MD 355 Flash Project Update

MD 355 North Corridor Advisory Committee
April 20, 2021
Welcome!

Welcome to this virtual Corridor Advisory Committee meeting

• We will be going to go over some basic controls to help you use the Zoom meeting format before we start the presentation.

• Please note this meeting is being recorded.
  • It is being recorded on video and audio and will be posted on our website.
  • If you do not wish to have your voice or likeness recorded, please turn your video camera off, and refrain from asking questions using the audio option. Instead, you can send your questions via the chat.
Using Zoom

Muting

• Everyone is on mute. You can unmute yourself, but we ask that everyone stay on mute to cut down on background noise.

• To request to speak, we ask that you use the **raise hand** feature (instructions in just a minute). Once you have been recognized, you can unmute and ask your question or share your comment.

• If you have called in by telephone, you can unmute yourself by dialing **\*6** once you have been recognized.
Using Zoom

Video

• Your video camera is enabled if you choose to turn it on.

• If your internet bandwidth is limited and affects audio, you may have better performance by turning off your camera.
Using Zoom

Asking Questions (Chat)

- If you have a question during the presentation, send it via chat.

To send a chat:
- Click “chat” in the bottom menu
- A new window will appear. In the “to” field, change the drop down to “Corey Pitts”
- Type your question and send it.
Using Zoom

Raise Your Hand

- If you’d like to speak to ask a question or make a comment, please **raise your hand**

To raise your hand

- Click “participants” in the bottom menu
- A new window will appear. Click the blue “raise hand button”.
- If you’ve dialed in by phone, dial *9.
Using Zoom

View

To change your view so that you only see people with cameras on:

• Click the up arrow next to “start video”.
• Select “Video settings”.
• Make sure “Hide non-video participants” is checked.
Introductions
Project Team Participants

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)
• Corey Pitts
• Darcy Buckley
• Joana Conklin
• Denny Finnerin

Preliminary Engineering Consultant Design Team
• Mike Chamberland, Stantec
• Lori Adgate, Stantec
• Randy Knapick, IBI Group
• Andrew Pease, IBI Group
Meeting Objectives and Agenda Review
Agenda

• Meeting Objectives & Agenda
• MD 355 Project Refresher
• Project Update & Schedule
• Presentation & Focused Discussion
• Next Steps
Meeting Objectives

• Update CAC members on the status of the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, as it moves forward into Preliminary Engineering

• Introduce design refinements being considered as part of Preliminary Engineering

• Provide CAC members with an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback
MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit
Project Refresher
The purpose of the project is to provide a new transit service with greater travel speed and frequency along MD 355 between Bethesda and Clarksburg that will help accomplish the following:

- Enhance transit connectivity and multimodal integration
- Improve bus mobility
- Address current and future bus ridership demands
- Attract new riders and provide improved service for existing riders
- Support approved Master Planned growth
- Improve transit access to major employment and activity centers
- Achieve Master Planned non-auto driver modal share
- Provide a sustainable and cost-effective transit service
- Improve safety for all
MCDOT’s Flash BRT Program

- The MD 355 BRT is part of Montgomery County’s vision for over 100 miles of Flash Bus Rapid Transit in 11 Corridors County-wide

- The US 29 Flash BRT began operations on October 14, 2020
MD355 BRT Corridor

- Extends for approximately **22 miles**, from Bethesda to Clarksburg
- Corridor contains a diversity of travel needs, trip purposes, and land use
# Project Design Segments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Geographic Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Clarksburg to Middlebrook Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Middlebrook Road to MD 124/Mont. Vill. Pkwy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MD 124/Mont. Vill. Pkwy to Summit Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Summit Avenue to College Parkway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>College Parkway to Dodge Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dodge Street to Grosvenor Metrorail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grosvenor Metrorail to Bethesda Metrorail</td>
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Phase 2 Planning Outcome: Alternative B Modified

- BRT in dedicated median lanes where feasible
- Single, reversible, peak direction dedicated lane north of Rockville (Segments 4 through 6)
- Single, fixed (southbound) dedicated lane through Rockville (Segment 3)
- Mixed traffic in the far north (Clarksburg) and south (Bethesda) segments
Project Update & Schedule
The MD 355 BRT is entering the Preliminary Engineering stage
- Completion of 35% Design Plans, Schedule, Cost Estimate

Alternative B Modified is the basis of design, with refinements being explored to enhance performance and reduce costs/impacts

Federal/state environmental process will occur in parallel with the design process
MD 355 BRT Project Process

Planning & Conceptual Engineering
- Existing Conditions
- Modeling
- Purpose & Need
- Conceptual Alternatives
- Preliminary Impacts
- Identify Recommended Alternative

Preliminary Engineering
- BRT Performance and Design Refinements
- Surveys
- Right-of-way
- Traffic studies
- Environmental assessments
- Detailed Scope, Schedule, and Cost Estimate

Final Design (Not Funded)

Construction (Not Funded)

We are here

Corridor Advisory Committee Input

Public Input

Funding Decision
Several studies find MD 355 to have high potential ridership and strong support for a BRT line.

**Phase 1**
Maryland Department of Transportation develops a Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement and Conceptual Alternatives Report for MD 355 BRT.

**Corridor Design Refinement and Survey**

**Phase 2**
MD 355 BRT Alternatives Analysis, led by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

**Preliminary Engineering Phase**
MD 355 BRT Preliminary Design, led by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.
Key Preliminary Engineering Phase Milestones

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>15% Roll Plan Submission/Design Refinements</td>
<td>Summer 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adoption of Locally Preferred Alternative</td>
<td>Summer/Fall 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>25% Design Progress Plans</td>
<td>Winter/Spring 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35% Preliminary Engineering Plans, Schedule, and Cost Estimate</td>
<td>Fall 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of 35% Plans for Mandatory Referral (Planning Review) after County Approval</td>
<td>Fall/Winter 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Review of Environmental Process Alternative (Categorical Exclusion/Environmental Assessment)</td>
<td>Fall/Winter 2022</td>
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Presentation & Focused Discussion
Service Planning Refinement

- Maximize BRT speed and reliability based on detailed analysis of traffic and operating conditions

- Refine BRT service patterns based on needs of riders in the corridor

- Inform preliminary engineering design refinements, based on BRT vehicle volumes and operational needs
Shared Alignment – MD 355 and Veirs Mill BRT

Shared MD 355 and Veirs Mill BRT Alignment from Rockville Metrorail to Montgomery College Rockville

The MD 355 BRT project is leading Preliminary Engineering for the shared corridor segment
Phase 2 Service Plan

Four route patterns:

• Clarksburg to Montgomery College – Rockville

• Germantown to Montgomery College – Rockville

• Lakeforest Transit Center to Grosvenor Metro

• Montgomery College – Rockville to Bethesda
Proposed Service Plan Revisions

Four route patterns:
- Clarksburg to Shady Grove
- Milestone to Shady Grove
- Lakeforest Transit Center to Grosvenor/White Flint Metro
- Montgomery College – Rockville to Bethesda

Germantown Transit Center (lowest performing route) no longer served
BRT Runningway Refinement

• Continue to refine runningway design to maximize BRT speed and reliability

• Identify opportunities to reduce right-of-way and cost impacts

• Apply design treatments and technology strategies to maximize intersection BRT and traffic performance
Segment 3 (Rockville)

**Dodge Street to College Parkway**

- Alt. B Modified proposes a single dedicated BRT lane in the Southbound direction
- Exploring options to provide additional operational benefits in the Northbound direction
- Need to consider the operational needs of the combined MD 355 and Veirs Mill Road BRTs in this segment
Segment 5 (Gaithersburg)

Montgomery Village Avenue to Summit Avenue

• Alt. B Modified proposes a single dedicated reversible BRT lane

• City of Gaithersburg seeks to reduce impacts of project on adjacent property owners by preferring mixed traffic configuration.

• Exploring opportunities to improve performance of the mixed traffic configuration in Segment 5
BRT Runningway Refinement

Corridor-Wide Preliminary Engineering Refinements

• Refine details of roadway treatments/intersections

• Explore Transit Signal Priority and Traffic Signal improvements to enhance performance

• Refine station locations to improve operations and first/last mile access

• Coordinate with WMATA for BRT stations located or near at Metrorail stations

• Confirm BRT terminus locations and facility needs
BRT Runningway Refinement

Design and Analysis Next Steps

• Define engineering alternatives to the current proposals in Alternative B Modified

• Conduct detailed traffic and BRT microsimulation analysis of the refined runningway concepts

• Compare and review impacts on BRT performance, overall traffic flow, and project impacts to inform decision making
Shady Grove Metro

• Highest ridership station in the MD 355 BRT system
• Seek to improve connection to/from Metrorail station compared to proposed station location on Somerville Drive
• Consider travel time/directness for through passengers not destined for Shady Grove
• Consider compatibility with future redevelopment of Shady Grove Station
Shady Grove
Potential BRT Station Locations

Shady Grove West
South of Metro Station Access Road

Somerville Drive (CURRENT PROPOSED LOCATION)

Shady Grove East
Montgomery College-Rockville

- Create quality transit connections to the College as an important destination
- Address integrated station and terminal needs of MD 355 and Veirs Mill BRT lines
- Consider capacity constraints of existing South Campus Drive bus loop
- Maintain directness of north-south BRT service for passengers not bound for the College
Montgomery College
Potential BRT Station Locations

- South Campus Dr. (CURRENT BUS LOOP)
- MD 355 North
- South of Mannakee St. (CURRENT PROPOSED LOCATION)
- Lot 13
Lakeforest Mall

- Avoid the long diversion of BRT corridor along Lost Knife Road to serve the existing Lakeforest Transit Center

- Maintain critical local bus connections and access to transit-dependent riders, services, and employment

- Support the redevelopment/master planning vision of the Lakeforest Mall area
Lakeforest:
Potential BRT Station & Transit Center Locations

- Russell Ave Frontage
  - Transit Center & BRT Station
- Lakeforest Blvd
  - BRT Station
- N Frederick Ave (MD 355)
  - South of Lakeforest Blvd
  - BRT Station

Existing Lakeforest TC
(CURRENT PROPOSED LOCATION)
- BRT Station & Transit Center & P&R
Discussion/Questions
Next Steps
Next Steps

• 15% roll plan design development

• Continued technical analysis of BRT service plan, runningway, and station locations

• Coordinate with FTA and develop modified CE/EA for NEPA environmental process

• Continued stakeholder and community outreach, including Fall CAC meetings

• Adoption of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
Contact the Project Team

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MD 355 BRT Project Website: