

Meeting Summary
US 29 South Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #6
May 24, 2016, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Silver Spring Civic Building
1 Veterans Place Silver Spring, MD 20910

Attendees

CAC Members ('X' for attendees, blank for apologies)			
Louis Boezi	X	Karen Michels	X
Alan Bowser	X	Bernice Mireku-North	
Marie-Michelle Bunch		Anita Morrison	
Ilhan Cagri	X	Brian Morrissey	X
Carmen Camacho		Michael Pfetsch (alternate Harriet Quinn)	X
Barbara Ditzler	X	Shane Pollin	X
Sean Emerson		Mark Ranze	X
Karen Evans	X	Dan Reed	X
Roberta Faul-Zeitler	X	Michele Riley	
Joseph Fox		Herb Simmens	
Sean Gabaree	X	Tina Slater	X
Melissa Goemann	X	Julie Statland	
Larry Goldberg		Brad Stewart	
Bradley Gude		Eugene Stohlman	
Avi Halpert	X	Chris Wilhelm	
Kevin Harris (alternate Larry Dickter)	X	James Williamson	X
Linda Keenan (alternate Jay Elvove)	X	Teddy Wu	X
Rebecca Lentz-Fernandes replaced by Dan Figueroa		Lori Zeller	X
Tracy Lewis		James Zepp	X
Harold McDougall		Clifford Zinnes	X
Jeffrey McNeil			
Study Team			
Meeting Facilitator – Jen Kellar		Lead Project Facilitator – Andrew Bing	
Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Director – Al Roshdieh		MCDOT Acting Deputy Director – Gary Erenrich	
MCDOT Rapid Transit System (RTS) Manager – Joana Conklin		Maryland Transportation Administration (MTA) Planning Director – Kevin Quinn	
Consultant Engineer/Planner – Brian Lange		MTA Corridor Manager – Tamika Gauvin	
MTA Program Manager – Jackie Seneschal		SHA BRT Coordinator – Laura Barcena	

MCDOT Team Member – Darcy Buckley	Facilitator Assistant – Lauren Michelotti
MTA Deputy Program Manager – Kyle Nembhard	Consultant Stations Architect – Todd Connelly
MTA Corridor Manager – Rick Kiegel	MCDOT Deputy Director – Emil Wolanin
Consultant Transit Planner -- Chris Bell	MCDOT Team Member – Rafael Olarte
MNCPPC County Planner – Larry Cole	Consultant Transit Engineer – Kendall Drummond
Public	
James Bunch	Sardy Biship - Woodmoor
Carole Barth – US 29 North CAC Member	Erfan Paryez
Jerry Garson – Montgomery County Civic Federation; MD 355 South CAC Member	David Kunes – Chief of Staff, Councilmember Tom Hucker
Stephanie Steele – The Fillmore Silver Spring	Mel Tull – Lee Development Group
Sean Heitkemper – The Fillmore Silver Spring	Rosemary DiPietro – Woodmoor Pinecrest Citizen’s Association
Ellen Lemeer	Drew Morrison – Staff, Councilmember Berliner
Tom Hucker – Montgomery County Councilmember	

Handouts

Handouts to add to CAC Members’ study binders were distributed, which included the following:

- Meeting #6 Agenda
- Meeting #6 PowerPoint Presentation
- Meeting #6 Question & Comment Sheet
- Map of US 29 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study Preliminary Service Plan BRT Route Patterns

Meeting materials, including a video recording of the meeting, will be posted on the County’s RTS website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rts.

Introductions

Jennifer Kellar, the meeting facilitator, opened the meeting by providing an overview of the meeting materials being distributed and the agenda for the meeting. Following each presentation section, there was a question and answer period, followed by open house-style tabletop discussions.

BRT Project Management Team Update

Montgomery County RTS Manager Joana Conklin reviewed the County Executive's most recent BRT Proposal, including the timeline and funding proposal. She confirmed an \$80,000 Transportation and Land Use Connections Grant was recently awarded and will be used for BRT station concept design. Additionally, the County is working to help fund the US29 BRT project by applying for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program Grant. The study team put in a grant for \$33 million in Federal funds from the TIGER Grant in April and expects to hear back in the fall.

Joana presented the US 29 BRT preliminary roadway configurations and proposed station locations, emphasizing that the proposed plans are not set in stone. She noted that the study team is conducting ongoing traffic and operational analyses, and assessing potential effects of alternatives. The alternatives will be within the existing pavement and right-of-way to the extent possible; however, some impacts may be unavoidable for stations. Joana emphasized that the County expects the BRT system will be operational by 2020. There is still planning to be done and NEPA requirements to meet. Although the level of detail needed for NEPA documentation approval will need to be evaluated, the BRT aims to run within existing lanes and is therefore projected to have a minimal environmental impact.

Joana pointed out the White Oak portion is mixed traffic and should be shown on the presentation slide in green rather than yellow. The team is running models to see if any of these proposed routes and stations need to be tweaked or changed, and will continue to refine it.

Joana discussed how CAC members' comments influenced the County Executive's US 29 BRT proposal. She touched on the positive recommendations that members have brought to light, such as the ways in which CAC members have suggested that the project can be less costly, the feedback they've received about the need for improved transit, and the idea of allowing high-occupancy vehicles to use BRT infrastructure.

Joana acknowledged CAC members have mentioned concern over the amount of time they are given to review meeting materials, discuss with the study team and provide comments. She stressed that the conversations are not over when the meetings are adjourned, and every member is welcome to reach out to the study team to leave comments at any time.

Al Roshdieh, Director of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, reviewed the role of the CAC. He acknowledged that while the CAC's feedback and opinions are important in shaping what the study team does, it is ultimately an advisory committee, not a decision-making body. He stressed how important community engagement and community involvement are, reminding the CAC that the study team needs and welcomes their feedback.

CAC Member Question: Member expressed concerns about the transparency of decisions the County Executive makes. She expressed concern about not receiving information about a WMATA study that was completed in 2014 that included a possible MetroExtra limited service, and questioned the transparency of the decision to pursue BRT rather than the WMATA MetroExtra limited stop service.

- **Study Team Response:** Study team member said the team aims to be as transparent as possible. In the case of US 29, the team doesn't think it's worth the investment in the limited stop WMATA service if it would be possible to have a BRT within the existing pavement in four years. Team member reminded CAC members that this study was not done by the County and pointed out WMATA did extensive outreach and made the study available to the public. As with any proposed long-term project that is funded for advancement, the study team will coordinate on project details in an effort to avoid potential issues that could preclude or negatively affect future implementation efforts.

Question: Member pointed out that “No Build” had been presented as an alternative and expressed concern that it is no longer an option. The member questioned whether the CAC is a purposeful advisory committee.

- **Response:** Study team member confirmed the CAC's feedback has been critical and purposeful. He said the analysis is still ongoing and no decision has been made, therefore, “No Build” is still an option, and is a baseline used for comparing the potential future effects of other transit alternatives to what is anticipated to take place if no significant changes were implemented.

Question: Member questioned the priority of a Ride On operated service over a WMATA operated service.

- **Response:** Study team stated it is more cost effective to taxpayers for Ride On to handle implementing a limited stop service, such as MetroExtra, and quoted a 20% difference of cost.

Question: Member expressed concern about the reason for implementing BRT. He questioned whether data was provided to justify the need for a BRT system.

- **Response:** Study team said part of the data, the existing conditions, has been available online, and a much more comprehensive analysis related to proposed improvements will be available in the future.

Comment: Member expressed concern about transparency surrounding the proposal for the BRT limited stop service, and concern that the CAC is not included in a thoughtful decision making process. She also expressed concern that the project schedule is vague and continually changing, and that there wasn't enough time given for public review and responses.

- **Response:** Study member stated there is no deadline for responses and the planning study schedule has not substantially changed. She acknowledged the exact timing of things can naturally shift in response to new data being found or directives from elected officials; as the range of alternatives and options shrink, the schedule can become compressed.

Question: Member wants to know what the work products are and when they'll be submitted to the public and CACs for review and comment.

- **Response:** Study member said the study team is still working with the county to make sure the range of improvement options is refined. Study team projects this summer they will be able to lay out the schedule for the remainder of the year, along with a basic understanding of the range of impacts. Traffic and ridership analysis will also be done this summer, and those results are expected to come back by the fall.

Comment: Member shared concern about the inclusion of HOV in BRT lanes. Member believes that allowing HOV in the BRT lane would take away from the reliability of the BRT schedule, and generally reduce the positive benefits of BRT.

- **Response:** Study team stated that they will be testing multiple alternatives to determine how each one affects ridership, time, and bus operations.

Draft Preliminary Purpose and Need Status

MTA Consultant Corridor Manager Tamika Gauvin recapped the Purpose and Need Open House that was held Monday, February 1, 2016. Generally, the 82 comments received were focused on concern around land development, environment, connectivity, economic impact, and traffic. The key concepts of the purpose statement and analysis about alternatives will all be released to CAC members and the public this summer. Coinciding with this release of information will be another CAC meeting to review and discuss the conceptual running way alternatives.

Tamika stressed that the Draft Preliminary Purpose & Need Statement will reflect the need for improvements to be implemented within existing right-of-way and pavement to the extent possible, and that the goal is to have service underway within four years – opening to customers in 2020.

Question: Member questioned whether or not the study team is still accepting comments.

- **Response:** Study team member confirmed they are still accepting comments.

Question: Member questioned whether the Purpose and Need takes other modes of traffic and how BRT might affect other modes of traffic into account.

- **Response:** Study team said their evaluation will look at BRT's impact on other modes of traffic and they will consider that data as they revise the purpose statement.

Comment: Member expressed concern that the team is more focused on the idea of implementing a service than the actual action of improving transit time. Member believes that the purpose statement should be more focused on the end goals than the means by which they hope to get there.

- **Response:** The team acknowledged they are taking this into account.

Question: Member pointed out that the BRT bus stops are more widely spaced than WMATA and Ride On and questioned how this is going to affect the project.

- **Response:** Another team member is going to answer that when he presents his portion.

Question: Member expressed concern that the current plan is solely aimed at putting more buses on US 29, even though other services already provide bus transportation.

- **Response:** Study member explained that adding more busses is only one part of the plan, but the roadway piece, which proposes a managed lane for BRT, is the piece that makes BRT different than any other priority service.

Comment: Member said they see the limited stop BRT service as an opportunity to test and experiment with transportation on US 29. Member felt it was a creative solution and it has the potential to provide data and knowledge that could greatly cut costs in the long run.

- **Response:** The team thanked the member for the comment.

Components of an Alternative

Study Team Member Brian Lange addressed the preliminary station locations and acknowledged some changes may need to be made—the more the team studies these areas, the more they'll understand what changes are appropriate. He reviewed the proposed changes the study team members are considering as a result of CAC members' comments. In closing, he encouraged

members to share any concerns and questions and to provide station feedback in the breakout session following the presentation.

Todd Connelly, Consultant Stations Architect, walked through the station planning process. Currently, the study team is in Step 2: Location Review, where they focus on producing studies to determine whether or not the proposed stations will be beneficial.

Question: Member said rider walkshed analyses are critical to review and take into consideration. Member was concerned with the current analyses and questioned if they are inflating the demand for BRT.

- **Response:** Study team emphasized they are still very early in the process and will take walkshed analysis into further consideration as they get further into analyses.

Comment: Member doesn't agree with removing the Fairland Road BRT station, citing concerns with having to cross the highway in order to access another bus service from that area. Member also stated if the point of BRT is to reduce congestion, a big interchange is less beneficial than a good bus stop or station location.

- **Response:** The study team acknowledges this and will take it into account.

Question: Member questioned if stations will be located on both sides of the street at every stop.

- **Response:** There may be locations where they find they have trouble fitting a station on both sides. Ideally they are aiming to have stations in easy-to-access locations that provide optimal safety, service and experience for riders, while remaining sensitive to property and environmental impacts.

Question: Member expressed concern about cross-county transportation and questioned if it would be a challenge to come up with useful traffic data in the summer months when ridership is skewed.

- **Response:** There is a need for cross-county transportation, but for tonight's purposes they want to focus on US 29 alone. Additionally, the study team will not be collecting new data over the summer, all data has been collected to reflect peak travel conditions.

Question: Member questioned exact station dimensions.

- **Response:** The team is still doing a detailed study into stations and dimensions. We'll have a better idea of dimensions later on; currently, we are projecting they could be 60 feet long, but the width and the general footprint of the stations are still up in the air.

Question: Member questioned how soon property owners will know if they will be affected by station dimensions.

- **Response:** There is a focus on minimizing property impacts as much as possible. If property impacts are found to be unavoidable, there is a standard process through which property owners would be contacted to discuss compensation and mitigation options.

Preliminary Service Planning

Study Team Member Chris Bell, discussed the sub-components of BRT service planning. The three main things the study team looks at are the BRT plan, the WMATA and Ride On plans, and other existing services' plans. He explained a service plan is key to the overall definition of each alternative, and in determining how beneficial BRT will be to potential riders. He stressed that the team is currently working on a preliminary service plan, but this will not be the final plan; instead, this will be the plan tested and it will be modified from there.

Question: Member expressed a concern about peak period, peak direction trips between White Oak and Silver Spring, as well as local stops between Lockwood and Silver Spring and the WMATA Z8 service.

- **Response:** Study team said supplemental WMATA Z8 trips would be replaced by BRT service and all local stops will continue to be served.

Question: Member expressed a concern that the Z7 service would go away, leaving a good chunk of the corridor with less service.

- **Response:** The study team noted this concern.

Wrap-up

The facilitator explained the format of the open-house style tabletop sessions to take place in the adjacent room. She encouraged everyone to move over to the room and interact with the study team asking any questions they may have. A summary of comments received during the tabletop sessions are included below. At that point, the formal portion of the meeting adjourned.

Map	CAC South Comments											
South Map #1	Fenton Street	Fenton Street	Dale Drive	Franklin Avenue	Franklin Avenue	I-495	I-495/University Boulevard	University Boulevard	University Boulevard	University Boulevard	University Boulevard	University Boulevard
	No Stops should be located in CBD (Central Business District)	This is a major transfer point and shopping area. It needs a stop. I live in Downtown Silver Spring. I own a home in DTSS. I want this stop.	Please look at where the traffic is going that is trying to get on the beltway.	BRT is for sprawl	How does the BRT help/improve traffic trying to get on the Beltway?	Any discussion of Stations South of New Hampshire Ave is premature until we know: 1. About elimination of local service. 2. The right-of-way impacts.	Where, oh where, do you propose putting station at Four Corners?	Underpass needed at US 29 at University Boulevard	Property Impacts. Cannot make recommendation until know where local service is and size of station.	There should be a vehicle underpass of University and Colesville going North-South.	Regarding University Blvd. Underpass: NEVER!! - This was studied at length. Extremely dangerous, impossible if forced.	Regarding University Blvd. Underpass: Can't be done - no way. Idea was rejected years ago.
South Map #1 (Cont.)	University Boulevard	Four Corners	Four Corners	Four Corners	Four Corners	Four Corners	Burnt Mills Crossing	Burnt Mills Crossing	Burnt Mills Crossing			
	How does this (BRT) help people who still have to or want to drive their cars?	Need to know impacts of repurposed lanes	Can a regular bus drive in a BRT lane?	Small Stations Northbound	How will/can HOV be enforced? A big problem elsewhere.	Either create the ACELA (BRT) or the Regional (BT)	Get rid of free parking for county employees	Need for more local bus service to serve demand in inner commuter that has had services cut back for 20 years.	Size of Stations? We have been told 150 feet long and 15 feet wide.			

Map	CAC South Comments											
South Map #2	Fenton Street	Fenton Street	Fenton Street	Fenton Street	Fenton Street	Franklin Ave	Franklin Ave	Franklin Ave	University Boulevard	University Boulevard	University Boulevard	Lockwood Drive at Oak Leaf Drive
	Silver Spring Downtown CBD is a destination point for entertainment & retail & Apts & Condos. Definitely Need Fenton Street Stop.	This is a large destination for people who are heading to Silver Spring for jobs or commerce. Keep this station.	No BRT Stops in CBD where local buses can stop. Keep BRT "Rapid". No Station at Fenton.	Fenton Street Stop is necessary. Do not remove it. Fenton Street is a Destination for all the downtown amenities.	There is Z-Line and Ride On Stop at Southbound Colesville Road just before Spring Street.	HOV only AM SB PM NB. HOV only when busses in operation.	Ok with removing this stop. Density is low and there is lots of local service.	Will Ride On #14 run on weekends (or better yet more frequently)? No weekend service today...Boo!	My experience for 5 years is that majority of southbound traffic gets on the beltway in the morning. So confused about purpose of BRT.	University Blvd south station will create a bigger bottleneck for all southbound traffic that is heading to the beltway.	BRT at Four Corners stop is good for people who work at Blair or who want to get to FDA/the new-to-be White Oak Science Center.	Move Lockwood Drive Station to Oak Leaf Drive for more space.
Central Map #1	Oak Leaf Drive	New Hampshire Ave/White Oak Transit Center	New Hampshire Ave	April Lane	New Hampshire Ave	FDA	April Lane	April Lane	April Lane	Fairland Road		
	Z buses removed from WMATA Service. Consider a BRT station on US 29 at Oak leaf Drive.	Move proposed BRT station closer to New Hampshire Ave. High Crime at McDonald's. Use lane (interchange ramp) for BRT to remove Lockwood intersection.	HOV SB AM NB PM. HOV only when busses in operation.	Move April Lane Station closer to US 29.	Affordable Housing for Seniors and Police Station.	Need Stop for FDA Employees	Need stop at Percontee Site to make transit accessible.	How do people get to the stations if they live more than 1/4 mile away?	Build a 2-lane bike, ped, transit crossing of Paint Branch.	Medical Complex. Possibly shift station to the south.		



Map	CAC South Comments												
Central Map #2	Lockwood Drive	Oak Leaf Drive	Oak Leaf Drive	New Hampshire Ave at Lockwood Drive	White Oak Transit Center	FDA	Fairland Ave						
	Don't serve south Lockwood to avoid the BRT stopping at US 29 to get out.	Propose BRT using Oak Leaf Drive with new signal at US 29.	Address through traffic from Howard County. Focus on making this corridor rapid.	Don't serve Lockwood Drive. Return to US 29 between New Hampshire & points south.	Move proposed White Oak Station closer to New Hampshire Ave.	How will FDA people get to the BRT station? What good will the station do for them?	Put this station back.						
North Map	Fairland Road/Verizon	Fairland Road/Verizon	Fairland Road	Briggs Chaney Road at US 29									
	Station (south of Fairland Road at Verizon Buildings) as connection?	Big employer/Medical Center/Nursing Home. Reduced Bus Service & Pedestrian Connection. Put this Station back.	Reconsider a stop at Fairland Road. Verizon. ManorCare. Consider stop closer to Musgrove?	Nice Station at this intersection. Consider circulator to pick up riders from Castle Blvd Stations.									