

Rapid Transit Task Force Working Group B

Report on Park and Ride Facility Needs

Introduction

The Rapid Transit Vehicle System (RTV) in Montgomery County provides for longer distance travel within and between major travel corridors to connect major activity centers throughout the County. The RTV System is fed by local Ride On and Metrobus services, as well as connections to Park and Ride lots. Ride On and Metrobus pick up commuters at Park and Ride Lots and deliver them to Metrorail or MARC to access their final destination. For the RTV System to be successful, many commuters and other travelers must be able to conveniently access park and ride lots to ride the RTV System. This report examines Park and Ride needs required to support the RTV System. The report is based on existing and projected near term demand for the next ten years. There has not been a comprehensive park and ride needs examination for the RTV system in Montgomery County. There are limited opportunities for the development of park and ride facilities. The strategy is to have facilities available at the end of corridors to intercept the longer distance traveler.

The typical Park and Ride Lot commuter lives in an area that is not served by the feeder bus system, and is unable to walk or bike to the RTV stations. Connecting park and ride facilities with commuter buses operated by the Maryland Transit Administration and express buses operated by Ride On and Metrobus is critical for the long distance traveler living in the outer Montgomery County as well as commuters living in Frederick, Howard, and Prince George's Counties and commuting through Montgomery County. The role that these park and ride facilities, commuter buses, and express buses serve is to capture the long distance automobile traveler as far away from the Beltway as possible, shift the commute to transit, and thereby reduce the number of single occupant vehicles traveling on congested Montgomery County roadways.

The review of Park and Ride facility usage undertaken for this report to the Rapid Transit Vehicle Task Force indicates that three new park and ride facilities at Germantown Milestone, Westfield Shoppingtown Montgomery and Olney are needed. Each lot would include a minimum of 200 spaces up to 1,000 spaces at a cost of \$25,000 per space. This cost estimate is for an open section parking garage exclusive of right-of-way costs, which can in some cases equal or exceed the cost of constructing a park and ride lot. Further study to identify specific locations and costs for the ultimate buildout of the RTV system is recommended.

Park and Ride Facilities Located in Montgomery County

The following table provides information from the Commuter Services Section of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation webpage: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/tsvtmpl.asp?url=/content/DOT/transit/routesandschedules/brochures/parklots.asp>. These park and ride lots are a mixture of sizes and ownership; all are served by public transit. In addition, there are other park and ride locations that primarily serve carpool and vanpool commuters and are not served by public transit. These other park and ride locations are typically built and maintained by the Maryland State Highway Administration and are located along major interstate corridors.

Park-N-Ride Lots in Montgomery County with Transit Service

Commuters may park their vehicles in the Montgomery County Park-N-Ride lots described below. Most lots are free. There are a few, however, that may require a parking permit and fee. Once parked, commuters can meet carpools or vanpools, or transfer to public transportation at these lots.

Corridor	Status	Lot Name	Spaces	Bus Routes Serving Lots	Metro Stations
1. US 29	Open	Burtonsville*	500	Z6 , Z9 , Z29 , MTA 929 , 915	Silver Spring
2. US 29	Open	Briggs Chaney*	240	Z1 , Z39 , Z6 , Z8 , Z11	Glenmont, Silver Spring
3. US 29	Open	Greencastle*	150	Z8 , Z11 , Z13	Silver Spring
4. US 29	Open	Tech Road*	130	C7 , Z8 , Z9 , 10	Glenmont, Silver Spring, Twinbrook, White Flint
5. US 29	Open	Scaggsville** (Howard County)	416	MTA929 , MTA915	Silver Spring, Dupont Circle, Farragut West (18th St.),

6. I-270	Open	Germantown*** (Clopper Rd & Kingsview Village Blvd)	78	71 , 74 , 78	Shady Grove
7. I-270	Open	Germantown/ MARC Station	670	61 , 83 , 97	Shady Grove
8. I-270	Open	Lakeforest Mall*	300	54 , 55 , 56 , 57 , 58 , 59 , 61 , J9 , J7	Shady Grove, Rockville, Bethesda
9. I-270	Open	Gaithersburg** I-270 & MD 124	517	J9 (I-270 Express)	Shady Grove
10. I-270	Open	Montrose Rd/MD 355**		5 , 26 , 38 , 46	Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, Twinbrook, White Flint, Grosvenor, Medical Center
11. I-270	Open	Milestone Shopping Center*	175	55 , 70 , 75 , 79 , 83 , 90	Rockville, Shady Grove, Bethesda
12. I-270	Open	Urbana ** (Frederick County)	193	75 , MTA 991 (Rock Spring)	Shady Grove, Germantown Transit Center
13. I-270	Open	Comus***	30	75	Shady Grove
14. I-270	Open	Westfield Shoppingtown Montgomery (Montgomery Mall) *	200	6 , 26 , 38 , 4 7 , 96 , J1 , J2 , J3	Rockville, Grosvenor, Wheaton, Glenmont, White Flint, Medical Center, Twinbrook, Bethesda, Shady Grove

15. I-270	Open	I-270 Corridor * West Diamond Avenue	350	54 , 71	Rockville, Lakeforest, Shady Grove, Kensington
16. MD 97	Open	Norbeck Rd**	235	51 , Y7 , 52 , 53 , Y8 , Y9 on Georgia at Norbeck)	Forest Glen Glenmont, Rockville, Wheaton, Silver Spring
17. MD 650	Open	Colesville Commuter Lot	190	Z2 , C7 , C8 , C9	Silver Spring, Twinbrook, White Flint
18. MD 118	Open	Germantown Transit Center*** (GTC)	125	55 , 61 , 74 , 75 , 82 , 83 , 97 , 98 , 100	Shady Grove, Germantown MARC station
19. MD 108	Open	Damascus	50	90	Shady Grove
20. MD 200 (ICC)	Under Constr uction	ICC at Georgia	150	51 , Y7 , 52 , 53 , Y8 , Y9	Forest Glen Glenmont, Rockville, Wheaton, Silver Spring

* Developer provided; ** State provided; *** County provided

In addition to the list above of park and ride facilities that are served by Ride On, Metrobus, MTA Commuter Bus, there are other lots that are served by Metrorail and MARC Commuter Rail. The Metrorail Stations with paid parking facilities include: Shady Grove, Rockville, Twinbrook, White Flint, Grosvenor, Forest Glen, Wheaton, and Glenmont. Montgomery County is funding the construction of a second parking garage at the Glenmont Station for an additional 1200 spaces and this facility is expected to open this spring.

Commuters from outside Montgomery County are also using park and ride locations that may not be served by public transit. These facilities include four park and ride lots in Howard County (Clarksville, Snowden River, Long Gate, and Broken Land) and three park and ride lots in Prince George's County (Laurel fringe parking, South Laurel, and Beltway and I-95).

Utilization of Park and Ride Facilities in Montgomery County

Park and ride facilities are a key element of the RTV System. The Park and Ride facilities that serve Metrorail stations and MARC Commuter rail in Montgomery County are typically operating at capacity, with the exception of those at the White Flint and Wheaton Metrorail Stations. Over the last 10 years, Montgomery County has built Metrorail garages at the Shady Grove and Grosvenor-Strathmore stations on the Metrorail Red Line. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) built the garage at the White Flint Metrorail station as a part of the joint development project. All of these parking facilities are at or near capacity except for White Flint and Wheaton. White Flint is expected to fill up with the completion of the joint development at the Metrorail Station while the Wheaton parking garage remains underutilized. The second garage with 1200 additional parking spaces at the Glenmont Station on the Metrorail Red Line is under construction with a spring 2012 opening.

The garage at the Germantown Transit Center, and the parking lot at the Germantown MARC station are operating at capacity. The park and ride lots at the MARC Stations that are typically full, with the exception of the Metropolitan Grove parking lot that with 352 spaces, approximately 70% of which are used. MARC management indicates that the limited availability of parking supply at the MARC stations is a significant constraint on ridership growth on the Brunswick Line serving Montgomery County. MARC parking is free of charge except for the parking at Rockville that serves the Metrorail station and has a fee of \$4.75 per day. The WMATA Board sets the parking pricing at the Metrorail Stations.

Park and Ride Facilities Near or At Capacity:

1. Westfield Montgomery Mall
2. Montrose Road / MD 355 (MidPike Plaza)
3. Germantown MARC Station
4. Germantown Transit Center
5. Germantown/Milestone Shopping Center
6. Comus (North of Clarksburg)
7. All Metrorail Stations except White Flint and Wheaton

Not all park and ride facilities in Montgomery County are well used. Several Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) lots serving the I-270 corridor as well as some serving the US Route 29 corridor are underutilized. Other underutilized Park and Ride facilities include the Norbeck Road facility located along the Georgia Avenue corridor, and the Colesville Facility along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor. In some instances, the underutilized facilities have poor visibility and access, other underutilized park and ride facilities are poorly served by local feeder buses.

Major Park and Ride Facilities that are underutilized:

I-270 Corridor:

- Lakeforest (10% used out of 217 spaces)
- I-270 and West Diamond
- I-270 and MD 124
- MARC Station @ Metropolitan Grove

US 29 Corridor:

- Briggs Chaney (60% of 250 spaces used)
- Burtonsville (80% of 388 spaces used)
- Greencastle (10% of 159 spaces used)
- Tech Road (30% of 157 spaces used)

General Montgomery County Park and Ride Lot Strategies

The best location for park and ride facilities is nearest the origin of the trip to minimize auto travel, at locations that are well served by public transit and provide easy access and visibility from major highways. Typically park and ride facilities are not in business districts and in neighborhoods.

Park and ride facilities should adjoin Rapid Transit Corridors serving 5,000 or more transit trips per day. Fourteen of the sixteen corridors examined in the Countywide BRT Study meet this ridership threshold. Only the Connecticut Avenue corridor and the Intercounty Connector corridor have less than 5,000 transit trips per day. The Connecticut Corridor is served on the north end by several existing lots along Georgia Avenue at Norbeck and the ICC Corridor has a park and ride lot under construction at the Georgia Avenue interchange.

New park and ride capacity should be located at the terminus of a given transportation corridor, with a minimum size of 200 to 300 spaces. Service strategies should minimize off route deviations to 1 to 2 miles. Sites should allow right –turns from the AM peak direction. The County should seek opportunities to share capacity with existing land uses, such as shopping centers and institutions. Locating park and ride facilities involves coordination with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) and WMATA. Work with neighboring counties is required when sites outside of Montgomery County are needed.

Needs Assessment by Corridor

Needs Assessments of park and ride lots can be divided into three phases corresponding to the phasing recommended by the Rapid Transit Task Force.

Phase 1:

- MD 355 South – No need because of the urban nature of the corridor
- ICC – Parking lot under construction that will be opened in early 2012
- Veirs Mill – Parking is available at the Wheaton and Rockville Metrorail Stations for a fee. Rockville lot is near capacity and additional spaces will be needed.
- Randolph Road – Glenmont Metrorail Station with the opening of the new 1200 space garage for a fee and free parking at the Colesville Lot
- Georgia North – ICC lot under construction that will be opened in early 2012 and Norbeck Lot.
- US 29 Columbia Pike – Ample Parking is available at Briggs Chaney, Burtonsville, Greencastle, and Tech Road

Phase 2:

- MD 185 Connecticut Avenue – Parking is available at the Norbeck lot (May need to extend route to lot)
- MD 193 University Boulevard – Parking for fee is available at Wheaton Metrorail Station and at other County parking facilities
- North Bethesda Transitway – Parking is available at the Westfield Montgomery Mall (need more capacity because existing lot is full)
- Old Georgetown – Parking is available at the Westfield Montgomery Mall (need more capacity because existing lot is full)
- Gude Drive/Key West – Parking for fee is available at the Rockville Metrorail Station. Rockville lot is near capacity and additional spaces may be needed
- Norbeck Road – Ample parking availability at the Norbeck lot
- New Hampshire – Colesville lot is currently underutilized.

Phase 3:

- Georgia South – No parking need in urban setting
- Muddy Branch – Ample parking available at Lakeforest Mall lot
- MD 355 North – Parking at the Corridor Cities Transitway parking lot at Comsat and at the Milestone Shopping Center lot. Additional capacity at Milestone should be examined.
- MidCounty – Examine parking needs in facility planning
- Route 355 South (Bethesda to Friendship Heights) - No parking need in urban setting
- CCT extension from Comsat to Clarksburg – Parking at the CCT station at Comsat
- Observation Drive - Examine parking needs in facility planning

Summary of Need

The vast majority of the rapid transit corridors provide parking supply that is adequate to accommodate the parking need generated by the RTV system. A detailed parking needs study has not been undertaken and should be examined as each corridor is advanced into RTV planning. Current parking supply deficiencies will continue to limit the ridership potential of many of the corridors if additional capacity is not created. A review of current usage levels at Park and Ride Lots confirms that *additional parking in the short term is needed to serve the routes at Westfield Montgomery Mall, Germantown Milestone, and the routes serving the Olney area*. Each of these three areas requires expansion of Park and Ride capacity to support the RTV system. Both the Westfield Montgomery Mall and the Germantown Milestone facilities are on private property and the expansion of these facilities would have to be negotiated with these owners. Additional property adjacent or nearby these facilities should also be explored. Parking in Olney has not been investigated as part of the prior BRT studies and should be further explored.

Park and Ride lots or garages of at least 300 parking spaces at Westfield Montgomery Mall, Germantown Milestone, and in the Olney Area are required to support the RTV system over the 10 year time horizon. Each Park and Ride lot is estimated to cost approximately \$7.5 million, based on a unit cost of \$25,000 per parking space. The total cost for the construction of the three needed facilities is roughly \$22.5 million. It is important to note that potential right-of-way costs are not included in these estimates, and that right-of-way costs can equal or exceed the cost of the lot itself. The next steps are to conduct further study to: 1) identify potential locations for each of the three park and ride lots required to support the RTV system in the near term, and 2) identify the planning horizon and costs for park and ride needs required to support the *ultimate buildout* of the RTV system.

FILENAME: h/transportation policy/planning/amr/park and ride/Rapid Transit Task Force Working Group B 1 10 12v3.docx