**Rapid Transit Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
EOB Auditorium**

**March 25, 2015 4:00 – 6:00 pm**

**Voting Members In-Attendance**Sean Egan; Andrew Gunning; David Hauck; Jonathan Parker; Dan Wilhelm; Mark Winston.

**Non-Voting Members**Tom Autrey; Carolyn Biggins, Joana Conklin; Gary Erenrich; Edgar Gonzalez; Rick Kiegel; Stacy Leach; Ligia Moss; Tom Pogue; Frank Spielberg; Emil Wolanin.

**Other Attendees**Nancy Abeles; Jamaica Arnold; Chris Bell; Andrew Bing; Kelly Blynn; Jerry Garson; Celesta Jurkovich; Karen Kahl; Kyle Kramer; Kyle Nembhard; Rafael Olarte; Harriet Quinn; Geri Rosenberg.

**Introductions and Welcome**

Emil Wolanin started the meeting at 4:08 pm. Mr. Wolanin is chairing the meeting in Al Roshdieh’s absence. The Directors are currently at a Senior Manger Retreat with the County Executive. The meeting started with all attendees introducing themselves.

**Approval of Minutes for January 28, 2015.**

The minutes were approved without changes.

**Montgomery County Transportation Priorities Letter**

The 2015 Joint Letter is from the County Executive and the County Council and it notifies the State of the County’s transportation priorities. The letter can be found on the RTS Web Site. A letter is sent to the State each year if there are changes. Edgar Gonzalez and Jonathan Parker explained the purpose of the letter and how the State releases funds based on the listed priorities. While there are sixteen priorities under the Construction Program and another ten under the D&E Program, realistically, only the first two will probably be funded.

**Updates on Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT)**

Rick Kiegel introduced his CCT Committee. After presenting a brief overview of the CCT schedules, with construction beginning Spring 2018 and service to begin in 2021. At this time, the CCT is on schedule, but there is currently no funding in the six year plan for construction. The CCT is sixteen miles long, and broken up into two phases. Phase One is Metropolitan Grove to Shady Grove (nine miles) and Phase Two is COMSAT to Metropolitan Grove (seven miles).

Alignment/Station Location

Karen Kahl, Engineering Manager, led this part of the discussion. Phase One is nine miles with a dedicated right-of-way. Ms. Kahl’s presentation showed the different sections of CCT as it runs alongside SHA and MC roadways. Ms. Kahl also explained the different locations of the stations. One station will tie-in with the MARC rail. There will be two stations on Quince Orchard road – one of which will run onto NIST property. The Kentlands will have the only aerial station. The CCT will also run clockwise around the Universities at Shady Grove. This section will have one bus every 15 minutes break off from the main CCT line to run the loop. As part of Ms. Kahl’s presentation, she gave some examples of how the lanes would look.

Q) Phase 2 – why the convoluted route.
A) Not working on Phase 2 at this time. If there are conflicts, they will look into it as they come up.

Q) At one time there was a study that showed 60 – 70% of ridership goes to Shady Grove station to go to DC. What is it now?
A) Don’t know, the AM peak greatest load is Rockville north. The morning peak is in the opposite direction – reverse commuting.

Q) In terms of modeling – at you finishing the last round.
A) Modeling never ends, but we are continuing.

Q) How many lanes?
A) All two lanes dedicated.

There was some discussion about the traffic signal priority and how it would work where the CCT crosses other lanes of traffic. In addition to roads with traffic signals, also need to take into account the residential feeder roads that have a stop sign instead of a traffic light. However, there are not very many residential cross street, most are commercial in this area.

Station Design

Kyle Kramer is the Station Architect, and he led this section of the presentation. The platforms are 150 feet long by 18 feet wide, 60% of which will be covered. There will be boarding for two buses at the same time, with primary and secondary entrances, benches, windscreens, etc. The process began by looking at the station areas and then the specific station sites. This was a high level urban design exercise. There are six unique stations types – Median Center (5), Side-Aligned Center (4), Side (1), Aerial (1), Sidewalk (2) and Split-Side (1). The goal is to create a system wide architectural scheme for the stations that symbolizes the premium nature of the BRT project that the CCT is by creating an image for the entire system while also establishing stations as amenities for the communities they serve. The remainder of Mr. Kramer’s presentation was showing the rendering of the individual stations in Phase One.

Q) Would there be any certain barrier that would prevent pedestrians from crossing the road?
A) There is a hard physical barrier, but it’s only 2 feet high. Using landscaping to discourage illegal crossing and the lay out of the station is also being design to discourage this. In addition, had to look what was around the station. A state highway on one side would make it more important to have a solid barrier, whereas an apartment complex would want to be given easier access to the station.

Q) Is there any cold weather protection?
A) There are wind screens.

Q) Would you be using infrared heaters?
A) No. Passengers are not waiting that long. This is something that has never been deemed necessary in this area.

This lead into a discussion about the merits of implementing heaters and other methods to make the stations more accommodating during the winter, even though most riders would have a 15 minute wait at the most. Members of the Task Force shared their experience of being in Cleveland during the winter at the stations.

Q) So the wind screens are permeable?
A) They are glass, so they would protect. In an S-shape, so you are not enclosed.

Q) Will there be a gap?
A) Yes. Not just to let trash go through, but to also make it easier to clean.

The Cleveland station’s windscreens did very little to change the temperature. There were gaps on the side and bottoms, and this same problem was found at all stations. The 15 degree temperatures really pointed out the disadvantages of this type of station and that we need to avoid. Gary Erenrich mentioned doing additional studies, especially on the aerial station, to see if it would be possible to correct these issues.

Q) To what extent for your design did you consider that there will be additional corridors? How do these stations potentially relate to the additional stations? I would like to see a consistency between the CCT and the BRT stations. The CCT will set the standard. Are we going to maintain a theme throughout the system or will the CCT be seen as a separate entity.
A) Working with WMATA and the MARC stations to keep some consistency. As to regards with the rest of the network, there aren’t currently any plans for stations, so it’s hard to plan around it.

Rick Kiegel mentioned that the different stations could be used along any stations in the RTS corridors. Need to look at the 14 inch station height, the length of stations, and the surround areas in order to make a decision of type of station for the RTS corridors. The stations will need to be scalable to the area. A big concern is keeping the station amenities, such as the canopies, the benches, wind screens, etc. the same across the network. We don’t want the other corridors to be of an obliviously lesser quality of the CCT. Cost would need to be taken into consideration.

Q) How are you going to integrate local buses coming into the stations?
A) No local buses will use the CCT stations. Coordinating with WMATA and RideOn to make sure the distance is the shortest amount between the other bus stops and the CCT stations.

Q) Will there be a kiss and ride type?
A) Not planning to have real estate for this – mostly curb side.

Q) At Shady Grove – are all the levels at the same grade?
A) Yes.

Q) Will there be escalators for the aerial stations?
A) No, elevators.

Operations

Chris Bell, Operations Manager, presented the final section. For operations planning to meet ridership demand, two concerns are the required number of buses per hour and the bus fleet size. This is a two-step project. Step One involves the final policy guidelines – vehicle type, acceptable maximum passenger loads, and services utilizing the transit way (only CCT branded buses with a two route pattern – CCT Direct and CCT via USG). There are no proposed changes to RideOn, WMATA or local shuttle networks. Some of the elements impacting the CCT are fare collection approach, transit signal priority and vehicle configuration. Step Two involves calculating the required number of buses per hour. Ridership forecasts and maximum load of the buses will dictate the required number of buses per hour.

Q) Bikes?
A) Not on the front of the bus, but loaded at the middle of the bus.

Q) Platform heights – level boarding sounds great, but this could be a problem if other buses want to share the stations. This problem has come up with the Trolley line in DC.
A) The 14 inch platform would work with other buses.

Q) The issues with which vehicles are being selected, fare collection, etc. will have an effect on the rest of the networks.
A) Trying to incorporate based on information available currently. As RTS moves forward, we will continue to add the new requirements.

Q) Using a 30% standees?
A) No, a 50% standees.

Q) If you are going to have all these buses, and you’re telling me I have to wait 2 minutes to get a seat, which most will be waiting, how is this going to affect headways?
A) It shouldn’t. There won’t be two lines. It will be like the METRO. If you don’t want to get on the packed bus, you step back. The information provided will be very important to keep the buses moving and to spread the loads.

Q) Local buses – not doing a lot of changes with the local buses. You need more circulators to pick up people further away from the stations.
A) Believe that will be adjusted for as the system is completed. It would either be a private route or RideOn.

Q) Is the draft environmental cost estimates report available on-line?
A) No. It is still in review. There are cost estimates, but not available right now.

This presentation can be found on the RTS Web Site.

**Status of BRT Studies**

MD586

Jamaica Arnold showed two slides. Areas in green were already completed There is a workshop next year to collect more data. The next steps of Data Collections are to look at exiting conditions, purpose and need, preliminary corridor alternative development, ridership analysis, hold another alternatives public workshop, with alternatives retained for detailed study.

MD355 & US29

These corridors are still in the beginning stages and will not be following the same process as MD586. The studies should only take a year. SHA still has not decided how to proceed with these studies. MD 586 is five years along and MD355/US29 are still at day one.

**Update on RTS Corridor Advisory Committees**

The CAC kickoff meeting was February 28, 2015. There were about 130 attendees. This was an opportunity to review display boards and meet project teams, County and State officials and other CAC members. Joana Conklin gave a brief overview of the meeting. Some common themes that came out of the meeting were:

* Interested in BRT’s potential as more than a commuter system;
* Access to transit – don’t believe people should have to walk 20 minutes to get to a station;
* Need to consider how to involve other jurisdictions since their residents will take advantage of the BRT;
* No matter what solution is chosen, bike access must be considered;
* Would RideOn service be in competition with the new BRT services;
* Are the station locations shown in the Master Plan set;
* Needs to be seen as part of an integrate system;
* More discussion on the economic development impact of BRT is needed
* What is the cost and how will it be paid for;
* How were the CACs formed;
* Do you really care about our input;
* Why are they called an advisory committee and not a decision making group;

Ms. Conklin provided dates for the next round of CAC meetings and invited the Steering Committee members and public to attend the meetings. She also explained the MD586 is on a different track from the rest of the corridors, so they are trying to bring the CAC up to speed. The studies began prior to the development and approval of the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. It was after the approval of the Master Plan, it was decided each corridor needed a CAC.

**Update on the Purple Line**

The MTA secretary is evaluation the projects and should have a Project Evaluation Report out around May 20, 2015. This could result in a revision of the RFP, with a due date would be around May 21st. Then there would be a three month time period for proposers to value engineering to lower costs. Proposals would be due August 19, 2015. The evaluation would be completed by September and a commercial close by December/January. There is basically a six month delay.

**Discussion of Future RTS Steering Committee structure, frequency and topics**

Emil Wolanin started this discussion. Internal discussions of MCDOT have raised concerns about the quality of the meetings, and feel it might be better to have the meetings every other month instead of monthly. There has been a low response to request for agenda items. The goal is to have more discussions similar to the CCT discussion during this meeting. Dan Wilhelm suggested, due to the lack of time to discuss this topic tonight, holding the April meeting. Mark Winston felt this topic should get more discussion next month.

**Meeting Calendar**

The next meeting is April 29, 2015 in the EOB 9th Floor Conference Room at 4:00 pm.