

Janet Gallant
Rockville Mayor and Council Meeting
June 1, 2020

Dontwiden270.org, with over 1,000 members, strongly advocates for fair, effective, multi-modal transportation, **supported by evidence that it will actually work.**

Our organization is calling on the State to PAUSE the \$11 billion-dollar P3 toll-lane project, then reassess after the COVID pandemic subsides or stabilizes. We ask the City of Rockville to join in calling for a PAUSE.

PAUSING the P3 project makes sense in this health and fiscal emergency. The State's decision to simply forge ahead along the pre-pandemic timeline ignores reality and shows poor stewardship of Maryland's financial well-being.

The current P3 contracting process alone is costing taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. This despite projections of massive, pandemic-related state budget cuts and enormous economic uncertainty.

To continue the P3 contracting process now ignores the extraordinary risks to taxpayers and communities. All of the current project's key financials, including the expected tolls, are based on assumptions and projections that no longer apply. The underlying business case is made obsolete by the pandemic.

No one knows how this virus will play out or how bad the fiscal hits to Maryland's economy will be. No one knows how many businesses will adopt telework, how many jobs won't come back, and what post-pandemic commerce, employment, and traffic patterns will look like.

Janet Gallant
Rockville Mayor and Council Meeting
June 1, 2020

Certainly, no one knows how high the tolls will have to be to offset the enormous risks. But Maryland taxpayers will be on the hook to ensure the contractor profits.

When the Governor first proposed I-270 toll-lanes, the City of Rockville was a powerful, early advocate for communities, the environment, and workable solutions to congestion.

Please continue that essential role. Call on the Governor and Transportation Secretary now to pause the toll-lane project. In the near future, submit official comments on the project's soon-to-be-released Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In the fall, testify at the Maryland Transit Authority's toll hearings.

We don't have much time. The State is rushing when wisdom and common sense say, 'don't.' Unless there's a PAUSE, MDOT will select the contractor for this massive, 50-year project just nine months from now.

We are asking the City to be an insistent voice for smart, reasoned choices in the face of this badly flawed, badly-timed, but hugely consequential project.