



March 2016

Public Outreach

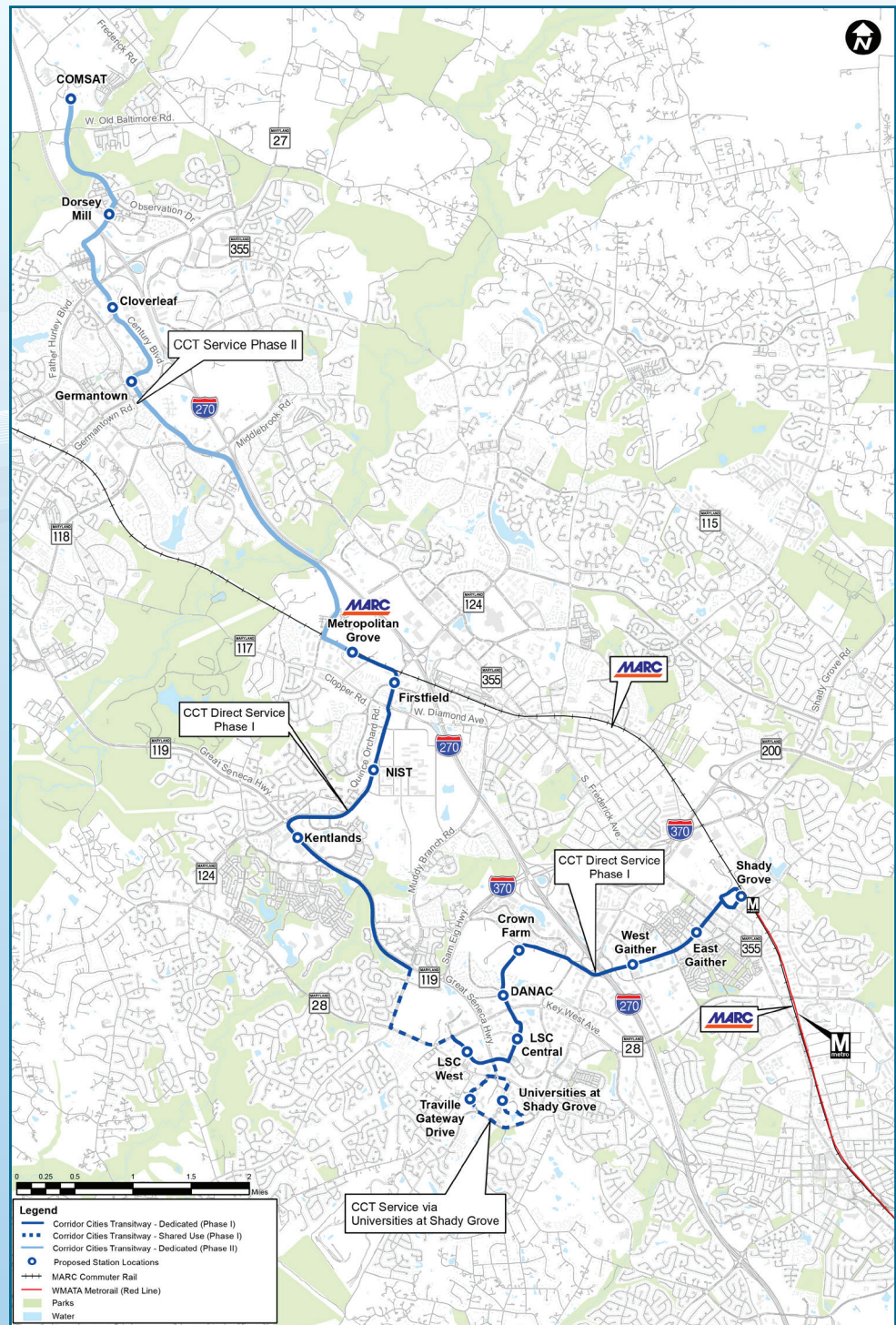


2015 Year-End Report

About the Corridor Cities Transitway

The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) is a planned 9-mile bus rapid transit (BRT) system that would extend south from the Metropolitan Grove MARC Station in Gaithersburg to the Shady Grove Metrorail Station in Rockville. The project would include 13 stations with future expansion plans for the CCT to include six additional miles of BRT service and four stations terminating at the COMSAT facility, located just south of Clarksburg, MD. Originally part of the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study, a joint multi-modal study initiated by the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), the CCT would provide additional transit service in Montgomery County.

The BRT vehicles will operate almost entirely on a dedicated transitway allowing for fast and reliable transit operations for the majority of the project. In 2013, two new stations were added at Traville Gateway Drive and at the Universities at Shady Grove. The BRT vehicles will operate in mixed traffic, in loop formation in this area and will not have a dedicated transitway. BRT is a modern, lower cost, but premium form of transportation that combines features of both a bus system and a light rail system.



2015 Highlights

MTA Concludes Phase I of the Area Advisory Committees

In March 2014, MTA launched the CCT Area Advisory Committees (AACs) after concluding a three month self-nomination process. The objective of the AAC program was to facilitate the engagement of homeowners, business owners, interested stakeholders and government representatives regarding the design decision-making process. Each AAC held a series of eight meetings focusing on a variety of topics. Over the 15-month period, the AACs attended facilitated meetings and provided feedback on design elements which included the alignment and station location, traffic engineering, urban design, stormwater management, bicycle and pedestrian considerations, safety and security and operations. Meetings #6 through #8 were held in 2015. Those specific meetings focused on operations planning, station design, the environmental documentation process, facility naming and value engineering.

Collectively, the AAC members provided key observations, insights and suggestions that informed design decisions. Several of the changes brought about as a result of AAC input include:

- Re-alignment of the shared use trail between NIST and Kentlands Stations, to keep the trail on the outside of the CCT transitway along Quince Orchard Road so that it is in position to connect with the existing trail along Great Seneca Highway
- Median alignment on Muddy Branch Road so that it allows for development of future lanes along Muddy Branch Road
- Reduction in station platform lengths from 125 feet to 65 feet at seven station locations, as a way to reduce station impact on the neighborhoods in which they exist. The Shady Grove station platforms are approximately 200 and 250 feet respectively
- Modification of the King Farm Boulevard alignment to minimize median impacts
- Various intersection modifications to improve vehicular flow and community access
- Members discussed the need for improved bicycle access and how it could be integrated into the project

30 Percent Design and Design Modifications

During the Summer of 2015, the MTA continued to work with the CCT project team to refine Phase I of the project based on input from the public; federal, state and local government agencies; and value engineering. The design refinements will result in a project that is more efficient and cost effective. This is a critical point in the design development process, as the project moves toward final design. Design modifications include:

- Shifting the alignment along Great Seneca Highway to minimize community impacts
- Creating a new alignment along Darnestown Road and Muddy Branch Road to reduce impacts to Belward Farm. This new transitway routing led to the elimination of the Belward Farms station – revising the number of CCT stations to 13 in total.
- Reducing the width of transitway from 28 feet wide to 26 feet wide
- Developing a new bridge alignment over I-270 to decrease capital costs on the project and avoid some major utility impacts. Additionally, this new alignment will reduce visual impacts along Fields Road.
- Selecting an at-grade crossing at Key West Avenue and Diamondback Drive



Reaching the Public

FTA Reviews Draft Environmental Assessment

The MTA completed the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the CCT project in 2015 under the guidance of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The MTA submitted a draft EA to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for review. This initial review provided an opportunity for MTA to discuss several project elements, including alternatives considered, environmental resources, consequences and mitigation, design modifications, schedule and cultural resource impacts. Specifically, the EA describes the: alternatives – operations, construction methods or assumptions and capital cost estimates; environmental resource information – land use, economy, environmental justice, cultural resources, wetlands, safety and security, public information and outreach. It also discusses the potential effect of the CCT on specific environmental resources within the study area corridor. The environmental resources that were assessed include land use, property acquisition, community facilities and resources; visual context; historic properties and archeological sites; natural resources including streams, wetlands and habitat; environmental justice benefits and impacts; noise and vibration; air quality; hazardous materials; and transportation effects.

The final draft EA will be available for public review and comment in 2016. A public hearing will be held in the Spring of 2016 to provide interested stakeholders with the opportunity to learn more about the EA and to provide written and oral comments to MTA. After the public hearing, public comments will be addressed and submitted to the FTA for review and consideration. The final step in the environmental process is the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

MTA remains strongly committed to informing and educating the public about the CCT project. In 2015, the outreach team continued to build on efforts to engage and educate the local community. Efforts included attendance at neighborhood festivals, community events and presentations at community association meetings. This year, the team attended several new events to reach citizens, including the Rockville Science Day and Montgomery County GreenFest, among others. In total, the team attended ten community events and gave ten presentations. Over the course of this year, the grassroots outreach efforts reached more than 2,562 people and added over 457 names to the project mailing list. Finally, the MTA continued the Area Advisory Committees program in 2015 in an effort to gather input from the community on important design decisions to move the project forward.



Outreach Events

Montgomery County GreenFest

(March 28, 2015)

Reach: 45

Themes: Project timeline and alignment at intersections

Take Your Child to Earth Day

(April 23, 2015)

Reach: 150

Themes: Project timeline and alignment at intersections

Rockville Science Day

(April 26, 2015)

Reach: 171

Themes: Project timeline, costs and pedestrian safety

Active Aging Expo

(May 4, 2015)

Reach: 113

Themes: Project timeline and alignment at intersections



Celebrate Gaithersburg

(June 14, 2015)

Reach: 123

Themes: Project timeline, ridership cost, CCT versus Montgomery County Rapid Transit System

Montgomery County Agricultural Fair

(August 14-22, 2015)

Reach: 1,557

Themes: Project status, schedule, funding, taxing implications, fare costs, ADA accessibility, alignment, operations and transit connections

Gaithersburg Labor Day Parade

(September 7, 2015)

Reach: 65

Themes: Opening date, future alignments, project timeline and fare costs

Montgomery Village Fall Festival

(October 10, 2015)

Reach: 25

Themes: Feeder bus service, fare costs, opening date and Governor Hogan's thoughts

Oktoberfest at the Kentlands

(October 11, 2015)

Reach: 227

Themes: Project status, alignment, project marketing plans and fare costs

King Farm Festival

(October 18, 2015)

Reach: 86

Themes: Alignment, limited ridership, Shady Grove station improvements, fare costs and support of project

Community Meetings

Amberfield Home Owners Association

(January 15, 2015)

Attendees: 9

Themes: General project update, property impacts, bicycle and pedestrian access

North Potomac Citizen's Association

(February 25, 2015)

Attendees: 40

Themes: Project update, Muddy Branch Road alignment and ridership forecast

City of Gaithersburg – Mayor and City Council Session

(April 20, 2015)

Attendees: 50

Themes: Project update regarding the CCT's alignment and station typology

Montgomery Place Community Association

(May 13, 2015)

Attendees: 10

Themes: Project update, transitway design, property impacts and ADA compliance

Montgomery County Council – Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee

(June 29, 2015)

Attendees: 15

Themes: Project update on the CCT's AACs, station typology, alignment, design and schedule

City of Gaithersburg – Transportation Committee

(July 14, 2015)

Attendees: 10

Themes: Project update on the CCT's AACs, station typology, alignment, design and schedule

Quince Orchard Knolls Citizens Association

(July 29, 2015)

Attendees: 8

Themes: Project Information – what is BRT? Bus lanes, alignment, safety, Shady Grove impacts and fare costs

City of Gaithersburg – Mayor and City Council Session

(August 31, 2015)

Attendees: 50

Themes: Project update, environmental documentation and impacts and project schedule

The Reserve at Crown Point I and II

(November 18, 2015)

Attendees: 10

Themes: Project update, funding and potential impacts

Watkins Mills Town Center

(November 23, 2015)

Attendees: 15

Themes: Project overview, updates and community benefits



Area Advisory Committee Meetings

Area Advisory Committee Two, Meeting #6

(January 14, 2015)

Universities at Shady Grove

Themes: Operations planning

Area Advisory Committee One, Meeting #6

(January 28, 2015)

Lakelands Clubhouse

Themes: Operations planning

Area Advisory Committee Three, Meeting #6

(March 9, 2015)

Ingleside at King Farm

Themes: Operations planning

Area Advisory Committee Two, Meeting #7

(March 18, 2015)

Universities at Shady Grove

Themes: Environmental documentation, stations and GSSC Loop Trail presentation

Area Advisory Committee One, Meeting #7

(March 26, 2015)

Lakelands Clubhouse

Themes: Environmental documentation and stations

Area Advisory Committee Three, Meeting #7

(March 30, 2015)

Ingleside at King Farm

Themes: Environmental documentation and stations

Area Advisory Committee Two, Meeting #8

(May 13, 2015)

Universities at Shady Grove

Themes: Project status, value engineering, bicycle facilities and station naming

Area Advisory Committee One, Meeting #8

(May 20, 2015)

Lakelands Clubhouse

Themes: Project status, value engineering, bicycle facilities and station naming

Area Advisory Committee Three, Meeting #8

(June 8, 2015)

Ingleside at King Farm

Themes: Project status, value engineering, WMATA – Shady Grove presentation and station naming

