

GOCA RESOLUTION
Montgomery County Independent Transit Authority (County Bill 24-15)

Whereas the County has proposed a new politically-appointed Independent Transit Authority (ITA) with unspecified borrowing and eminent domain powers; and

Whereas the ITA will not be directly accountable or transparent to County voters; and

Whereas the ITA proposal separates County decision-making and prioritization for transit projects from road projects; and

Whereas the ITA disenfranchises County elected officials; and

Whereas GOCA supports carefully informed planning and fiscal management with full accountability and transparency to the voters; and

Whereas the County proposes to grant itself the power to impose special taxes without limitation to fund County transit functions; and

Whereas the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) is on record strongly opposing any special taxing of residents for transportation projects with broad regional benefit; and

Whereas ITA debt will ultimately be the responsibility of County taxpayers through the aforementioned special taxes; and

Whereas the ITA will have power to exceed the County's authorized debt limits; and

Whereas the County still has debt obligations remaining from a debt burden that recently threatened its AAA bond rating

Now therefore be it resolved that GOCA opposes the creation of the ITA as currently proposed. Furthermore, GOCA strongly urges the County's elected officials to pursue transit projects in a fiscally responsible manner with full and direct accountability and transparency to County voters by adhering to the following general principles:

Transit projects shall be funded by existing Federal, State, and County funding methods and not by special taxes or bonds that exceed existing authorized borrowing limits

Transit and road projects shall both remain the direct responsibility of the County Executive, who is the elected official responsible for deciding trade-offs and prioritizations for all transportation projects and expenditures

Transit projects shall be developed in fiscally responsible phases with proof of operational viability, ridership, and ongoing fiscal self-sufficiency being requirements for proceeding to the next phase of development

Transit projects shall not proceed beyond the conceptual stage without first obtaining documented and published citizen input and a citizen's referendum on the final proposal

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