

Montgomery In Focus

Nancy Floreen

August 2009



Council Considers I-270 and CCT

The Council is considering a recommendation that I believe is the best bet to maximize transit usage and reduce congestion along the I-270 corridor. This comes as a result of our review of the State's I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study to figure out how to handle the regional challenge of congestion along the I-270 and I-70 corridor from Shady Grove Road past the City of Frederick. The State's work has resulted in the Alternatives Analysis/Environmental Assessment for both the Corridor Cities Transitway and I-270.

The Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee, which I chair, recommended Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for the Corridor Cities Transitway. This option offers a much higher level of service and convenience than a standard bus, and it provides the best flexibility to serve residential neighborhoods.

The alignment we chose for the transitway provides service to the highest-demand areas between the Shady Grove Metro Station and Clarksburg, including the Crown Farm area (which also serves the popular Rio commercial center) and the Kentlands



Germantown Employment Corridor will benefit.

(which includes the growing MedImmune campus). We also recommended a stop to serve Johns Hopkins' proposed biotechnology center at the Belward Farm. We are aware that the Council may approve higher densities in the upcoming Gaithersburg West Master Plan, so we reserved the right to revisit the light rail option if the new plan warrants it.

For the I-270 portion of the two-pronged plan, we're supporting the option that adds two electronic toll lanes in each direction. I don't like adding pavement any more than you do, but I am convinced the juice is worth the squeeze in this case, especially since much of the land needed is within the existing I-270 right-of-way, and this, they tell us, is the best way to maximize transit and reduce congestion in the corridor up to Frederick.

We think the new lanes should be operated as High Occupancy/Toll (HOT) lanes, which are HOV lanes (allowing buses, carpools and vanpools to drive at the speed limit even during congested times) that also allow lower occupancy vehicles to use the lanes if they pay a toll. The experts tell us this is the best option to provide the most congestion relief with the least disruption to the people who live near the highway.

This is only the first step in coming to regional and state agreement on locally preferred alternatives both for the CCT and the I-270 project that will then go to the feds for review and, we hope, funding in the next year.

I have long believed that providing the appropriate transportation infrastructure is one of the government's most basic jobs. That means supporting our growing biotechnology industry, the emerging

Germantown Employment Corridor and the ongoing build-out of Clarksburg. Our proximity to the nation's capital affords us vast opportunities, and we need to have the infrastructure in place to make the most of them. I feel confident we have chosen a good mix of highway and transit improvements to meet our goals.

For more details, see the press release, and remember to tune in to the Council session on Tuesday, September 15.



Council will continue CCT discussions September 15.

Green Tip of the Month

Ever wonder if your refrigerator is really running you into the poor house? Is your computer or TV silently sipping electricity when you are not using it? What is the lamp you just replaced with an energy-saving compact fluorescent lamp saving you? Now you can find out with the P3 Kill-a-Watt Meter--available on loan from Bethesda Green--and make energy efficiency changes to decrease your overall electricity use. The Kill-a-Watt meter is a simple, easy-to-use version of the home utility meter. Rather than finding the energy use of your entire house, this meter reads the power demand, energy use and other handy statistics of appliances and electronics.

Lyme Disease Precautions

Spring and summer bring warm temperatures, just right for walking in the woods and other outdoor activities. This can mean the risk of tick bites and Lyme disease. In fact, Montgomery County saw more than 300 new cases of Lyme disease in 2007,

and if attendance at a recent meeting on the subject is any indication, County residents take the risks seriously. Fortunately, when Lyme disease is detected early, it is usually mild and easily treatable.

You should see a doctor if you experience the symptoms of Lyme disease, including headache, fever, muscle and joint aches and general fatigue. In particular, look for the circular or oblong rash at the site of the bite. Up to 90 percent of people bitten by infected ticks develop a rash, which can grow from two to three inches in diameter to as much as 20 inches. As it gets bigger, the center of the rash clears giving it a bull's eye appearance. If left untreated, Lyme disease can affect the joints, nervous system or heart.

To prevent Lyme disease, avoid contact with black-legged ticks (formerly called deer ticks) which carry the bacteria and can pass it to humans by a bite. Lyme disease can be transmitted at any stage of the tick's life cycle, even during the larva and nymph stages when ticks can be smaller than a pinhead.

Fast Fact

Now you can stop juggling CDs and use one simple iPod-like device to listen to your favorite fiction. Playaways, available at your local library, are audio books packaged on a single small digital player that is about half the size of a deck of cards. With its universal jack, you can use the device with a headset or in the car. As with most of the print and audio material at the library, you can check out the Playaways for three weeks and renew them twice if no one else is waiting for them.

Let's Talk

What should I know? What is going on in your neck of the woods? Please let me know how I can assist you. Please put me on your community mailing list or listserv. I am always delighted to join your group and chat.

Subscribe Online

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/esubscription/