

**US 29 South Corridor Advisory Committee
Meeting #10
Monday, April 3, 2017, 6:30-9:00pm
Silver Spring Civic Center
1 Veterans Pl, Silver Spring, MD 20910**

Participants

CAC Members (x for in attendance, blank for regrets)			
Louis Boezi		Jeffrey McNeil	
Alan Bowser	X	Karen Michels	X
Marie-Michelle Bunch		Anita Morrison	X
Jon Halperin (Representing Ilhan Cagri)	X	Brian Morrissey	
Barbara Ditzler	X	DeAndre Morrow	
Sean Emerson	X	Michael Pfetsch	X
Karen Evans		Mark Ranze	X
Roberta Faul-Zeitler	X	Dan Reed	X
Brian Feit	X	Michele Riley	
Dan Figueroa		Herb Simmens	
Joseph Fox		Tina Slater	X
Sean Gabaree		Brad Stewart	
Melissa Goemann		Eugene Stohlman	
Larry Goldberg	X	Mel Tull	X
Susan Reutershan (Representing Avi Halpert)	X	James Williamson	X
Kevin Harris	X	Teddy Wu	
Sean Heitkemper		Lori Zeller	X
Linda Keenan	X	Harriett Quinn (Representing James Zepp)	X
Tom Lansworth		Clifford Zinnes	
Tracy Lewis		Shane Pollin (US 29 Northern CAC Member)	X

Staff

Michael Weinberger, Foursquare ITP
Joana Conklin, MCDOT
Rick Kiegel, RK&K
Rick Tibert, RK&K
Darcy Buckley, MCDOT
Tom Pogue, MCDOT
Rafael Olarte, MCDOT
Katie List, Foursquare ITP
Jessica Alvarez, Foursquare ITP
Paul Silverman, Sabra Wang, and Associates
Dan Hibbert, MCDOT
Phil Shapiro
Brittany Rolf, RK&K

Members of the Public

Pete Tomao, Coalition for Smarter Growth
Julio Ceron, Staff for Councilmember Hucker
Andrew Dashner

Beka Slur, League of Women Voters
Jamaica Arnold, WMATA

1. Introductions

a. Welcome from new facilitator, for preliminary design phase of project

Michael Weinberger, meeting facilitator, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. The CAC Program Plan is a working document, and feedback from the meeting will be incorporated.

Member Question (Q): A member asked about the layout of the meeting and when there would be opportunities for questions and input.

Response (R): Michael gave an overview of the agenda and possibilities for questions and input.

Q: A member inquired if the meeting was being recorded, and if the same ground rules apply to this meeting.

R: Michael confirmed that the meeting is being recorded, that the ground rules are the same, and that the group would discuss expectations during the meeting.

b. Digital Voting Activity: Michael facilitated a digital voting activity with the CAC members. About 50 percent of members were in attendance. Michael will send a follow-up survey to collect feedback from all members.

i. In which zip code do you live?

20910 is the largest category

Other: 20852

ii. In which zip code do you work?

Member Comment (C): A member expressed frustration at completing this activity during meeting time.

R: Michael responded that this activity is an icebreaker for him to get to know the group as well as understand members' interest and reasoning for being part of the group. He assured the members that we will get to the project slides soon.

C: Another member commented that they have been together as a group for two years and felt that they have spent too much time on this activity.

iii. How do you get to work?

Most members drive alone, with some using heavy or light rail and a few using local bus.
About 6 people either walk or work from home.

iv. If you do ride bus service, how often do you use it?

7% of members use bus service every day.

21% use it 5 days a week.

21% use it weekly.

21% use it monthly.

29% of members never use it.

v. Word Cloud for BRT

Responses include: Money, waste (waste was entered multiple times, possibly by one member, which caused it to appear in large font in the Word Cloud), efficient, reliable, environment, solution, costly, resources, slow, exciting, frequent, wrong

Michael commented that there was clearly a mixture of those who are hopeful and those who are skeptical.

- vi. BRT elements that are most important for success
Dedicated bus lanes received the most votes, with some voting for off-board fare collection.
- vii. What are the biggest selling points for BRT to the public?
Responses: Faster, job, reliability, mobility, accessibility, congestion, access, none, bypass, convenience, time
- viii. What is the greatest barrier to public buy-in for the BRT projects?
Cost, input, lack, public, politics, diverse, arrogance, dumb, privilege, elected, information
- ix. Best tools to educate public
Non-traditional outreach, all the above, public meetings

2. Expectations

Michael reviewed the expectations of the CAC from the CAC program plan. The CAC is an advisory committee, not a decision-making group. The purpose is to provide guidance on design and implementation. The project team would like feedback from the CAC, which the project team will take very seriously. The CAC will assist in public outreach for the project, helping the project team make connections in the community and ensuring that the project team receives diverse perspectives.

3. Project Schedule and Update

Joana Conklin, Montgomery County's rapid transit system development manager, explained that the County recently briefed the County Planning Board and County Council, and that she would present this overview to the CAC members today. Her slides provided a description of the project.

She began by restating the project goals, which are to improve quality, increase choices, enhance quality of life, and support master plan developments. The project will add expanded transit options to these areas in a sustainable and cost-effective way.

US 29 is already one of the busiest transit corridors not only in Montgomery County but also in Maryland, with over 11,000 daily bus trips. Bus trips along the corridor take 20% more time than automobile trips, and can be up to 60% longer than car trips during peak periods. The corridor is diverse, with 65% of corridor residents belonging to minority groups. 32% are foreign-born, and 31% speak a language other than English at home. One third of residents earn less than half of the county's medium-income. These features can indicate transit dependency. There are 9,000 senior citizens and over 11,000 residents with disabilities. Joana noted the advisory committee members do not represent the characteristics of residents in the corridor, making public outreach very important.

There are major job and education centers along the corridor, including the Food and Drug Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Discovery Communications, and many other employers. The corridor currently has about 61,000 jobs, a number which is projected to grow to 80,000 by 2020.

This project relies on a study conducted by Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) over the past 1-2 years. The study determined the station locations based upon the master plan, and property and environmental impacts. The property and environmental impacts in the study show a worst-case scenario, and the County is not moving forward with the most impactful parts of the plan. There will be no property displacements. There may be minor property takes for stations, but the County is trying to keep these as minimal as possible. The study showed that a managed lane could encourage increased high-occupancy (HOV) traffic in place of single-occupancy traffic. While encouraging ridesharing is one of MDOT's goals, the study showed there would also be significant traffic impacts from repurposing of a lane. Joana noted that the idea is not ready for implementation—this would require further study in the future. She emphasized that the BRT project on US 29 would utilize only the shoulders north of Industrial Parkway and operate in mixed traffic in the southern segment all the way to downtown Silver Spring. The study also examined completely rebuilding the shoulders for bus-on-shoulder traffic, which would be expensive. Because there is already existing bus-on-shoulder service, the County plans to use that for this BRT project. MDOT's study had an estimated cost of \$80-140 million. The County's BRT project will cost \$31.5 million (down from an original estimate of \$67 million), \$10 million of which will be paid for with federal grant money.

Q: A member asked where the station location will be in Four Corners.

R: The project team is still deciding between two alternatives, either one station in the median or stations on either side of the road. The May CAC meeting will cover this topic.

Joana reviewed the US 29 project map. The blue line is bus-on-shoulder. The green portions will be in mixed traffic. Circles are station locations. Originally the plan included two stops in Castle Ridge, but now will only have one station in this neighborhood. Approximately 40% of the line is a dedicated bus lane (bus on shoulder), but the project does not involve any roadway construction.

The BRT will have frequent, all-day service, with buses running every 7.5 minutes during peak periods and every 15 minutes during off-peak times. Some buses start in Burtonsville, and some will start in Briggs Chaney. They will leave each starting location every 15 minutes so that along the trunk line on US 29, buses will run every 7.5 minutes. The BRT will have the same hours of operation as Metrorail and will operate seven days per week. Vehicles and stations will be uniquely branded with their own logo. They will install Transit Signal Priority (TSP) at up to 15 intersections along the corridor. There will also be bike and pedestrian improvements, including 10 new bikeshare stations along the corridor. The project team is also working in coordination with Howard County, who will begin their own BRT study soon. Although it is funded by the State, Howard County will run the study.

Q: A member asked which intersections will have Transit Signal Priority (TSP).

R: The project has a budget for 15 intersections, but the specific locations have not been identified yet. The project team will evaluate the corridor and determine which intersections make the most sense. TSP can be installed at 15 intersections, be continually monitored, and turned on as appropriate.

Q: The member asked if the State examined TSP while they were running the study.

R: The state did include TSP in modeling within the 2040 condition, and the County will examine the 2020 conditions to determine locations of for TSP at intersections. TSP is also being considered in Baltimore.

Michael explained that TSP can allow a preemptive or extended green light as a bus is approaching an intersection, improving on-time performance. TSP involves upgrading the signal as well as the vehicle.

Q: A member asked for more information about the TSP that was implemented in Baltimore.

R: Michael responded that TSP exists at 90 intersections in DC and improvements for downtown DC are currently being reviewed. The Maryland corridor with TSP is US 1, connecting PG County to Laurel. The Baltimore Link project will have 20 TSP intersections that will begin operation in June 2017. Los Angeles has also used TSP and saw a 40% improvement in on-time performance.

Q: A member asked for clarification of the two-step TSP process, which is 1) optimizing signals and 2) implementing TSP, and would like to know if signals along US 29 have been optimized.

R: A Sabra Wang representative responded that TSP has been tested in Maryland and is very standard. Montgomery County has complex signals that are constantly receiving information and being adjusted, and TSP will be another input into this system. It will be used to maintain distance between buses and will probably be unnoticeable to car or foot traffic. TSP is an operations tool, which is a standard software for a car or bus.

Q: A member asked for clarification if the signals on US 29 are optimized.

R: The Sabra Wang representative responded that yes, signals have recently been optimized for all-day, including peak and off-peak periods. Michael clarified that the County is ahead of DC in that they have already been doing this work for some time.

Joana noted that there will be an entire meeting devoted to TSP.

Q: A member asked if TSP would be for all buses, or just for BRT buses.

R: It is currently budgeted only for BRT buses.

The US 29 BRT will touch on all elements of a BRT system as defined by the National Bus Rapid Transit Institute, including dedicated bus-on-shoulder lanes, stations with level boarding, real-time arrival information, off-board fare collection, branded vehicles, TSP, and frequent headway-based service.

The project team expects strong ridership for the program, with 13,000 daily boardings estimated for 2020. TSP and more efficient boarding process will improve transit reliability and speed.

C: A member commented that funding for the project is based on ridership estimate and said that this is what is holding up the Purple Line. A brief debate ensued over members' ability to comment on others' questions, and Joana said she would like to continue with her presentation.

Joana showed a graphic of anticipated ridership for BRT projects and federally-funded light rail systems across the United States. The US 29 BRT projected ridership is higher than most BRT systems and is higher than some light rail systems.

C: A member noted that comparing actual ridership of other systems to projected ridership of the US 29 BRT was not a direct comparison. The member commented that they should compare actual ridership versus projected ridership for existing BRT systems.

R: Joana noted that this information is not within the presentation.

The US 29 BRT system will provide substantial savings in terms of travel time, in part due to offboard fare collection and TSP. When comparing the BRT travel time with local bus and other BRT systems, the US 29 BRT shows significant improvement.

The US 29 BRT is expected to provide a significant economic benefit to this part of the county, with a net benefit of \$269-520 million. It will improve accessibility for the community, increase regional connections, and provide better access to current and future employment centers. It will provide consistent, all-day service on the corridor, increasing current service to mornings and evenings in

addition to peak service. Existing local service will be evaluated and potentially changed to provide better service in coordination with the BRT. Although decisions about local service have not yet been made, potential changes include adjusting frequency and coverage, moving location of stops, changing routes, and extending routes.

Overall project costs are \$31.5 million, with \$10 million covered by a federal grant. Close to half is for buses, with the remainder covering stations and stops, TSP, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Q: A member asked Joana to clarify if half of the \$30 million budget was for buses.

R: Joana clarified that it is \$14 million, which is approximately 40% of the budget.

The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant is a federal grant that pays for transportation infrastructure projects. The grants are highly competitive, with only 5% of grant applications accepted.

Q: A member asked if the TIGER grant is a definitive commitment, and how many additional steps there are in the process.

R: The County is working with the Federal Transit Administration, and the grant agreement will be finalized by June 2017. There are four main steps to complete: the final scope, inclusion in the long-range plan, an approved budget showing local funding, and the environmental process. With very few anticipated impacts, this project is a categorical exclusion and qualifies for the lowest level of environmental clearance.

The US 29 project is currently in the Project Design stage, with service expected to start in 2019-2020 after a project construction phase. Michael explained the timeline in detail, including the planned CAC meeting schedule and public outreach before the design phase. Open houses were held in March and community events and updates will happen in the upcoming months. If there are specific questions, the project team can hold community meetings to answer these questions. By June, the team will conduct focus groups with employers and employees, as well as last-mile bicycle and pedestrian improvements. In July, the team will conduct a public survey. The questions can be determined from CAC meetings.

Q: A member asks for clarification about the term "last mile."

R: Michael explains that the last mile means where there is a lack of transit service along a person's commute. The last mile concept is a major reason why a lot of projects implement local bus service or bicycle improvements to provide local access.

Joana commented that a member requested a list of frequently used terms and acronyms and that she will provide this at the next meeting.

C: A member comments that based on the ZIP codes represented in the room, the last mile for them is from Sligo Creek Parkway to Sarbanes Transit Center. APTA talks about that as a significant challenge, and that's why so many members continue asking about the dedicated bus lane. They are concerned about the whole picture.

Michael said that coming out of public outreach this spring and summer, the project team will have recommendations for local bus stops and local bus service improvements. They will present this information in a second set of open houses in November.

Questions from Members

Q: A member commented that bus trips on the corridor average 20% longer than auto trips, and up to 60% longer during rush hour. What is the target after the BRT is implemented?

R: Joana answered that a dedicated bus lane is needed to reduce bus travel time to lower than auto travel time, but the BRT will still improve transit time and reliability. Because of faster service, the ridership will increase to 4,000 new riders per day.

C: The member comments that it would be good to show by what percentage the travel time would decrease. For example, if they are currently able to judge 20% and 60%, the member would like to know how much slower the new service will be than driving a car.

Q: A member asked if new riders will be using transit instead of their cars.

R: Some new riders will choose transit rather than their cars, and some new riders will be new residents or employees of the corridor.

C: A member commented that the project assumes that 30% of riders will be new riders. However, in actual ridership on existing BRT systems, no more than 10-15% of riders are current car commuters. This member thinks the model is overly optimistic.

Q: A member asked what level of ridership is necessary for the project to fail and when it is no longer economic to run the system.

R: According to the FTA, benefits must exceed costs. When the project team submitted the benefit-cost ration to FTA, the benefit-cost ratio was 4:1, exceeding the 1:1 minimum. Even with lower-than-expected ridership, the system would likely still show a strong benefit to cost ratio.

Q: The member commented that based on the bus cost of \$14 million, if they do not receive the TIGER grant, would they switch over to MetroExtra service instead?

R: The answer is no; Joana showed the slide about how MetroExtra compares to the BRT. MetroExtra is limited stop service, but without additional improvements that BRT will have (including TSP, bike and pedestrian improvements, etc.). MetroExtra estimated 1,100 daily peak boardings, while the BRT estimates are 7,000 during peak hours, leading the team to believe that BRT offers a significantly better service than MetroExtra. Metro estimated that their service would cost \$9.6 million in operating costs per year for the same level of service as the BRT, while the BRT estimates operating costs of \$7.5 million. This is consistent with typical Ride On costs, which are on average 20% lower than Metro costs. Most importantly, if the County doesn't do BRT, they are not able to add MetroExtra service. The state of Maryland determines investment in Metro, rather than the counties, so Montgomery County could not direct additional MetroExtra service be placed on this corridor. If the County would begin funding Metro in the future, which is unlikely, it would require a large discussion about what service that money would fund, and MetroExtra on this corridor may not be what the County would choose. Jamaica Arnold, from Bus Planning at Metro, clarified that 1,100 estimated riders does not include existing transit riders.

Q: A member asked how many riders they have on local buses.

R: Jamaica said she can pull that information.

Q: A member asked why the original costs of the project were so much higher than the original estimate. In addition, he would like to know the relationship between the \$140 million estimate to the \$30 million estimated infrastructure costs.

R: In the original estimate, the County's projected cost of reconstructing the shoulders was significantly lower than what the State's study team ultimately developed. The State's estimates for restructuring the

shoulder for bus use was higher than the County's in part because they were including stormwater management. The State was also looking at increasing the size of the lane width and assumed that larger bus stations would be built. These differences account for increase from \$67 million estimate to \$140 million estimate. As for the difference between the current \$30 million project cost and \$140 million estimated cost, the current project has smaller bus stations, no highway construction, and similar vehicle costs.

Q: A member asked if, in addition to examining best practices, the project team could also look at failed BRT programs, like in Delhi, India, to learn from those mistakes.

R: Joana agreed that we can learn lessons from other projects.

Q: A member commented that when the BRT is economically a better option, there will be more ridership, and that this will be true when BRT is faster than a car. The member asked how the project anticipates a 35% increase in ridership from opening to 2020 based on improvements. What causes this increased ridership?

R: Joana answered that there has been a lot of discussion at the CAC about how the ridership model works. In fact, there was a special meeting to answer technical questions about this. This project uses the same methodology and considers new developments planned in the corridor.

Paul Silverman from Sabra Wang discussed the ridership model. He mentioned that this is a unique corridor in terms of travel and households. Speed is not the only factor in determining ridership; high parking costs in downtown DC or Silver Spring, for example, can also create increased ridership. The 2040 model estimates 5,600 new riders, but that number is predicated on new developments, especially in White Oak.

C & Q: A member comments that cost and speed are both drivers; he is open to better transit but skeptical about the ridership model. The member asked if increased subsidies would mean increased ridership.

R: Although it is not a one-to-one relationship, a subsidy increase would also increase ridership.

C: The member commented that existing service could be subsidized to increase ridership.

R: Paul commented that the model is very sensitive to speed and reliability, and assumed a generous speed when using the shoulders. A lot of ridership actuals will depend on day-to-day traffic operations. However, the model uses the same predictions that other studies have used in these conditions.

C: A member commented that extended service and frequency would have a large impact on ridership.

R: Joana commented that in the model, they expect to pick up a lot of ridership midday because there is not much other midday service.

Q: A member commented that buses will run 7.5 minutes apart, but was uncertain how that relates to Burtonsville and Briggs Chaney.

R: The bus will run every 15 minutes from Burtonsville and every 15 minutes from Briggs-Chaney, with 7.5-minute service on the trunk (US 29). Lockwood will also have 15-minute service.

Q: A member asked how many buses \$14 million will buy.

R: This will buy 14 buses.

Q: The member asked if the project will hire new bus drivers.

R: The answer is yes.

Q: The member asked if there will be a special BRT bus facility.

R: The answer is no.

Q: The member asked if the project will hire new repair staff.

R: The answer is no, because the existing staff will be able to handle the additional buses.

Q: The member asked about the BRT station maintenance.

R: Existing personnel will be able to handle the station maintenance. However, the biggest cost of operations is bus operators, especially while providing higher frequency service.

Michael emphasizes that we will hold community meetings about many of the topics that CAC members were bringing up.

C: A member commented that the Fenton Street stop's purpose is to serve people riding local buses along Fenton St. to the Transit Center. The member requested giving these riders a stop where they can catch a bus that has left the transit center.

Q: A member asked about Metro funding from Maryland, stating that Governor Hogan stated that he would allow Montgomery and Prince George's Counties to determine Metro funding. The member pointed out that DC recently funded MetroExtra service. The member commented that current ridership is 11,000 per day, and projected ridership for the BRT is 13,000, with 2040 predictions still higher than what the State predicted.

R: Joana answered that a portion of the 11,000 riders are shifting, so 13,000 is not new ridership.

Q: A member asked how many riders will remain on local bus service.

R: Paul answered that they will examine this. In the model that projects 13,000 riders, there will need to be modification of local service so there is not duplication of feeder services.

Q: The member asked how many boardings there will be in addition to local service.

R: Paul answered that they will consider that.

Q: The member again asked if a lot of riders are coming from local service, what will happen to local service availability?

R: Again, the answer is that local service is currently being examined. There were no assumptions in the model that local bus stations would be removed.

Q: The member asked if they would be able to get a list of assumptions used in the ridership model.

R: Joana answered that they are available in the benefit/cost analysis, which is an appendix to the 30-page project description, with technical memos attached, and include local service assumptions.

Joana explained that the model attempts to account for human behavior. For example, if it is quicker for Howard County riders to take the Express bus, they will likely keep taking the express bus. Michael also commented that a service planner, Jessica Alvarez, is present, and she would like to hear members' ideas about how to make sure that we get ideas about how to improve local bus service.

Q: A member asked about frequency changes to local buses.

R: The model predicts some changes, but they do not expect to see service changes right away, but will instead monitor ridership.

C: A member commented that CAC participants were frustrated because currently there is no visualization of what the service will look like.

R: This is because it has not been designed yet.

C: The member commented that no other major project gets funded with less than 30% design level, and so this is about having a level playing field for everyone. The member commented that next time, they can do 30% design so that members have answers to these questions before taking the leap for construction. The member commented that the County may have figures that should be further verified.

R: Joana responded that the modeling activity had been presented at previous CAC meetings, and complies with FTA guidelines.

Q: The member requested the data that shows a 35% increase in ridership on Day 1.

R: A representative from Sabra Wang responded that many other BRT systems have above 30% increase in ridership in the first year. He cites a 2012 GAO ridership study.

Joana also responded that compared to other BRT projects, this is a relatively low-impact project. Montgomery County has “Level of Effort” umbrella projects for things like pedestrian improvements and installing bus shelters. This is not a roadway project, and most of the projects that they are referring to are roadway projects at 30%. For lower impact projects, it is not always necessary to go to 30% before approving construction.

Q: The member asked why the other BRT projects are going to the 30% design level.

R: Those projects are much more impactful, while this project is relatively less impactful and minor compared to MD 355 and Veirs Mill, for example. Those projects will involve taking properties and adding lanes, while this one does not

Introductions

The CAC took a break to complete introductions of all in the room. Michael recognized that everyone is there because they care about the corridor, even if they do not have the same goals in mind. He said that he likes to have people caring loudly at him. He became interested in transit because of his personal experience as a transit user. All problems are real, but we work to gain solutions. The project team is taking note of member concerns and will adjust the program plan accordingly.

4. Document Overview

a. CAC Program Plan

Michael reviewed the CAC Program Plan. There are four upcoming meetings scheduled, and he reviewed the topics for each. In May, the meeting will cover station design. In June, the meeting will cover bike and pedestrian accommodations, TSP, and environmental documentation. The August meeting will examine the BRT operations plan and recommendations for local bus, with time for comments from the CAC and the public. The project team will host community meetings throughout this phase to collect public feedback. The final meetings will cover topics that have not been captured in other meetings. He noted that this is the preliminary design phase, and is not the end of the CAC schedule.

Q: A member asked if it is realistic to have a meeting on local bus service in mid-August, and requested that the meeting be moved into September to allow for summer absences.

Q: A member asked if most CAC meetings would be scheduled on Mondays.

R: Tom Pogue of MCDOT answered that days of the week vary, often based upon room availability, with most meetings held on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Michael stated that the Northern group has 20 members and this group has 40. He suggested splitting the Southern group into two groups, one in Silver Spring and one in the White Oak and Four Corners area. This would have the benefit of an easier travel to the meetings for the members. The smaller meetings would allow more people to feel heard, especially based on the number of questions and comments throughout this meeting. One member is in favor because the County will begin charging for

parking in the county garage in July until 10pm. Many members expressed agreement to splitting the group.

Michael will send out a full survey to determine this. Joana added that future meetings will involve more tabletop and small group discussions, which will be easier with a smaller group.

Q: One member asked if it would be possible to do a meeting in Four Corners.

R: This will be determined in the future – the study team will look into venue availability.

C: One member commented that if the meetings are at the Civic Center, she would not mind paying for parking.

C: Another member commented that it makes sense for design issues, but she is not sure about overall issues.

Michael will send out a full survey online to get all zip codes of members and make the final determination.

C: A member comments that minutes will need to be accurate and detailed so that members can know what questions members in other meetings have asked.

b. Public Involvement Plan

Michael reviewed the Public Involvement Plan. The goal is to engage the public and collect meaningful feedback as well as understand the public's perception of benefits and concerns of the project. Topics include the distinction between local bus and BRT, impact of the project, and passenger amenities. The team will send out monthly newsletters and is refining the listserv for this newsletter.

Q: A member asked if there will be a mailing list for the public involvement plan, not just for the CAC.

R: There is a separate mailing list, and contact information is and has been collected through the Get On Board BRT initiative. The team will also conduct outreach through mailers, schools, civic groups, opinion leader groups, religious institutions, pop-up events, shopping center, community parks. This is non-traditional outreach, reaching low-income and Limited English Proficiency populations where they already are.

C: A member commented that outreach in parks could be in partnership with Pop-Up Parks, which could increase involvement.

The outreach team will conduct pop-up events, which include distributed material and targeted surveys, with giveaways and incentives for participation. The project team hosted three open houses in March, which were held at three key points along corridor. The open houses covered program details, the definition of BRT, what the project corridor looks like, a trade-off activity, station design, and the public involvement plan in a general way. The open houses had a total of 190 attendees, and the team received 90 comment cards. These comments will be integrated into the project design where appropriate.

A virtual open house is available online for anyone who was unable to attend the open house in person.

Michael reviewed the tradeoff activity results from the open houses. In general, residents prefer a faster transit trip. They prefer the bus to come more often as opposed to a short walking distance as well as a more direct trip with less transfers. However, answers were split between preferring peak hour services versus off-peak services, indicating a strong demand throughout the day. Michael showed the results from the Word Cloud activity. The general takeaway is that people often want to share their perspective and concerns more than they would like to answer the question at hand. However, it is apparent that

residents celebrate the diversity in Montgomery County and that sustainability is important. In addition, residents acknowledge that there is an aging population that will need special transit service in the future. Later in the summer, the project team will conduct a survey, analyze the feedback, share it with the CAC, and incorporate it into the project design.

Q: A member asked if the County will use bus ads to help publicize the project.

R: Joana answered that they will, and some are already up on buses. The County gets some free ad space, and some ads will be going up in bus shelters as well.

5. Next Steps

Michael reviewed next steps. The CAC Meeting #11 will be held the weeks of May 15th and 22nd, 2017. Michael asked which topics covered in the CAC plan would members like to see covered, and members responded through electronic voting. Answers included diverse and inclusive outreach. Michael confirmed that he will send out an assignment to CAC members to look at hot spots for future infrastructure investments.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.