



CORRIDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
MEETING #5 SUMMARY
JANUARY 31, 2024
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

ATTENDEES:

CAC Member Attendees	
Sophie Boreshe - Resident	Peter Myo Khin – Labquest, East County Citizens Advisory Board, Tamarack Triangle Civic Association
Hector Chang – Resident	Shane Pollin - PS Ventures
Eileen Finnegan – Resident	Peter Tantisunthorn - Resident
Craig Grunewald - Resident	Jason Weaver - Resident

Additional members of the public who attended the meeting:

John Bonghi – Kokosing Construction	Maureen Madden
William Bolgiano – Resident	Grant Matthews – Duffy Companies
Paul Bran – Hillandale Center	Matt McOlash – HDR Consulting
Bee Ditzler – League of Women Voters/Montgomery County Transportation chair	Sergio Mendez – Concrete General
Andrew Farkas	Alex Riley- Montgomery Planning
Nicholo Gadiana – Stacy Witbeck Civil Contractor	Javier Rivas – Takoma Langley Crossroads Development Authority
Margaret Goergen – Hillandale Citizens Association	Cicero Salles – White Oak Planning Manager
Seth Grimes – WABA	Lauren Stamm – Montgomery Planning
Dion Ho	Catherine Tunis – South of Sligo Citizens Association
Jim Keough	Ronnetta Zack Williams – Montgomery Planning

Montgomery County Staff and Consultant Team	
Corey Pitts	MCDOT
Rick Kiegel	MCDOT
Rebecca Mellema	MCDOT
Jon Crisafi	Kittelson
Jamie Henson	Kittelson
Tara Hofferth	Kittelson
Jacob Smith	STV
Charise Geiling	SensisConnect



PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Welcome and Introductions

- Montgomery County DOT Project Manager, Corey Pitts, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the project team.
- Consultant Charise Geiling gave a brief overview of meeting expectations and Zoom software.
- Consultant Jamie Henson reviewed the role of the Corridor Advisory Committee and reviewed the agenda.
- Montgomery County Public Relations Manager, Rebecca Mellema, invited the CAC members and additional members to introduce themselves.

Study Overview

- Consultant Jamie Henson provided an overview of the study – the study corridor is between Fort Totten Metro and the Colesville Park and Ride. The study will define start and end points, identify station locations, develop and evaluate improvements to bus service, and address station accessibility. Jamie covered specific phases of the schedule and the approach to alternatives. Various concepts were screened and paired into four alternatives and the next step will be to identify a preferred alternative.

Alternatives Overview

- Jamie provided a brief overview of the four alternatives:
 - Alternative 1 -
Incorporate queue jumps with special traffic signals at intersections with Flash bus stops to allow all buses to get ahead of the line. Also include transit signal priority.
 - Alternative 2 -
Repurpose Curbside Lanes south of Piney Branch Road for buses only. Implement transit signal priority north of Piney Branch Road.
 - Alternative 3 -
Repurpose center median lanes south of Piney Branch Road for buses. Add one center shared bi-direction transit lane for Flash buses between Piney Branch Road and Lockwood Drive. All Flash buses pick up at median stations, even though stops are not reflected in the graphic. Implement transit signal priority north of Lockwood Drive.
 - Alternative 4 -
Repurpose center median lanes south of Piney Branch Road for buses. Add one center shared bi-direction transit lane for Flash buses between Piney Branch Road and Powder Mill Road. All Flash buses pick up at median stations, even though stops are not reflected in the graphic. Repurpose center median lanes between Powder Mill Road and Lockwood Drive. Implement transit signal priority north of Lockwood Drive.

Evaluation Overview

- Jamie shared that the nature of the evaluation of the alternatives follows directly from the BRT program guidance and is based on the six BRT Program goals:



- Mobility Choices
 - Sustainable Solutions
 - Corridor Safety
 - Economic Growth
 - Quality Service
 - Community Equity
- The metrics used to evaluate and compare alternatives are offshoots of those guiding principles, and the evaluation is built to focus on those big picture goals. The specific metrics are BRT travel time, local bus travel time (specifically K9), vehicle travel time, additional property required, cost per mile, total construction cost, construction duration, jobs accessibility, and transit ridership (which will be discussed at the next CAC meeting).
 - Jamie identified the questions that the analysis strives to answer, including:
 - Do the alternatives improve transit travel time?
 - Are there major differences in BRT travel times?
 - Are there major differences in K9 travel times? (K9 is the limited bus stop in the corridor. We've used the K9 because it's the most comparable to the type of service BRT would be.)
 - Are there major changes to vehicle travel times?
 - Are there major differences in cost and implementation timeline?

Corridor Travel Time

- Jamie walked through the evaluation approach, including the use of a detailed computer simulation tool that takes into account the nature of the road, 2045 traffic volumes, and how vehicles would be affected with the proposed changes. Four data sets of the evaluation results were compiled to compare travel times:
 - Southbound in the morning from Mahan Road to Sheridan Street
 - Northbound in the morning from Sheridan Street to Mahan Road
 - Southbound in the afternoon from Mahan Road To Sheridan Street
 - Northbound in the afternoon from Sheridan Street to Mahan Road.
- Overall, BRT improves transit travel times, but is modestly faster in Alternatives 3 and 4 than in 1 and 2. K9 bus service is improved in Alternative 2 and is substantially degraded in Alternatives 3 and 4. General traffic is moving more slowly in Alternatives 2, 3, and 4. See presentation slides 25-28 for more details.



Property Requirements, Cost, Timeline, Jobs Accessibility

- Jamie summarized the property requirements, costs, timeline, and jobs accessibility for each of the alternatives.
- There are property needs for constructing the curbside stations, stormwater facilities, and widening the road to accommodate median stations. Alternative 2 has the least property needs and Alternatives 3 and 4 have the greatest property needs. See presentation slide 31 for more details.
- Alternatives 1 and 2 are lower cost options. Alternatives 3 and 4 are higher cost options. See slide 32 for more details.
- No design or construction funding has been identified for the project. The assessment for construction duration is an abstraction of what it might take once construction begins. Alternatives 3 and 4 will take considerably longer to construct than Alternatives 1 and 2.
- Accessibility to jobs is the measure of how many jobs are available within a specific range of time by way of transit. There's a 20-33% increase from the no build option, depending on the alternative. See slide 34 for more details.

FDA Connection

- Jamie provided an overview of the considerations for connecting to the FDA campus. There are a variety of concerns including BRT travel time, ridership gain/loss, security, master plan facility adjustments, environmental process, and potentially the need for FDA to shuttle staff to White Oak Transit Center. There are three options to serve the campus. The team will develop concepts and look at costs to inform further discussions with FDA representatives.
 - Option A – stay on New Hampshire Avenue and stop at the White Oak Transit Center on Lockwood Drive. NB and SB Flash stations would be constructed on New Hampshire Avenue at Mahan Road.
 - Option B – loop into and exit the FDA campus back onto New Hampshire Avenue and stop at the White Oak Transit Center on Lockwood Drive. NB and SB Flash stations would be constructed on the FDA Loop Road.
 - Option C – create a new connection for Flash buses only on the north end of the FDA campus to the White Oak Transit Center near the self-storage location. Jamie provided two potential ways to do that:
 1. go through self-storage site
 2. go east of the self-storage site near the apartment property

NB and SB Flash stations would be constructed on the FDA Loop Road.



Next Steps

- Jamie reviewed next steps, including completing ridership analysis, beginning analysis of a potential hybrid option, returning to the CAC to discuss transit ridership in early spring, and having pop up events in the spring to engage with the public. In the spring/summer of 2024, the preferred alternative will be identified.

Written Questions (placed in the Zoom chat window):

Question:

Montgomery County's Bicycle Master Plan calls for side paths or separated bike lanes along New Hampshire Ave. I don't see this in your diagram.

Response:

This project doesn't necessarily preclude side paths or bike lanes. They are not shown because the purpose of this study is to show how the BRT might function and to weigh tradeoffs between the various ways to implement BRT. This effort does not supersede anything related to the bicycle recommendations in the Master Plan for the bicycle elements and the importance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the corridor.

Question:

Are there any assumptions about mode shift in the travel time analysis? That is, people switching from driving to the bus given the faster bus service? What mode shift is envisaged?

Response:

When we develop travel volumes, one of the steps is running the regional travel demand model. It's a large network of the entire region's travel facilities in a computer program that reflects how people travel. We use that model to develop our understanding of future travel volumes which considers travel shifts between modes.

Question:

Is there an assumption in the analysis that we will have fewer cars if the Flash is implemented?

Response:

The travel demand model weighs the trade off in the utility for each of the modes and makes an assessment of people using each of the travel modes. This understanding is incorporated into the analysis.

Question:

What is the assumption on ridership of Flash? How does that vary at the different stations?

Response:

We will provide ridership results when we come back to you in the March/April timeline.

Question:

With the reduction of travel time for vehicles in Alternative 1, I expect more people will want to travel on New Hampshire Ave. Is there an expectation that the faster travel times for everyone will hold?

Response:

It's possible that faster travel times would induce vehicle demand, but it seems unlikely. The travel demand model weighs those comparisons across the region and really tries to consider at a macro level



what is happening to predict travel pattern changes. Broadly speaking, it is a reasonable expectation that the conditions we are forecasting would hold.

Question:

Why do the different transportation mode project teams in DOT work in silos?

Response:

We make a major effort to stay out of any silo. Our team has met with a variety of technical agencies, including County planning staff, SHA, Prince George's County, Takoma Park, as well as other agencies to talk to them about the project. We have been diligent to be inclusive. Some of our partners at County Planning are here tonight to participate in the meeting and to listen and learn.

Question:

What is being done to actively use Ride-On as feeder/collector mechanism for BRT?

Response:

Usually, transit riders want as few stops as possible. Typically, transit agencies operate their services such that people have minimal transfers. There is still much work to be done prior to the implementation of BRT on New Hampshire Avenue. However, the County is currently in a process to rethink how their bus network functions. The result of this effort may include structural changes to how the routes function together.

Question:

Is there some variability in all the travel time predictions? Currently, sometimes it takes 20 mins for me to get to the Beltway and sometimes it's 40 minutes.

Response:

This is considered to be a reasonable average day assessment. It does not account for the variability around crashes or weather-related delays.

Question:

Within the 45-60 minute scenarios, what consideration is being given in supporting the build-out of North White Oak and Viva White Oak for the populations of residential riders and employees going to these two activities centers in the future?

Response:

The current corridor is proposed to serve New Hampshire Avenue and the White Oak Transit Center along Lockwood Drive. It is not envisioned at this point to go to Viva White Oak. One of the things that we want feedback on is how do you want this service to connect with land use nodes.

Question:

When you explain the number of employees that would be supported within the 45 and 60 minute time frames, do you support the possibility of additional numbers that would be taking the New Hampshire BRT coming from those two activity areas? With that influx of drivers, have you taken that into consideration?

Response:

The analysis does take into consideration future land use. It looks at growth that's in the corridor within a reasonable walking distance. It doesn't consider more distant areas in the corridor, except through those transit connections.



Question:

The Route 29 Flash has been faulted for not being a true BRT. Are we now going down the same path of making New Hampshire Avenue another "Not BRT" with Alternatives 1 & 2?

Response:

Some of these BRT alternatives move buses and vehicles more quickly. Some of the options move BRT more quickly but yield substantially slower local bus service. The goal of this effort is to identify and weigh those trade-offs to understand what is best for the community.

Question:

Last I asked, you were using a COG version that had errors in the FDA numbers. Have you gone back to use COG 10?

Response:

We are using the most recent, up to date COG model and land use that's available.

Question:

In Alternative 2, are the bus only lanes active all the time or just during the peak hour/peak direction?

Response:

The bus only lanes in all alternatives are active all the time for BRT and local buses. The precise times for which direction of BRT would use the center single lane during the non-peak hours would be something that the County would have to decide at a later point.

Question:

Have efforts been made to directly contact the property owners who would be impacted by the various options' need for additional right of way?

Response:

We have not systematically reached out to every property owner in the corridor. We are still developing the full strategy and are weighing methods to reach the widest audience. We also look to the CAC members to help inform that process. If you are aware of list serves or you know of large associations or groups that talk about things of interest along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor, we'd be happy to connect with them and use them as an avenue to reach folks.

Question:

We have issues in our neighborhood already with failing intersections and significant cut-through traffic on side streets, so I hope those costs would also be weighed in these evaluations.

Response:

The goal of this project is to provide excellent transit service through BRT. We do not want that to come at the cost of additional issues in the neighborhoods. If cut through traffic is found to be problematic, ways to mitigate those issues could be identified.

Question:

Given the early phase of the project is there a probable delivery method for this project?

Response:

We have not determined that at this stage. We would typically do that during preliminary design.



Question:

How are pedestrian and bicycle safety being factored into this? Would this be a reason to pick center running over side lanes or vice versa?

Response:

Part of this effort is to make sure that there are safe ways to access the service. Every rider that makes a back-and-forth trip will need to cross New Hampshire Avenue. I don't know that there is any fundamentally safer alternative for crossing the street. Whether a center or side running option is chosen, riders will still end up crossing the same number of travel lanes once the full trip back and forth is considered. As the project advances into design, thought will be given to roadway treatments, making sure there are clear crosswalks and giving pedestrians a safe amount of time to cross the streets.

Spoken Questions:

Question:

When you explain the number of employees that would be supported within the 45- and 60-minute time frames, do you support the possibility of additional numbers that would be taking the New Hampshire BRT coming from those two activity areas? With that influx of drivers, have you taken that into consideration?

Response:

The analysis does take into consideration future land use. It looks at growth that is in the corridor and considers that in the analysis.

Meeting Sign Off

- Corey Pitts thanked attendees for their time and questions.