

ATTENDEES:

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
 MEETING #2 SUMMARY**

**MAY 24, 2022**

**7:00 PM-8:30 PM**

<b>CAC (Citizens Advisory Committee) Members</b>	
Andrew Saul	Silvana Valencia
Susanna Parker	Steven Robins
Karen Guertler	Stephen Miller
Steve Bello	Timur Edib

**Additional members of the public attended the meeting.**

<b>Montgomery County Staff and Consultant Team</b>	
Sandra Marks	MCDOT
Corey Pitts	MCDOT
Jesse Cohn McGowan	Montgomery County Planning Department
Nkosi Yearwood	Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Melissa DuMond	Kimley-Horn
Lucas Muller	Kimley-Horn
Kate Widness	Kimley-Horn
Paul Elman	Kimley-Horn

## PRESENTATION OVERVIEW:

- **Welcome and Introductions**
  - Project manager Sandra Marks welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of meeting expectations, zoom software, and the meeting agenda.
- **Planning Study Overview**
  - An overview of the planning study termini and outcomes was provided along with an update on the project schedule, and we are in the process.
  - A high-level overview of the project goals and objectives was presented.
- **Corridor Foundations**
  - An explanation of what data and topic areas were collected for the corridor foundation component of the study.
  - Project survey results were presented including existing travel patterns for survey respondents and bus stop chat specific data related to trips in and around North Bethesda and what bus features were most important to survey respondents.
  - Key opportunities from the corridor foundations reports were provided.
- **Termini Screening**
  - An explanation of how the metrics were developed from the project goals and objectives was included with the detailed measures of effectiveness for each of the following goals:
    - Quality Service
    - Mobility Choices
    - Sustainable Solutions
    - Community Equity
    - Economic Growth
    - Public Safety
  - An overview of the two alternatives, White Flint, and Grosvenor, were presented
  - A summary of how each of the alternatives achieved each goal was shown along with key takeaways from the termini screening for each alternative.
- **Upcoming Public Engagement**
  - A summary of engagement completed to date was provided with information on the upcoming project StoryMap and Public Open House information.

## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (BOTH “CHAT” AND VERBAL):

- You are talking like this is an approved program, not one that can be evaluated if it is needed or not.
  - Staff responded that this is an approved project by Council, and it is codified to be evaluated.
  - Part of this study is to determine if and what type of BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) service is warranted in these areas.
- Did this initiative also consider transit between North Bethesda and the eastern part of the county, and transit between North Bethesda and Bethesda along Old Georgetown Road? Or did the study focus on transit between White Flint and Grosvenor and Montgomery Mall?

- Staff responded that no direct route currently exists, and our job is to advance the recommendation from the 2013 Master Plan. There is demand for connections along Georgetown Road and the County is looking at that with the Ride On Reimagine study
- We see that only 83 riders per day use the Ride On bus 6 and 82 on the 96 riders per day.
- We already have Ride On routes that go from White Flint and Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall.
- Would we assume that any additional transit access on I-495 or I-270 would have interface with bus exchange at Montgomery Mall?
  - Yes, assuming the planned express lane connection is provided through the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Project, the connection would be at Westlake Terrace.
- With Montgomery Mall dying and White Flint dead what are we considering? Are we focusing on reaching jobs or shopping? Are we competing with cars or providing service when there are no cars?
  - Staff responded that as part of the I-495 Transit/TDM study and I-270 Corridor Forward, the Montgomery Mall is being planned as transit hub. Development planned at White Flint is also very extensive.
- Aren't we dealing with the need for a dedicated lane between Pike and Rose and Montgomery Mall?
- Does purple line come close?
  - Staff responded that the purple line is south and east of our study area.
- Participants commented that Ride On already offers service between White Flint and Montgomery Mall, and between Grosvenor and Montgomery Mall.
- White Flint does not connect with BRT on 355
  - White Flint is a stop on the planned BRT route down 355 and staff are currently evaluating the proposed placement: [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/Resources/Images/area\\_map\\_2022.jpg](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/Resources/Images/area_map_2022.jpg)
- Do we really need a dedicated lane for a bus trip that currently takes ten minutes?
- Is this data without projections for the White Flint mall usage? Is there any place to grow at Grosvenor?
  - Future ridership will account for programmed development in the study area
- My last comment: it seems that if you would like to connect two areas with residential and mixed-use development, White Flint is your better choice. The Grosvenor station has residential use. And, of course, both White Flint and Grosvenor already have Ride On service to Montgomery Mall.
- What keeps Grosvenor on the table?
- Only logical connection is at Grosvenor to 355; Do we want them interconnected?
  - Staff responded that we are working closely with the 355 team and looking at ways to connect with that service near Old Georgetown Road and MD 355. The goal would be a seamless transfer and we are meeting with the design team to make sure of this.
- There is no need to get between Montgomery Mall and Grosvenor. You could have three ride share services to cover the demand.

- Staff responded that we have maps of where existing ridership is along each route and we will be doing forecasting during built alt. phase; ridership was published by council showing basically no ridership.
- Can you discuss the different stations along each of the paths?
  - Stations shown are ones shown in the 2013 Master Plan but there may be additional, moved, or removed stations as we progress in the build alternatives analysis. Please provide locations where you would like to see stations in a particular area.
- Hopefully Ride On Reimagined will address the lack of direct bus service between Silver Spring, White Flint, Old Georgetown Road, and Bethesda.
  - Staff responded that yes, we are coordination with them.
- Participants commented that it seems that if you would like to connect two areas with residential and mixed-use development, White Flint is your better choice. The Grosvenor station has residential use. And, of course, both White Flint and Grosvenor already have Ride On service to Montgomery Mall. Hopefully Ride On reimagined will address the lack of direct bus service between Silver Spring, White Flint, Old Georgetown Road, and Bethesda.
- Basic spatial suggestion - if this thing is a feeder to red line or 355 BRT and most people feeding are heading south to District, then Grosvenor has singular advantage that it is not backtracking. Just look at the direction the route is going. People do not want to backtrack.
  - Staff responded that while that is one travel pattern, there are also lots of other travel patterns potentially served by this route
- Is there a mission/vision statement for the CAC? I am having a tough time understanding the target audience.
  - Staff responded that the CAC is to help provide insight into the project as the planning study progresses.
- Who is the audience we are trying to capture?
  - Staff responded, everyone; we are trying to encourage use. But also thinking about development in area. There needs to be a balance of what is out there today and BRT in the future.
- There is no need for a dedicated lane from pike and rose down old Georgetown Rd. There is little density along and the costs associated with this are unnecessary. Existing ride-on can service area.
  - Staff responded that the need for a dedicated lane would be evaluated during the build alternatives phase
- Which route has the potential to build more riders because it goes through more residential areas? E.g., the path to White Flint seems to have more stops, which would mean more potential riders from lower-density residential areas.
  - Staff responded that when we looked at transit data, we intentionally looked at Fall of 2019 to understand a better picture of existing conditions. White Flint has approximately 450 more existing weekday riders than Grosvenor. Transit ridership is picking up, but we are not back to where we were.

- Participant recommended that the methodology needs to include Bethesda trolley trail which is much more comfortable and used by many. And the 1/2-mile radii needs to be tightened up a bit because we are going across MARC rail line and these are not reasonable to use.
  - Staff responded that regarding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, we were focusing on what is along corridors, but we did look at connections to other nearby routes. It was also noted that there are limitations to the buffer area and during the build alternatives, we will do a walkshed analysis.
- Do we know if Woodward high school will be a magnet or regular HS?
  - Information about the project can be found here:  
<https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/BASISCAPITAL/Common/Project.aspx?ID=P651908>
- Today, anyone can get from White Flint Metro or Grosvenor Metro to Montgomery Mall, within ten minutes during rush hour. Where they cannot go without waiting for a transfer: from White Flint to Silver Spring, and from White Flint [right on Old Georgetown Road] to Suburban Hospital [also on Old Georgetown Road.]
  - Staff responded that we will share this information with the Ride On Reimagine team.
- What parameters are we using to understand either of the routes; how can we know if they can tolerate a lane just for transit?
  - Staff responded that we will evaluate this more during build alternatives analysis and demand is also a part of this. We will look at if there are ways to achieve goals with less intensive approach.
- Do you anticipate extensive commercial development at Montgomery Mall that will be to bring people from north of Pike and Rose by either bus or metro that would want to transfer to a bus at Montgomery Mall? If so, would Grosvenor be better as existing service is available there?
  - Staff responded that Montgomery Mall is active and there is development there planned as a major transit center. Major point of terminus for potential travel routes to and from Virginia via I-495; Rock Spring Sector Plan is also tied into this.
- The White Flint alternative presents a better option for future continuing along Old Georgetown to Bethesda. Is there not a 355 BRT stop planned for the intersection of Old Georgetown and 355, which would tie into a northern entry to the White Flint Metro stop?
  - Staff responded that we are working with the design team to make sure connections are as close as possible and as easy as possible for all user types.
- It was noted that Rockville Pike has better access to NIH, BETHESDA Naval and government offices on both sides of Rockville Pike
- Is the redevelopment of Sears into mixed use still on the table?
  - There is a plan for mixed-used around the existing mall...  
<https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/development/planning-board-approves-major-building-project-at-westfield-montgomery-mall/>
- The challenge, I believe, is that there is not a direct route between White Flint and Bethesda, along Old Georgetown Road. If you have not taken a bus recently, there can be a twenty-minute delay between bus arrivals and departures.

- Are you aware that Westlake terrace will have major backup since it is an entrance and exit to the HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) 270 lanes; If you put BRT here, once HOV lanes open you will have major back up.
  - Staff responded that right now we are focusing on what we have today and what conditions are going to look like in future; what does it look like if everything is approved and comes to fruition. Future phases will include a traffic assessment.