

Resolution No.: 18-844  
Introduced: May 16, 2017  
Adopted: June 13, 2017

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

---

Lead Sponsor: Council President

---

**SUBJECT:** Selection of Recommended Alternative for the MD 586/Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit Study

**Background**

1. In September 2016 the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), in coordination with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), completed a Draft Corridor Study Report for the MD 586/Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study. The study examined four alternatives in detail:
  - Alternative 1 (No Build): assumes no improvements to the corridor other than what is included in the Fiscally-Constrained Long Range Plan and serves as a baseline to measure other alternatives.
  - Alternative 2 (Transportation Systems Management): Minor infrastructure improvements, including construction of queue jumpers, installation of Transit Signal Priority (TSP), and bus stop improvements. This alternative includes implementation of limited-stop service. Cost = \$34.9 million.
  - Alternative 3 (Curb-running BRT): Provision of dedicated curb BRT lanes along most of the corridor through widening or use of existing bus lanes. Curb lanes would also accommodate local buses and right-turning vehicles. BRT stations would be constructed along the corridor with features such as level-boarding, off-board fare collection, and real-time information, and new BRT service would be provided using new, branded, and larger BRT vehicles. Cost = \$148.2 million.
  - Alternative 5B: Creation of a single, two-way BRT lane in the median, with passing lanes at stations or two dedicated median lanes where feasible. As in Alternative 3, BRT stations would be constructed along the corridor with features such as level-boarding, off-board fare collection, and real-time information, and new BRT service would be provided using new, branded, and larger BRT vehicles. Cost = \$289.4 million.
2. The County Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment (T&E) Committee received a briefing on the report at its December 1, 2016 meeting. At this worksession the Selection of Recommended Alternative for the MD 586/Veirs Mill Road

Bus Rapid Transit Study consensus was that Alternative 5B should be eliminated from consideration due to its much higher cost and relatively small improvement in travel time savings compared to the other build alternatives. The Committee asked MDOT to evaluate a new “BRT with queue jumps only” alternative. This alternative includes many of the elements of Alternative 3: longer (60’ long), multiple-door BRT buses, larger stations with canopies, level boarding, real-time information, and off-board fare collection. It would not have a continuous dedicated lane; however, like Alternative 2, it would feature queue jump lanes at Veirs Mill Road’s 12 busiest intersections between Rockville and Wheaton, and TSP that would give BRT vehicles an advanced or extended green at these intersections. Since it is a hybrid of Alternatives 2 and 3, it is referred to as Alternative 2.5.

3. The T&E Committee received a second briefing from MDOT and MCDOT on May 3, 2017. MDOT found that Alternative 2.5 would provide roughly the same or slightly less travel time savings (depending on the direction of travel and the time of day) than Alternative 3, but at a cost of \$79.2 million: \$69.0 million (47%) less than Alternative 3. The Committee proposed Alternative 2.5 as the recommended option to carry forward into preliminary design, and it proposed Alternative 3 to be retained as the master plan option, protecting the right-of-way for a potential upgrade to a continuous dedicated lane in the long term, if it is eventually warranted.

#### Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Council selects Alternative 2.5 as the recommended option to carry forward into preliminary design, and identifies Alternative 3 to be retained as the master plan option, protecting the right-of-way for a potential upgrade to a continuous dedicated lane in the long term, if it is eventually warranted.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council