

February 5, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Congratulations on your appointment to this impactful position. As fellow municipal leaders, we are writing to **strongly oppose** the proposed Baltimore-Washington Superconducting Maglev Project. The proposed route would destroy the City of Greenbelt's Forest Preserve. Even though some of the route through Greenbelt is underground, there will be construction impacts, accessory structures for tunnel access, ventilation and power substations which will negatively impact our historic community.

Greenbelt is a National Historic Landmark and planned community with parks, open spaces and recreational amenities. In addition to the Greenbelt Forest Preserve, this proposed project will have a very destructive impact on valuable, environmentally sensitive resources along the proposed route including: the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), the Patuxent Research Refuge and other important open spaces adjacent to our City. This project is not consistent with President Biden's recent executive actions and statements regarding climate change.

This project will not benefit Greenbelt residents or any of the communities and neighborhoods along the proposed route. Our City is already split and blighted by highways and a Maglev train would further divide the community. It is not clear that this project will reduce traffic congestion and residents have expressed concerns about noise, loss of trees and wildlife habitat, harmful health impacts, property damage and reduction in property values. The City is also concerned about the impact on our business community and scientific activities at BARC and the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.

City staff and consultants are reviewing the DEIS for this project and expect to spend almost \$400,000 on initial legal and technical costs related to the DEIS review. While the City views this expenditure as vital to the opposition of a project that would harm our community, these funds could otherwise be spent on continuing essential City services like police and road repair, or delivering much needed COVID-19 housing, food, and business relief.

We are also requesting an extension of the 90-day public comment period for the DEIS. The DEIS and attendant appendices are technical in nature and total approximately 4,100 pages. Additional time must be provided to ensure the public has the opportunity to give meaningful input on the project.

The City of Greenbelt **vehemently opposes** this project. This proposed Maglev project reduces the quality of life in our City and will destroy the environment. These Federal or State resources allocated to the proposed Maglev would be better spent on improving existing rail and local transit services. For example, high speed rail and Amtrak, WMATA and MARC train service at the Greenbelt Metro Station, transit and alternatives like bicycle and pedestrian connections. For decades, the Greenbelt City Council has tirelessly advocated for regional, State and National transportation improvements and funding.

We urge you to stop this ill-conceived project now.

Sincerely,

Colin A. Byrd, Mayor

Emmett V. Jordan, Mayor Pro-Tem

Judith F. Davis, City Council

Leta M. Mach, City Council

Silke I. Pope, City Council

Edward V.J. Putens, City Council

Rodney M. Roberts, City Council

cc: City Council
Senator Ben Cardin
Senator Chris Van Hollen
Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
Nicole Ard, City Manager
Terri Hruby, Director of Planning & Community Development