



**CORRIDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
 MEETING #1 SUMMARY
 JUNE 2, 2022
 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

ATTENDEES:

| CAC Member Attendees | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Marie Michelle Bunch | Miguel Hernandez |
| Hector Chang | Peter Myo Khin |
| Eileen Finnegan | Richard Garifo |
| Gail Fisher | Shane Pollin |
| Gretchen Goldman | Elise "Elizabeth" Rahimi |
| Craig Grunewald | Peter Tantisunthorn |
| Louis "Lou" Krupnick | Dan Wilhelm |
| Jason Weaver | Maura Moser |

Additional members of the public attended the meeting.

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Jewru Bandeh | Cicero Salles |
| Bob | 12403161058 |
| Kayleigh De La Puente | |

| Montgomery County Staff and Consultant Team | |
|---|-------------|
| Sandra Marks | MCDOT |
| Jamie Henson | Kittelsohn |
| Aditya Inamdar | Kittelsohn |
| John Manzoni | STV |
| Nadiya Kutishcheva | Sharp & Co. |



PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Welcome and Introductions

- Project manager Sandra Marks welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of meeting expectations, zoom software, and project team.

Program and Project Overview

- Project Manager Sandra Marks introduced the project. The New Hampshire Avenue study covers the area between the Colesville Park & Ride and the Maryland / DC Border. The potential route intersects with current Flash service on Route 29 service. Potential termini will be discussed in this meeting – Takoma Langley Transit Center, East West Highway, and Fort Totten Metro.
- Project Manager Sandra Marks reviewed the 2022 Planning Study in context with overall project implementation. The goal of the study is to take the recommendation from the 2013 Master Plan and provide a recommendation on how to implement BRT within this corridor. Later stages include an environmental analyses, preliminary design, final design, and construction.
- Consultant Jamie Henson covered the greater study schedule, next steps for the project and topics for upcoming CAC meetings, program goals for Montgomery County’s program goals. A schedule is presented upcoming Pop-Up Event dates. Topics and dates for upcoming Public Meeting / Open House dates are shared. The project website is shared.

Review of Findings

- The Planning Analysis focuses on the following topics. The main takeaways, as discussed in the previous CAC meeting, are as follows.
 - Equity Areas
Much of the corridor is adjacent to equity areas
 - Existing Plans and Development
Many transportations development projects along the corridor
 - Land Use Nodes
There are mixed land use nodes at major crossings along the corridor.
 - Network Limitations
There is a limited network of parallel streets along the corridor.
 - Safety Concerns
There are severe crashes, most notably between the Beltway and University Blvd



Existing Traffic Analysis – The main study questions are addressed

- *Where are delays and queues?*

The longest delays are at major intersections.

Delays are greater at the PM rush hour. Delays are generally more extensive south of the Beltway.

- *How long does it take to drive the corridor?*

Travel times are slower south of the Beltway. Slowest speeds are between University Blvd and the Maryland-DC boundary.

AM Northbound (Outbound) traffic flows relatively fast. PM Northbound (Outbound) is about five minutes slower than AM Northbound (Outbound).

Southbound (Inbound) Traffic is similar in the AM and PM. Peak traffic experiences more delay in the PM than the AM. PM Northbound (Outbound) is slower than Inbound (Southbound) AM inbound.

- *Have we accurately represented conditions?*

The study team provides poll “Where does your driving experiences differ?”

The study team responds to questions and comments from the meeting chat.

Audio Comments regarding Traffic Analysis:

- I would expect to see the PM delay at Powder Mill, where traffic backs up to Langley Park. The actual time to the Beltway is double what is indicated on the map. Modeling does not represent the real-world conditions.
- In the morning there are significant delay on Eastern Ave outside of the study area. Is there a way to account for this within the study? The people modeled in your Traffic Analyses encounter this delay right after leaving the study area.
Response: From a modeling perspective, this is not a part of our study area. We are working with DDOT to facilitate better movement of buses.
- Can you comment, bigger picture, on how this analyses feeds into design? Are you looking for a need for dedicated lane? Is there a threshold?
Response: The reason we do the Existing Conditions is to find where the problems are, and how bad they are. As we test alternative solutions, we want to make sure the scale of our solutions is appropriate to the problems.



New Hampshire Avenue BUS RAPID TRANSIT

- What kind of hourly or daily traffic nodes are you seeing on New Hampshire?
Response: The volume varies north and southbound of Adelphi Rd. North of Adelphi, volume is 60,000-80,000 ADT (average daily traffic). South of Adelphi, volume is approximately 35,000ADT.
- The Hillandale Center will add 500 residents in the middle of the Corridor.
Response: We are using the Regional Travel Demand model, this includes expected growth from planned development in the corridor. Our solutions will address additional traffic demand.
- The K-9 NH Express uses Eastern to Riggs to Ft Totten to avoid that terrible connection to North Capital.
Response: Yes, K9 is once again in service.
- Your times are optimistic [too fast] and does not match my experience commuting via bus on this corridor. It's difficult to take public transportation in this corridor when travel times are extensive. For example, I've taken the bus from Hillandale to Fort Totten Metro, this ride took an hour and a half. It's takes me an hour and a forty-five minutes to come home to Hillandale from Fort Totten Metro. The ridership experience is that if experience these long travel times a few times, you will stop using public transportation. "Over solving" is key for this corridor.
- My experience pre covid, traveling in the AM was quicker than PM. People tend to stagger their morning commutes, but they return at the same time. This causes the major problems from Powder Mill to Langley Park, and then to Sligo Creek. That's where traffic backs up. What is normally a 45 min trip towards DC becomes an hour/hour and a half trip returning. There have also been talks that behavior will change in response to telecommuting. Eventually, I suspect more employers will mandate their employees return to work. Managers like to see their employees at work.
- My experience differs at Valley Brook Dr and Jackson Rd – adjacent to schools including Springbrook High school, White Oak Middle School, Jackson Rd Elementary School. Will this bus service riders outside of commuting hours?
Response: Yes, this will be an all-day service.
- I agree that companies will require employers to come in at least three days a week. I also agree that areas around Springbrook High school and White Oak Middle School see congestion, especially during morning hours.

Written comments regarding Traffic Analysis:

- I believe that there is significant delay at University Blvd in the evening rush also.
- true, also Ethan Allen, although I'm not sure what the threshold for delay is.



- I would expect to see the PM delay at Powder Mill to be indicated as material as the map appeared to indicate with a larger dot.
- Also, in the morning rush the back at the MD/DC border is caused by the traffic pattern at North Capital and NH Avenue.
- I don't really drive on NH Ave during peak times
- No difference from your analysis
- Driving in DC in the morning is always faster than the evening rush, almost a 30 minutes
- What are the hourly traffic loads you are seeing am/ pm?
- I have found that PM travel has more delays, so my experience fits.
- My only q is should we mark other if we do not have an answer? Or just close the poll.?
- What were the exact dates of the study?
- How long does it usually take to drive the corridor outside the peak/under normal circumstances?
- Was modeling accompanied with actual driving?
Response: We used 2019 numbers in our modeling. In comparison, current traffic is roughly 20% lower. Doing travel time runs now would not be helpful for the study.
- The k-9 NH Express uses Eastern to Riggs to Ft Totten to avoid that terrible connection to North Capital.
- does the k-9 still run though? Is there plans to bring it back?
- Adelphi is a big connection to UMD.
- Yes the K-9 is back now!
- oh great! I haven't seen it revived yet
- I agree with Shane. A lot of traffic uses Riggs so if you fix NH much of the traffic will sitch
- A lot of the problem at Powder Mill in the PM is the bus stops largely eliminates one lane
- Growth anticipated by a "regional traffic demand model" is not likely to appropriately reflect the acute impact of Hillandale Gateway. Our new development is underway which will focus trips to the Powder Mill intersection. I suggest the model be adjusted to account for this reality.
- Almost all traffic is going downtown. This will not be served by traffic ending at Eastern. How could use the proposed service that stops at Eastern?
- Google does estimate a 15-45 minute travel time on NH between Eastern and White Oak during the peak, which matches what others have said. Is the large variation caused by slowdowns/backups or is there usually a crash somewhere along the corridor? (I don't usually drive during peak)
- Probably obvious my biggest delay between university and 495 every day is the right hand land getting onto the on- ramp for 495



Existing Transit Analysis – The main study questions are addressed

- *How fast and reliable is the bus?*
Transit Frequency – Multiple high frequency routes service the corridor. High combined frequency is south of Piney Branch Rd.

Route K6 Speed – Bus operations across the corridor as slower at University, approaching the Beltway, and near the District. In the peak PM operating hour, speeds are generally slower south of the Beltway.

Transit Stops – The team captured various bus stop conditions throughout the corridor. Almost all the stops require riders to wait very close to the street with little to no buffer between traffic. Many are not ADA Accessible. Many stops are between a service road and the main line of New Hampshire Avenue.

- *Where are people getting on and off?*
Transit Ridership – This is gathered from automated passenger count data on buses. High ridership nodes can be observed around White Oak, the Beltway, University Blvd, Ethan Allen, and Fort Totten. There are roughly 9500 daily bus boardings throughout the corridor.
- *Where can people [easily] get using public transit?*
The study team reviewed Fall 2019 data from RideOn and WMATA.

Transit Connectivity – There are multiple transit routes both thru the corridor and crossing the corridor. Connections are provided to Silver Spring, Takoma Park, College Park, and Hyattsville.

Origin-Destination Analysis shows where people live and work. Corridor residents live and work in the District, Silver Spring, 270 Corridor, and White Oak.

Multimodal Infrastructure – There is limited bike and pedestrian networks throughout the corridor.

We’ve begun conversations with DC and WMATA, who are receptive to a potential terminus at Fort Totten.



Written comments regarding Transit Analysis:

- Why is Hillandale not listed as "High Ridership"?? It was specifically mentioned and shown.
Response: That is correct, the data does show Hillandale as having high ridership. It should have been listed in the presentation.
- That represents ~10% of the current ADT's
Response: It depends where you are within the corridor.
- Related to improving east/west travel, as more Flash lines begin service, would it be possible to have buses switch lines where they cross each other? For example, a bus starts at the northern end of US 29, then instead of continuing south on 29, switches to New Hampshire to head south or north, allowing one-seat rides to more destinations.
Response: That could be an option down the line once more corridors are developed. We ultimately hope there will be improved connectivity.
- Rocking chairs are cute but you'd take your life in your hands to sit there
- Fort Totten or bust :-)
- Along with Hillandale there is a huge ridership at Oakview!
- (But if for some reason it isn't possible to go into the district, I would strongly recommend having it turn onto eastern and ending as close to Takoma Metro as possible so it gets the train connection.)
- I second Gretchen's statement
- I personally would love Takoma Metro even though it really doesn't make sense 🙄. Fort Totten or bust indeed!
- Related to improving east/west travel, as more Flash lines begin service, would it be possible to have buses switch lines where they cross each other? For example, a bus starts at the northern end of US 29, then instead of continuing south on 29, switches to New Hampshire to head south or north, allowing one-seat rides to more destinations.
- Agree w/ Gretchen & Craig -occasional Tacoma Park terminus does make a lot of sense
- The Elton Slip Ramp issue is not appropriate for this discussion. It is a LATIP issue !!!!
- Cicero is correct. The development team at Hillandale conducted the study which we would be happy to supply. There was NO single improvement which would have greater positive impact to the Powder Mill Road intersection. The Slip Ramp is absolutely appropriate as it is impactful to the corridor that the BRT will utilize.
- Actually more important for the NH BRT is how to get a median station in the space available. One area possible for a station in Hillandale is in the Elton Road area!
- I recall a BRT stop in the Master Plan being at Adelphi not Oakview. Has that changed?



Audio Comments regarding Transit Analysis:

- Does not the transit corridors being discussed here funnel people to certain areas from where they live to where they go to work, thereby limiting the opportunities to jobs (a de facto redlining in a sense), versus what true cross route transit beyond the scope of eastern MoCo where greater job opportunities may exist. These routes only travel in certain directions, which cut off people from potential job centers.

Response: It is important to look at this holistically. The 2013 Master Plan is being implemented over time. The ultimate goal is to make connections throughout the County.

- We are coordinating with the District, WMATA as well as Prince Georges County. Is it relevant to discuss a study by state highway developing a new ramp onto the Beltway. There is a concern in PG County for cut through traffic. This ramp may improve traffic on New Hampshire Avenue.

Response: We are working with regional partners. The Safety Study is done in partnership with Prince Georges County. SHA is part of the project in the Technical Advisory Committee. This project is beyond our current scope, but we are discussing with relevant parties.

- Comment: Is it in the recommendation to extend the northern end of the line beyond Colesville, to the ICC? It's a very diverse community, and many folks gravitate towards Millwood and New Hampshire.

Response: There is consideration in having the service ultimately reach Briggs Chaney. There are also conversations extended US-29 Flash service. In the longer term, there is potential to extend the service.

Next Steps

- The study team provided an overview of BRT as enhanced vehicles, enhanced stations, and enhanced operations. Vehicles and stations are developed at a program level. This project is focusing on enhanced operations. This includes precise station locations, running way (exact lane/location of running bus), and intersections. The team will then determine alternatives and test them for effectiveness.
- Refining Station Locations – The team will review and verify the proposed station locations in the 2013 Master Plan. Additional locations will be considered. Specific station location, including side of roads and accessibility will be considered. Current and future land use and ridership trends will be considered.
- Next Step: Identify Concepts to Consider – The study team will consider various lane configurations (runningway), including bus in mixed traffic, curbside bus lanes, one median bus lane, and two median bus lanes. This includes consideration of bus alignment at intersections and consideration for station access needs.



- Help Spread the Word – Materials were sent to CAC members to promote upcoming public meetings. CAC members are encouraged to use these materials to promote attendance through their local channels.
- Upcoming CAC Meeting will likely be after Labor Day

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The CAC Members also asked a series of questions following the meeting:

Q: Are there eventual plans for a trackless trolley system?

A: Perhaps in the far future. For now, the County is looking at Zero Emission vehicles.

Q: The study needs to look at the crossover between different BRT lines, for instance New Hampshire and Randolph. How people could transfer between and the other.

A: We are taking a look at this at Lockwood Drive, at the intersection with Flash on Route 29.

Q: Actually more important for the NH BRT is how to get a median station in the space available. One area possible for a station in Hillandale is in the Elton Road area!

A: We will take that into consideration.

Q: I recall a BRT stop in the Master Plan being at Adelphi not Oakview. Has that changed?

A: There is likely a stop at Adelphi, we will double check the County master plans.



POLL RESULTS

Throughout the presentation, meeting attendees were polled for their input and perspective. The poll questions and results follow.

