

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
September 17, 2019**

Voting Members

Barbara Condos (Chair)	Town of Somerset
Elizabeth Demetra Harris	Friendship Heights Village
John Mertens (Vice Chair)	Friendship Heights Village
Manuel Ochoa	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Afua Ofori	Polinger Co./Large Employer

Non-Voting Members

Sandra L. Brecher	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Katie Mencarini	M-NCPPC

TMD Staff

Jim Carlson	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Nakengi Byrd	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services

Absent

Charles Crerand	CBRE Asset Services/Wisconsin Place
Chief John Fitzgerald	Chevy Chase Village Police
Derrick Harrigan	B-CC Services Center
Christopher Itteilag	Somerset House Management Association
Ahkeia Payne	GEICO

Guests

Darcy Buckley	MCDOT
Bob Joiner	The Agenda News
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village
Mayor Jeffrey Slavin	Town of Somerset
Stephanie Webber	Sharp & Company

Item 1 & 2 – Introductions/Minutes: Chair **Barbra Condos** called meeting to order, members and guests introduced themselves. July minutes were approved.

Item 3 – BRT Update: **Darcy Buckley**, MCDOT, briefed the Committee on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) / “Flash”. MCDOT is nearing completion of the second half of Phase One of the project. The purpose of the project is to identify a recommended alternative for BRT on Route 355, such as station placement and type of lanes – dedicated or mixed traffic – based on the master plans in the surrounding area. The objective is also to provide transit service with greater frequency between Clarksburg and Bethesda. Ms. Buckley explained that Faculty Planning is finished, and the project is now moving into the Preliminary Engineering phase, which is more comprehensive and will involve conducting surveys and providing a more detailed cost estimate. Also discussed:

- Outreach continues with community stakeholders, Corridor Advisory Committee meetings, briefing to various jurisdictions, open houses (some virtual) and community surveys

- The entire BRT Corridor project will be built in seven segments
- The team looked at a “no-build” alternative to assess probable results if nothing were done, and also evaluated a Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative, which is an expansion of existing Ride On service involving operational changes with no funds for capital construction

The recommended alternatives:

- Alternative A: BRT vehicles operate in mixed traffic aided by queue jumping technology
- Alternative B: Dedicated median lanes where feasible
- Alternative B (modified): Same as Alternative B, but with a reversible lane at northern point
- Alternative C: Vehicle operates in curb widening lanes, where feasible, with directional reversible lanes

An analysis of the above alternatives showed a projected increase in transit ridership over TSM (9000 new riders). Alternatives B & C provide better travel time over the no-build and Alternative A due to dedicated curb lanes. Also discussed:

- Reliability is an important need of transit users, as both Metro and Ride On bus reliability is around 75 percent – impacted by several factors such as crashes, work zones and weather
- Modeling only looks at normal operating conditions; however, non-traditional delays can account for extra 11-21 minutes of drive time
- Alternative B (dedicated median lanes) provides a more consistent travel time due to lane separation from traffic, thus not impacted by delaying events in regular lanes
- All alternatives improve access to transit over the no-build model and increase travel speed by optimizing intersection signalization
- Environmental impacts are minimal, with less than an acre of the project on wetlands, parks and woodlands
- Another objective of the project seeks to minimize impact to private and public property-right of way costs figure into project financing
- BRT costs are low compared to other transportation projects in investment per mile – infrastructure longevity is figured into costs
- Public input for the project included the preference of dedicated lanes, alignment of service and they generally feel the service will have a positive impact on the community
- Approved FY20 appropriation the CIP budget

Ms. Buckley discussed additional recommendations from the Planning board and other agencies some of their recommendations were:

- Advancing Alternative B – median transitway
- Have mixed traffic or reversible lanes in median during peak hours
- Convert existing lanes to BRT instead of widening them

Next steps:

- Move forward with Veirs Mill Road & MD 355 preliminary design
- Informal solicitation of ideas from the private sector

Also discussed:

- 3,000 new riders projected to use the BRT system

- Safety will be taken into consideration when designing road crossings for the BRT system and lowering speeds – State Highway Administration will conduct speed control with a near-zero fatalities goal

Item 4 – Marketing Outreach Update:

- Car Free Day- weekend of 9/20 – 9/23
- Walk & Ride Challenge – teams are forming

Item 5 – County / Police/ Other Updates:

- Park(ing) Day Friday, September 20
- The 84th new Capital Bikeshare station established at the new Wheaton Library opening
- New Wheaton relocation of the M-NCPPC headquarters – some County agencies will also be consolidating in new headquarters
- The Climate Planning Workgroups – part of an emergency planning process to reduce greenhouse gas by 2027. **Mr. Carlson** will send meeting schedule and info to Committee
- Dockless vehicle pilot is extending, Bethesda and Friendship Heights will not be included
- Sidewalk enforcement & information to the community regarding not blocking sidewalk right-of-way due to the cyclist fatality on Old Georgetown Road
- FareShare program has received funding due to efforts of **Councilmember Andrew Friedson**
- Drive 2050 – an update of the existing comprehensive plan which projects future changes. Last updated in 1964, the plan looks at space efficiency & housing opportunities. Part of the plans 3-year process is obtaining public feedback.
- Learn to Ride bicycle classes October 5

Item 6 – Around the Room:

- Committee members expressed appreciation for the sidewalk along the “Green Mile” between Bethesda and Friendship Heights
- Finding ANC Commissioners from DC to provide input from the District

Adjourn: Next meeting date: TBA