

Thank you President Navarro, Vice President Katz, members of the Council, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Brian Kramer, I'm a senior at Northwood High School, and I'm a low-income student. I'm also a student leader, and without Montgomery County's transportation network, I wouldn't be able to claim that title.

My family moved here from Charles County in 2013 for many reasons, the largest factor being opportunity. When we moved here, we still had a car. It wasn't long before we got into an accident and the car was completely totalled. If we had lost our car in Waldorf, it would have been utterly devastating. There was no public transportation infrastructure at all, not even a local bus like our RideOn service.

When we thought of opportunity, we thought of the schools. But opportunity for us now meant my mom being able to take the bus to work, and me being able to take the bus to meetings and to school. Waldorf didn't have that opportunity. For a low-income family, that access to transportation means everything. Without RideOn and Metro, we wouldn't have been able to keep going, and other low-income families wouldn't be able to climb above the terrible reality of poverty.

The county's student government, MCR as we call it, has monthly meetings up the street at 850 Hungerford Drive. I've taken the bus to every single one. It means that I have to leave early and get there early, but I'm still able to make it 8 miles up the road with just my ID, except after 8:00 pm unfortunately.

Through the bus, I've been able to attend such events as attending Board of Education meetings, running the SMOB election this year, and even running for SMOB last year.

Overall, public transportation is vital to social mobility, and I wouldn't be speaking to everybody here today without it. I'm grateful for the opportunities I've been given because of RideOn and Metro, and can't thank the County enough for those opportunities. Thank you all so much!