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MEMORANDUM

DATE: 2/21/14

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Larry Harris
Principal, Mason-Dixon Polling & Research

RE: Montgomery County survey of voter opinions towards BRT
Proposal

Montgomery County voters **overwhelmingly support the county's proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network**. The survey documented that 7-in-10 voters countywide support the county's BRT plan.

This support is grounded in the belief by a two to one majority (63% v 32%) of county voters that mass transit, not new roads, would provide the greatest relief to traffic congestion in the county.

Countywide, 71% of voters support the BRT plan. Support was strong across all demographic subgroups, with women expressing the greatest level of support (77%).

A majority of Democrats (76%), Republicans (57%), and Independents (70%) supported the BRT proposal. A majority of voters in each of the county's council districts also expressed support for the BRT plan.

These strong levels of support was uniform among all other demographic subgroups, including all age ranges and races/ethnicities.

The survey of 400 Montgomery County voters was conducted January 22-23, 2014.

The survey tested support/opposition to the BRT plan twice; once at the beginning of the survey (70% support) and a second time after voters were asked about the principal arguments made both for and against the BRT proposal (71% support).

Arguments Tested

Cost:

- The highest rated argument for the BRT plan was the cost comparison to other modes of transit options, with 80% of voters agreeing that BRT is the most affordable option.
- Just 36% of voters agreed with the argument that, notwithstanding the savings over other mass transit modes, the county simply could not afford the cost of BRT; 52% of voters rejected this argument against BRT.

Impact on traffic:

- Three quarters (76%) of voters agreed that BRT could reduce traffic by moving more commuters through heavily congested travel corridors.
- Voters were split over whether the taking of lanes for the BRT system would make automobile traffic worse, with 50% saying yes and 50% saying no or not sure.

BRT vs Road Building – Impact on existing neighborhoods:

- 72% of voters agree that new road construction and widening would have ‘destructive impacts’ on existing neighborhoods.
- While only 26% of voters agreed with the argument that BRT would ruin the character of existing neighborhoods.

Economic Development & Growth:

- Nearly 8-in-10 (78%) agreed that BRT promotes the right kind of development by supporting walkable communities with mixed residential & commercial spaces along major commercial corridors like Rockville Pike.
- Additionally, 66% of voters believe that systems like BRT are critical to the county’s need for sustainable economic growth in order to stay competitive regionally and nationally.

County’s Management of Major Infrastructure Projects:

- A majority of voters (59%) rejected the argument that the county could not effectively manage a large infrastructure project like BRT.