes and businesses, as well as destruction of the character of neighborhoods in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties through increased noise, regional traffic, and pollution; and

WHEREAS, additional lanes on the Capital Beltway are likely to increase the number of cars and trucks moving through the region rather than promoting safer, greener, more equitable transportation alternatives; and

WHEREAS, increased vehicular traffic on the Capital Beltway will likely result in more traffic on regional and local roads such as those in Takoma Park; and

WHEREAS, the City Council remains opposed to widening Highway 410 (Ethan Allen Avenue/Philadelphia Avenue) in Takoma Park for vehicular traffic; and

WHEREAS, more traffic on the Capital Beltway and local roads will result in increased pollution through additional carbon emissions, which are a contributor to accelerating climate change, and could also have negative health impacts due to increased air pollutants; and

WHEREAS, the proposed widening runs through or over several environmentally sensitive and officially protected areas such as Sligo Creek, Rock Creek and Northwest Branch Parks; and

WHEREAS, MDOT is proceeding with engineering studies for this project despite an incomplete Environmental Impact Statement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Council opposes the widening of the Capital Beltway for toll lanes and calls on State officials to seek alternatives that reduce the number of individual cars on the road and that bolster public transportation options.

Adopted by the Takoma Park City Council this day of _____.

Attest: