

**MD 355 North Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #2 Summary**  
**April 14, 2015 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM**  
**Montgomery County Executive Office Building**  
**101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland**

**Attendees:**

<b>Members</b>	
Jerry Callistein	Tom Savoie
Robert F. Cowdrey	Margaret Schoap
Nallathamby Devasahayam	Peter L. Shaw
Stephen Hendrickson	Gail H. Sherman
Kathie Hulley	Goke Taiwo
Richard Lindstrom	Paul Yanoshik
Mark Pace	Joel Yesley
David A. Rosenbaum	
<b>Apologies</b>	
Paula Bienenfeld	Era Pandya
Dennis Cain	John Francis Torti
Cherian Eapen	Helen Triolo
Peter Henry	Ronald C. Welke
James Martin	Andrew Williamson
Dayssi Morera	Kam F. Yee
<b>Staff</b>	
Montgomery County – Joana Conklin	Montgomery County – Rafael Olarte
Montgomery County – Tom Pogue	SHA – Kenya Lucas
SHA – Joe Harrison	MTA – Kyle Nembhard
Lead Facilitator – Andrew Bing	Facilitator – Mary Raulerson
Facilitation Staff – Liz Gordon	SHA Consultant PM– Alvaro Sifuentes
<b>Public</b>	
Rich Adams	Bob Justis – Palladian Condominiums
Cathy Drzyzgula – City of Gaithersburg	Pamela Lindstrom
Barry Gore – City of Rockville	Martin Matsen – City of Gaithersburg
Greg Hwang – Montgomery County	Aaron Zimmerman – Montgomery County

**Handouts:**

Handouts provided to CAC Members included:

- Summary from CAC Meeting #1/Kick-off Meeting

- Summary of the Homework responses from CAC members (in map form)
- Agenda for CAC Meeting # 2
- Presentation for CAC Meeting #2 and larger versions of the keys maps from this presentation
- Starter Matrix of Needs, Values and Concerns that was used in the interactive exercise

Meeting materials will be posted on the project website: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rts](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rts)

### **Introductions**

Each CAC member and attendees provided a brief introduction and shared which mode of transportation they used to travel to tonight's meeting. Mary Raulerson reminded the group of the CAC ground rules and Alvaro Sifuentes began with the presentation.

### **Project Development**

Maryland State law requires Maryland's 23 counties and the City of Baltimore to develop their own planning documents. These documents set the vision that the local authorities and residents have on a specific area. Within these planning documents a transportation component is identified within the plan that explains the existing roadway network, improvements to the existing roadway network, the utilization of the road to provide transit, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The project team noted that within Montgomery County both the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg are responsible for developing their own planning documents that set the vision within these municipalities. As part of this local planning process, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (CTCFMP) in 2013.

The project team described what the CTCFMP does and what it doesn't do. The CTCFMP recommends implementing a 102 mile bus rapid transit (BRT) network comprised of 10 corridors. The MD 355 corridor was divided into two separate corridors, the MD 355 South Corridor from Bethesda to Rockville and the MD 355 North Corridor from Rockville to Clarksburg. The plan also recommends the creation of dedicated lanes along certain segments of the corridors, the location of stations and the public right-of-way necessary to implement the system. The locations of the stations in the CTCFMP were based on the presence of an existing Red Line station, the presence of a planned Purple Line or CCT station, the presence of an existing intersecting transit route, the concentration of existing or planned land use and on a reasonable distance between stations. The plan however does not endorse specific treatments to determine where the dedicated lane should be, what the operational characteristic of the dedicated lane should be and whether dedicated lanes achieved by lane repurposing are warranted and achievable given detailed traffic analysis. In addition the plan does not define the staging or phasing to implement the service on each corridor and does not make recommendations within the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg.

Alvaro added that as part of the current study, the team will build upon the work done for the CTCFMP. However, this phase of the study will investigate alternatives to a greater level of detail by developing horizontal and vertical alignments, typical sections, proposed station locations and by investigating drainage and utilities at a conceptual level. This higher level of detail will enable the team to assess potential impacts and develop cost estimates for the design, right-of-way and construction of the corridor. In addition, the team will develop forecasted ridership for the BRT and future traffic along the corridor with and without the BRT.

The CAC members have been involved at the very early stages of planning and this provides the members with the opportunity to shape the project from the very beginning. In addition to the CAC, the project will have two public workshops that will be open to the general public for comment. At the end of this stage of planning, a final report and recommendation on proposed BRT conceptual alternatives will be developed.

A member from the CAC inquired at what point is right-of-way acquired. Alvaro responded that there are four steps in the project development process; planning, engineering, right-of-way and construction. We are currently at the beginning of the planning phase. During this phase, we will develop the project scope, purpose and need, alternatives, cost estimates and perform an environmental inventory. For a transit project, the environmental documentation begins in planning and continues into the design phase. If funding is available, right-of-way acquisition can be done consecutively with engineering. After all the first three phases are complete, construction can begin.

Alvaro presented an overview of the MD 355 BRT Corridor schedule and milestones through Summer 2016. There are four major aspects of work being performed; engineering, environmental inventory, traffic and ridership analysis, and public involvement. The public involvement aspect includes meeting with the CACs at least quarterly and holding two meetings with the general public. Although the corridor planning study is scheduled to end Summer 2016, subsequent phases of engineering, environmental, traffic and ridership analysis and public involvement will be necessary to further refine the recommended alternative and to obtain approvals and permits before construction can begin.

Within the current corridor planning study there will be some topics that will be discussed with the current CAC members. There are other topics however that will be covered during later stages of planning.

### **Existing Conditions**

Alvaro described the existing conditions for the MD 355 corridor from the Bethesda Metro Station to Redgrave Place in Clarksburg. The existing condition assessment provides planners and engineers with an understanding of the corridor and the opportunities, issues and constraints along the corridor. However even though we are focusing on existing conditions, he stated one thing that we need to keep in mind for any transportation study is not only what the corridor looks like now but what it will look like in the future. Everyone is familiar with what the existing land use is around where they live, however as part of the local planning process future land use and future zoning changes are made that could change the character or the corridor.

Mary Raulerson then provided an overview of the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Data (LEHD) provided by the census bureau. The data enables you to determine where people who live in a specific area work and where people who work in a specific area live. Several examples were shown that demonstrated how there was a very high correlation between commuter trips and the I-270 and MD 355 corridors for many areas in the MD 355 North CAC. One particularly interesting analysis showed that King Farm Residents' work locations are highly concentrated along the I-270 corridor into Germantown, Clarksburg and North Bethesda area and not much density into Washington D.C.

There are four major existing transit components along the MD 355 corridor. These include WMATA Metrobus, MTA Commuter Bus, Ride-On and several rail alternatives. The WMATA Metrobus has many bus

routes that serve MD 355 intermittently. Most of these routes provide east-west connectivity along the different branches of the Metro system. The Q line is WMATA's highest ridership bus in Maryland and serves along MD 355 from the Shady Grove Metro Station to the Rockville Metro Station heading to the Wheaton Metro Station. The MTA Commuter Bus service provides the 201 and 202 lines from Gaithersburg to major destinations in Anne Arundel County; Fort Meade and BWI. The 505 and 515 lines serve as feeder routes into the Shady Grove Metro Station from Frederick and Hagerstown. Ride-on has 39 routes that serve intermittently along MD 355. Two of these routes remain on MD 355 for longer segments. Route 46 serves from the Medical Center Station to Shady Grove Metro station. This route has an average of 3,700 daily riders and it takes about an hour to travel from Medical Center to Shady Grove Metro in rush hour. It has 15 minute headways. Route 55 serves from the Rockville Metro Station to the Germantown Transit Center. This route has an average of 8,100 daily riders and it takes about one hour and twenty minutes to travel from the Rockville Metro Station to the Germantown Transit Center. It has 12 minute headways.

Alvaro then presented an overview on the existing roadway features and typical sections. The corridor from the Bethesda Metro Station to Redgrave Place in Clarksburg is approximately 22 miles long. Within these 22 miles the corridor has six lanes typically from Bethesda Metro to Middlebrook Road in Germantown. North of that the typical section narrows down to four lanes and north of Milestone Manor in Germantown the typical section narrows down to two lanes. There are 78 signalized intersections, 80 unsignalized intersections and hundreds of driveways and entrances. There are four separated grade interchanges; these include the Capital Beltway, the new Montrose Parkway interchange, the I-370 bridge over MD 355 and the MD 355 bridge over the rail track in Gaithersburg. Both residential and commercial service roads exist throughout the corridor. MD 355 south of MD 27 (Ridge Road) is an urban principal arterial with posted speeds of 25 to 45 mph. MD 355 north of MD 27 (Ridge Road) is an urban minor arterial with posted speeds of 30 to 50 mph. A presentation of several existing typical sections occurred next which described the varying conditions from Rockville up to Clarksburg.

A handout showing existing sidewalk and bicycle paths was provided to the CAC members. Sidewalks are mostly present from Bethesda to MD 27 (Ridge Road), there is however a gap in the existing sidewalks in the vicinity of the Capital Beltway. Bicycle paths are intermittent throughout the study area; however there is a long bicycle path adjacent to MD 355 north of MD 124 up to Middlebrook Road.

An environmental inventory is being conducted as part of the study to identify specific areas that should be avoided if possible, minimized or mitigated. As part of this environmental inventory, several streams, wetlands and 100-year floodplains have been identified. The forested areas in the northern part of the county have the habitat for Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS). Coordination with Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is ongoing to determine if there are any rare, threatened or endangered species within the study area. 33 public parks owned by M-NCPPC, City of Rockville and City of Gaithersburg and the State of Maryland have been identified within the study area. There are three National Register Listed Historic Resource within the study area; these include the Bethesda Meeting House, the Bethesda Naval Hospital Tower and the Bethesda Theatre. In addition, there are 19 resources eligible for listing within the study area.

## **Corridor Planning Study**

Alvaro Sifuentes discussed the process being followed as part of this study. This process includes public outreach throughout the duration of the study. As part of the Corridor Planning Study we are currently collecting data and beginning the development of the Purpose and Need. We will then move into the alternatives development, evaluation and end this phase of the study with a final report.

One of the goals of the exercise that the CAC members will conduct is to help in establishing the Purpose and Need of the project. The Purpose and Need contains a statement of what the project intends to address based on the needs. The Purpose and Need document is used throughout the planning phase to drive the conceptual alternatives discussion, to compare alternatives and to support recommendation of an alternative. The second goal of the exercise will be to assist Montgomery County in a separate effort which is developing the Goals, Objectives and Measures of Effectiveness (GOME) which will be utilized to prioritize corridors and sections within the corridors.

Mary Raulerson informed the members that based on the comments received at the kick-off meeting and from the homework; a map was developed documenting the locations associated with the specific comments. Some of the key items focused on the need for better pedestrian facilities along and across MD 355 and ways to improve the station locations along the corridor. These comments fit into four needs categories: connectivity, mobility, transit appeal and livability.

A general description of each need category was described. A Needs, Values and Concerns matrix was handed out which grouped the values and concerns received thus far into the four need items identified.

## **Values and Concerns Exercise**

CAC members divided into two groups of approximately eight, and used larger versions of the Needs, Values and Concerns matrices to conduct a discussion of the draft needs, values and concerns, with the direction to add, delete, or modify values and concerns until they represented the opinions of their group. Each group designated a spokesperson who shared their final items with the room. After the groups presented, the groups' posters were placed on the wall, and each CAC member used the three round stickers they were given to indicate which of the values/concerns are most important to them. They were able to place their dots/stickers any way they wished – they could place all three on their most important value/concern, or spread them out across three different ones.

The following matrix shows the compiled values/concerns that the groups developed, as well as the number of times a CAC Member identified it as an important value/concern. Photographs of the posters are attached as an appendix to this summary.

Needs	Values and Concerns	Number of Times a CAC Member Identified this as One of Three Most Important	
<p><b>TRANSIT APPEAL AND MOBILITY:</b> Create reasonable, appealing and reliable transportation choices besides a private automobile, to reach employment, education, commercial, and social/recreational destinations near the corridor while maintaining reasonable automobile travel</p>	Serve commute/regional travel from the MD 355 Corridor into downtown DC		
	Serve commute/regional travel from I-270 north of the MD 355 Corridor into downtown DC		
	Serve local/shorter distance trips in and along the MD 355 corridor		
	Serve existing and future activity centers	1	
	Maintain or improve travel times for residents near the corridor		
	Provide transit service that is competitive with the automobile (travel times, frequency and convenience)	2	
	Provide a transportation system that is optimal for different trip types		
	Provide a transit system that is more predictable, faster, more convenient and comfortable than existing transit such as Ride On and Metro	4	
	Provide a transit system that is better than auto travel		
	Maximize direct access to BRT	1	
	Create a system that is expandable	3	
	Create a system that is well connected with other modes	2	
	Create a system that is flexible as technology improves		
	Explore alternatives that generates revenues that can be used for maintenance/amenities		
	Provide 24 hour service		
	Ensure network and power availability (focus on people within 1 mile of the station)		
	Create a system that "beats sitting in traffic" – provide fewer stops and faster service	1	
	Provide climate protected and controlled stations		
	<p><b>MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY:</b> Create efficient and safe access to transit stops from existing neighborhoods and between major transit nodes, including safe and comfortable pedestrian access along the corridor, and across the corridor.</p>	Create a predictable system that arrives on time (dots merged with "Provide a transit system that is more predictable...")	
	Cost-appealing for riders including middle income riders, families, the disabled.	1	
Understand and appeal to changing transportation "cultures."			
Use advanced technologies that are environmentally friendly, such as hydrogen fuel.	2		
Provide safe pedestrian access to transit stations and activity centers along and across MD 355			
Provide local transit service between neighborhoods to MD 355 transit stations	2		
Provide safe, well-lit access to transit stations and at the stations			
Provide a complete and safe sidewalk network	1		
Provide multi-use paths to access BRT	2		
Provide a net increase in safe pedestrian access	1		
Provide safe, well-lit pedestrian access along MD 355			
Provide covered walkways and waiting/boarding areas	1		
Simplify connections between transit modes (CCT, Metro, BRT) and consolidate fare collection systems.	8		

	Northern end of the transit line should become a new transit/urban node to serve commuters coming in from other counties.	1
	Locate transit stations to maximize service to existing and planned developments	
LIVABILITY: Develop MD 355 Corridor land uses that support premium transit investments	Locate transit stations in mixed-use, higher density areas	
	Explore how to absorb growth/demand that will come as a result of the implementation of the system.	
	Provide interim parking facilities that can be transitioned over time as urbanization and mass transit use expands.	3
	Implement transit service that is consistent with the context of the neighborhoods	
LIVABILITY: Preserve the character of existing	Provide a service that is quiet and clean (both inside and outside)	4
	Provide safe stations	

**Questions/Comments from CAC Members**

- Who is the intended audience for the traffic data? Will traffic analysis and ridership analysis be presented as part of the public/CAC process?
  - Yes. Existing and No-Build traffic analysis and potential ridership will be presented at the next CAC meeting. –Crash data will also be shared at that meeting.
  - Additionally, the next meeting will include typical sections for the various alternatives being analyzed.
- How many people ride MARC?
  - The answer was not readily available during the meeting, but research shows that average daily ridership on MARC’s Brunswick line was 6,527 in the month of December 2014.
- Comment: The posted speed limit has been reduced to 45 mph in portions of Clarksburg.
- How far does the public right of way extend into properties in Clarksburg?
  - Specific parcel boundary data was not readily available at the meeting, but the public right of way typically extends a few feet past the back of the sidewalk.
- Is the land use information available for the County’s independent cities (Rockville and Gaithersburg) within the MC Atlas online resource?
  - Yes, and this link was provided in the presentation.
- What is the source of the commute data? Why was the employment/commute data presented as old as 2011, when there have been significant changes, especially in the Clarksburg area, since then?
  - This was the most recent data available from the Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) system. These maps were presented as planning-level examples of some of the commute patterns along the corridor. Later in the study, as detailed ridership forecasting is completed, the future housing and employment data included in the regional transportation model will be used. This is the data that all transportation projects use to evaluate and plan projects.
- Is it an error that employment/commute data was presented for Montgomery Village as an employment location, since Montgomery Village is mostly residential?
  - That analysis area was a large area east of MD 355 that included parts of Washington Grove and Montgomery Village, as well as nearby employment centers. We labeled this map as

“Montgomery Village”, but the analysis was correct for the highlighted area on the map that extends beyond the residential areas of Montgomery Village.

- Why haven't we looked at necessary tradeoffs between amenities and prices, as well as the subsidies that will be used to pay for the system? Who is the planned “audience” that is intended to be served by this system?
  - These discussions are more appropriate for later portions of the study process.
- Comment: One of the locations shown in the presentation near Clarksburg is the site of a proposed bypass connecting nearby highways.

### **Questions/Comments from Members of Public during Question and Answer Session**

- How do you plan to address concerns, such as from Gaithersburg residents, about how this system will pass through historic neighborhoods without disrupting their character or contradicting the community's stated desire for wider setbacks and other neighborhood design elements?
  - These issues are important and were raised by several of the CAC members also. These issues will be included in the values and concerns for the project which will be used to measure the performance of the different alternatives.

### **Next Steps**

The next MD 355 North CAC meeting has been scheduled for June 3 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. It will be held at the Upcounty Regional Services Center at 12900 Middlebrook Road, Suite 1000, Germantown MD 20874.



Appendix: Needs, Values and Concerns Posters

Montgomery County <b>RAPID TRANSIT</b> MD 355 North	
MD 355 Initial Goals and Objectives - DISCUSSION DRAFT 04.07.15	
Needs	Values and Concerns
<p><b>TRANSIT APPEAL AND MOBILITY:</b> Create reasonable, appealing and reliable transportation choices besides a private automobile, to reach employment, education, commercial, and social/recreational destinations near the corridor while maintaining reasonable automobile travel</p>	Serve commute/regional travel from the MD 355 Corridor into downtown DC
	Serve commute/regional travel from I-270 north of the MD 355 Corridor into downtown DC
	Serve local/shorter distance trips in and along the MD 355 corridor
	Serve existing and future activity centers
	Maintain or improve travel times for residents near the corridor
<p><b>MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY:</b> Create efficient and safe access to transit stops from existing neighborhoods and between major transit nodes, including safe and comfortable pedestrian access along the corridor, and across the corridor.</p>	Provide transit service that is competitive with the automobile (travel times)
	Provide safe pedestrian access to transit stations and activity centers along and across MD 355
	Provide local transit service between neighborhoods to MD 355 transit stations
	Provide safe, well-lit access to transit stations and at the stations
	Provide safe, well-lit ped access along MD355 covered walkway + waiting/banking area
<p><b>LIVABILITY:</b> Develop MD 355 Corridor land uses that support premium transit investments</p>	Locate transit stations to maximize service to existing and planned developments
	Locate transit stations in mixed-use, higher density areas
<p><b>LIVABILITY:</b> Preserve the character of existing neighborhoods</p>	Implement transit service that is consistent with the context of the neighborhoods

Parking for

provide a transportation system that is optimal for different trip types  
 provide a transit system that is more predictable, faster, more convenient, comfortable than Ride On or Metro  
 that is better for auto travel  
 maximize direct access to BRT  
 System that is dependable - well connected - w/ other modes  
 flexible - low technology design if can evolve  
 explore a alternative S track type <sup>concept</sup> to be used for maintenance/amenities

for maintenance/amenities

provide a complete & safe sidewalk  
 provide multi-use paths to access BRT  
 provide a net increase in ped safety access

plan a system how to absorb future growth/demand that will come as the result of rail system



MD 355 Initial Goals and Objectives - DISCUSSION DRAFT 04.07.15

Needs	Values and Concerns
<p><b>TRANSIT APPEAL AND MOBILITY:</b> Create reasonable, appealing and reliable transportation choices besides a private automobile, to reach employment, education, commercial, and social/recreational destinations near the corridor while maintaining reasonable automobile travel</p>	Serve commute/regional travel from the MD 355 Corridor into downtown DC
	Serve commute/regional travel from I-270 north of the MD 355 Corridor into downtown DC
	Serve local/shorter distance trips in and along the MD 355 corridor
	Serve existing and future activity centers
	Maintain or improve travel times for residents near the corridor
	Provide transit service that is competitive with the automobile (travel times)
	24-hour service
	Network and power-availability
	Climate protected & controlled stations
	seats sitting in traffic - fewer stops / express buses
<p><b>MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY:</b> Create efficient and safe access to transit stops from existing neighborhoods and between major transit nodes, including safe and comfortable pedestrian access along the corridor, and across the corridor.</p>	Productivity - "it's now or time!"
	understand difference to transit
	Location for Maryland Transit
	Cost Appealing for users - seniors, disabled
	Provide safe pedestrian access to transit stations and activity centers along and across MD 355 - Teeny
	Provide local transit service between neighborhoods to MD 355 transit stations
	Provide safe, well-lit access to transit stations and at the stations
	Simplify connections between modes of transit (CCT, Metro, BRT)
	consolidate fare collection across transit systems
	Northwest tip of line becomes a big transit node
- to connect transit from other counties	
- becomes a new urban node	
<p><b>LIVABILITY:</b> Develop MD 355 Corridor land uses that support premium transit investments</p>	Locate transit stations to maximize service to existing and planned developments
	Locate transit stations in mixed-use, higher density areas
	Interim parking areas during development that can be converted as urbanization & mass transit use increases
<p><b>LIVABILITY:</b> Preserve the character of existing neighborhoods</p>	Implement transit service that is consistent with the context of the neighborhoods
	Quiet & clean inside & outside
	Safe Stations

Focus on people w/in 1/2 mile of station

Appealing to middle income riders

is further along