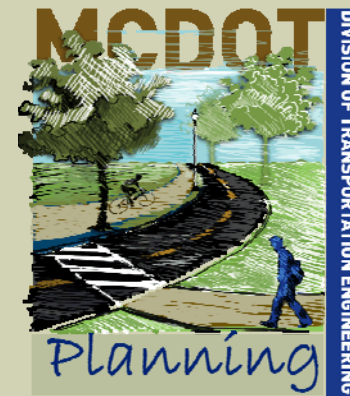




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THE PLAN AHEAD

Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director Department of Transportation

**MIDCOUNTRY CORRIDOR STUDY
 ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED STUDY**

NEWSLETTER PURPOSE

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with an overview of the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS) that have been approved by federal and state environmental regulatory agencies for the Midcounty Corridor Study (MCS) and an outline of the next steps.

ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED STUDY

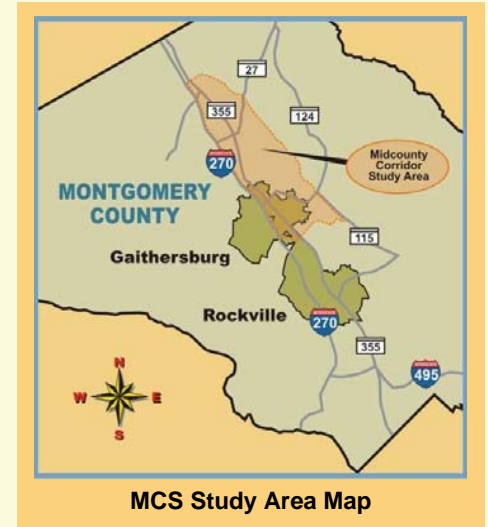
The Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study, referred to as **ARDS**, for the Midcounty Corridor Study is a document published by Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to summarize and compare the studied preliminary alternatives and recommends those to be carried forward for detailed study.

In 2010, MCDOT submitted the **June 2010 ARDS Recommendations** and **November 29, 2010 Modified ARDS Recommendations** to the three environmental regulatory agencies - US Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency and MD Department of the Environment - for their review and concurrence. The ARDS recommendations reflect the result of preliminary studies, agency input, stakeholder recommendations and public comments received.

In January/February 2011, the three environmental regulatory agencies granted concurrence on the ARDS proposed by MCDOT in the **November 29, 2010 Modified ARDS Recommendations**. The approved ARDS includes:

- **Alternatives 1, 2, 4 Modified, 5, 8 & 9.**
- **Northern Terminus Options A, B & D for Alternatives 8 & 9.**

Alt. 1, No Build, is the baseline condition which assumes that all proposed transportation improvements as defined in the 2004 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MCOG) Constrained Long



Range Plan (CLRP) and other approved planning documents are built for horizon year 2030 except for the extension of Midcounty Highway. The baseline condition also includes all transit system improvements including the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) and travel demand management measures applied to the entire Metropolitan Washington region. Alt. 1 is retained for comparison to the build alternatives because it serves as a baseline if no action is taken.

Alt. 2, Transportation Systems Management/Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM), was developed to improve the existing transportation system with minimal capital improvements while reducing the demand for single-occupant vehicle travel on roadways. In the horizon year 2030, thirteen (13) intersections will exceed the acceptable Critical Lane Volumes (CLVs) as defined in the growth policy area. These intersections are proposed to be improved with addition of through and/or turning lanes to increase capacity. Alt. 2 is retained to determine the impact that minor transit service enhancements and intersection improvements would have on reducing congestion.

The Next Steps

**PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE &
 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT**

After a public hearing on the Draft Environmental Document, MCDOT will evaluate public and agency comments, identify a Preferred Alternative in concert with the permit agencies, and refine this alignment based on public and agency comments to further avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts. These refinements will be documented in the Final Environmental Document. The permit agencies will make their permit decision. This completes the NEPA review process and concludes the Midcounty Corridor Study. *The schedule for this step is currently pending.*

The Preferred Alternative will then be proposed to the County Council to be included as part of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to receive funding for final design and construction.

Public participation is an indispensable component of the Midcounty Corridor Study. During the life of the Study, your feedback and input is vital. MCDOT encourages you to stay involved!

DETAILED STUDY

MCDOT is currently proceeding with detailed engineering and environmental studies for the retained alternatives and options and will be refining the alternatives and options to make them as environmentally and operationally beneficial as possible. Cost estimates will be developed and detailed impacts to traffic, properties, and social, economic, cultural and natural resources will be evaluated. *The detailed studies are expected to take approximately one year and be completed in Spring 2012.*

**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT &
 PUBLIC HEARING**

The results of the detailed study will be documented in a Draft Environmental Document which will be published and made available for public comment and agency review. A public hearing will be held for public testimony. *This step is expected to be completed in Summer 2012.*

For more information, please contact Greg Hwang, Project Manager
 Phone: 240-777-7279 • E-mail: greg.hwang@montgomerycountymd.gov
 Login onto: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/midcountycorridorstudy



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MIDCOUNTY CORRIDOR STUDY (MCS) - ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED STUDY (ARDS)

Alt. 4 Modified, Brink-Wightman-Goshen-Snuffer School-Muncaster Mill, is the combination of Alt. 4 and Alt. 10. With this combined alternative, traffic on the Brink Road — Wightman Road — Goshen Road — Snuffer School Road — Muncaster Mill Road corridor will have multiple options to access other major corridors such as I-270, MD 200 (ICC), MD 355, MD 124 and MD 115. Alt. 4 is retained to offer improvements to traffic congestion, travel times, safety, efficiency, and pedestrian/bicycle access using existing roadways on the eastern side of the study area.

Alt. 5, MD 355 with Service Roads, was developed to determine if improvements within the heavily-traveled MD 355 corridor would be sufficient to satisfy the project purpose and need. It follows the Midcounty Highway (MD 124) — Montgomery Village Avenue (MD 124) — Frederick Road (MD 355) — Ridge Road (MD 27) corridor. Service roads along MD 355 were proposed to consolidate the access drives, entrances and side streets along the corridor and improve mobility and safety. Alt. 5 is retained to offer improvements to traffic congestion, travel times and pedestrian/bicycle access using existing roadways on the western side of the study area.

Alt. 8, Midcounty Highway (M-83) Master Plan Alignment truncated at Watkins Mill Road, is a truncated version of Alt. 9, M-83 Master Plan Alignment, that terminates on the south at the southern Watkins Mill Road intersection. Spot intersection improvements will be evaluated within an area bounded by MD 355, Watkins Mill Road, Stedwick Road, and Montgomery Village Avenue to improve mobility for motorists who want to access existing Midcounty Highway (MD 124). Alt. 8 is retained to eliminate the environmental impacts to Whetstone Run between Watkins Mill Road and Montgomery Village Avenue while maintaining the high level of transportation benefits associated with the Master Plan alignment.

Alt. 9, Midcounty Highway (M-83) Master Plan Alignment, has been proposed in the County's Master Plan since

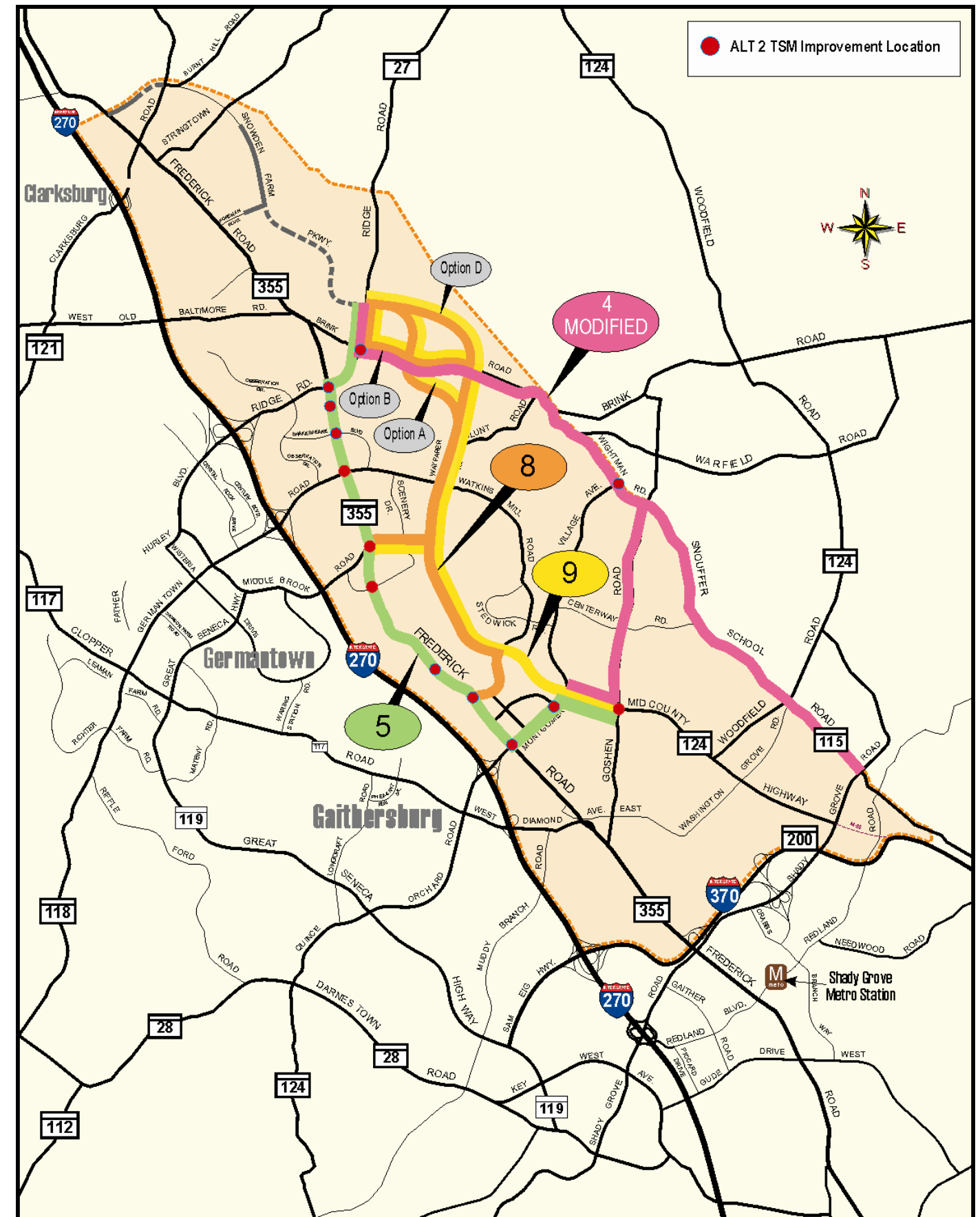
the 1960s as an extension of Midcounty Highway (M-83). Alt. 9 would complete the master planned link between existing Midcounty Highway on the south and Snowden Farm Parkway on the north and would reduce congestion, minimize travel times and significantly improve capacity, mobility, safety, efficiency and pedestrian/bicycle access.

Northern Terminus Options A, B & D for Alts. 8 & 9 between Blunt Road and Ridge Road (MD 27), are carried forward for detailed study to evaluate their impacts to North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park, Dayspring Creek, Wildcat Branch, Woodfield Farm (historic property), All Souls Cemetery, working farms and adjacent communities.

Option A follows the Midcounty Highway (M-83) Master Plan alignment. It starts from Blunt Road, crosses Dayspring Creek, and passes through North Germantown Greenway Park on a curvilinear alignment, intersecting Brink Road at Wildcat Road. It extends to the east and north of All Souls Cemetery, crosses Wildcat Branch, and terminates at the Ridge Road (MD 27) / future Snowden Farm Parkway intersection.

Option B starts from Blunt Road, crosses Dayspring Creek, and passes through North Germantown Greenway Park on a tangent alignment, intersecting Brink Road east of Wildcat Road (between Glendevon Court and Lawland Court). It extends along Brink Road and Ridge Road (MD 27) and terminates at the Ridge Road (MD 27) / future Snowden Farm Parkway intersection.

Option D starts from Blunt Road, crosses Dayspring Creek, and passes through North Germantown Greenway Park on a tangent alignment, intersecting Brink Road east of Wildcat Road (between Glendevon Court and Lawland Court). It extends through Woodfield Farm, crosses Wildcat Branch, and terminates at the Ridge Road (MD 27) / future Snowden Farm Parkway intersection.



Public Access for ARDS Documents



Montgomery County
Department of Transportation

In MCDOT's desire to best serve the needs of your community, hard copies of the **June 2010 ARDS Recommendations** and **November 29, 2010 Modified ARDS Recommendations** are available for review at the following onsite locations during business hours:

Damascus Public Library
9701 Main Street, Damascus, MD 20872

Gaithersburg Public Library Interim Branch
Lakeforest Mall, Second Floor
701 Russell Ave. Suite D201, Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Germantown Public Library
19840 Century Boulevard, Germantown, MD 20874

Rockville Public Library
21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850

Quince Orchard Public Library
15831 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Upcounty Regional Service Center
12900 Middlebrook Rd, Ste. 1000, Germantown, MD 20874

You may also access both ARDS documents at the MCS project website: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/midcountycorridorstudy

