

MD 586/Veirs Mill Road Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Summary
Saturday, February 28, 2015, 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Montgomery County Executive Office Building, 10th Floor
101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD 20850

Attendees:

Members	
Messanvi Richard Adjogah	Mary Means
James Agliata	Sara Moline
Michel Audigé	Jessica Reynolds
Galo A. Correa, Sr.	Philip C. Sossou
Timothy Crawford	Michael A. Staiano
Larry Finkelberg	Tom Strawbridge
Jared Hautamaki	Mike Stein
Kathleen Hume	
Apologies	
Mirza Donegan	Ethan Goffman
D. Jonathan Fink	Stacy L. Spann
Staff	
Facilitator – Denise Watkins	Consultant Project Manager – Karen Kahl
State Highway Administration Project Manager – Jamaica Arnold	Project Engineer – Dave Roberts
Montgomery County DOT – Gary Erenrich	
Public	
Donna Savage – Alternate to Tom Strawbridge	Jerry Roberson - WMATA

Handouts:

Each Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) member received a binder that should be brought to all subsequent meetings. The binder contained the following materials:

- MD 586 CAC Staff Directory
- MD 586 CAC Members List
- RTS Corridors Map
- MD 586 Existing Transit Service Map and Vicinity Map
- BRT Glossary of Terms
- CAC Overview
- CAC Invitation Letter
- Nomination Form
- Kickoff Meeting Agenda
- CAC Mission Statement and Ground Rules
- Keynote Presentation from the Kickoff Meeting
- Montgomery County Rapid Transit System (RTS) Presentation from the Kickoff Meeting



- MD 586 CAC Meeting #1 Agenda
- MD 586 CAC Exercise #1
- MD 586 Existing Conditions Maps

The project website will also be a resource for the CAC members to view information and handouts that are presented at the CAC meetings. The project website is: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/RTS>

Introductions:

Denise Watkins, MD 586 CAC facilitator, introduced herself and welcomed everyone to CAC Meeting #1 for the MD 586 Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study. She explained that her role as facilitator will be to respect the time of the members by ensuring that all material on the agenda is covered and by keeping the discussions focused on the agenda items.

Following Denise’s introduction, the Staff members then introduced themselves and explained their roles on the project.

Each CAC member then gave a brief introduction in which they described their interest in the project and if they were affiliated with an organization.

General Discussion:

Denise gave the members an opportunity to ask questions or discuss the presentations that were made at the kickoff meeting. The following topics and questions were discussed:

- How can a BRT system be provided along Veirs Mill Road without taking a travel lane away? Denise responded that there are several alternatives that have been developed and that those alternatives will be presented in detail in future meetings.
- What work has been completed on the Veirs Mill Road BRT project? Denise responded that the Veirs Mill project is further along in the planning process than the US 29 and MD 355 projects. She explained that alternatives have been developed but that nothing is written in stone at this point. The alternatives and concepts could change based on the comments and advice from the general public and CAC members.
- How will the BRT be branded? Denise responded that branding is an important component of a BRT system because it makes the system attractive to riders and it can help the system fit into the surrounding neighborhoods. She added at this topic will be discussed in detail in future meetings.
- What types of alternatives were developed? Karen Kahl replied that this study began in 2012 and that two public meetings have been conducted. A Purpose and Need Open House was held on May 23, 2012 and an Alternatives Public Workshop was held on November 21, 2013. Initially, a full range of alternatives was developed that included many of the features in Cliff Henke’s presentation. However, at this point in the project, the goal is to study the alternatives that seem most feasible. The CAC process will assist in identifying those alternatives.
- The types of service seem to range from local service to commuter service. How would the Veirs Mill BRT service be characterized? Gary Erenrich responded that it would likely be characterized as a limited stop service. There would be approximately nine stops along Veirs Mill Road, not including the termini at the Rockville and Wheaton Metro Stations, as opposed to the 37 stops that the local buses currently use.



- How would a new BRT service affect the existing bus service? Karen responded that once the new BRT service is determined, an analysis would be done to identify necessary changes to the existing service. The BRT service could attract riders from the existing services which could warrant a change to the existing service.
- Would the Ride On service be in competition with the new BRT service? Karen replied that the goal would be for the services to work together rather than be in competition.
- A member commented that signage should be in Spanish in certain neighborhoods along the corridor due to the high percentage of Spanish-speaking residents.
- A member commented that the goal of the CAC members should be to represent those who would use the BRT service, which may or may not include the CAC members themselves. Denise replied that the CAC members are representing more than just themselves and that they should take the information they learn at the CAC meetings back to anyone they are representing to receive their input.
- A member provided an index card with written comments and questions, but the topics were not discussed at the meeting. The topics could be discussed at future meetings. The comments and questions included:
 - The feeder service is very important because people need to get from the residential neighborhoods to the BRT corridors.
 - How will people waiting at the stations be protected from car road spray?
 - The stations should have greenery and overhead protection from precipitation and the sun.
 - Accessibility to the stations in the middle of the road is a concern.

Map Exercise:

The CAC then completed an exercise called, “Where do you Live, Work & Play?” using a large roll plan map of the corridor. The purpose of the exercise was to look at how Veirs Mill Road plays a role in the lives of the CAC members. Each member placed numbered stickers on the map on locations where they travel to or from frequently. The members also used index cards to write down how transportation could be improved with transit for each location they placed a sticker. A summary of the exercise including the notes that were written on the index cards will be presented at the next CAC meeting.

Mission Statement:

Denise reviewed the Mission Statement and no comments were made by the CAC members.

Ground Rules:

Denise reviewed the Ground Rules and no comments were made by the CAC members.

Logistics:

Denise covered various logistical items with the group, including:

- Denise confirmed with the CAC members that communication through email was acceptable with everyone
- Denise walked through the binder contents with the CAC members
- Denise noted that she should be the point of contact for the CAC members
- Gary Erenrich commented that Ligia Moss will be the Montgomery County DOT representative at future CAC meetings
- Denise noted that the meetings will be recorded (audio only) to aid in the preparation of the meeting summaries. The summaries will not be verbatim minutes and will broadly cover the topics that were

discussed. The CAC members will have a chance to review the summaries before they are posted on the website.

- Binders will be mailed to the members that were not in attendance
- The current plan is to hold eight total CAC meetings, with six to eight weeks in between each meeting. The number of meetings and time between meetings could change based on the progress of the project. Future meetings will be held on Wednesday nights from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Meeting #2 is scheduled for March 25 in the Executive Office Building.

Exercise #1:

Denise reviewed the optional Exercise #1 to be completed by the CAC members before Meeting #2. The purpose of Exercise #1 is for the CAC members to identify the strengths and opportunities along the Veirs Mill Road corridor. The maps in the binders were provided as reference for this exercise and future exercises. Denise will email the form to the members so they can submit their responses via email. She asked for responses by March 10 so that the information can be compiled before Meeting #2.

Questions and Comments:

Denise then opened the meeting to questions and comments from the members. The following topics were discussed:

- A member asked if the decision to implement BRT along Veirs Mill Road was finalized and if so, is there any way to reverse that decision? Gary Erenrich replied that this project is in planning in order to be consistent with the *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*, which calls for the study of a BRT system along several corridors, including MD 586. The purpose of the current project is to study the feasibility of implementing BRT along MD 586 by doing preliminary engineering and quantifying costs and impacts. At this point, the project is not funded beyond the planning phase, which is scheduled to be completed in summer 2016.
- A member noted that the Master Plan lists nine stations along MD 586 and asked if those locations were set. Gary replied that the Master Plan station locations were the first thought at where stations would be placed, and that the locations could change. Denise will send an email with a link to the Master Plan to all CAC members so they can review it before the next meeting. Gary provided the members with a hard copy of the four pages of the Master Plan that pertain to MD 586.
- Jamaica Arnold noted that all of the information presented at the previous public meetings is available on the SHA website. Denise will send an email with a link to the website to the CAC members.
- A member asked if there will be more public meetings. Jamaica responded that there will be a Public Hearing after the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies are complete. The schedule is currently being revised but the Public Hearing will likely be in early 2016.
- A member asked if all buses would use the dedicated median lanes or if just the BRT buses would use those lanes. Jamaica responded that at this point, the assumption has been that only the BRT buses would use dedicated median lanes.

Next Steps:

- The meeting summary will be posted to the website after it has been reviewed by the CAC members
- The CAC members should complete Exercise #1 by March 10
- Denise will send an email to the CAC members with links to all of the relevant information
- **Meeting #2 is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2015 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Auditorium on the Lobby level of the Executive Office Building. If a CAC member cannot attend**

they may send a designated alternate. Please let Denise know if you cannot attend and the name of your alternate.