

Meeting Summary

US 29 North Corridor Advisory Committee

Meeting #16

Wednesday May 30, 2018, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

East County Regional Services Center

3300 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Participants

CAC Members (X for in attendance, blank for regrets)			
Fisseha Adugna		DeAndre Morrow	
Carole Ann Barth		Peter Myo Khin	
John Bowers		Shane Pollin	X
Brian Downie	X	Rob Richardson	
Oladipo Famuyiwa	X	Julian Rosenberg	
Kevin Gunthert		Sebastian Smoot	
Latisha Johnson		Joseph Tahan	
Bernadine Karns	X	Dan Wilhelm	X
Matthew Koch	X	Eric Wolvovsky	X
Sean Emerson (South CAC Member)	X		
Members of the Public		Affiliation	
Harriet Quinn			

Staff

Joana Conklin, MCDOT

Dan Hibbert, MCDOT

Corey Pitts, MCDOT

John Thomas, MCDOT

Jewru Bandeh, Dir. Eastern Regional Services Center

Rick Kiegel, Consultant Project Manager, RK&K

Jim Bunch, Sabra Wang

William Shuldiner, Foursquare ITP

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting commenced at 6:35 p.m.

Rick Kiegel of RK&K welcomed everyone and began introductions by staff and CAC members. He explained that this meeting would begin with him providing a short update about the US 29 BRT project as it moves through the final design phase. After this, a representative from MCDOT's Division of Transportation Engineering would give an introduction of the US 29 Mobility and Reliability Study and take questions from CAC members.

Project Update

Rick explained that the 85 percent design will be submitted to MCDOT in July which will allow the project team to complete the 100 percent design by October 2018. The platform length is currently being finalized since the project staff has a rough idea of how long each BRT vehicle will be. The platforms, ramps, and sidewalks will be placed to minimize any potential impacts on surrounding utilities that may occur once they have been built and while they are being constructed. The architects are also finalizing the placement of the platform amenities, such as the station marker, fare collection machines, and benches. The project team is finalizing stormwater management facilities and drainage relocation where necessary. Additionally, the BRT project team is working with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to approve a new traffic signal and crosswalk at Lanark Way.

On the topic of right of way considerations, Rick explained that Montgomery County has sent letters to all property owners where an easement will be needed to accommodate the project and the negotiation process will continue throughout the summer. Canopies and windscreens are currently being designed and will be standard at all BRT stations across the county. Finally, the project team worked with WSSC to get approval for the water and sewer utilities at the new Briggs Chaney Comfort Station.

Questions:

QUESTION (Q): When will the bus contract be awarded?

RESPONSE (R): Bids for the contract are due in June and the contract will most likely be awarded at the end of the summer.

Q: I've heard that to procure money for the buses, there needs to be a County Council hearing. Can you describe this process?

R: All projects with spending over a certain threshold must have these hearings but it is mostly administrative and should not impact the bus procurement or overall project.

Montgomery County BiPPA Presentation

Rick introduced John (JT) Thomas who gave a brief introduction to Montgomery County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas (BiPPA) Program which can be found at the link below.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/BicycleandPedestrianPriorityAreas/index.html>

Questions:

Q: What constitutes a cyclist? How will this definition evolve in 10 years, especially regarding micro transit?

R: Right now, in Washington, DC, motorized scooters are considered cyclists. The proliferation of new transportation services will likely spur new regulations, so the county may need to change its legal definition of cyclists to reflect changing technology and transportation conditions.

US 29 Mobility and Reliability Study

JT then gave a presentation about the US 29 Mobility and Reliability study that was recently approved by the County Council. He invited CAC members to ask him questions or provide him with comments about various aspects of the study.

Information and documents from the US 29 Mobility and reliability study can be found at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/US29Study/index.html>

Comments:

- Stay within the existing curbs on US 29, don't just focus on right of way.
- Prioritize reversible and dedicated lane BRT projects.
- Local bus service needs to be restructured along the corridor. This will be very important to the success of the BRT service.
- Better transit options are needed in the White Oak area for the future Viva White Oak development.
- Make it easier to cross US 29 at Stewart Lane. Currently the walk signals do not give pedestrians much time to cross.
- If the county gives developers tax credits for infrastructure or transportation improvements, this can help them make the improvements and lessen the burden on the county.
- There should be a study for people with disabilities to have more mobility along the corridor.

- Response: There are several studies currently underway, but more can be added.
- Crosswalks should be serving all four crossings at major intersections along the corridor, especially along US 29.
- The other studies will only take up time and resources from the dedicated lane BRT study which should be most important.
 - Response: Other studies will require less time and resources than the dedicated lane BRT study

Questions:

Q: Is the primary purpose of this survey to develop a plan for BRT with dedicated lanes south of Tech Road?

R: This is among the options that are being studied but will need to be examined further to identify if there are potential negative impacts.

Q: Will the findings of the study be presented to CAC members?

R: Yes, the Mobility Study team will present its findings to CAC members for their comments. There will also be separate public workshops that CAC members can attend.

Q: Are there any metrics that the county will use to determine if the BRT project is successful so that they can better examine if the dedicated lane BRT project is necessary?

R: There are no metrics that the county is planning to use once the BRT service is implemented on US 29, however, the models that the mobility study team uses will be updated with ridership for the BRT service. The team will track the progress of BRT service using this ridership data and if the service is effective then we will use it as a baseline to determine if the studied alternative would be much better.

Adjourn

Rick Kiegel thanked everyone for attending and concluded the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.