

**Meeting Summary**  
**US 29 South Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #7**  
**July 14, 2016, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**  
**Silver Spring Civic Building**  
**1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring, MD 20910**

**Attendees**

<b>CAC Members ('X' for attendees, blank for apologies)</b>			
Louis Boezi		Karen Michels	X
Alan Bowser	X	Bernice Mireku-North	X
Marie-Michelle Bunch		Anita Morrison	X
Ilhan Cagri		Brian Morrissey	
Carmen Camacho		Michael Pfetsch	X
Barbara Ditzler	X	Shane Pollin	X
Sean Emerson		Mark Ranze	
Karen Evans		Dan Reed	X
Roberta Faul-Zeitler	X	Michele Riley	
Joseph Fox	X	Herb Simmens	X
Sean Gabaree		Tina Slater	
Melissa Goemann (alternate Harriet Quinn)	X	Julie Statland	
Larry Goldberg	X	Brad Stewart	
Bradley Gude		Eugene Stohlman	
Avi Halpert (alternate Nat Bottigheimer)	X	Mel Tull	X
Kevin Harris		Chris Wilhelm	
Sean Heitkemper	X	James Williamson	X
Linda Keenan	X	Teddy Wu	
Rebecca Lentz-Fernandes replaced by Dan Figueroa		Lori Zeller	
Tracy Lewis	X	James Zepp	X
Harold McDougall		Clifford Zinnes	
Jeffrey McNeil		Carol Barth (North CAC Member)	X
		Brian Downie (North CAC Member)	X
<b>Study Team</b>			
<b>Meeting Facilitator – Jen Kellar</b>		<b>Lead Project Facilitator – Andrew Bing</b>	
<b>MCDOT Rapid Transit System (RTS) Manager – Joana Conklin</b>		<b>Consultant Engineer/Planner – Brian Lange</b>	
<b>MTA Program Manager – Jackie Seneschal</b>		<b>MTA Corridor Manager – Tamika Gauvin</b>	
<b>MTA Deputy Program Manager – Kyle</b>		<b>Consultant Transit Engineer – Kendall</b>	

Nembhard	Drummond
<b>MCDOT Team Member</b> – Tom Pogue	<b>SHA BRT Coordinator</b> – Laura Barcena
<b>Consultant Transit Planner</b> – Chris Bell	<b>Facilitator Assistant</b> – Lauren Michelotti
<b>Consultant Engineer</b> – Angela Jones	
<b>Public</b>	
James Bunch – Silver Spring TMD	Dave Asche – Tom Hucker’s Council Office
Jerry Garson – MD 355 South CAC Member	Peter Aepbele
Pete Tomas - CSG	John Giblin – Taxpayer
Michael Bufalini – SOECA	Jean Cavanaugh – SOECA
Larry Dickter	

**Handouts**

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

- Meeting #7 Agenda
- Meeting #7 PowerPoint Presentation
- Meeting #7 Question & Comment Sheet
- Map of US 29 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative A
- Map of US 29 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative B
- Meeting #6 Meeting Summary

Meeting materials, including a video recording of the meeting, will be posted on the County’s RTS website: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brt](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brt).

**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. She explained that following each presentation section, there would be a question and answer period, followed by open house-style tabletop discussions. Additionally, Jennifer announced that CAC Meeting #8 will be held in the Silver Spring Civic Center on Monday, September 26.

**BRT Schedule Update**

MTA Corridor Manager Tamika Gauvin reviewed the schedule update. She noted that the proposed project is currently in the Conceptual Alternatives Development phase, and outlined the schedule phases to follow. Tamika explained that at the meeting the study team would share information on the bus running way component of the alternatives and review the selection criteria that are being used to evaluate the alternatives. In the fall, the study team will present the evaluation data to the Corridor Advisory Committee. Following that, the study team will host a public workshop to share all available and prudent project information with the general public. The study team hopes to select a recommended/preferred alternative by December 2016, and will

be close to completing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation and 30% design phase by spring or summer of 2017.

### **Purpose Statement Update**

Tamika provided an update on the Draft Purpose Statement. She said that the study team is working toward having the service commence as quickly as possible. The study team is also focused on working within the existing right-of way with a goal of improving mobility while minimizing property and resource impacts.

### **Alternatives Screening and Selection Criteria**

Tamika then reviewed the alternatives screening and selection process. Generally speaking, the screening criteria used to narrow the alternatives included: implementation schedule, construction costs, property impacts, environmental impacts, traffic operations, and ridership. Of these criteria, property impacts took priority as the primary way in which the study team narrowed down alternatives. Tamika explained the selection criteria are what the study team will use to compare the alternatives and determine which alternative or elements of each alternative would move forward. Currently, only high-level qualitative evaluations have been completed for the purposes of the initial screening; quantitative, data-driven analysis, which will be used for the selection process, is projected to be complete by the fall of 2016.

**CAC Member Question:** Member pointed out that there is a difference between State Highway right-of-way and the actual width of a road, curb to curb. Member felt it would be helpful for study team to clarify what is meant by “right-of way.”

- **Study Team Response:** Study team explained they are working to stay within the right-of-way, or property boundaries, owned by State Highway, but stations and special instances may take them outside of that. Where possible the study team is making efforts to stay within the existing pavement, which is also within the existing right-of-way owned by State Highway.

**Question:** Member wondered if lane widths would be listed on diagrams.

- **Response:** Study team will address lane widths in Meeting #8. At that meeting, it is anticipated that detailed design drawings will be presented for both existing and proposed routes.

**Question:** Member expressed concern that BRT will eliminate local bus service, such as that provided by Ride-On or WMATA, and will not serve the full transit needs of existing and future riders. Member stated the study may not necessarily meet the needs of public transit commuters, solely because it meets the Purpose and Need.

- **Response:** Study team stated that the object of the Purpose and Need is to improve overall mobility options, as well as accommodate a high-frequency reliable service. With regard to local service, no changes will be made except to WMATA’s Z11 Metrobus line service in peak direction; no other local service or stops are being eliminated.

**Question:** Member expressed concern about the morning back up on US 29 and how the BRT will eliminate that traffic issue. He also suggested the team look at the MetroExtra study by WMATA before implementing the proposed service.

- **Response:** Currently, the study team is waiting to see the data results from the studies currently looking at the existing traffic congestion. They will be able to better answer that

question once they have that information. As far as MetroExtra, the study team is looking at BRT.

**Comment:** Member stated the Purpose and Need is not very specific about how it will make the service more “rapid.”

- **Response:** The study team acknowledged and appreciates this comment. It is anticipated that the data from the traffic operations analysis will provide information on BRT and general traffic speeds.

**Comment:** Member said he believes MetroExtra and BRT don’t necessarily have to be mutually exclusive. The two services may be able to work together.

- **Response:** The study team thanked member for this comment.

**Question:** Member pointed out that MetroExtra could be implemented two years sooner than a BRT.

- **Response:** The study team acknowledged and appreciates this comment.

**Question:** Member questioned what the CAC should be expecting in terms of analysis and when to expect it.

- **Response:** The study team will be providing the CAC with quantitative data related to information such as travel times, transit ridership, jobs and people within 45 and 60 minutes of activity centers, and potential impacts to properties and resources. This data will be provided in September before Meeting #8. The study team will walk the CAC through that information during the meeting but, because of the quantity of data, it may take multiple meetings to get through it all.

**Question:** Member questioned how BRT will support the vitality of downtown Silver Spring, and wanted to know if the study team is open to revising the Purpose and Need.

- **Response:** The study team is taking comments on the P&N; it is a living document and is not final until it is officially approved by a lead Federal Agency.

**Question:** Member felt using the terminology “Master Plan” makes it seem like there isn’t flexibility regarding statements made in the Master Plan.

- **Response:** Study team stated the Master Plan is flexible and should only to be considered as a starting point. Adjustments can and will be made based on feedback; there are new stations beyond those identified in the Master Plan and other stations have been removed already, as a result of such feedback.

**Question:** Member asked when the study team will go to elected officials with information.

- **Response:** The study team has a briefing in December that they believe will be a Planning Board briefing. Following that, a County Council hearing will likely be held in January or February, 2017.

**Question:** Member questioned how winning the TIGER Grant would impact the current project and schedule.

- **Response:** The study team should know about the TIGER Grant by the fall. They requested \$33 million, which they would use toward the project. Currently they only have County funds to use for design. The current schedule will not be affected by the TIGER Grant.

### **Conceptual Alternatives Development**

Study Team Member Brian Lange reviewed the running way conceptual alternatives. He said that feedback from stakeholders and CAC members was used to develop these conceptual alternatives. Brian emphasized that it is possible the final selected alternative may be a variation

of the currently proposed alternatives. He reiterated the currently proposed alternatives are only a starting point and they can still be altered and changed as the project progresses.

Currently, the study team has developed two build alternatives, and maintains a third alternative, the No-Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative is always included in studies such as this one as a baseline to compare with the build alternatives. The two main repurposing features of the running way alternatives are 1) Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes and 2) managed lanes, which are a combination of HOV2+ and BAT lanes. BAT lanes are curb lanes that are, for specified periods of time, designated for BRT buses, local buses, and right turning movements at intersections and access points. HOV2+ are lanes that can be used by high occupant vehicles with two or more persons. The other key element in understanding the conceptual alternatives is the utilization of shoulders; buses could utilize outside shoulders much like they do today, or they could utilize median shoulders as dedicated lanes to bypass traffic congestion.

**Question:** Member asked if the HOV lane would function as an HOV lane continuously, 24/7 or only during peak hours.

- **Response:** The study team is currently only analyzing peak hour data regarding all running way types currently under consideration.

Brian reviewed the No Build Alternative, which includes the planned and programmed transit and roadway improvements as they are currently listed in the Constrained Long-Range Plan. The no-build is an important tool for the comparison of alternatives. The study team must understand what the future differences are between building and operating a BRT system versus not building and operating BRT.

Brian then reviewed the two build alternatives and discussed specifics about where and why and how the team is looking at implementing the bus running way components. Alternative A consists of peak direction curbside BAT lanes in the southern portion of the corridor, and median shoulder lanes in the northern portion of the corridor. Alternative B consists of peak direction curbside managed lanes (HOV2+ and BAT) in the southern portion of the corridor, and outside shoulder lanes in the northern portion of the corridor.

Brian went over next steps, explaining that more detailed drawings and analysis will be presented in the coming months. After the CAC has reviewed and provided feedback on the evaluation data, the study team will host a workshop for the general public.

**Question:** Member shared that Colesville Road rush hour starts in the morning around 5:00 a.m. and in the afternoon around 2:30 p.m. Member questioned how left hand turns would be handled. Member also asked whether non-BRT buses would be allowed in the curb lane or if they would provide service via other lanes.

- **Response:** The changing flow of traffic and when rush hour starts and ends are factors the study team is currently studying to better understand and address. Left hand turns are likely to remain unchanged, but the study team is still working through the details as more data become available. Additionally, non-BRT buses would be allowed in the curb lanes at all times.

**Question:** Member questioned how the BAT lanes and HOV lanes will be enforced.

- **Response:** The study team will be having a meeting with emergency response officials to discuss possible enforcement approaches. They may look to use public outreach and education efforts, video surveillance, patrolling, or a combination of the three to help with enforcement.

**Question:** Member asked what the performance metric for speed of travel of vehicles will be applied to the given alternatives.

- **Response:** The study team is looking at what existing delays and travel speeds are, as well as what will happen to these numbers if we implement these alternatives.

**Question:** Member asked what level of improvement the study team would need to see in their analyses to condone implementing BRT changes.

- **Response:** The decision regarding the levels of improvement necessary is not up to the study team staff, and will be determined by higher level decision makers and elected officials.

**Question:** Member wanted to clarify what is included in the analysis for “Traffic Operations.” Member asked whether the study team is considering the impact BRT might have on other roadways as a result of diverted traffic, and questioned if this is a factor in picking BRT alternatives.

- **Response:** The current model the study team is using focuses solely on US 29. The study team is looking to see what kinds of delays the alternatives might cause, but the diversion of traffic to other routes would have to be looked at separately. The current analyses are aimed at understanding what the alternatives are doing and how they will function on US 29.

### **Wrap-up**

The facilitator asked members to proceed to the open-house style tabletop sessions in the Ellsworth Room on the first floor. She encouraged everyone to use this opportunity to interact with the study team to ask any questions they may have. At that point, the formal portion of the meeting adjourned.

Below is a summary of the written comments received during the open-house style tabletop session that followed.



Map	CAC South Comments								
South #1	Location	Fenton	Colesville Rd at Georgia Ave	NB Colesville Rd at I-495	Sutherland Rd	Colesville Rd at University Blvd / MD 193			
	Comment	Alt B: Please keep Fenton / Spring stop for commercial / shopping traffic	Alt B: Eliminate street parking on Colesville in off-peak hours	Alt A: PM right lane is needed by vehicles going onto I-495	Street is Sutherland not Southerland!	Alt B: The right turn lane US 29 south is also for right turns to go left (east) on University since there are no left turns at Four Corners. Need to study impact of any repurposing from Southwood to University			
South #2	Location	Fenton	Colesville near Dale Dr.	Colesville	Colesville	Colesville Rd northbound from Sligo Creek Parkway	Colesville Rd south of I-495	Colesville at University	Colesville at Northwest Branch
	Comment	Alt B: Please keep this stop - lots of activity & bus transfer here	Alt A: What are the accident statistics for the reversible lanes? (existing lanes)	Alt B: Is it possible to paint the reversible lane times on the road? The overhead 'X's' are not too helpful.	Alt B: Red paint on bus lanes could help enforcement (commented twice)	Alt B: People immediately get into right lane to turn right onto beltway	Alt A: AM BAT ok; PM right turn lane onto I-495 needs 1-mile of length	Alt A: Safety for pedestrians crossing	Alt A: Raise height of bridge to reflect global warming
Central #1	Location	Oak Leaf	Stewart Lane at April Lane	Tech Road	Tech Road	Musgrove Road	Fairland		
	Comment	Alt B: Need to use WMATA walkshed data instead of circle radius - they have it for each existing stop	Alt B: Please ensure that the bus stops are designed so riders are not discharged / picked up on the street like in P.G. County WMATA stops	Alt A: Pedestrian access for center stations could present safety concerns	Alt B: Heavy congestion at closely spaced intersections at Tech Road PM peak	Alt B: Possible new location for station	Fairland Station needed (Musgrove Road?) for Verizon and Medical Center		
Central #2	Location	US 29 at New Hampshire	Colesville at Stewart						
	Comment	Alt B: 29 Southbound is only 2-lanes here at NH Ave. There needs to be another lane created.	Alt B: Retime signals to improve traffic.						
North #1	Location	Fairland	Fairland	Briggs Chaney at US 29	Briggs Chaney at US 29	Greencastle	Blackburn	MD 198	
	Comment	Alt B: Downstream reversible lanes - add either more overhead panels or more signage. Helps motorists entering in between.	Alt B: Tech Rd area - managed lane is appealing / attractive. BRT & HOV would be moving. Often completely backed up in peak hours.	Alt B: This is NOT a viable bus station. Not safe for peds. No parking to motorists.	Alt B: A second person agreed this location dangerous for peds to get across this intersection.	Alt B: All signalized intersections - signals should be re-timed and operating correctly. Many do not currently.	Alt B: BRT service must run frequently & run well into the evening.	Alt B: Asked if Howard Co. would be able to use BRT. Would they stop before downtown SS?	
North #2	Location	Castle Ridge Circle	Greencastle						
	Comment	Alt A: Why are we replacing the Z7 & Z11 at major cost	Alt A: Median BRT could increase the number of pedestrian accidents of people trying to reach bus.						