

Meeting Summary
US 29 South Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #1
February 28, 2015, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Montgomery County Executive Office Building, Auditorium
101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland

Attendees

CAC Members			
Louis Boezi	X	Karen Michels	X
Alan Bowser	X	Bernice Mireku-North	X
Marie-Michelle Bunch	X	Anita Morrison	X
Ilhan Cagri		Brian Morrissey	
Carmen Camacho	X	Michael Pfetsch	X
Barbara Ditzler	X	Shane Pollin	X
Sean Emerson	X	Mark Ranze	X
Karen Evans		Dan Reed	X
Roberta Faul-Zeitler	X	Michele Riley	X
Joseph Fox	X	Tina Slater	
Melissa Goemann	X	Herb Simmens	
Larry Goldberg	X	Julie Statland	X
Bradley Gude	X	Brad Stewart	
Kevin Harris	X	Eugene Stohlman	X
Linda Keenan		Chris Wilhelm	
Rebecca Lentz-Fernandez	X	Teddy Wu	X
Tracy Lewis	X	Lori Zeller	X
Harold McDougall	X	James Zepp	X
Jeffrey McNeil	X	Clifford Zinnes	X
Project Team			
Facilitator – Jennifer Kellar		Facilitator Assistant – Lauren Garrett	
Consultant Project Manager – Brian Lange		Consultant Project Engineer – Josh Crunkleton	
SHA Project Representative – Barry Kiedrowski		County RTS Project Manager – Joana Conklin	
County Staff			
County Park & Planning (MNCPPC) – Larry Cole		County Regional Service Center Director – Reemberto Rodriguez	
Public			
Harriett Quinn		Melvin Tull	
Paul Seder		Dan Wallace	

Handouts

Study binders were distributed to each member, which included the following:

- Plenary Session Agenda
- Plenary Session PowerPoint
- Breakout Session Agenda
- Breakout Session PowerPoint
- Homework (Feedback Form)

Meeting materials will be posted on the project website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rts

Introductions

The facilitator opened the meeting at 11:00 a.m. with introductions by the project team, Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) members, and the public. During introductions, participants were invited to share their takeaways from the earlier plenary session, expectations for their participation in the CAC, or questions they would like answered during this process.

CAC Member Session

Member comments and questions are captured below:

- Concerned about impact on community, particularly schools such as Blair High School
- Would like to know more about the politics involved in this project—is the CAC “political cover” for the county?
- The committee should take votes so that policy makers can know the real feeling of the group; summaries of the overall opinion of the group can be misleading
- New Hampshire Avenue should be a priority over US 29 given that the FDA feeds onto that directly; it has more median space and less traffic congestion; it feeds into the Fort Totten red line station; and the City of Takoma Park has requested that New Hampshire avenue be given priority Wondering how Montgomery County fits into the different levels/types of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system and what solution is right for the area
- Interested in the potential impact on Four Corners and if there will be benefits to the area
- US 29 South, especially the Four Corners area, has a very large minority and immigrant population
- Would like to know who will use BRT and how the single lane with alternating directions will work
- Wondering how many people will be moved by BRT; the actual number is very unclear, heard a variety very different numbers during the plenary session presentations
- Very interested in the implementation of the system and how people will be moved
- During the plenary session it was stated the BRT is not supposed to be used as a commuter service, but that seems to be exactly what is trying to be accomplished on US 29

- Interested in BRT's potential as more than a commuter system, for nighttime and weekend use
- We will need to move past prejudice associated with buses in branding BRT
- Branding of BRT will be important, especially in order to sell the concept to millennials
- Burtonsville is often over crowded with Howard County commuters; it's likely Howard County commuters will use this system without paying taxes for it—will Howard County be contributing funding to this project?
- Concerned about advisory status of this group as opposed to decision-making status
- How is this effort being coordinated with the Metrobus, Ride-On, and overlapping bus routes? Are agencies coordinating with each other?
- Kids, high schoolers in particular, are unlikely to use the BRT system; curious about how we can encourage them to use it
- How will we get people out of their cars and onto the BRT?
- Interested in the economic development of the project—how are we going to pay for this?
- Are there alternative routes for this? Is US 29 the best option in the area?
- We are going to be paying for a luxury service with transit funds instead of putting the money into other projects, such as repairing roads in the county--is this the best use of funds?
- How will ridership numbers for the BRT impact the new Metrobus Z-line?
- Students who do not have cars often use the Metrobus Z2 bus and complain about long wait times, slow service, waiting outside in bad weather; it seems Blair High School could benefit by this system and the opportunities it could provide
- Alternatives to rapid transit could include contra-lanes to effectively solve the problems of congestion
- What is the policy objective of this project; is it intensifying development or expanding the development?
- It is important that this project is driven by Montgomery County rather than the Maryland Department of Transportation
- There are many agencies doing multiple projects on US 29; there needs to be clear communication between agencies
- Is the mission of this group to gather data and make data-driven decisions?
- Is BRT on Route 29 a done deal and we are just here to say here is how to do it best, or are the planners going to gather data and bring the data back to the community groups?

To the extent possible, the project team members will try to address these and any additional questions and comments during future meetings.

It was suggested that a list of objectives or specific topics be set forth on which the group can focus their discussions. The facilitator explained that it is very early in the process; therefore, the members have the ability to shape the CAC's objectives and topics for discussion. That said, the project team will share a list of topics and milestones upon which agendas will be developed moving forward.

Project team members explained that BRT is not a "done deal" and this project is in the very early stages. The CAC process will be very similar to the process used for Maryland

Environmental Policy Act and National Environmental Policy Act, which do not call for a voting body, but rather the gathering of public input to shape potential projects.

Map Exercise

CAC Members were divided into three color-coded groups--orange, yellow, and green —where they reviewed maps of the entire US 29 BRT Study Corridor and placed numbered stickers on the transportation-related elements relevant to them. These included, but were not limited to: areas of congestion; transit stops they use or would use; locations of safety concerns; and mobility needs. Each group had a scribe who recorded a description of the comment(s) made for the corresponding location number. Maps with numbered locations that correspond to the comments recorded are included as attachments to this summary.

Mission Statement

The MD 355, MD 586, and US 29 Corridor Advisory Committees' Mission Statement was presented to the group. It was also distributed as part of the presentation.

Ground Rules

Likewise, CAC Ground Rules were presented, which summarize how we treat each other; how we provide feedback and how the feedback will be used; and how we communicate with those outside the CAC.

A question was asked about the ability of members to send an alternate if they are unable to attend a meeting. Alternates are allowed to attend. Some CAC members expressed concerns about this and the potential for substitutes to detract from the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the CAC.

Logistics

The next meeting will be held on March 24, 2015, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., at the Silver Spring Civic Center, Fenton Room, located at 1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910. This location is accessible via WMATA Route F4, and Ride-On Routes 16, 17, and 20, stop at corner of Fenton Street and Ellsworth Drive. Parking is available at Garage 61 located at 801 Ellsworth Drive across from the Civic Center. Parking is free after 6:00 p.m.

Note: Due to a scheduling conflict with another transportation-related workshop in the County, the CAC meeting has been rescheduled for Tuesday, March 31, 2015, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. The meeting location remains the same.

Members expressed concern that downtown Silver Spring is not an ideal location for evening meetings due to traffic and it is not convenient for members who live in more northern areas of corridor. Alternate locations were offered for consideration by various members:

- Blair High School
- United Methodist Church, former Marvin Memorial
- White Oak Library
- White Oak Community Recreation Center

The project team is open to suggestions regarding the meeting location and will explore these options for future meetings. The March 24 meeting will be held as planned.

Homework (Feedback Form)

As homework, a feedback form was provided where members have the opportunity to provide input on their desired outcomes for the CAC process, input about the corridor, and questions they would like answered. They have been asked to complete and turn the form in following the session or by one of the following methods:

- Scan and email the form to your facilitation team at *Lauren.Garrett@aecom.com*
- Mail the form to:
Lauren Garrett, AECOM
430 National Business Parkway, Suite 400
Annapolis Junction, MD 20701

Self-addressed stamped envelopes were offered for those who wish to mail the form.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m. and members were invited to enjoy a boxed lunch in the cafeteria where staff would be available to answer any additional questions.

Next Steps

The facilitator will communicate with the group via email with meeting logistics updates.

Based on a request from some team members to share email addresses amongst themselves for communication between meetings, the facilitator will ask members via email who wishes to share their email address and then will provide that list to interested members.

Following review by the internal project team, the meeting summary will be circulated to the members for feedback before being finalized.

Attachment: Map Exercise Notes

The following notes generated during the Map Exercise mentioned above correspond with numbers placed on locations and features on the attached maps:

Orange Group

- #1 & #7 There are homes in path of widened lane, minority owned, immigrants 10,000 block on both sides of US 29
- #2 – Lockwood Drive, Stewart Lane, 6 – access to transit; people shouldn't have to walk 20 minutes to get there, need circulator inside complex
- #3 – At Blair High School there are a large number of students crossing during rush hour
- #4 – At Lockwood it is more pedestrian friendly, safety is a big issue
- #5 – Narrow sidewalks
- #6 – FDA (no further explanation provided for this sticker site)
- #8 – At FDA there is a circulator to get 9,000 employees to US 29. Why not have BRT on New Hampshire (MD 650)?
- #9 – Why not have a BRT stop on the ICC to connect with Gaithersburg/BWI MTA bus?
- #10 – This area there is a bike hazard
- #11 – This area needs a safe bike crossing
- #12 – The west side area near Oak Leaf, pedestrian and bike is a concern
- #14 – How do we deal with Howard County commuter traffic?
- #31 – Indian Springs dangerous for pedestrians crossing from YMCA; rapid traffic off beltway exit
- #32 – Frequent location for pedestrian and vehicle accidents, signage not visible
- #34 – Bus stop location but no shelter, why take bus?
- #36 – Four Corners pedestrian safety, this could be a dangerous zone
- #38 – Blair High School students trying to get around Four Corners very dangerous coming out for lunch

Yellow Group

Overall, this group felt all areas present a congestion and pedestrian safety issue. Hours of operation is also controlling factor.

- #1 – Congestion at the beltway
- #2 – Congestion at Four Corners, Woodmoor/Blair High School and safety
- #3 – Congestion at Spring Street up to Dale Drive
- #4 – Dale Drive
- #5 – Colesville at Georgia (MD 97), congestion issue and safety issue
- #6 – Burnt Mills congestion and pedestrian safety

- #7 – Lockwood/Trader Joes, congestion and Pedestrian Drive
- #8 – Lockwood at Oak Leaf Drive high pedestrian because of demographics as well as a neighborhood pass through from MD 650
- #9 – South Noyes and Colesville, there’s an un-signalized area where pedestrians cross in high volume
- #10 – How do we get from the neighborhoods to the stations to the BRT? Aging in place, young families etc... Every neighbor has the same access issue. What is the feeder system solution to the BRT?
- #11 – Establish a partnership with Howard County for funding mechanism funding so Montgomery County is not paying the whole bill

Green Group

- #1 – US 29 is not pedestrian friendly between Sligo Creek and downtown Silver Spring
- #2 – Blair High School, lots of pedestrians and students taking bus
- #3 – Beltway ramp backup on US 29
- #4 – Location of the Franklin stop vs where people currently get on buses
- #5 – Lots of ridership demand at this location
- #6 –Trader Joe’s parking is awful, bus option would help
- #7 – Woodmoor parking is awful, bus option would help
- #8 – Heading US 29-S from I-495 people speed and accidents occur
- #9 – Lots of auto-dependent resident, how do they connect to transit?
- #10 – White Oak – poor pedestrian connection
- #11 – Congestion – Lockwood Drive only 2 lanes
- #12 – Bus stations at University Blvd. (MD 193) and 20 transferring, busy bus lines on University from Langley Park
- #13 – Crestmoore – cannot cross US 29 on foot because no light
- #14 – Local vs express lanes – how do people get between BRT and “last-mile” service
- #15 – Church – big pre-school
- #16 – Crosswalk where daycare is – cars don’t stop
- #17 – Inadequate pedestrian crossing
- #18 – Land impact, wider road
- #19 – Rush hour congestion
- #20 – Impact on adjoining land use
- #21 – Congestion in and out of Silver Spring Transit Center, little turning room in one light cycle
- #22 – Sharrow safety
- #23 – Reversible lane safety on US 29 near Dale Drive
- #24 – On-street parking necessary toward downtown

- #25 – Left turns, limits
- #26 – Heading South on US 29, one lane becomes right turn only – then after New Hampshire Ave, lane returns for traffic coming onto US 29 from New Hampshire
- #27 – No explanation was provided for this sticker site