

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 MEETING #3 SUMMARY**

JANUARY 10, 2022

7:00 PM-8:30 PM

ATTENDEES:

CAC Members	
Karen Guertler	Silvanna Velencia
Stephen Miller	Steve Robins
Susanna Parker	

Additional members of the public attended the meeting.

Montgomery County Staff and Consultant Team	
Collin Hayward	MCDOT
Corey Pitts	MCDOT
Alex Riley	Montgomery Planning
David Anspacher	Montgomery Planning
Kate Widness	Kimley-Horn
Lucas Muller	Kimley-Horn
Paul Elman	Kimley-Horn

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW:

- **Welcome and Introductions**
 - Project manager Collin Hayward welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of meeting expectations, zoom software, and the meeting agenda.

- **Previously Completed Tasks**
 - An overview of the background and outcomes of the planning study was provided
 - The purpose of the termini screening was presented, which was to select an eastern terminus. Results of the termini screening were also shared, which showed that the North Bethesda Metrorail station terminus had some or significant advantages in achieving the project study goals, except for in the goal “Sustainable Solutions”.
 - The route screening was explained, and the two selected routes were shared:
 - Marinelli Road via Nicholson Lane
 - Old Georgetown Road
 - An update on the study schedule was provided. The project is currently moving into the Build Alternatives Analysis stage.

- **Build Alternatives Development**
 - An overview of the alternative analysis was described, including the different types of alternatives being evaluated for the project, components that vary and components that stay constant between alternatives, and the high-level level of investment for each alternative.
 - A decision matrix of various lane configurations that could have been evaluated was presented.
 - A framework and definition for each alternative was shared, as well as maps for each build alternative (“Maximum Build-Out” and “Targeted Investment”).
 - The approach to bike and pedestrian infrastructure was presented. A map of assumed bike and pedestrian infrastructure was shown.
 - Consideration of the public’s expressed interest in extending the western terminus for additional service was shared.

- **Next Steps**
 - An explanation of next steps for the study were provided.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- So, the North Bethesda Metro station has been selected, and it’s just a matter of which route will go between Montgomery Mall and the Metro station?
 - Staff responded yes, we initially looked at two different endpoints before selecting North Bethesda Metro station, then we completed a screening process to narrow down to two routing options, and next we will be looking into more specific elements of the alternatives.

- When was the eastern terminus determination made?
 - Staff shared that the eastern terminus recommendation was brought to the CAC and TAG over the summer and then brought to County leadership for approval.

- Was the eastern terminus determination made before the bike lanes were added to Old Georgetown Road?
 - Staff responded that we are aware of the bike lanes, but their presence does not impact the fact that North Bethesda Metro station is a better attraction than the White Flint Metro station. We will consider the bike lanes in the alternatives analysis, and what happens with them.
- The community is really concerned about the sudden increase in traffic due to the bike lanes and are concerned about the loss of an additional lane. Will this project take away another lane of traffic?
 - Staff explained that a potential outcome of this project could be that nothing is built. This kind of planning study is always the first step for projects in the County. No decision has been made for this project other than to study what we should do, and there's no funding beyond the current stage of doing this study. The County council will have the final say in selecting the final alternative. There are no impending changes to this corridor with regards to BRT currently.
- Has anything changed with this project, such as the schedule and how soon it would be implemented?
 - Staff explained that we currently do not have the funding to even know if/when this project would be implemented. Other corridors in the county are of higher priority right now.
- A participant who lives in Luxmanor noted that the new bike lanes have been a complete disaster for many reasons (i.e., increased traffic, narrow lanes, lost lanes). It is forcing traffic to go through the local neighborhoods. I can't even imagine if we lost another lane. This needs to be considered in the analysis.
 - Staff noted that the bike lanes will be considered in the analysis and that we understand concerns about safety. Staff also noted that there are no alternatives that bring Old Georgetown Road down to 1 lane of traffic in each direction.
- What are you thinking in terms of enhancing the White Flint station? Have there been any thoughts on getting money from Amazon? What will be done to enhance the Strathmore station? Can you consider taking it all the way to River Road with so much residential property? How much are you looking at future trends in this study?
 - Staff noted unfamiliarity with the White Flint funding you mentioned. One of the biggest things we are considering in developing alternatives is connections to the entire system.
- Will the recording of the meeting be made available to the public?
 - The recording, presentation, and minutes for all the meetings are posted on the project website following each meeting.
- For clarification, what is a sidepath?
 - Staff explained that it's a facility off the road that allows for bikes and pedestrians. It would be outside of the curb space. It would not change the curb-to-curb travel lanes. It would be an improvement similar to a sidewalk.
- So it's basically two lanes in each direction, a dedicated transit lane, and a sidepath? Would we be losing another lane to BRT?
 - Staff answered that we would essentially be proposing to connect the sidepaths that are already planned. None of the alternatives would propose that Old Georgetown Road go down to 1 lane in each direction.
- Will the adjacent properties be eminent domain?
 - Staff answered that property impacts would be determined as part of the alternatives analysis.

- For property impacts, are the impacts from both sides of the road? Or just from one side?
 - Those determinations haven't been made yet.
- Will there be an updated traffic analysis incorporating the bike lanes?
 - Staff answered yes, it will be worked on this winter/spring with the goal of sharing results after that.
- I recall an earlier planning study going down Tuckerman lane. Has this changed?
 - This was part of an earlier step in this study. This information will be made available on the website.
- I noticed a very brief reference to the "Tysons Connector" - I assume this is referring to the Fairfax Connector route 798 express bus service to Tysons that will be servicing the Montgomery Mall Transit Center. Can you speak to how this is being considered in your plans and, on a side note, do you know anything about when that service will be launching?
 - Staff noted that they could not speak to when the service is launching, but connections to existing facilities are something that will be involved in the alternatives analysis.
- So, there will be two lanes in each direction of Old Georgetown Road - regardless of the decision - no build, Alternative 1, and Alternative 2? In other words, nothing you decide will change the currently two lanes on Old Georgetown Road?
 - As far as we know, yes.
- How often would the BRT actually run, to warrant even studying a dedicated lane for buses?
 - Staff answered that service levels are something we will look at along this corridor. Depending on how the dedicated lanes are configured, there are opportunities for other bus services to use the dedicated lanes.
- When would you know if and when there will be another traffic study? We (the community) just want to make sure that another traffic study is done.
 - Staff responded that we don't know that there will be another full traffic study, but traffic will be factored into the analysis.