

# MD 355 Flash Project Update

MD 355 North Corridor Advisory Committee

April 20, 2021

# Welcome!

## Welcome to this virtual Corridor Advisory Committee meeting

- We will be going to go over some basic controls to help you use the Zoom meeting format before we start the presentation.
- **Please note this meeting is being recorded.**
  - It is being recorded on video and audio and will be posted on our website.
  - If you do not wish to have your voice or likeness recorded, please turn your video camera off, and refrain from asking questions using the audio option. Instead, you can send your questions via the chat.

# Using Zoom

## Muting

- Everyone is on mute. You can unmute yourself, but we ask that everyone stay on mute to cut down on background noise.
- To request to speak, we ask that you use the **raise hand** feature (instructions in just a minute). Once you have been recognized, you can unmute and ask your question or share your comment.
- If you have called in by telephone, you can unmute yourself by dialing **\*6** once you have been recognized.

# Using Zoom

## Video

- Your video camera is enabled if you choose to turn it on.
- If your internet bandwidth is limited and affects audio, you may have better performance by turning off your camera.

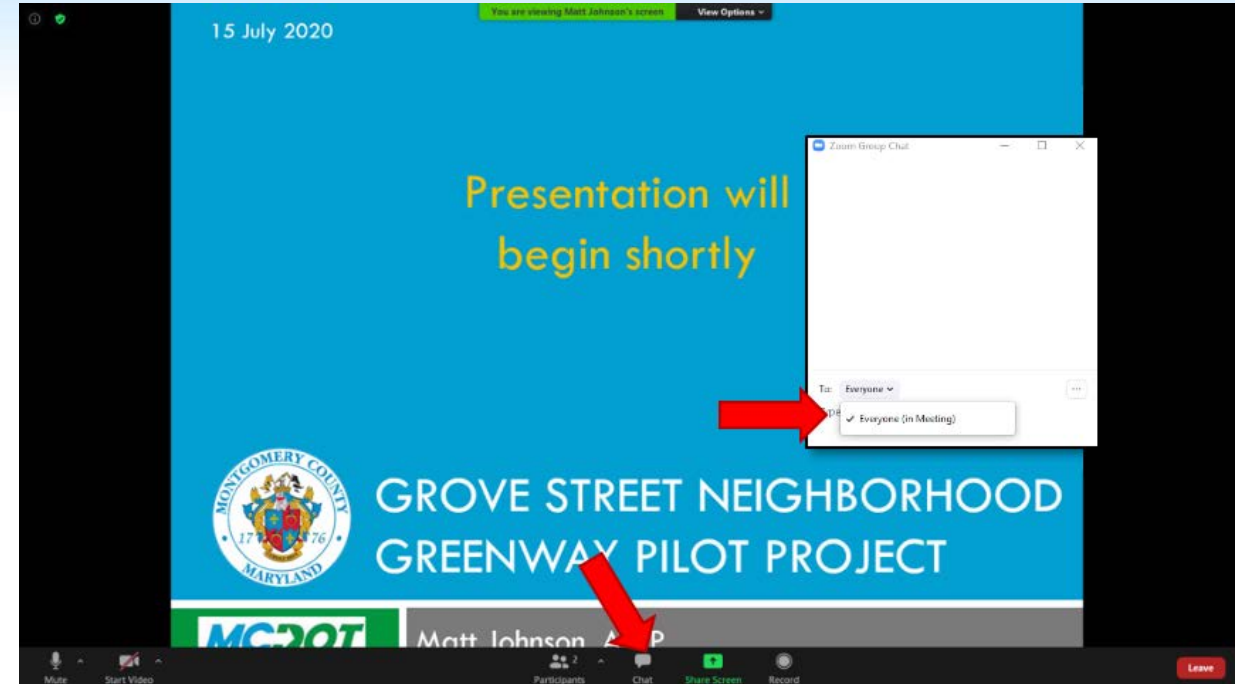
# Using Zoom

## Asking Questions (Chat)

- If you have a question during the presentation, send it via **chat**.

To send a chat:

- Click “chat” in the bottom menu
- A new window will appear. In the “to” field, change the drop down to “Corey Pitts”
- Type your question and send it.





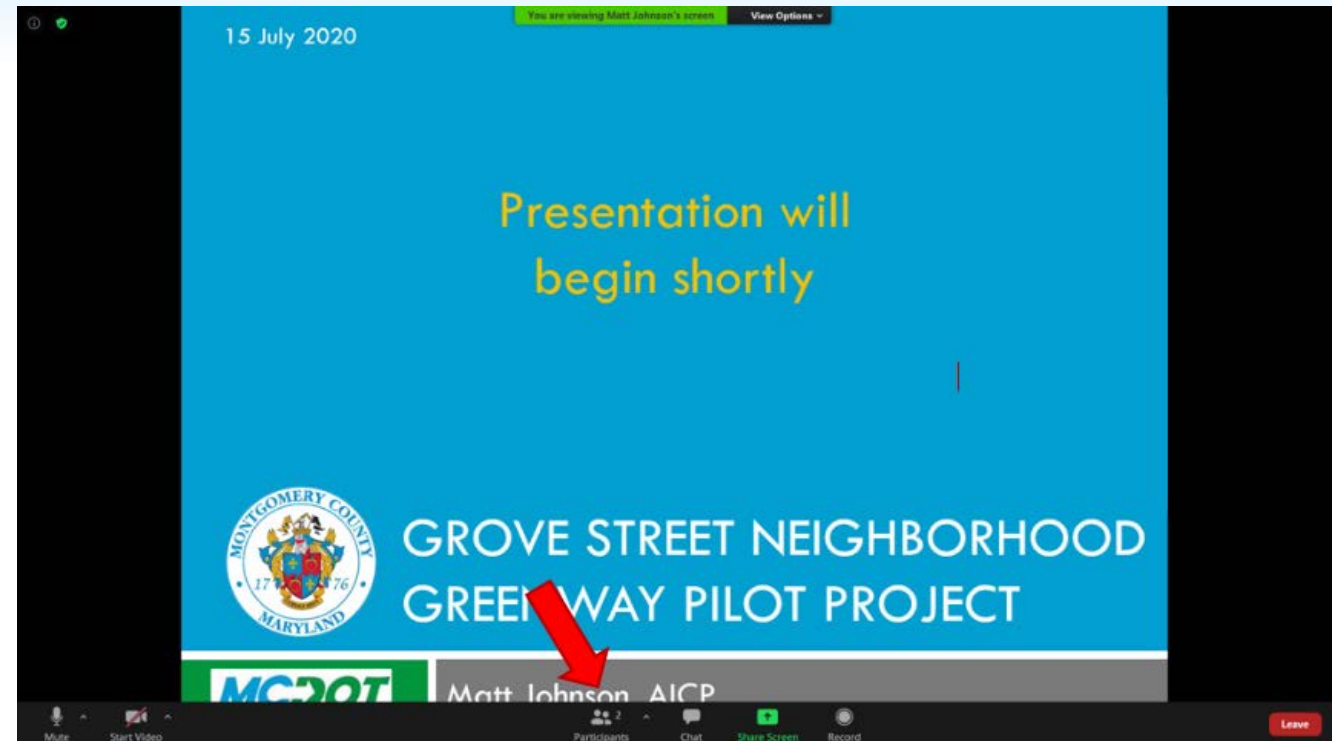
# Using Zoom

## Raise Your Hand

- If you'd like to speak to ask a question or make a comment, please **raise your hand**

To raise your hand

- Click "participants" in the bottom menu
- A new window will appear. Click the blue "raise hand button".
- If you've dialed in by phone, dial \*9.

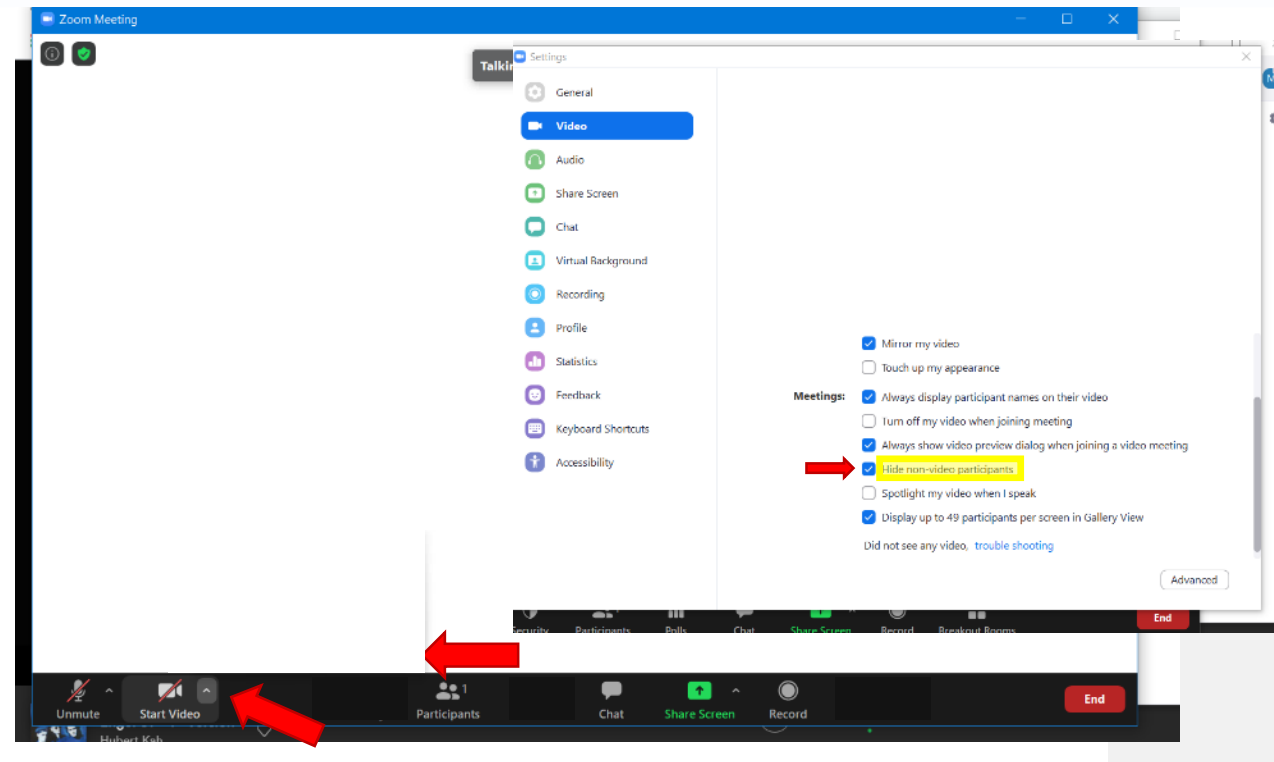


# Using Zoom

## View

To change your view so that you only see people with cameras on:

- Click the up arrow next to “start video”.
- Select “Video settings”.
- Make sure “Hide non-video participants” is checked.



# Introductions



# Project Team Participants

## Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

- Corey Pitts
- Darcy Buckley
- Joana Conklin
- Denny Finnerin

## Preliminary Engineering Consultant Design Team

- Mike Chamberland, Stantec
- Lori Adgate, Stantec
- Randy Knapick, IBI Group
- Andrew Pease, IBI Group

# Meeting Objectives and Agenda Review

# Agenda

- Meeting Objectives & Agenda
- MD 355 Project Refresher
- Project Update & Schedule
- Presentation & Focused Discussion
- Next Steps



# Meeting Objectives

- Update CAC members on the status of the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, as it moves forward into Preliminary Engineering
- Introduce design refinements being considered as part of Preliminary Engineering
- Provide CAC members with an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback

# MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit Project Refresher

# MD 355 BRT Project Purpose

**The purpose of the project is to provide a new transit service with greater travel speed and frequency along MD 355 between Bethesda and Clarksburg that will help accomplish the following:**

- Enhance transit **connectivity** and multimodal **integration**
- Improve bus **mobility**
- Address current and future bus **ridership** demands
- Attract **new** riders and provide improved service for **existing** riders
- Support approved Master Planned **growth**
- Improve transit **access** to major employment and activity centers
- Achieve Master Planned non-auto driver **modal share**
- Provide a **sustainable** and **cost-effective** transit service
- Improve **safety** for all



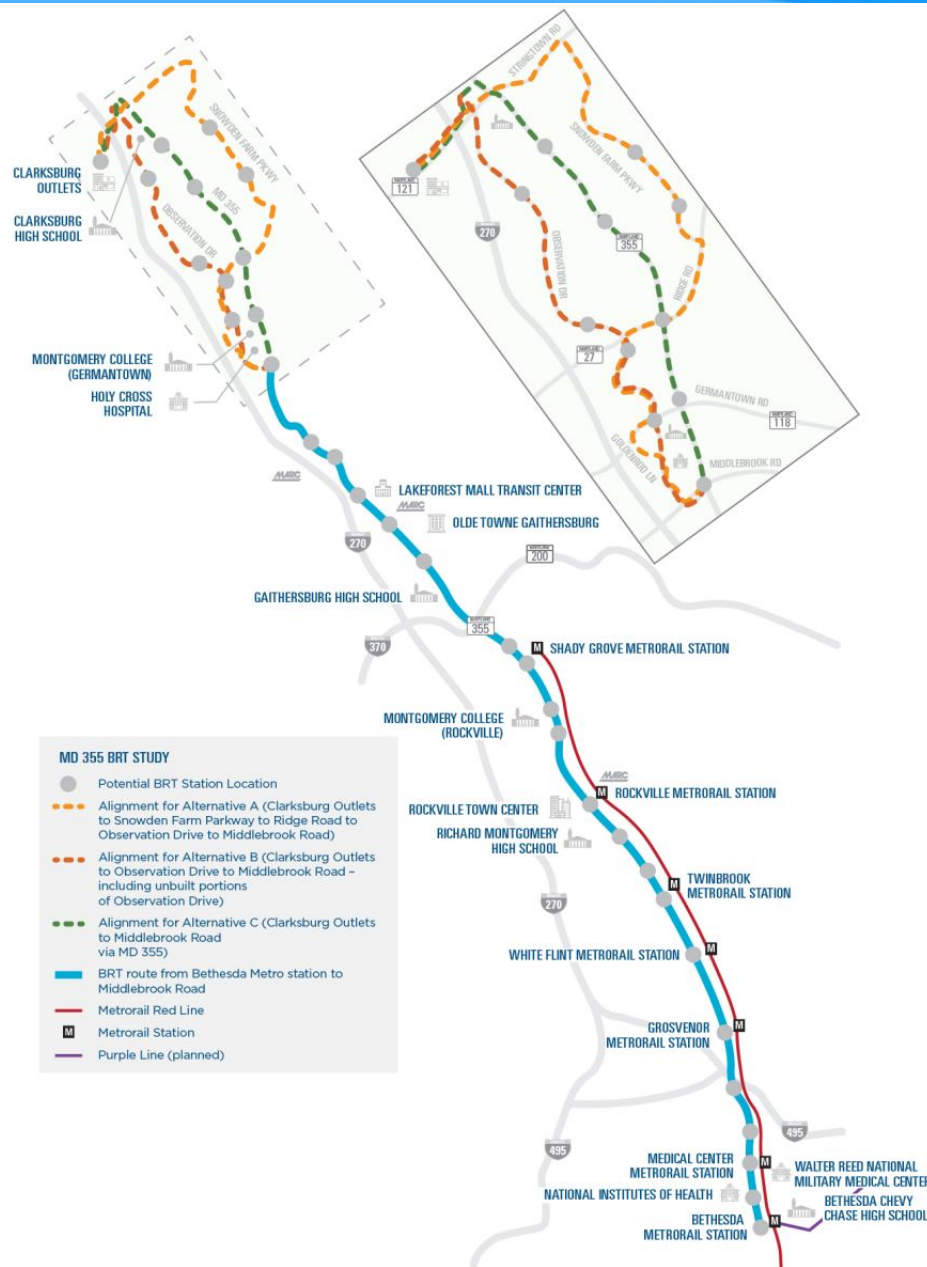
# MCDOT's Flash BRT Program

- The MD 355 BRT is part of Montgomery County's vision for over 100 miles of Flash Bus Rapid Transit in 11 Corridors County-wide
- The US 29 Flash BRT began operations on October 14, 2020



# MD355 BRT Corridor

- Extends for approximately **22 miles**, from Bethesda to Clarksburg
- Corridor contains a diversity of travel needs, trip purposes, and land use

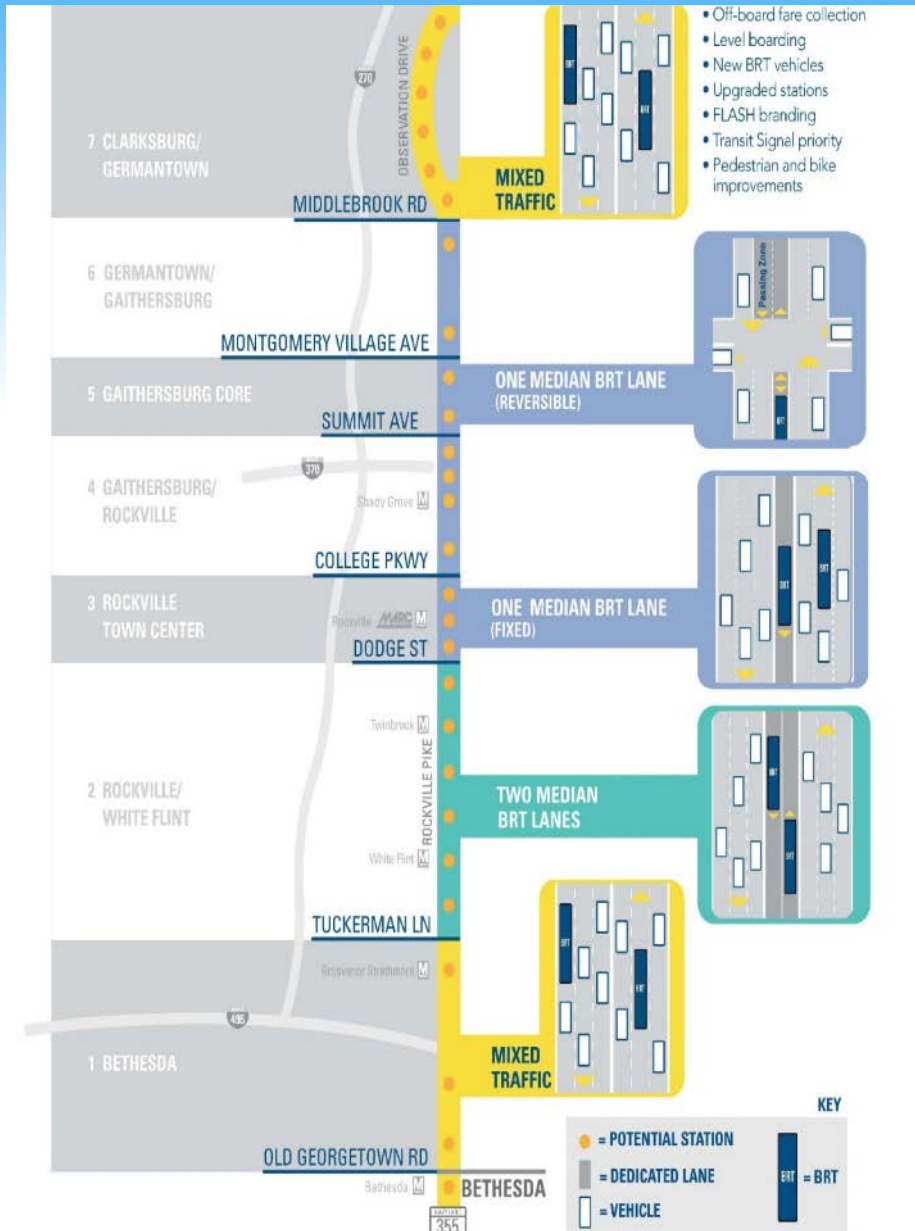


# Project Design Segments

| Segment | Geographic Description                      |
|---------|---------------------------------------------|
| 7       | Clarksburg to Middlebrook Road              |
| 6       | Middlebrook Road to MD 124/Mont. Vill. Pkwy |
| 5       | MD 124/Mont. Vill. Pkwy to Summit Avenue    |
| 4       | Summit Avenue to College Parkway            |
| 3       | College Parkway to Dodge Street             |
| 2       | Dodge Street to Grosvenor Metrorail         |
| 1       | Grosvenor Metrorail to Bethesda Metrorail   |







## Phase 2 Planning Outcome: Alternative B Modified

- BRT in dedicated median lanes *where feasible*
- Single, reversible, peak direction dedicated lane north of Rockville (Segments 4 through 6)
- Single, fixed (southbound) dedicated lane through Rockville (Segment 3)
- Mixed traffic in the far north (Clarksburg) and south (Bethesda) segments

# Project Update & Schedule

# MD 355 BRT – Current Status

- The MD 355 BRT is entering the Preliminary Engineering stage
  - Completion of 35% Design Plans, Schedule, Cost Estimate
- Alternative B Modified is the basis of design, with refinements being explored to enhance performance and reduce costs/impacts
- Federal/state environmental process will occur in parallel with the design process

# MD 355 BRT Project Process

**We are here**



## Planning & Conceptual Engineering

- Existing Conditions
- Modeling
- Purpose & Need
- Conceptual Alternatives
- Preliminary Impacts
- Identify Recommended Alternative



## Preliminary Engineering

- BRT Performance and Design Refinements
- Surveys
- Right-of-way
- Traffic studies
- Environmental assessments
- Detailed Scope, Schedule, and Cost Estimate



Final Design  
(Not Funded)



Construction  
(Not Funded)

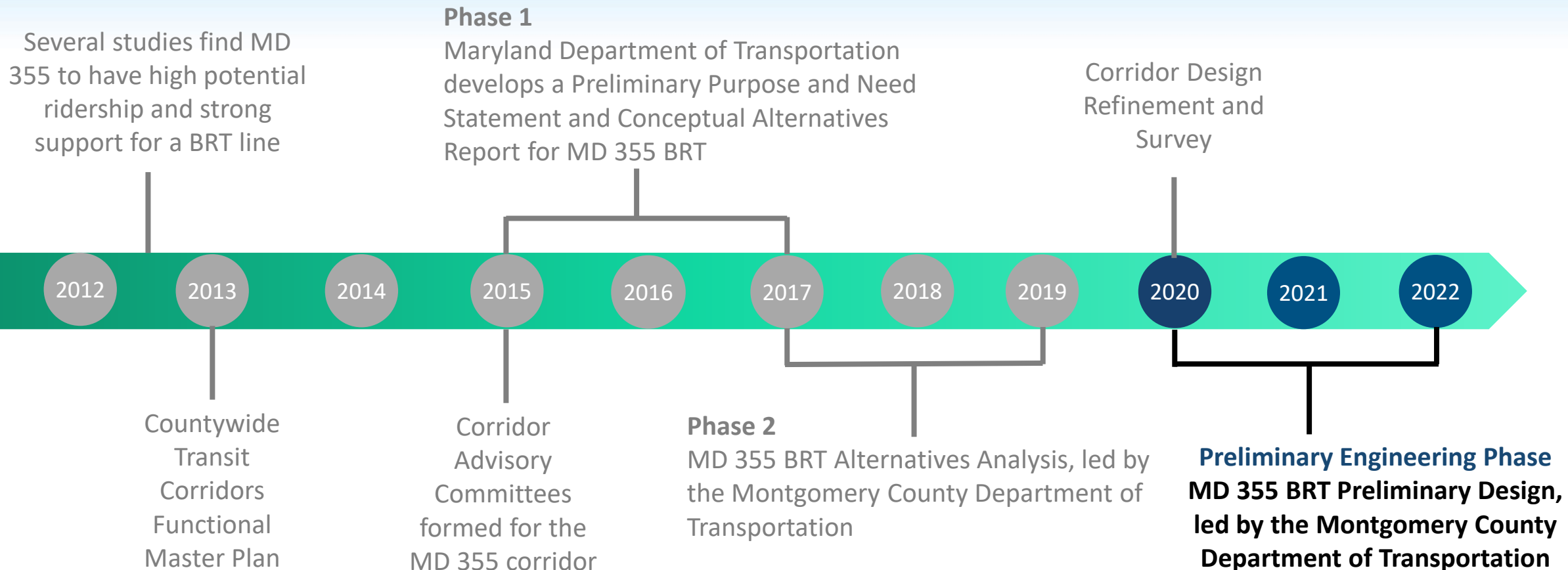
← Corridor Advisory Committee Input →

← Public Input →

→ Funding Decision



# MD 355 BRT Project Timeline



# Key Preliminary Engineering Phase Milestones

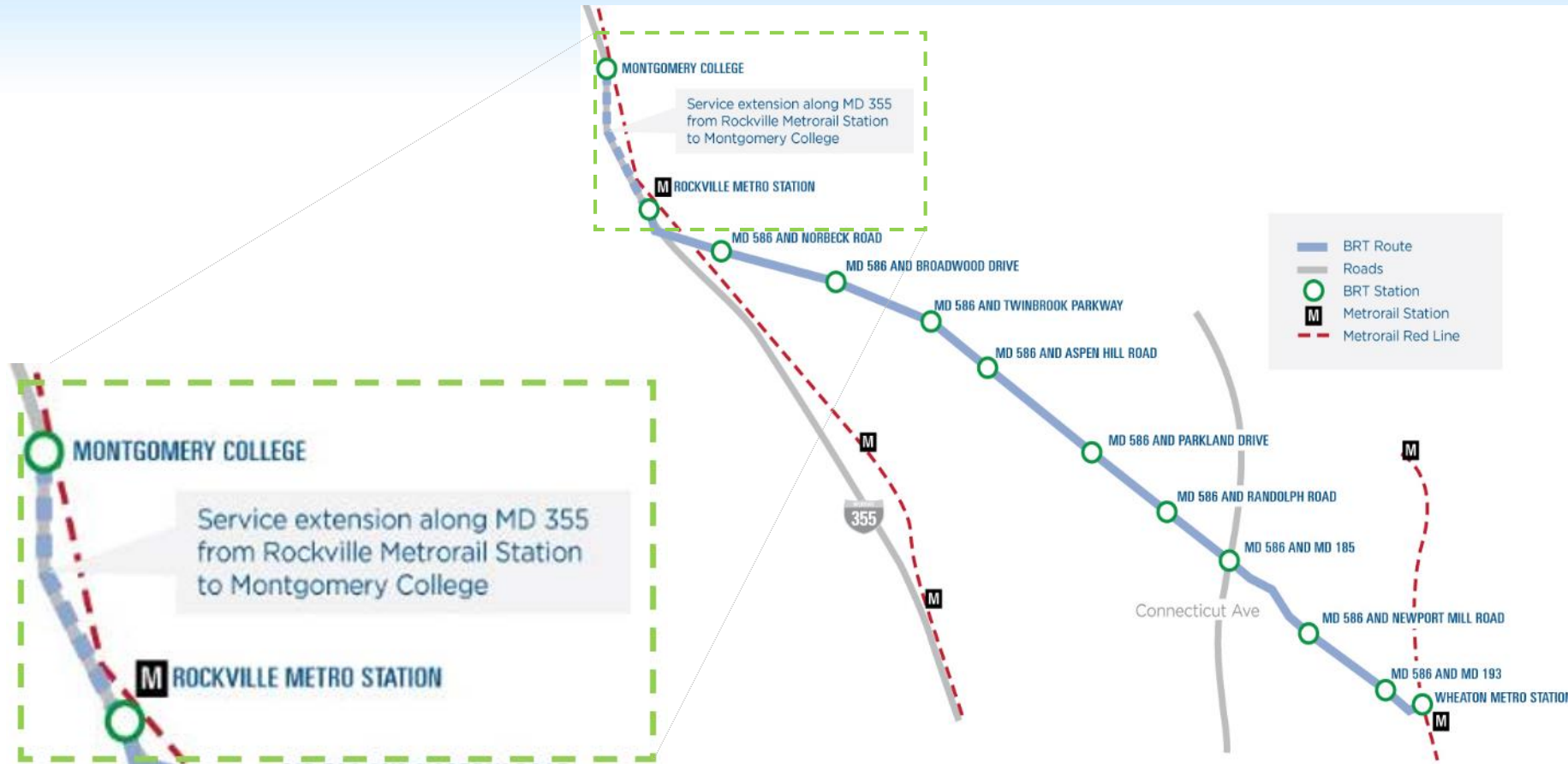
| Milestone                                                                                           | Timeline           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 15% Roll Plan Submission/Design Refinements                                                         | Summer 2021        |
| Adoption of Locally Preferred Alternative                                                           | Summer/Fall 2021   |
| 25% Design Progress Plans                                                                           | Winter/Spring 2022 |
| 35% Preliminary Engineering Plans, Schedule, and Cost Estimate                                      | Fall 2022          |
| Submission of 35% Plans for Mandatory Referral (Planning Review) after County Approval              | Fall/Winter 2022   |
| Public Review of Environmental Process Alternative (Categorical Exclusion/Environmental Assessment) | Fall/Winter 2022   |

# Presentation & Focused Discussion

# Service Planning Refinement

- Maximize BRT speed and reliability based on detailed analysis of traffic and operating conditions
- Refine BRT service patterns based on needs of riders in the corridor
- Inform preliminary engineering design refinements, based on BRT vehicle volumes and operational needs

# Shared Alignment – MD 355 and Veirs Mill BRT



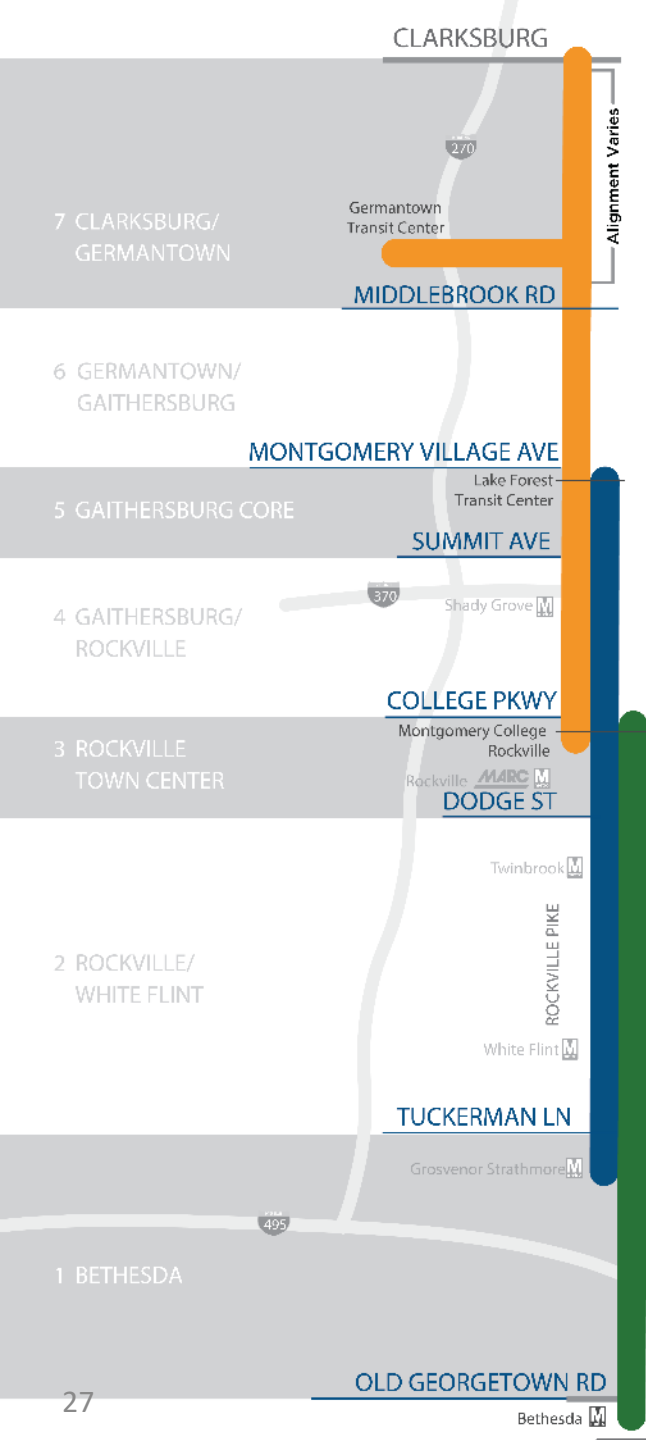
Shared **MD 355** and **Veirs Mill BRT**  
Alignment from  
Rockville Metrorail to  
Montgomery College  
Rockville

The MD 355 BRT project  
is leading Preliminary  
Engineering for the  
shared corridor  
segment

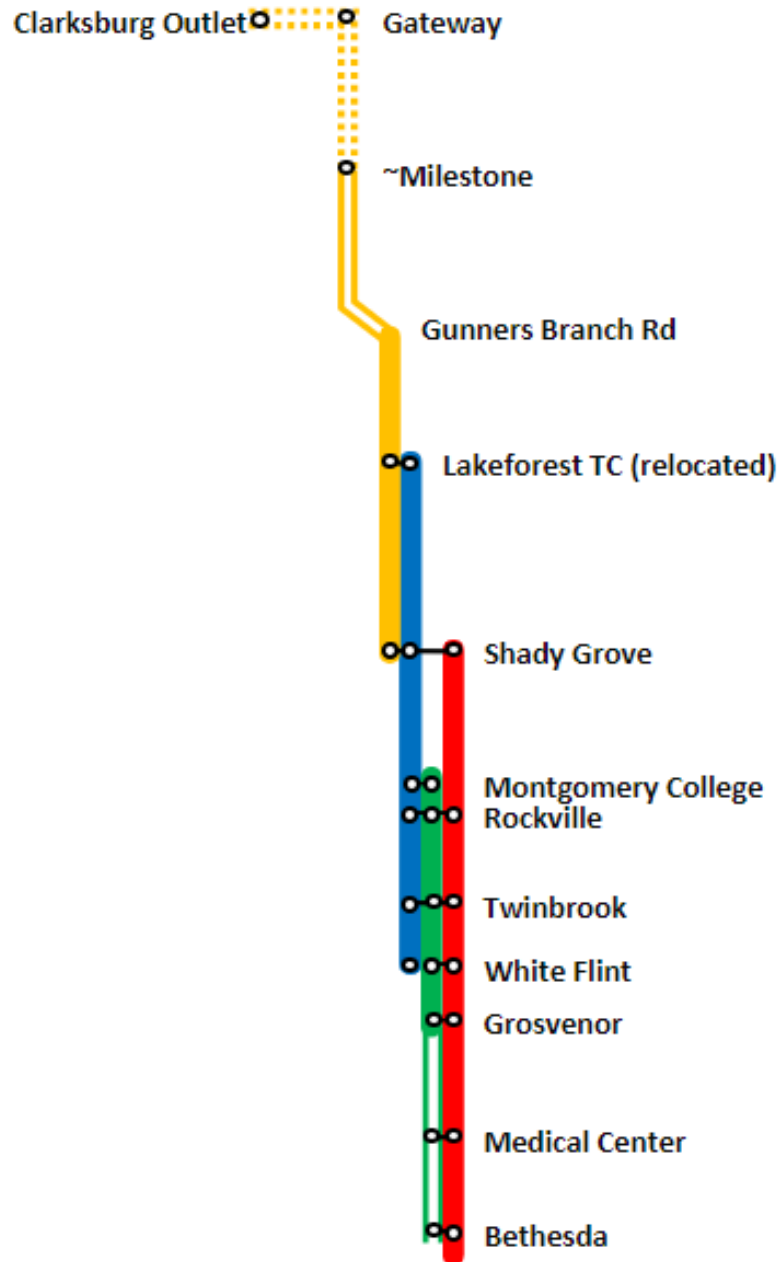
# Phase 2 Service Plan

## Four route patterns:

- Clarksburg to Montgomery College – Rockville
- Germantown to Montgomery College – Rockville
- Lakeforest Transit Center to Grosvenor Metro
- Montgomery College – Rockville to Bethesda







# Proposed Service Plan Revisions

Four route patterns:

- Clarksburg to Shady Grove
- Milestone to Shady Grove
- Lakeforest Transit Center to Grosvenor/White Flint Metro
- Montgomery College – Rockville to Bethesda

Germantown Transit Center (lowest performing route) no longer served

# BRT Runningway Refinement

- Continue to refine runningway design to maximize BRT speed and reliability
- Identify opportunities to reduce right-of-way and cost impacts
- Apply design treatments and technology strategies to maximize intersection BRT and traffic performance



# Segment 3 (Rockville)

## Dodge Street to College Parkway

- Alt. B Modified proposes a single dedicated BRT lane in the Southbound direction
- Exploring options to provide additional operational benefits in the Northbound direction
- Need to consider the operational needs of the combined MD 355 and Veirs Mill Road BRTs in this segment





# Segment 5 (Gaithersburg)

## Montgomery Village Avenue to Summit Avenue

- Alt. B Modified proposes a single dedicated reversible BRT lane
- City of Gaithersburg seeks to reduce impacts of project on adjacent property owners by preferring mixed traffic configuration.
- Exploring opportunities to improve performance of the mixed traffic configuration in Segment 5



# BRT Runningway Refinement

## Corridor-Wide Preliminary Engineering Refinements

- Refine details of roadway treatments/intersections
- Explore Transit Signal Priority and Traffic Signal improvements to enhance performance
- Refine station locations to improve operations and first/last mile access
- Coordinate with WMATA for BRT stations located or near at Metrorail stations
- Confirm BRT terminus locations and facility needs

# BRT Runningway Refinement

## Design and Analysis Next Steps

- Define engineering alternatives to the current proposals in Alternative B Modified
- Conduct detailed traffic and BRT microsimulation analysis of the refined runningway concepts
- Compare and review impacts on BRT performance, overall traffic flow, and project impacts to inform decision making



# Shady Grove Metro

- Highest ridership station in the MD 355 BRT system
- Seek to improve connection to/from Metrorail station compared to proposed station location on Somerville Drive
- Consider travel time/directness for through passengers not destined for Shady Grove
- Consider compatibility with future redevelopment of Shady Grove Station







# Shady Grove Potential BRT Station Locations

Shady Grove East

Shady Grove West

Somerville Drive (CURRENT PROPOSED LOCATION)

South of Metro Station Access Road



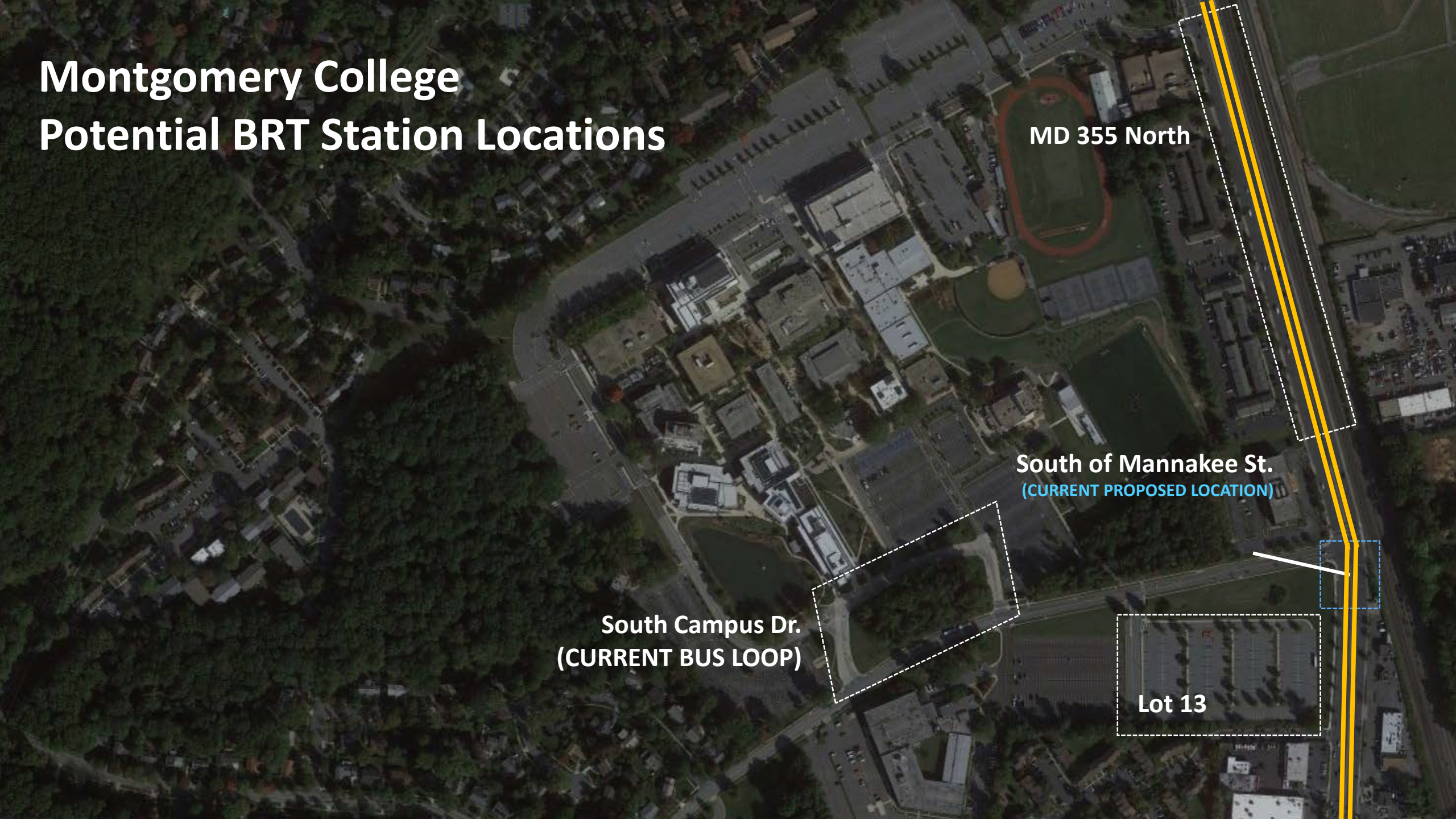
# Montgomery College-Rockville

- Create quality transit connections to the College as an important destination
- Address integrated station and terminal needs of MD 355 and Veirs Mill BRT lines
- Consider capacity constraints of existing South Campus Drive bus loop
- Maintain directness of north-south BRT service for passengers not bound for the College





# Montgomery College Potential BRT Station Locations



MD 355 North

South of Mannakee St.  
(CURRENT PROPOSED LOCATION)

South Campus Dr.  
(CURRENT BUS LOOP)

Lot 13



# Lakeforest Mall

- Avoid the long diversion of BRT corridor along Lost Knife Road to serve the existing Lakeforest Transit Center
- Maintain critical local bus connections and access to transit-dependent riders, services, and employment
- Support the redevelopment/master planning vision of the Lakeforest Mall area





# Lakeforest: Potential BRT Station & Transit Center Locations

**Russell Ave Frontage**  
Transit Center & BRT Station

**Existing Lakeforest TC**  
(CURRENT PROPOSED LOCATION)  
BRT Station & Transit Center & P&R

**Lakeforest Blvd**  
BRT Station

**N Frederick Ave (MD 355)  
South of Lakeforest Blvd**  
BRT Station



# Discussion/Questions

# Next Steps

# Next Steps

- 15% roll plan design development
- Continued technical analysis of BRT service plan, runningway, and station locations
- Coordinate with FTA and develop modified CE/EA for NEPA environmental process
- Continued stakeholder and community outreach, including Fall CAC meetings
- Adoption of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)



# Contact the Project Team

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MD 355 BRT Project Manager

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Transportation

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## **MD 355 BRT Project Website:**

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/MD355BRT/>