MD 355 Central Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #12

February 12, 2018
6:30pm – 8:30pm

Montgomery County Executive Office Building
9th Floor Conference Room
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

CAC members in attendance:

CAC members (marked with an "X" if Present)			
Joshua Raymond Arcurio		Anthony Kouneski	
Peter Benjamin		Jeremy Martin	
Jay Corbalis		Chad Salganik	
Elizabeth Crane	X	Eric Siegel	
Kristi Cruzat	X	Ana Milena Sobalvarro	
Roger Fox	X	Gerard Stack	
Jerry Garson	X	Michael Tardif	
Peter Katz		Zachary Trupp	X
Arnold Kohn	X	Francine Watters	X

Stakeholders and members of the public in attendance:

Other attendees
Barry Gore, City of Rockville

Staff in attendance:

MCDOT staff	Consultant team members
• Darcy Buckley, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Director's Office • Corey Pitts, MCDOT Division of Transportation Engineering, MD 355 BRT Project Manager	• Steve Hawtof, Gannett Fleming (GF), Project Manager • Denny Finnerin, GF • Dan Lovas, VHB • Drew Morrison, VHB • Christine Potocki, VHB • Lora Byala, Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning (Foursquare ITP) • Sandy Davis, Foursquare ITP • Josh Diamond, Foursquare ITP • Alanna McKeeman, Foursquare ITP • William Shuldiner, Foursquare ITP • Chris Bell, AECOM

Introductions, Project Update, Overview of Agenda

Alanna McKeeman, facilitator, and the participants all introduced themselves. Alanna reviewed the ground rules for the CAC meetings. MCDOT staff announced that Corey Pitts, the MD 355 Project Manager would be the new point of contact for CAC members, as Darcy Buckley will be on leave for the next few months. Alanna gave the CAC members an update on the three recent open houses that occurred in January and early February, explaining that there were approximately 170 total attendees and roughly 70 comment cards submitted, which allowed the project staff to gather valuable feedback on the various aspects of the project. She concluded the introduction by informing the CAC members that the next round of open houses for the project would take place in the fall of 2018, but that MCDOT would continue other outreach efforts including stakeholder meetings, pop-up events, and community updates throughout the spring and summer.

Meeting Activity

Alanna introduced the activity for the meeting. During the activity, CAC members were separated into three groups and each group rotated around the room to visit three stations, which addressed BRT and bus service planning, engineering, and station locations, respectively. Each group visited each station for 25 minutes, where they discussed the respective topics with project staff.

Meeting Activity Feedback

Upon completion of the activity, Alanna asked one team member from each topical station to provide a summary of the discussions, comments, and questions during all three rotations.

Service Planning Station

Many of the attendees who discussed service planning agreed that BRT ridership is segmented along the corridor. Many riders in the north ride buses to connect to the Red Line, while those in the south are moving between Metro stations. When riders use existing local buses along the corridor, they are more likely to take the first bus that arrives at the stop, whether it is the 46, the 55, or the 101 (Ride On extRa). CAC members recommended extending Ride On extRa service all day, or at least later in the evenings, to increase ridership. Others added that it is important to ensure that the BRT headways were short enough to keep the service “rapid.” Finally, CAC members explained that the signage and maps for the new BRT routes would need to be clear in order to assist the high number of non-local riders, such as tourists, who may use the service.

Engineering Station

At the engineering station, the project team and CAC members discussed the different alternatives for BRT service, which use a combination of mixed traffic, curb-running, and median-running operations. CAC members discussed how the new Amazon headquarters, if it were to come to White Flint, would affect the BRT service. There were also discussions about the efficiency of the single lane alternative. The groups also discussed potential safety issues caused by jay walkers if the median-running alternative is selected, as well as the opportunity to build a bicycle path along the corridor that is separate from the roadway to reduce safety concerns. Some CAC members pointed out that many vehicles turn left at Strathmore Avenue while traveling southbound on MD 355, which may affect the ability to implement

median-running service at that location. There were also discussions about the White Flint Sector One and Sector Two Plans, which should be considered as new BRT service is implemented. Finally, there were questions about whether new bike paths could be used by emergency vehicles throughout the corridor, and if this would help these vehicles bypass traffic.

Stations Location Station

At this station, CAC members discussed potential BRT station locations throughout the corridor and provided feedback about what makes a good station. CAC members said that many areas along the corridor are less conducive for BRT stations. Among the places that were discussed as potentially advantageous station locations were: Templeton Place, Security Lane, Old Georgetown Road and Marinelli Road, White Flint Metro station, Cedar Lane, and Bethesda Metro station. The project team explained that MCDOT is not targeting a specific number of station; rather, MCDOT plans to build enough stations to serve the projected levels of ridership.

Conclusion

Alanna thanked the CAC members for attending the meeting and providing constructive feedback. She informed them that the next CAC meetings will take place in June, at which there will be information on preliminary modeling results, detailed engineering including stormwater management, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and environmental considerations.