

FLASH

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

SEMI-ANNUAL UPDATE TO
THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
SPRING 2025

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) continues to implement the 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. This brief document contains an update on recent efforts to advance the program and is published semiannually.

Current Flash BRT program and project efforts include:

- General BRT Program Development.
- Design and Construction of Veirs Mill Road and MD 355 Central Flash projects.
- Preliminary Engineering for US 29 – Phase 2 Flash, which will add median dedicated transit lanes within the project's limits from Tech Road to Sligo Creek Parkway.
- Planning/Alternatives Analysis for the North Bethesda Transitway and New Hampshire Avenue Flash BRT Corridors.
- “AccelerateMC” Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) Implementation.
- Associated Fleet Procurement and Facilities Development.

Highlights of progress during the period of November 2024 through April 2025 on each of these efforts are provided on the following pages.



BRT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

1. Executed a Letter of Intent (LOI) for MDOT and MCDOT Bus Rapid Transit Program Coordination to facilitate the delivery of a BRT network on State roads.
2. Continued coordination with MDOT State Highway Administration to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that implements the actions outlined in the LOI.
3. Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Howard County for extending Flash service to Columbia. Executed a grant agreement with the FTA for bus funding for the extension.
4. Initiated programmatic level guidance on:
 - BRT Standards and Specifications;
 - Programmatic Quality Management System;
 - Programmatic Systems Integration Testing Plan and Pre-revenue Operations Plan; and
 - BRT Infrastructure Maintenance program.

HOW FLASH BENEFITS THE COMMUNITY



ALEX TSIRONIS
Founder - MoCo Show

“The population has doubled since I've been in Montgomery County, and so has development, and there's not much room for new roads... if there was another option, a faster bus that I would be able to get on, I would definitely take it.”

The “Learn About Flash BRT!” video highlights several ways in which the Flash BRT benefits the Montgomery County community.



5. Conducting research on Emerging Technologies for BRT.
6. Completed development of a Programmatic Safety and Security Management Plan and Certification Plan.
7. Prepared a brochure to help property owners understand their rights and the County's right of way (ROW) acquisition process.
8. Completed the preparation of Programmatic Safety and Security Plans for application to the design and construction of BRT routes.
9. Participated in the following events to promote the Flash BRT program:
 - Thanksgiving Parade at Veterans Plaza
 - Winter Holiday "Flash Lights" Social Media Campaign and Holiday "Get Around" Flash Guide released in December
 - "Love Flash" Social Media Campaign unveiled in February
 - Released Spring "Get Around" Flash Guide in March
10. Completed and released a brief video called "Learn About Flash BRT!" to familiarize community members with BRT service and its benefits.
11. Developing a Communications Strategy to establish consistently timed messaging across all BRT corridors, based on which phase of project delivery each corridor is in. This resource will ensure that every touchpoint with the public reinforces the same clear narrative.



Thanksgiving Parade at Veterans Plaza



"Love Flash" Social Media Campaign Unveiled in February

ASSOCIATED FLEET & FACILITIES EFFORTS

- Selection of a Public-Private Partnership (P3) developer is ongoing for the Crabbs Branch Maintenance Depot (Jeremiah Park). The RFQ is completed and has identified three highly qualified teams. RFP development is in progress for final selection.
- Coordinating with the City of Gaithersburg and the developer of the Lakeforest Mall site on relocation of the Lakeforest Transit Center to Russel Avenue. Conceptual design options were presented to the County Executive and 30% Design is currently in progress.
- Awarded a Community Project Grant from the FTA for four electric buses to be deployed on the extended US 29 Flash service in Howard County.
- Advancing the purchase of 13 zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (FCEBs), made possible by a \$14.8 million Bus and Bus Facilities grant from the FTA to design and construct a new hydrogen fuel production and fueling station at the existing David F. Bone Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operations Center (EMTOC) in Gaithersburg. These buses will be assigned to the Veirs Mill Road BRT service.

ACCELERATEMC REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE ACCELERATOR

The County was awarded a \$2 million grant by US DOT Build America Bureau to create the [AccelerateMC Regional Infrastructure Accelerator \(RIA\)](#).

AccelerateMC will develop innovative approaches to funding, financing, risk management, third-party agreements, project delivery, and workforce development for the BRT program.

- Negotiated scopes and budgets for consultant support for delivery of RIA tasks; tasks to begin in Spring 2025.
- Participated in biweekly coordination meetings with USDOT.
- Updated the AccelerateMC website to explain the program and scopes of the tasks.



1 VEIRS MILL ROAD FLASH BRT

The [Veirs Mill Road Flash BRT](#) will be a 7.6-mile, limited-stop, branded bus service with twelve stations planned on Veirs Mill Road and MD 355.

- Awarded an \$8 million grant for project development from the FTA's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program. These funds provide additional resources to complete the planning, design, and environmental work.
- Completed 95 percent design and now completing final design.
- Worked closely with the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Project Management Oversight Consultant (PMOC) team on risk assessment, including two site visits.
 - In January 2025, hosted the team for a tour of the Veirs Mill Road corridor. The PMOC team had an opportunity to ask technical questions about the project in preparation for the Risk Workshop.
 - In February 2025, hosted a three-day Risk Workshop. This meeting provided the PMOC team the opportunity to understand MCDOT's preparedness for executing the project, and for MCDOT to understand what aspects of the project may require more planning to mitigate risks. This is a key step in the process to secure a federal grant.
- Staff are conducting bi-weekly meetings with the FTA and its PMOC to coordinate their evaluation of the project's readiness for federal funding. Through these meetings, MCDOT is demonstrating its in-house management and technical capabilities to advance the project.
- Established a Safety and Security Committee and Fire Life Safety Committee to review project-specific Safety and Security Plans and required readiness documentation for federal funding.
- Developed updated schedule and prioritization for temporary and permanent right-of-way acquisition. Notices for priority parcels were distributed to initiate the acquisition process.
- Preparing plats to accompany the right-of-way acquisition.
- Coordinating with third-party agencies and utilities (e.g., City of Rockville, Pepco, Verizon, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Washington Gas) to confirm design and roles for utility relocation.
- Coordinating with WMATA and Ride On to facilitate operations planning, complementing services, and adjustment of underlying services when the BRT becomes operational.

2 MD 355 FLASH BRT

The [MD 355 Flash BRT](#) will be a 24-mile County-owned and operated transitway to include approximately 11 miles of fully dedicated BRT lanes. MCDOT is currently advancing the first phase, the Central portion between the Germantown Transit Center and Rockville Town Center.

- Accepted by the FTA for entry into the Project Development phase under the FTA's CIG New Starts program on October 25, 2024. This is the initial step in obtaining federal funding for the project.
- Evaluated proposals and conducted interviews for the Progressive Design Build (PDB) Request for Proposal (RFP). The PDB will complete design for the corridor and construct the initial 11-mile Central Phase of the project between Rockville Town Center and the Germantown Transit Center.
- Advanced initial design for a relocated Lakeforest Transit Center, replacing the facility that currently exists on Lost Knife Road and better integrating with the new development.
- Preparing environmental documentation for the Central phase. Conducting natural resources and cultural and historic resources field work to identify potential impacts. Findings will be used to refine the design to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts.
- Developing a service plan for underlying local bus service along the corridor.
- Documented strong existing ridership in the corridor for the FTA's New Starts Grant program, a major source of project funding.
- Developed a Public Engagement Plan for 2025, including two rounds of upcoming public meetings (Spring, Fall 2025).

HOW FLASH BENEFITS THE COMMUNITY



NARCISSE OSSIALA
Montgomery
College Student

"It would be great to save money on gas and parking. Plus, riding the bus is easier than driving; I can study or catch up with friends."

The "[Learn About Flash BRT!](#)" video highlights several ways in which the Flash BRT benefits the Montgomery County community.



1 US 29 – PHASE 2

MCDOT has continued work to complete preliminary engineering (35% design) for [US 29 BRT Phase 2](#), which includes the selected median bus lane concept. The study area includes a 4.6-mile section of the full US 29 BRT Corridor between Sligo Creek Parkway and Tech Road.

- Conducted Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting with the MNCPPC, SHA, and WMATA on January 16, 2025.
- Conducted the Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) Winter Meeting at Montgomery Blair High School on January 29, 2025.
- Developed a Public Engagement Plan for 2025, including three rounds of upcoming public meetings (Spring, early Summer, Fall 2025). Conducted a public meeting on April 8, 2025.
- Continued developing median running bus lane design and reviewing bicycle/pedestrian plans.
- Continued coordinating with SHA on preliminary design.
- Conducted noise monitoring in Winter 2025 as part of the project’s environmental documentation.

2 NORTH BETHESDA TRANSITWAY

MCDOT is planning a BRT connection in [North Bethesda](#) between the Westfield Montgomery Mall Transit Center and the North Bethesda Metrorail Red Line Station.

- Revised build alternatives and analysis based on feedback received from CAC and Homeowner Associations (HOAs).
- Conducted a TAC meeting with MNCPPC, SHA, and WMATA on March 17, 2025.
- Conducted a CAC meeting on April 3, 2025.
- Developed a Public Engagement Plan for 2025, including a planned public meeting in Spring 2025 and HOA engagement.
- MCDOT anticipates recommending a preferred alternative to the County Executive and County Council in Fall 2025.

3 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE

The project will create a BRT corridor along [New Hampshire Avenue](#) (MD 650) between the Fort Totten Metrorail Station in the District of Columbia and the Colesville Park and Ride lot.

- Developed and analyzed the performance of the Hybrid Alternative which combines the most productive elements of multiple alternatives into a single alternative.
- The public is providing feedback on the preferred alternatives

HOW FLASH BENEFITS THE COMMUNITY



HENEDINA DE LOS TRINOS
Montgomery County Resident

“I gave up driving last year because I don’t feel like it’s safe. Seniors, usually, you get slower and you have to know your limitations to be safe for other people. That’s my main concern.”



KARI SWENSON
Business Owner, Horizon, LLC

“I have 450 employees overall—about 170 in Montgomery County. With access to the Flash Bus system, it would allow our employees more time with friends and family, less time waiting for the bus.”

The [“Learn About Flash BRT!” video](#) highlights several ways in which the Flash BRT benefits the Montgomery County community.

