

**MD 355 North Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #1 Summary
February 28, 2015 from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm
Montgomery County Executive Office Building
101 Monroe St., Rockville, Maryland**

Attendees:

Members	
Paula Bienenfeld	Margaret Schoap
Dennis Cain	Peter L. Shaw
Jerry Callistein	Gail H. Sherman
Robert F. Cowdrey	Goke Taiwo
Nallathamby Devasahayam	John Francis Torti
Cherian Eapen	Helen Triolo
Peter Henry	Ronald C. Welke
Kathie Hulley	Andrew Williamson
Richard Lindstrom	Paul Yanoshik
James Martin	Joel Yesley
Mark Pace	
Era Pandya	
Apologies	
Martha Gurevitz	David A. Rosenbaum
Stephen Hendrickson	Kam F. Yee
Dayssi Morera	
Staff	
Facilitator – Mary Raulerson	Facilitation Staff – Liz Gordon
Montgomery County – Rafael Olarte	SHA - Brandon Scott
Public	
Mrs. Lindstrom	

Handouts:

Binders with project information were distributed to CAC members, along with materials for participating in discussion exercises during the CAC meeting.

The binders included:

- List of staff members for the MD 355 North Corridor
- List of MD 355 North CAC members
- Map of all proposed BRT Routes
- Map of the MD 355 study corridors
- Glossary of terms
- Overview of the CAC selection process and participation roles
- Generic copy of the CAC invite letter

- Copy of the CAC self-nomination form
- CAC Kickoff meeting agenda
- Presentations from both the general and CAC sessions during the Kickoff meeting
- Project website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/RTS
- CAC mission statement
- CAC ground rules
- Spaces/tabs for materials for future meetings

Introductions:

Each CAC member, project staff and public participant, gave their name and their affiliation or interest in the project.

CAC Member Debrief on the Opening Session:

The first discussion in the CAC meeting was of the members' impressions of the morning program prior to the CAC break-out session, including the presentations and speeches by elected officials, project staff, and a BRT consultant. Points that were raised in this discussion include the following:

The attributes of BRT:

- Most examples of BRT that were discussed in the presentation were in a downtown or urban core setting. The proposed route on MD 355 does not meet this description north of Ridge Road. Questions were raised as to how that would affect the BRT design, use and service characteristics.
- Members asked if it is possible to implement a BRT incrementally, or if it is a system that must be built all at once.
- The presentation emphasized the importance of station design; would it be possible for individual communities to influence the designs of the stations near them?
- How would right of way choices and station designs foster seamless connection to BRT from different modes? Current rail stations often suffer from designs that make them difficult to access on foot, by bike, or from other transit.
- The historic lack of high frequency transit in the northern part of the MD 355 corridor means that more of the residents in this area are car dependent, and therefore would be "choice riders" of BRT.
 - A high speed, reliable system would be essential to compete with driving, for these riders.
- During the presentation, some examples showed operation of BRT all day/24 hour service. Some neighborhoods would find late night bus service on their streets disruptive.
- The presentations did not include much information about the likely economic development impacts of BRT
- The flexibility of BRT compared to rail is one of its more impressive features

Development patterns and Context

- The area along the MD 355 corridor north of Germantown continues to grow, so some solution for moving people to their jobs and other destinations is necessary.
- Much of the growth in Clarksburg is not focused on the MD 355 Corridor – will we be exploring BRT in corridors other than MD 355?
 - Some members were glad that the county is exploring solutions other than more automobile travel lanes.

- It was noted that both in Europe and along the nearby Rosslyn/Ballston corridor, density and development often follow transit investments, not the other way around.
 - One member described the BRT system as proposed as being “in search of density.” Another noted that it may also produce density.
- It was repeatedly noted that much of the traffic on the MD 355 comes from inter-county travel, and trips that will not be served by the future BRT, limiting the amount of automobile traffic that could be alleviated by people choosing to take BRT instead of drive.
 - What is the communication and coordination between the Montgomery and Frederick counties in regards to this service?
 - Does Frederick County have a similar plan, to provide its residents necessary access to WMATA Metro and other transit?
 - Currently, the Shady Grove Park-and-Ride lot fills by 8:00 AM, as a demonstration of people driving to reach transit.
- Some of the current development patterns that exist were shaped by transit service that was promised, but never built.
- How does the BRT serve the Outlet Center in Clarksburg?
- Smart growth principles need to be applied to this corridor – and we need to think out decades, not just the next few years.
- Buses that serve Germantown are already crowded.
- One thing that was evident from the morning presentations was that the County has a real commitment to BRT.
- Will parking be provided for the BRT?

Feeder Service:

- Since much of the current development near the MD 355 north corridor is single family housing that is not interconnected, people may have difficulty reaching transit service along MD 355. We need to explore ways to have better feeder service from neighborhoods to the BRT.
- Would development of efficient feeder service or an app that helps people get to the BRT be part of the BRT design process?

This Process/Study:

- How will economic impacts/benefits be evaluated in this study?
- Will person-throughput be a methodology used to evaluate tradeoffs related to BRT vs. roadway improvements?
 - This answer will be forthcoming at a future meeting
- What traffic impacts can we expect with the various types of BRT systems?
 - Answer given: This information is going to be one of the outcomes of the current ongoing study.
- What was the cost of this study? The total cost of BRT related studies completed in the county?
 - This answer will be forthcoming at the next CAC meeting.
- Will analysis include a detailed economic comparison of BRT vs. toll lanes, new road construction, etc?
 - It is unknown at this time which specific alternatives will be evaluated, and this will be explored at a future CAC meeting.
- The question of how this study relates to the Functional Master Plan was raised. Since the Master Plan is a legal document, how can we be exploring alternatives that are different than what was outlined in the Master Plan?

- The intent of this phase of the study is to start with the recommendations of the Master Plan and conduct more detailed analyses on the Master Plan recommendations and other BRT alternatives to better understand the tradeoffs and impacts. A clarification to this answer will be provided during the next CAC Meeting.

Corridor Overview and Mapping Exercise:

An overview of the corridor, study limits and various contexts along the MD 355 Corridor was provided by the project team. Then, the following Mapping Exercise was carried out.

CAC members used two large maps and color coded sticky notes to answer the questions below, and, where appropriate, indicate the location of the subject their comments addressed. Participants discussed their answers with each other and with facilitators as they worked, and reported major themes to the whole group. Answers to the questions that were discussed during the meeting are listed below. Many other items that were not discussed were written on color-coded notes and provided to the project team; all of the written ideas are included in the table below.

- Question 1: How do you/people you know use transit? (Ideas provided on Blue notes)
 - For shopping/restaurants
 - To reach DC for non-work purposes
 - To reach DC for work
 - To commute to work
 - To attend government/committee meetings

- Question 2: For what purpose do you use the corridor? (Ideas provided on Pink notes)
 - To commute
 - To access transit such as Metro Rail
 - For social/commercial errands

- Question 3: What would make taking transit more attractive? (Ideas provided on Purple notes)
 - Free parking at transit stations
 - Better information, perhaps in an app
 - More stations
 - Better reliability and frequency
 - Better looking buses
 - “Branding,” and generally more attractive buses and facilities
 - This is related to overcoming stigma attached to bus systems
 - Lower cost of tickets
 - Better security/lighting
 - Connections to the stations for pedestrians
 - Better feeder service to reach major regional transit from homes
 - Fewer and faster transfers
 - Smaller, quieter vehicles for local neighborhood service
 - Stations with character, that fit their surroundings well
 - Walkable station areas – areas that have density with a mix of uses within ½ mile of the transit station
 - A dedicated lane so that transit is faster than surrounding auto traffic

- Question 4: How do you see BRT on MD 355 making the corridor more attractive? (Ideas provided on Yellow notes)
 - It could reduce demand pressure on other existing transit
 - It could reduce congestion, in some situations
 - It could reduce parking demand near stations, thus allowing more non-parking development of that land
 - It could spur density and mixed use development, creating dense, transit-oriented “nodes” of development.
 - It could be an opportunity to change/beautify the streetscape
 - It could increase pedestrian safety in some locations

- Question 5: What concerns do you have? (Ideas provided on Green notes)
 - Pedestrian safety – particularly in areas like the Rockville Metro station
 - There is an operational concern about striking an appropriate balance between the number of stops desired and the necessity for the service to function as a true BRT, and thus have considerable distance between stops.
 - Since MD 355 south is more dense, it tends to get the lion’s share of attention and study, related to transportation improvements. The concern is that this MD 355 north group should get equal attention.
 - Could current local bus service that’s on MD 355 be repurposed to serve as feeder service to BRT?
 - Will feeder services and their coordination be part of the BRT process?
 - A difference in opinion:
 - Start construction at the north end, so that it’s more likely to be completed
 - Start construction at density
 - What will the “real cost” of the project be?
 - What is the takings process going to look like, where more right of way is necessary
 - What is the project’s implementation timeline?
 - The alternatives for the northern portion of the corridor should reflect its current density
 - What will the fare cost be?
 - What will the impact on pedestrian safety be?

During this exercise, a question was posed regarding how many of the CAC members use transit, or used transit to get to the meeting today. It was requested that this question be asked during the next CAC meeting. It was also noted that transit directions to this meeting and all future CAC meetings be included in the meeting notices/invitations.

All of the written comments on the color-coded notes are listed below. Some of these were discussed during the meeting (those listed above), and many were provided but not discussed. If the item pertained to a location on the map, that is noted on the table and is shown on the map attached to this meeting summary.

Question 1: How do you/people you know use transit?		
Sticky Color	Comment	Dot # on Map
Blue	I and people I know use transit for daily commuting, work and to go to DC	
Blue	Red line to DC/work	
Blue	Ride On to Rockville Metro	
Blue	Rockville Metro station and occasionally Ride On to Montgomery College	58
Blue	Access to work	58
Blue	Access to shopping in DC	58
Blue	Access to National Airport	58
Blue	Access to Metro and sites near Metro	58
Blue	Central Gaithersburg to Metro, and to Rockville	
Blue	From North county to employment centers	
Blue	To get to 270 N and Metro station	84
Blue	Germantown town center station	
Blue	Linkage of local buses and parking lot feeding the commuter system	
Blue	"I ride BRT Montgomery county" T shirts could be sold	
Blue	A logo in the bus stop about MRT	
Blue	I use Germantown park and ride	
Blue	To commute to work	
Blue	As an alternative to I-270	
Blue	For daily use for works and appointments	125
Blue	Bus 100; Bus 55	115
Blue	Most of my neighbors drive because of the time it takes to use transit	
Blue	Take Metro as often as possible, and to work and leisure	
Blue	Tried to take the bus, too. Too difficult to find the information	
Blue	Use Metro to go to downtown DC 1 to 2 times a month	
Blue	My spouse occasionally takes Ride On Route 79 to and from Shady Grove	137
Blue	My Spouse takes Ride On Route 100 express bus to Shady Grove on a regular basis from Germantown town center. Parks there after driving from Clarksburg.	138
Blue	I used MARC Germantown to commute from Clarksburg to Silver Spring for ten years	139
Blue	Work	
Blue	Play	
Blue	Community Shuttle to Shady Grove Metro	
Blue	Commute to work	
Blue	School/work	

Question 2: For What Purpose Do You Use the Corridor?		
Pink	Shopping	
Pink	Mostly for travel north or south, about 5 minutes either way. If BRT could be incorporated with better bikeability, that would be ideal for me.	58
Pink	I use 355 for running personal errands, visiting friends, etc.	
Pink	Commute to work and to recreation or airport.	58
Pink	Commute to job, mainly	
Pink	Build dense, mixed-use transportation centric communities	100, 99
Pink	To work	
Pink	To shop	
Pink	To entertain	
Pink	To commute to work	
Pink	To visit local tourist sites	
Pink	Shopping	
Pink	Movies	
Pink	Visits	
Pink	Use the Rockville Pike for shopping. I use it as little as possible.	
Pink	Strictly shopping, mainly in area near [translation needed...]	
Pink	Commute by driving	
Pink	Shopping by driving	
Pink	Even with BRT congestion along MD 355 will be severe, which makes it much easier for many upcounty residents to shop in frederick	
Pink	Shop	
Pink	Meetings in Rockville/Gaithersburg	
Pink	Go to places further south for doctors' appointments and shopping, by car	
Pink	People in our area use public transit for some commuting but primarily for leisure transportation into/out of DC. Ideally we would like convenient transport that would allow us to leave cars completely at home	20
Pink	Shop	
Pink	Church	
Pink	Recreation	
Pink	New development under construction	47
Question 3: What would make taking transit more attractive?		
Purple	Reliability	
Purple	Safety/Security	
Purple	Weather protection at stops	
Purple	The last 1/4 mile connection	
Purple	Need an easy way for people to get from homes to 355 so they can take advantage of transit (eg: with an app)	9

Purple	Public transit will be more attractive if it is more efficient, with minimal shortfalls. I would like to have online tracking via apps. BRT stops should be heated in winter. More stations within a mile.	
Purple	Congestion at Rockville Metro and down Pike is limiting currently	58, 59
Purple	Parking facility near BRT stops	
Purple	Feeder lines to BRT stations	100
Purple	Linkage of BRT to CCT	101
Purple	Parking at select BRT stations	
Purple	Successful integration of bus stops into communities	
Purple	Ticket pricetag	73
Purple	Fewer transfers are better	
Purple	Ease of getting from residence to stop	
Purple	Making the cost attractive compared to the alternatives	
Purple	BRT stop access	126
Purple	Short wait and accountable time of arrival	126
Purple	Frequency and reliability of service	
Purple	dedicated lane would definitely help	
Purple	make it as similar to rail as possible, minus the tracks	
Purple	Functionally, use MD 355 South route does not serve its function because it does not extend all the way to the DC line	136
Purple	Extend Snowden Farm Parkway via MD 83 to connect ICC and Shady Grove metro station	146
Purple	More frequent timing	
Purple	Parking at stations	
Purple	Cost	
Purple	Parking for transit stops are essential for people in Clarksburg unless a good internal bus service is provided	
Purple	Walkable stations	
Purple	Speed	
Purple	Frequency	
Purple	Feeder system	
Purple	Better looking buses	
Purple	I already take transit. It's convenient to get to metro.	
Purple	Stops on the campus of Montgomery College as a major transit hub	
Purple	Widen MD 355 north of MD 27 to Stringtown Road	39
Purple	Time savings	
Purple	Including local communities in station design could increase community buy-in	48
Purple	Commuter parking areas need expansion	
Purple	Location of stops	
Purple	access to stops via parking and sidewalks	

Purple	Reliability	
Purple	Rider information	
Question 4: How do you see BRT on 355 making the corridor more attractive?		
Yellow	Access to destinations	
Yellow	Avoidance of connections	
Yellow	More pleasant trip than driving	
Yellow	Parking at stops	
Yellow	Get us out of our cars for weekend shopping, eg: from Rockville to Gaithersburg	28
Yellow	Larger and visible signs; energy efficient fluorescent street lights across 355.	
Yellow	BRT passing through central [...] and down the Pike would further congest this area and constitute a division of Rockville into separate areas!	58, 59
Yellow	By building [...] increasing accessibility to work and recreation	99
Yellow	Better planned higher density building around these transportation nodes	101
Yellow	Justifies more expensive development and better planned open spaces	100
Yellow	More people leave their car	79
Yellow	Company employees will prefer to travel	79
Yellow	Each station must [...] to the local park/recreation	79
Yellow	It would more, and very full of passengers if it had higher reliability	
Yellow	Can't tell yet	
Yellow	By creating dense mixed use nodes	
Yellow	More travel choice and less congestion for motorists	
Yellow	Could make 355 travel better. However M-83 needs to be built to accommodate N/S and E/W travel and as a quick connection to Shady Grove.	
Yellow	MD 355 South makes more sense than MD 355 North from an economic standpoint	
Yellow	May be an attractive [...]? Though I suspect it will bring more multi-family development	
Yellow	Reduce demand for parking by increasing travel choices	1, 10
Yellow	Increasing travel choice	
Yellow	More dense development	
Yellow	Improved streetscape	
Yellow	Need sheltered stops	
Yellow	Alternative to driving	
Question 5: What Concerns Do You Have?		
Green	Supply of parking at major stops	
Green	Security	
Green	Very narrow; would have to be single lane	19

Green	I would like to see designated large parking with different levels similar to Shady Grove metro. I would like it to be free.	
Green	Additional congestion at Rockville Metro and [...] Redundancy with other existing systems.	58, 59
Green	Narrow road too much congestion on sideways. Road widening costs.	88
Green	Station integration with communities	100
Green	Need for Feeder circulator system	
Green	Need for parking	
Green	Timing and funding	
Green	How quickly will it be implemented?	
Green	Where on 355 will the construction begin?	97
Green	Make sure longer distances between stops so it's not called Ride On	
Green	Taking a lane or more from 355 North of Gaithersburg will necessitate taking land, at what business cost?	
Green	Safety of users getting to and from buses	
Green	Need to know funding sources	
Green	People in neighborhoods will still have trouble getting to stops	
Green	Pedestrian safety	
Green	Quick take process is a concern	
Green	Raising taxes	
Green	No accountability	
Green	KF Blvd shady grove metro traffic issues even with BRT	143
Green	Pedestrian safety	
Green	How are we going to pay for it and how will the county make MD 355 North financially feasible? Clarksburg needs its roads such as MD 83 and is paying more taxes than everyone else already	
Green	Getting people to believe that transit can replace cars	
Green	The dedicated access on 355 through Gude to Rockville Metro impacting the speed of service	
Green	The link to Shady Grove Metro does not take into account the development of the Shady Grove development area east of 355 along Shady Grove Road	38
Green	How will traffic to/through Montgomery College/Rockville be handled?	48
Green	Right-of-way constraints through Gaithersburg from Summit Ave to Odendhal Ave	28
Green	MD 355 only 2 lanes north of MD 27	2
Green	Post office has Ride On	29
Green	Money	
Green	Noise is not an issue compared to VMT of driving	
Green	Central Gaithersburg is 2 [...] for traffic	

Mission Statement:

It was assumed that each CAC member had already seen the mission statement since it was part of the application process. Nonetheless, some very minor changes, that did not affect its intent, had been done to the statement previous to this meeting. Therefore the mission statement was presented here again to the audience. This mission statement is also included in the CAC binders.

Ground Rules:

An overview of the ground rules for conduct within the CAC was provided. Most of these are for respectful and productive interaction. It was explained that this is not a voting body, but an advisory one. It was also explained that we have many different opinions in the room, and that all opinions are valid and should be discussed.

Logistics:

Communication and sharing of information between the CAC members and the facilitator was encouraged, and contact information was provided. The next CAC meeting will be held on April 14 from 6:30 to 8:30 in this same building, the County Executive Office Building. Locations for future meetings farther north in the corridor will be explored by the project team.

A question was raised about how work between now and the next CAC meeting will be shared with the CAC. It was requested that notes from all meetings be placed on the website for the sake of transparency. It was also requested that if input is to be sought during future CAC meetings that the materials for the meeting be shared with the CAC prior to the meeting.

Homework:

CAC members collected their printed map, the explanation of the “homework” exercise which is reproduced below, and -- when requested -- a self-addressed envelope. The homework exercise was to be completed by March 10th 2015 and either mailed or scanned and emailed to the facilitator. The details of the Homework are attached to these minutes.

Questions:

There will always be an opportunity for questions during the meeting from the CAC members. Are there other questions that have not been raised from either the CAC members or the public members? (No additional questions were raised)

Next Steps:

The next MD 355 North CAC meeting has been scheduled for April 14th, 2015 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. This meeting will be held at the Executive Office Building; the team is exploring locations for future CAC meetings further north in the corridor. Details for the next meeting will be emailed to CAC members. A meeting summary will be provided to the CAC (via email) and made available on a project website.

Map Used During Mapping Exercise

MD 355 North Table Map Comments

Table 1: Starting from Clarksburg project limit







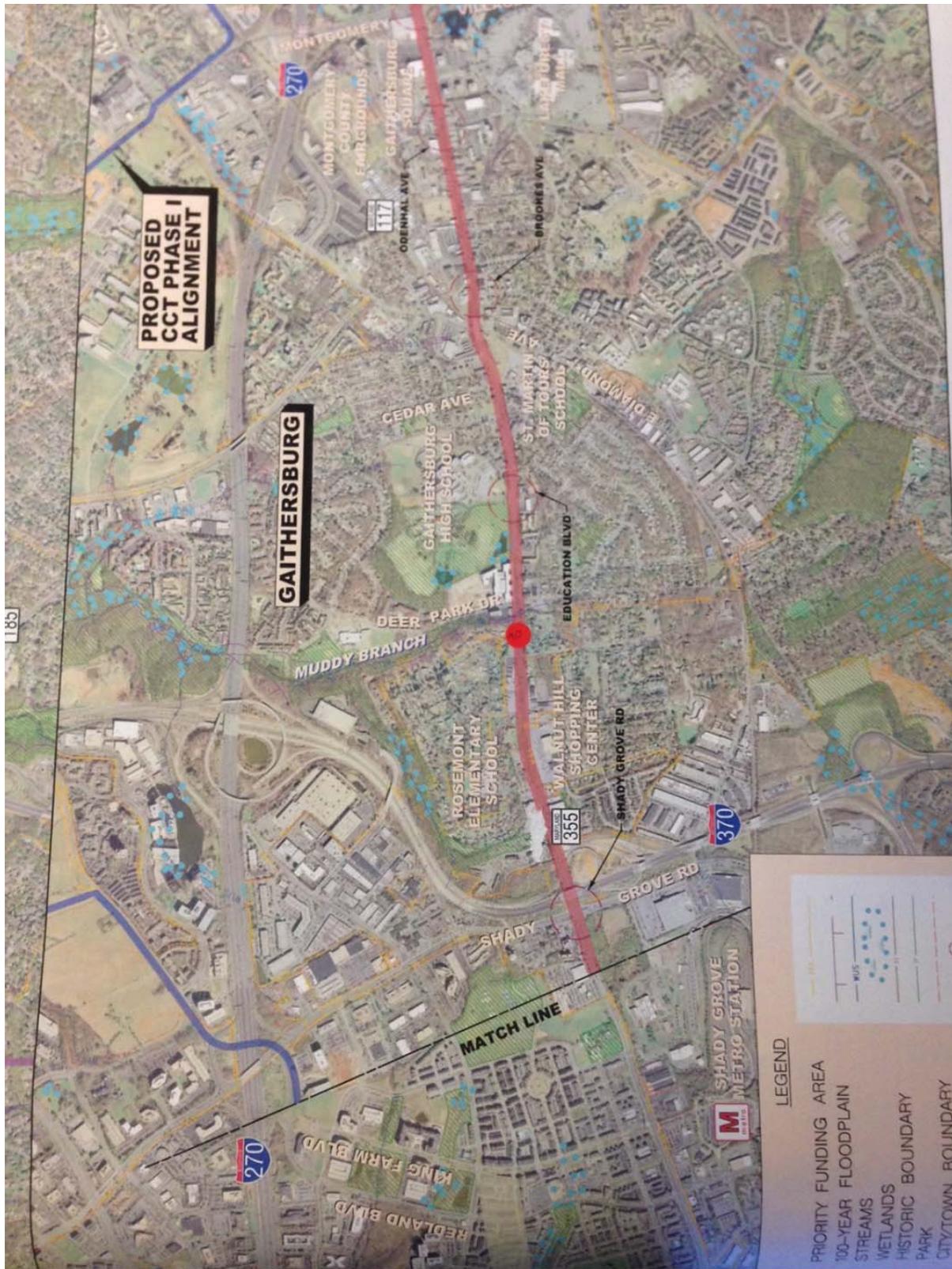


Table 1 participants restricted their comments to north of the Shady Grove Metro Station.

Table 2: Starting from Clarksburg project limit





GERMANTOWN

ROUTE 118

270

**PROPOSED
CCT PHASE II
ALIGNMENT**

SENECA MEADOWS
CORPORATE PARK

RIDGE RD

ROUTE 27

MILESTONE
CENTER
NEELSVILLE
VILLAGE
CENTER

RIDGE ROAD
RECREATIONAL
PARK

RIDGE RD

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
GERMANTOWN

MD 118

MIDDLEBROOK RD

CLEAR SPRING
PARK

NEELSVILLE
MIDDLE SCHOOL

SHAKESPEARE BLVD

GERMANTOWN RD

SHAWNEE LN

FOREMAN BLVD

CLARKSBURG
HIGH SCHOOL

ROCKY HILL
MIDDLE SCHOOL

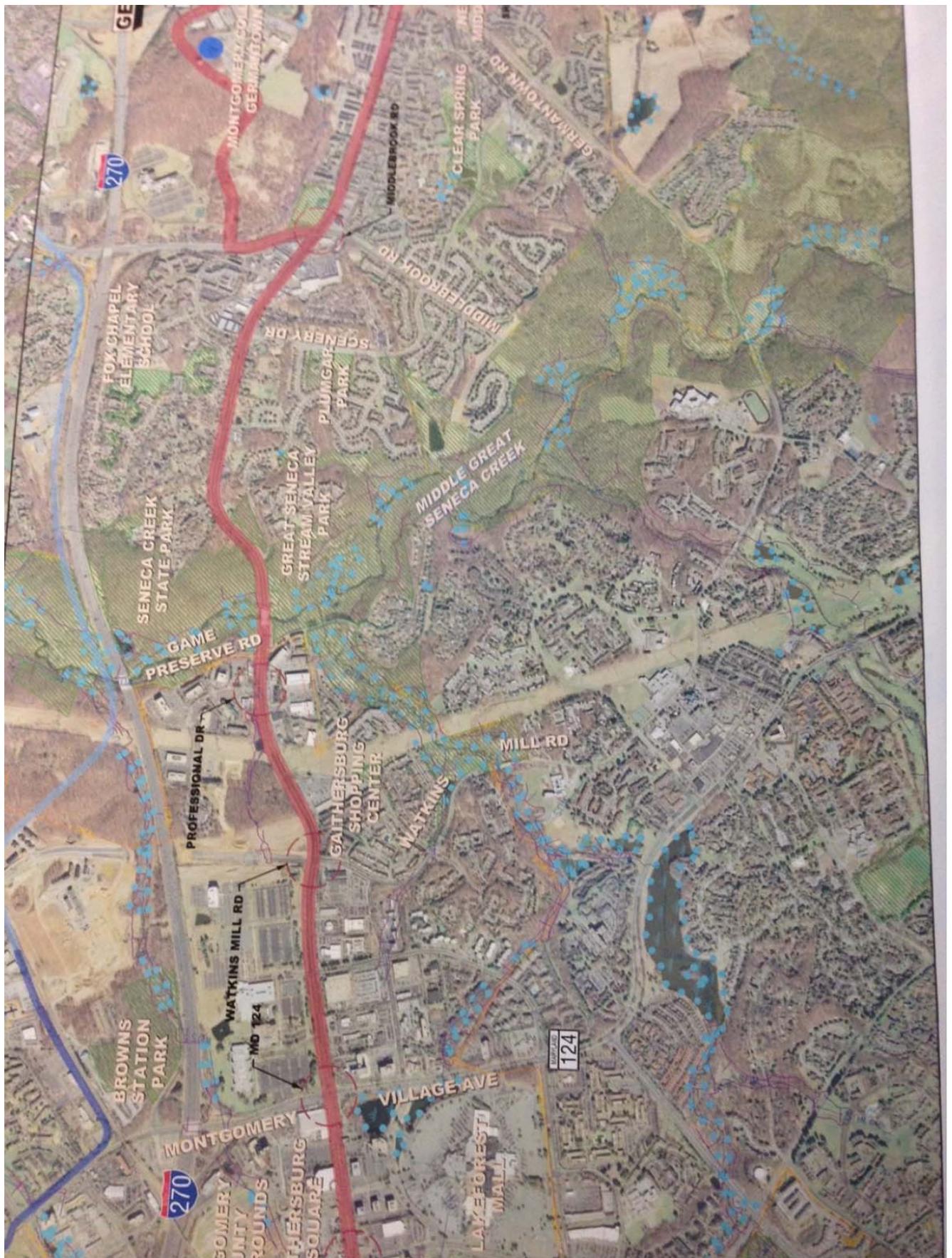
W OLD
BALTIMORE RD

LITTLE SENECA PARK

NEW CUT RD

GREENRIDGE
BAPTIST
CHURCH

BANK RD





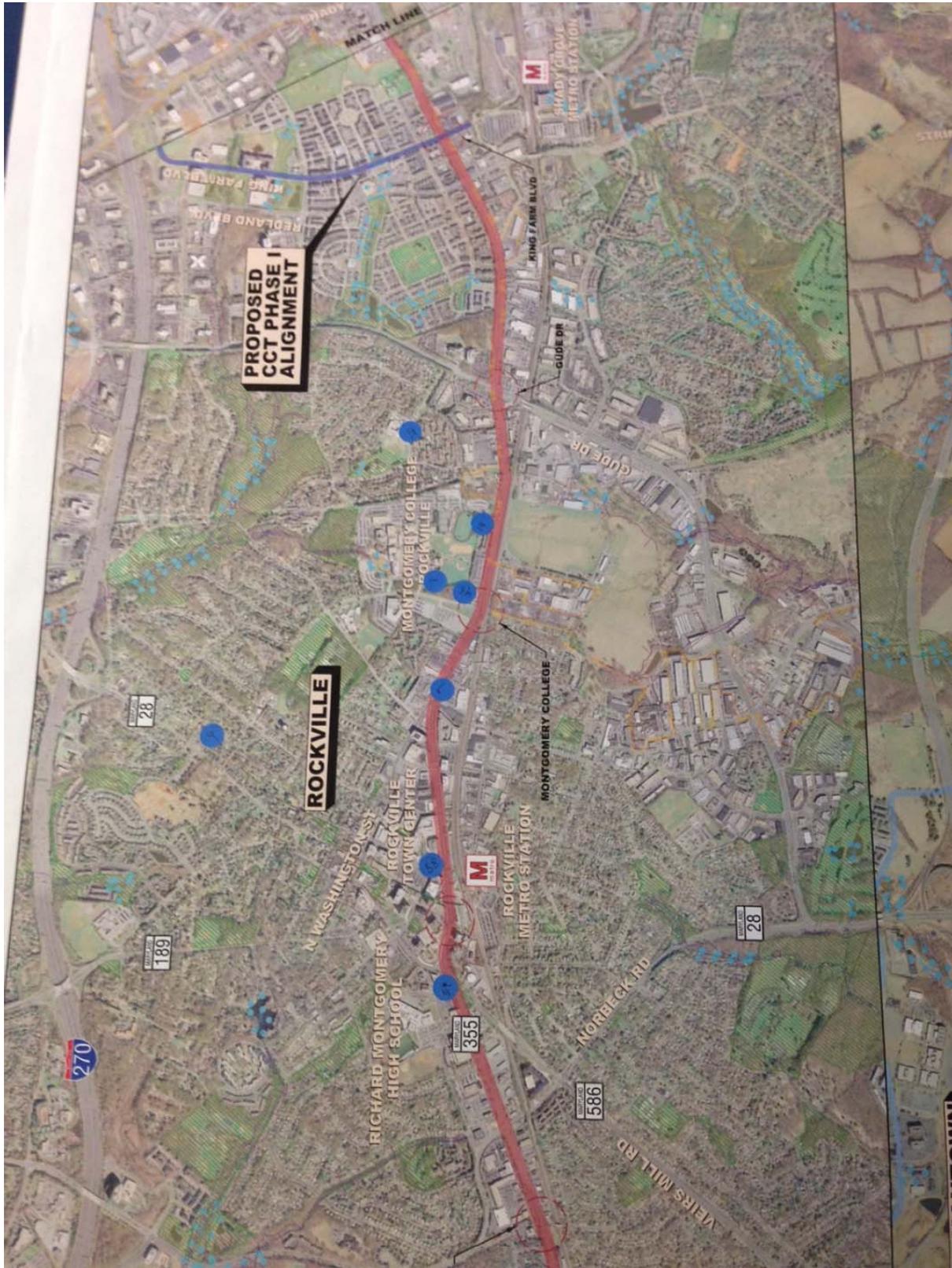


Table 2 participants restricted their comments to points north of the Rockville Metro Station.

Homework Provided During the CAC Kickoff Meeting

Identifying MD 355 North Corridor Strengths and Opportunities

CAC Member Activity due 3/10/15

The Exercise Purpose

During the next meeting we will work together to build a set of needs and objectives for the study area. To share these with one another, the team, and the broader community we will work to identify and, where possible, show locations for your priorities and concerns so we are prepared to discuss them during our meeting.

Please complete the following exercise to communicate your thoughts about the MD 355 corridor. You may use either of the communication options below to make sure that we have your ideas recorded and integrated into the meeting materials and discussion. A compilation of exercise worksheets and maps received by 3/10/2015 will help ensure this integration.

Strength and Opportunity Mapping

Please identify up to three locations along the MD 355 corridor that you think of as “Strengths.” These are ways in which the corridor works well and plays a positive role in the life of the community.

- Example: “New sidewalk along the west side of Rockville Pike from Security Lane to Marinelli Road provides me with good access to Ride On and the Metro.”

Please identify up to three locations along the MD 355 corridor that you think of as “Opportunities.” These are ways in which the corridor could work better and has opportunities for improvement.

- Example: “The sidewalk stops just south of the Ride On stop in front of Bennigan’s in Clarksburg, which makes it really difficult for me to walk to the stop from my house.”

On the provided map and the back of this worksheet identify locations and describe what you see as representing each of these strengths or opportunities. This can be an intersection, a length of corridor, or some other area type. Photos and sketches in addition to text can be used to convey what you see.

Communicating your ideas to the Team

1. A prepaid addressed envelope is provided. Please **mail the map and this sheet** by 3/10/2015.

Ms. Mary Raulerson
Kittelsohn & Associates, Inc.
36 South Charles Street, Suite 1920
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

2. Scan your map and worksheet, and **email them** to mraulerson@kittelsohn.com.

Identifying MD 355 North Corridor Strengths and Opportunities

CAC Member _____

1. Strength Location (Nearest Intersection/Cross Street):

Description:

2. Strength Location:

Description:

3. Strength Location:

Description:

1. Opportunity Location (Nearest Intersection/Cross Street):

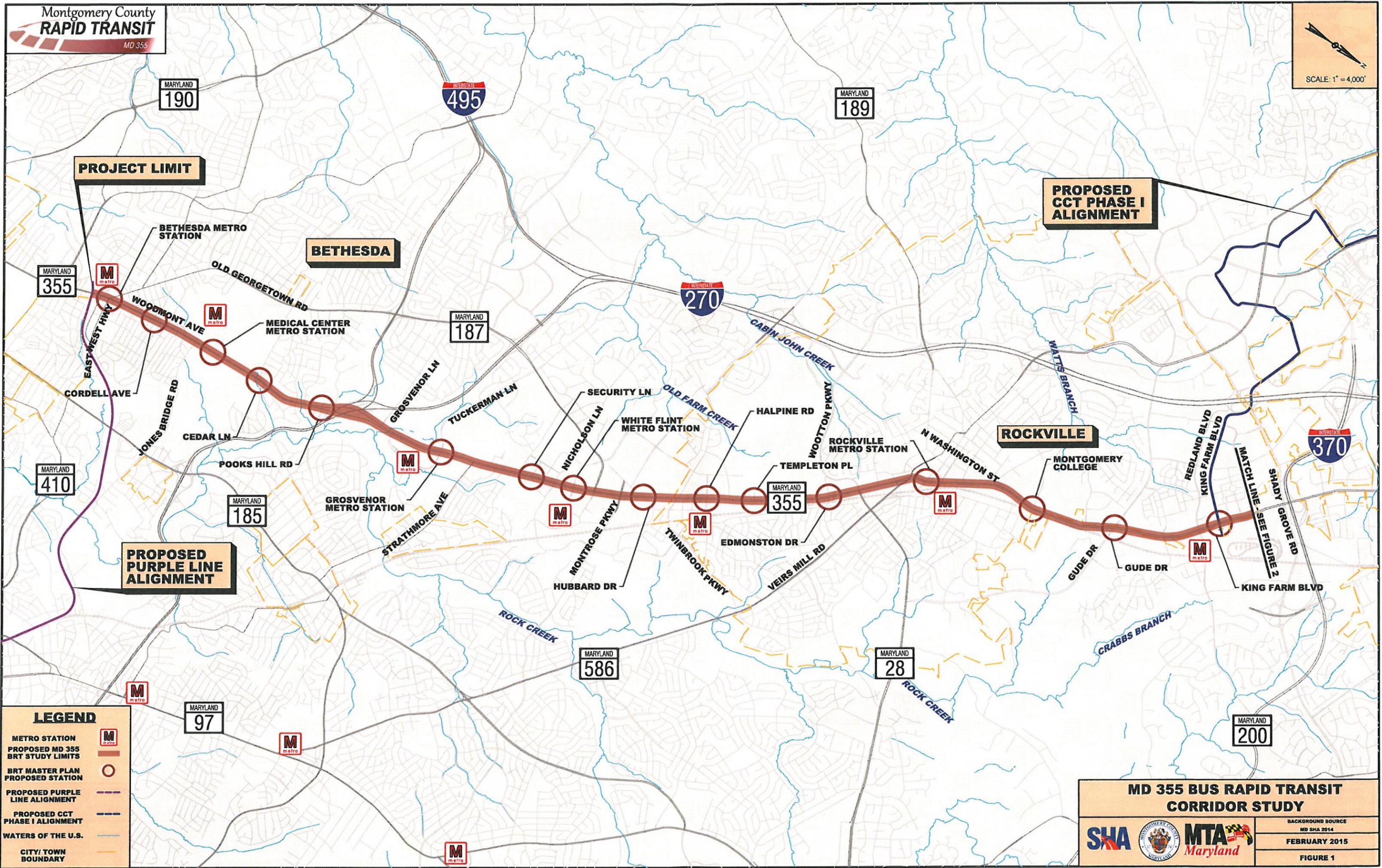
Description:

2. Opportunity Location:

Description:

3. Opportunity Location:

Description:



LEGEND

- METRO STATION
- PROPOSED MD 355 BRT STUDY LIMITS
- BRT MASTER PLAN PROPOSED STATION
- PROPOSED PURPLE LINE ALIGNMENT
- PROPOSED CCT PHASE I ALIGNMENT
- WATERS OF THE U.S.
- CITY/TOWN BOUNDARY

MD 355 BUS RAPID TRANSIT CORRIDOR STUDY

SHA MTA Maryland

BACKGROUND SOURCE
MD SHA 2014
FEBRUARY 2015
FIGURE 1

PROPOSED CCT PHASE I ALIGNMENT

PROPOSED CCT PHASE II ALIGNMENT

PROJECT LIMIT

LEGEND

- METRO STATION
- PROPOSED MD 355 BRT ALIGNMENT
- BRT MASTER PLAN PROPOSED STATION
- PROPOSED CCT PHASE I ALIGNMENT
- PROPOSED CCT PHASE II ALIGNMENT
- WATERS OF THE U.S.
- CITY/TOWN BOUNDARY

MD 355 BUS RAPID TRANSIT CORRIDOR STUDY

BACKGROUND SOURCE
MD SHA 2014
FEBRUARY 2015
FIGURE 2

