



**CORRIDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)
 MEETING #3 SUMMARY
 DECEMBER 15, 2022
 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM**

ATTENDEES:

CAC Member Attendees	
Brian Downie	Craig Grunewald
Eileen Finnegan	June Henderson
Peter Myo Khin	Shane Pollin
C Tunis	Jason Weaver
Dan Wilhelm	

Additional members of the public who attended the meeting:

Andrew Dempster U.S. FDA, White Oak Campus	Cicero Salles Montgomery County White Oak Planning Manager
Ezra Hollander Hillandale community member	David Anspacher, M-NCPPC
Jeremiah Pope Former District 5 Candidate, Hillandale Community Member, State House Chief of Staff	Bee Ditzler League of Women Voters-Montgomery County Transportation chair
Koralleen Stavish Takoma Park resident	Gerald Cichy
Inez Gutierrez	James Holmes
Rainier Gomez	

Montgomery County Staff and Consultant Team	
Rick Kiegel	MCDOT
Corey Pitts	MCDOT
Jamie Henson	Kittelson
Aditya Inamdar	Kittelson
Tara Hofferth	Kittelson
Nadiya Kutishcheva	Sharp & Co.



PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Welcome and Introductions

- Consultant Nadiya Kutishcheva welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of meeting expectations and Zoom software
- MCDOT Project Manager Rick Kiegel introduced the project team. Study team members introduce themselves.
- Consultant Jamie Henson reviewed the role of the Corridor Advisory Committee.

Project Recap

- Consultant Jamie Henson provided an overview of the study – the study corridor is between Fort Totten and the Colesville Park and Ride. The study will define start and end points, identify station locations, develop, and evaluate improvements to bus service, and address station accessibility. Jamie covered the greater study schedule, next steps for the project, and topics for upcoming CAC meetings
- Jamie presented a synthesis of findings from Existing Conditions Analysis, program goals, and considerations for identifying BRT concepts

Station Identification

- Jamie reviewed preliminary station locations as identified in the 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan
- Jamie reviewed changes from the Masterplan - the removal of one proposed station (Colesville Park and Ride), and the addition of three stations (MD 650 and Quebec St, MD 650 and Merwood Dr, Fort Totten Station)

Audio Comments Regarding Station Identification:

- In terms of the entire system, it seems like the goal is to provide transit from communities to employment centers with emphasis on intra-region connectivity. How do you deal with that as a part of this study? What if you live in White Oak and want to use transit to connect with family, not only to connect with employers? That's something transit systems need to focus on to facilitate community building.

Response: The main focus of the study is to improve service along the New Hampshire Corridor. There is a large amount of transit service on and crossing this corridor. Proposed alternatives will consider how New Hampshire Avenue service improves connections to other transit services to improve accessibility.

- There are places outside of the current station recommendations that would be helpful for people to reach. For example, between Randolph Rd and Valley Brook Dr there is a commercial center at Hollywood Blvd. Between Jackson Rd and the White Oak Transit Center, there is the White Oak library. Would the study consider having stops there because they are important?
Response: To make this a fast and efficient service, trade-offs will need to occur with stops. The more stops, the slower the service. However, it won't be only BRT serving the corridor. Local



service will be paired with BRT to provide full access for the corridor.

- The park space at the Hillandale Fire Department is undergoing a massive renovation. It does make sense for there to be a stop at FDA. It may be a lost opportunity for this public space to not receive a dedicated stop.

Response: It makes sense to connect as many civic spaces as possible. We are open to hearing these concerns and evaluating station locations. We hope to make sure that the FDA stop is optimized to access both the FDA and the park.

- I like your station recommendations. Local bus service (RideOn) should support BRT service. You need to be able to transfer between routes and travel quickly.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

- The CHI Center should also be considered, this is a critical employer for the Hillandale Area and an employment center for the physically challenged. Is the proposed FDA station right outside of the FDA complex or at the transit center? There is a considerable distance between the FDA and the park.

Response: Right now, we are thinking of that station location as right outside of the FDA entrance to make it as accessible as possible to adjacent residents and the park, as well as to FDA.

- Could your team put together a map showing the proposed BRT map on New Hampshire, along with the other bus services around the corridor to show transit routes feeding in/out of the service area?

Response: This map is on the study website and was shown during the meeting.

Curious to find out how and where the busses turnaround on the northern terminus

Response: This might happen at the Colesville Park and Ride.

Written Comments Regarding Station Identification:

- Did you say there would be a station at 410?

Response: Yes, that was envisioned as part of the Master Plan and it has not been amended in the study recommendation.

- Regarding FDA--have you been working regarding the FDA on-campus transit center and then using the WOSG Master Plan connection from that transit center to Lockwood at the White Oak Transit Center? I will send you some of the detail from both the WOSG and the FDA 2018 master plan. It is up to the county to advance the connection! BTW, regarding connections to FDA-- Currently there is a significant issue with the 29 Flash having to reroute to get to the FDA. This backtrack is a problem for those using the Orange line!

Response: We have been working with FDA. We have met with them and they have attended the study's Technical Advisory Committee meetings. The new street connection is contingent on being advanced through the FDA.



- The local bus service should be improved to go along with the BRT. At some places they run every 30 minutes or longer, which makes it not useful for connections.

Response: We are thinking through how we can facilitate these connections.

- I see the Colesville Park and Ride station may be eliminated. Will there still be a place to park and catch the Flash at the northern terminus?

Response: The park and ride is underutilized. Typically, it's not common to see folks driving and parking to take a BRT. If they are driving, they generally prefer to stay in their car. The park and ride will be less than a quarter mile from the Randolph Road station.

Concept Benefits and Challenges

- Jamie introduced four main “families” of concepts, along with benefits and challenges.
 - Concept 1 (Optimize in Mixed Traffic)
 - Concept 2 (Repurposing Lanes)
 - Concept 3 (Adding One Flash Lane)
 - Concept 4 (Adding Two Lanes)
- Jamie reviewed corridor Segments used for screening concepts and screening criteria

Audio Comments Regarding Concepts:

- The fatal flaw of impacting existing local service should be taken with a grain of salt. Local bus service can be restructured and expanded. The BRT and local bus should be integrated with each other.

Response: We're not removing the ability to marginally impact local bus service, but we would not want to impact operations to become significantly slower. We want to ensure local bus service continues to work well.

Written Comments Regarding Concepts:

- Dedicated lane with only BRT and regional express transit only.
- Has any modeling been done? IF not, when will you test? Peak direction historically has been in and out of DC, but this is changing in some areas. What growth are you considering for models?
Response: Modeling is the next step in the study. For most of the corridor, it's difficult to see a well-defined peak direction. We are considering the COG 2045 Regional Model for growth and the FTA STOPS model to predict ridership.
- 4th concept is the best for future growth.
- In DC, you might consider a different route than the K6 takes. The K6 goes down NH to North Capital, left on N Capital, then left again on Riggs. This is a traffic bottleneck. If you can avoid this and take another route to Ft. Totten, it may yield significant benefits.



Response: We have not settled on a routing to Fort Totten and are working with DDOT as we consider different options.

- Ridership tool: <https://www.wmata.com/initiatives/ridership-portal/Bus-Data-Portal.cfm>

Alternatives

- Jamie reviewed the three proposed alternatives
 - Alternative 1 -
Optimize traffic in mixed transit along full corridor
 - Alternative 2 -
Repurpose Curbside Lanes south of Piney Branch Road
Implement Transportation System Management with Transit Signal Priority north of Piney Branch Road
 - Alternative 3 -
Repurpose median lanes south of Piney Branch Road, Add one center loading Flash, shared bi-direction transit lane between Piney Branch Road and Lockwood Drive
Implement Transportation System Management with Transit Signal Priority north of Lockwood Drive

Audio Comments Regarding Alternatives:

- The segment between Powder Mill Rd and Sligo Creek is a challenge. The Hillandale shopping center has several bus stations that could be consolidated. In current operations, northbound PM buses block a full lane in this area. WMATA and RideOn should communicate better. Also, consider lessons learned from recent council approvals on US-29.

Written Comments Regarding Alternatives:

- What has been SHA's involvement? Is the agency supportive? If Alternative 3 is selected, are there more road improvements required? Takoma Park has a MP BRT concept. How does that fit?
Response: SHA has been deeply engaged, but we have not brought forward yet a preferred alternative for them to react to. They will review the study's models and microsimulations. The study team is also actively working with Takoma Park to discuss how alternatives work with their vision.
- Center lane boarding seems scary to me as a pedestrian. When riding a bus, I tend to avoid having to cross this highway.
- Could you describe how BRT buses transition from one lane configuration to the next in this alternative?
Response: We have not yet figured out all these details, but these transitions often happen using special signals to guide buses in and out of the lanes. In Alternative 3, likely at Piney Branch, a special signal would allow buses to enter and exit the exclusive transit lanes. On either end, there



would be spaces for buses to merge in and out of the lane as appropriate.

- Suggest talking with planned/likely new development in Hillendale and White Oak shopping center (on Lockwood).

Response: We're talking to planning staff about these developments, along with the project Technical Committee.

Next Steps

- Jamie reviewed next steps for the study
- The next CAC meeting will be in March or April 2023

Audio Comments Regarding Next Steps:

- Hillendale Gateway is highly impacted by this project. We are programming a transit center into the development and have done design work for transit. The study should reach out and engage with the project.

Response: We will follow up to schedule.

- How are you calculating ridership at this point? Do your numbers change if you have a circulator type system within a neighborhood. For example, in the Southwest corner of Hillendale just above the beltway there is a small loop. RideOn goes down practically every street within this neighborhood, if we could get this on either side of the corridor up to Randolph Rd, that would be great. My preference is Alternative 3. My concern with alternatives 1 and 2 is Flash buses traveling during peak hours getting stuck in traffic (particularly between Stewart Lane and the Beltway, and around Sligo Creek and Silver Spring). If Flash buses get stuck in traffic, how do you keep the supply of Flash buses going? Dedicated lanes provide a solution to this problem. Otherwise, it's a regular RideOn service. In Alternative 3, you are investing in long term infrastructure.

Response: We are looking at multiple alternatives. Alternative 3 does consider a peak running center lane allowing the bus to travel out of regular vehicle traffic.

- Between Hollywood Rd and Lockwood Dr, this gets congested on School Days.

Response: Thanks for the input, it's helpful to know specific generators influencing traffic. The Master Plan is very clear on the segment north of Lockwood Dr, and we want to operate with consistency.

Written Comments Regarding Next Steps:

- What is a "Hybrid Alternative?"

Response: After testing the three alternatives, we will consider additional enhancements that improve an alternative. We may mix and match solutions to create a new alternative.

- Meeting with planning staff is not the same as meeting with the impactful developments directly. I and other representatives of Hillendale Gateway look forward to speaking with you.

Response: We will follow up to schedule.



New Hampshire Avenue BUS RAPID TRANSIT

- North of White Oak, why is mixed traffic the only alternative under consideration?
Response: North of White Oak, the Master Plan is clear that no additional transit lanes are considered. Traffic also doesn't slow down in this segment as much. There is minimal infrastructure needed to ensure buses can move quickly in this segment.
- Will all your outreach meetings be virtual? Will there be additional community meetings planned? What timing do you anticipate for additional community input?
Response: Our next round of outreach will likely be in March/April following the Alternatives Analysis. There will be virtual outreach, along with bus stop chats, and other approaches for engaging with as many people along the corridor as feasible. This is a large study corridor, and we will consider how to best prepare materials showcasing alternatives on local segments.
- Will there ever be consideration in extending the BRT to Cloverly. Extremely limited service from White Oak to Randolph Road. Only two buses serve New Hampshire Avenue (Lockwood) to Randolph Road.
Response: Our current focus is based on how BRT is outlined within the Master Plan. Previous plans noted 20 min service between White Oak and Lockwood, which would be an improvement over two buses serving the corridor.
- As much as I would like service to Cloverly, Cloverly is a particularly sparse region, and outside the scope of the plans. Would it be possible to consult the bus drivers of related routes (K6, Z2, 22, etc.)? They should have firsthand experience of current ridership.
Response: Yes, it is helpful to get the operator's thoughts. We looked at data from automated passenger counters, so we have a good idea of where folks are getting on and off the buses.
- Must keep in mind when designing station at NH Ave and Randolph Road, the future Randolph Road BRT and the station it'll need at that intersection.
Response: We want to make sure that we are thinking through that interaction.
- Will the alternatives analysis look at how the NH BRT line will run through the White Oak Transit Station on Lockwood, or will that particular connection be determined after the alternatives analysis is completed?
Response: The County is looking into upgrading the Lockwood transit center and may not have a decision within the timeline of this project. This study will provide high level guidance to the County.
- I can help promote any future community meetings for the Takoma Park area.
Response: We will follow up.

Meeting Sign Off

- MCDOT Project Manager Rick Kiegel thanked attendees for their time and questions and shared contact information.