

**Meeting Summary**  
**US 29 North Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #7**  
**July 20, 2016, 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**  
**East County Regional Services Center**  
**3300 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904**

**Attendees**

<b>CAC Members ('X' for attendees, blank for apologies)</b>			
Carole Ann Barth	X	Rob Richardson	X
John Bowers		Julian Rosenberg	X
Brian Downie		Ian Swain	
Oladipo Famuyiwa		Joseph Tahan	X
Johnathan M. Genn		Eric Wolvovsky	X
Kevin D. Gunthert	X	Lou Boezi (South CAC Member)	X
Latisha Johnson	X	Sean Emerson (South CAC Member)	X
Bernadine Karns	X	Tina Slater (South CAC Member)	X
Matthew Koch	X	Lori Zeller (South CAC Member)	X
Peter Myo Khin			
<b>Study Team</b>			
<b>Meeting Facilitator</b> – Alan Straus		<b>Lead Project Facilitator</b> – Andrew Bing	
<b>MTA Program Manager</b> – Jackie Seneschal		<b>MTA Corridor Manager</b> – Tamika Gauvin	
<b>MTA Deputy Program Manager</b> – Kyle Nembhard		<b>Consultant Engineer/Planner</b> – Brian Lange	
<b>MCDOT Team Member</b> – Tom Pogue		<b>MCDOT Team Member</b> – Darcy Buckley	
<b>Consultant Transit Planner</b> – Chris Bell		<b>SHA BRT Coordinator</b> – Laura Barcena	
<b>WMATA</b> – Jamaica Arnold		<b>Facilitator Assistant</b> – Lauren Michelotti	
<b>MCDOT Acting Deputy Director</b> – Gary Erenrich		<b>WMATA</b> – Matthew Crooks	
<b>Public</b>			
Harriet Quinn		Jewru Bandeh – Montgomery County RSC	
Brian Anleu – Councilmember Tom Hucker		Dan Wilhelm	
Peter Fosselman – County Executive’s Office		Robert Peters – Greater Colesville Citizens Association	

**Handouts**

Handouts to add to CAC Members’ study binders were distributed, which included the following:

- Meeting #7 Agenda
- Meeting #7 PowerPoint Presentation

- Meeting #7 Question & Comment Sheet
- Map of US 29 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative A
- Map of US 29 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative B
- Meeting #6 Meeting Summary

Meeting materials, including a video recording of the meeting, will be posted on the County's RTS website: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brt](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brt).

### **Introductions**

Alan Straus, the meeting facilitator, opened the meeting by providing an overview of the meeting materials being distributed and the agenda for the meeting. He said following each presentation section, there would be a question and answer period, followed by open house-style tabletop discussions. Alan announced Meeting #8 will be held in the East County Regional Services Center on Thursday, September 22. Additionally, the study team is considering hosting a supplemental meeting in October.

### **BRT Schedule Update**

MTA Corridor Manager Tamika Gauvin reviewed the schedule update. She noted that the proposed project is currently in the Conceptual Alternatives Development phase, and outlined the schedule phases to follow. Tamika explained that at the meeting the study team would share information on the bus running way components of the alternatives and review the detailed selection criteria used to evaluate the alternatives. In the fall, the study team will present the evaluation data to the Corridor Advisory Committee. Following that, the study team will host a public workshop to share all available and prudent project information with the general public. The study team hopes to select a recommended/preferred alternative by December 2016, and will be close to completing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation and 30% Design phase by spring or summer of 2017.

### **Purpose Statement Update**

Tamika provided an update on the Draft Purpose Statement. She said that the study team is working toward having the service commence as quickly as possible. The study team is focused on working within the existing right-of way with a goal of improving mobility while minimizing property and resource impacts.

### **Alternatives Screening and Selection Criteria**

The screening criteria used to narrow the alternatives included, implementation schedule, construction costs, property impacts, environmental impacts, traffic operations, and ridership. Of these criteria, property impacts took priority as the primary way in which the study team narrowed down alternatives. Tamika explained the selection criteria are what the study team will use to compare the alternatives and determine which alternative or elements of each alternative would move forward. Currently, only high-level qualitative evaluations have been completed for the purposes of initial screening; quantitative, data-driven analysis, which will be used for the selection process, is projected to be complete by the fall of 2016.

**CAC Member Question:** Member questioned if the North and South Corridor Advisory Committees would have the opportunity to meet at the same time to discuss entire corridor.

- **Study Team Response:** As of now, the study team plans to continue hosting two separate meetings. All of the available information will be presented equally to both groups during the meetings.
- **Question:** Member questioned whether the study team will look at criteria linked to secondary impacts of implementing BRT, such as displaced traffic or effects on local bus services.
- **Response:** The study team's data studies are focused on US 29; there are no foreseen studies that will offer detailed data about traffic beyond what's in the corridor. The studies being conducted for US 29 will provide a general metric that represents the number of vehicles that cannot or choose not to access US 29. This metric will give us an idea of how many vehicles may be diverted away from US 29 to alternative arterial routes.

**Question:** Member felt MetroExtra is a BRT system, and should be examined as a preliminary alternative. Member expressed concern that the selection criteria may have excluded this alternative, although it seems like a good option.

- **Response:** At this point MetroExtra is not considered a BRT option and is not being examined as part of this study.

**Question:** Member questioned what is meant by "existing right-of-way."

- **Response:** The study team is using the State right-of-way dimensions, or property boundaries owned by SHA to evaluate property impacts. Not the curb-to-curb pavement dimensions.

**Question:** Member pointed out the use of temporarily repurposed lanes and existing right-of-way suggests the study team is not looking at alternatives that involve property impacts.

- **Response:** Yes, the study team is aiming to avoid property impacts by staying within the right-of-way, or property boundaries, owned by State Highway, but stations and special instances may take them outside of that. Where possible the study team is making efforts to stay within the existing pavement, which is also within the existing right-of-way owned by State Highway.

**Question:** Member expressed concern regarding what the exact definition of BRT is for this project's purposes. Member requested a definitive definition and standards, as online information is varying.

- **Response:** The study team has covered a lot of information regarding the definition of a BRT in previous meetings. The study team acknowledges this is a good suggestion and agreed to provide the CAC with further information about the definition of BRT.

**Question:** Member pointed out the project is referred to as a "high frequency reliable transit service" in the Purpose Statement Update; member felt the terminology should be updated to reflect that the study team is building a "rapid" transit service.

- **Response:** The study team has tried to keep this terminology general, but our goal and focus is still to have a rapid transit system.

### **Conceptual Alternatives Development**

Study Team Member Brian Lange reviewed the running way conceptual alternatives. He said that feedback from stakeholders and CAC members was used to develop these conceptual alternatives. Brian emphasized that it is possible the final selected alternative may be a variation

of the currently proposed alternatives. He reiterated the currently proposed alternatives are only a starting point and they can still be altered and changed as the project progresses.

Currently, the study team has developed two build alternatives, and maintains a third alternative, the No-Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative is always included in studies such as this one as a baseline to compare with the build alternatives. The two main repurposing features of the running way alternatives are 1) Business Access Transit (BAT) lanes and 2) Managed lanes, which are a combination of HOV2+ and BAT lanes. BAT lanes are curb lanes that are, for specified periods of time, designated for BRT buses, local buses, and right turning movements at intersections and access points. HOV2+ are lanes that can be used by high occupant vehicles with two or more persons. The other key element in understanding the conceptual alternatives is the utilization of shoulders; buses could utilize outside shoulders much like they do today, or they could utilize median shoulders as dedicated lanes to bypass traffic congestion.

Brian reviewed the No-Build Alternative, which includes the planned and programmed transit and roadway improvements as they are currently listed in the Constrained Long-Range Plan. The No-Build option is an important tool for the comparison of alternatives. The study team must understand what the future differences are between building and operating a BRT system versus not building and operating BRT.

Brian then reviewed the two build alternatives and discussed specifics about where and why and how the team is looking at implementing the bus running way components. Alternative A, includes peak direction curbside BAT lanes in the southern portion of the corridor, and median shoulder lanes in the northern portion of the corridor. Alternative B, consists of peak direction curbside managed lanes (HOV2+ and BAT) in the southern portion of the corridor, and outside shoulder lanes in the northern portion of the corridor.

Brian went over next steps, explaining that more detailed drawings and analysis will be presented in the coming months. After the CAC has reviewed and provided feedback on the evaluation data, the study team will host a workshop for the general public.

**Question:** Member questioned why the CAC has not seen the approximate dimensions of each alternative.

- **Response:** For the majority of what the study team is proposing, our goal is to fit the elements into the existing roadway. The approximate dimensions would aim to uphold the current lane widths and locations of curbs. The approximate dimensions of the existing roadway and those of the proposed alternatives are anticipated to be provided at the fall meetings.

**Question:** Member felt it would be easier and clearer for CAC members to understand the alternatives if they had knowledge of curb-to-curb dimensions. Member questioned if BAT lanes and managed lanes would be the same width.

- **Response:** BAT lanes and managed lanes will be the same width as the current roadway, since the study team is only looking to repurpose already existing lanes. The study team anticipates that more detailed design drawings and data will be provided at the next meeting that will show only a few locations where widening of existing pavement is needed.

**Question:** Member pointed out Alternative A seems to have BRT running in median shoulder lanes. Member feels when BRT is going through certain areas and intersections, this can cause traffic difficulties; member questioned how these traffic difficulties will be handled.

- **Response:** The study team is currently studying those kinds of traffic difficulties and how to manage them. We are looking into making traffic signal changes, such as adding a new phase or implementing new signal timing. In instances where a traffic signal change does not work, the study team may have to make roadway changes.

**Question:** Member asked if signal prioritization is being studied.

- **Response:** Signal prioritization is being studied, as it might provide a boost in speed to the BRT system, but the study team recognizes that is a complex issue. We will address signal prioritization when we discuss results from our traffic studies.

**Question:** Member asked how BAT lanes will be enforced.

- **Response:** The study team is looking at different options, such as local enforcement or video surveillance. We're aiming to make sure BAT lanes are well signed and have a lot of pavement markings to communicate to drivers that these lanes have special uses. We want there to be every indication that BAT lanes are not normal lanes.

**Question:** Member asked if bicycles lanes will be designated.

- **Response:** The study team is not looking into designating bike lanes at the moment, but we would not preclude them. We hope to work with the County's Bicycle Master Plan to incorporate as many bike lanes into the BRT project as possible.

**Question:** Member asked if the shoulders on US 29 north of Stewart Lane would require reconstruction to use them for BRT purposes.

- **Response:** The study team is currently discussing this with State Highway Administration engineers. The reconstruction of the shoulders is something we are considering to better accommodate a smooth and safe ride for BRT buses while addressing the potential for future roadway pavement maintenance needs from higher bus volumes using the shoulders.

**Question:** Member asked what bus-use data the study team will be using.

- **Response:** The study team is currently using bus-use data from 2014.

**Question:** Member asked if the study team would be able to provide travel times for individual segments of each alternative.

- **Response:** Yes, travel time data will be broken down from segment to segment, and even intersection to intersection.

**Question:** Member expressed concern that US 29 South is only two lanes at the MD 650 interchange and asked if the study team is planning on adding a third lane.

- **Response:** The study team is not currently looking to add a third lane at this location, but that doesn't mean we won't look at it as an improvement option as the study progresses.

### **Wrap-up**

The facilitator explained the format of the open-house style tabletop sessions and said it would pertain entirely to the running ways. He encouraged everyone to interact with the study team to ask any questions they may have. At that point, the formal portion of the meeting adjourned.

Below is a summary of the written comments received during the open-house style tabletop session that followed.

Map	CAC North Comments						
South #1	Location	Hastings to Timberwood	Sligo to MD 193	Franklin Ave	Franklin Ave	University	University
	Comment	Alt A: Provide two median bus lanes?	Alt A: Inside BAT lanes.	Alt B: Have you coordinated with Police department about enforcement of BRT lanes?	Alt B: Is additional parking being considered?	Alt B: How will we educate drivers about the BAT lanes when they transition from mixed traffic to BAT?	Alt B: When turning from Timberwood heading north on 29, how much time/distance does a driver have to get out of BAT lane?
North #1	Location	Briggs Chaney	Sandy Spring /Spenserville/ MD 198				
	Comment	Alt A: There are tools out there to measure where diverted traffic would go. Diverted traffic wouldn't be counted as an impact.	Alt A: No sidewalk on many parts of MD 198.				