Area Advisory Committee One Meeting #2 Summary
Wednesday, May 14, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Kentlands Clubhouse
485 Tschiffely Square Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Attendees:

Members	
Joseph Allen	Peter Henry
Girum Awoke	Erik Morrison
Marilyn Balcombe	David Rosenbaum
Stuart Barr	Steve Scharf
Brian Downie	Lynne Tucker
Cherian Eapen	Francine Waters
Neil Harris	

Apologies	
Michael Janus	Ronald Welke
Anita Schweinfurth	James Woods
Michael Watkins	Kam Yee

Staff	
Facilitator – Holly Storck	**Public Involvement Task Lead** – Crystal Saunders
Station Architect – Todd Connelly	**City of Gaithersburg –** Rob Robinson
Traffic Engineer – Elizabeth Andrew	**Logistics Staff** – Jordan Vann
Segment Engineer – Denny Finnerin	**Logistics Staff** – Tori Leonard

General Public
Richard Arkin

Handouts

The meeting packets included: an Agenda, Meeting #1 summary, Kick-Off Meeting summary, proposed meeting schedule, CCT overview map, an aerial map of the AAC #1 area, typical sections, CCT Interaction at Intersections diagrams, station prototypes, and an operations plan summary.

Introductions

The meeting began with Holly walking the attendees through the materials in meeting packet. She said that the July and September meetings dates have been set and asked AAC members to let her know if they had conflicts with the proposed November, January, and March meeting dates.

Attendees introduced themselves. For the benefit of a member of the public in attendance, Holly emphasized the rules regarding public participation – members of the public can listen but not participate in the discussion.

Holly explained that the goal of tonight's meeting was to help members become familiar with the alignment details by participating in a 'tabletop tour' of AAC One's section of the alignment. If desired by AAC members, she would be happy to arrange a physical tour of the corridor and asked interested members to e-mail her. Holly announced that at the request of the Lakelands community the project had conducted traffic counts yesterday at the intersections of Lakelands Drive and Great Seneca Highway and Kentlands Boulevard at Great Seneca Highway.

Operations Plan Overview

Elizabeth Andrew, Traffic Engineer, provided an overview of the 2035 operations plan and referred AAC members to the operations plan summary handout in the meeting packet. She told the group that there will be two routes running on the alignment: 1) CCT Direct Service (that excludes the Universities at Shady Grove) and 2) CCT Service via the Universities at Shady Grove. On the CCT Direct Service, the buses will stop at all stations along the main route. On the CCT Service via Universities at Shady Grove, the buses will leave the transitway at Great Seneca Highway between the LSC West and LSC Central Stations and serve two additional stations on Traville Gateway Drive.

In 2035, CCT Direct Service will be operating with 3.5 minute headways during peak periods and 6 to 10 minute headways during off-peak periods. CCT Service via Universities at Shady Grove will operate every 15 minutes. The Universities at Shady Grove route will not replace any direct route runs, but is in addition to CCT Direct Service.

The operations plan currently shows 6am to 9am as the morning peak and 3pm to 7pm as the evening peak, but the Advisory Committee pointed out that the CCT rush-hour time may need to start earlier/end later than the traditional rush hour to accommodate passengers riding the CCT to reach the Metro during its peak period. The technical team has discussed the possibility of starting a half hour earlier in the morning and running a half hour longer at close to make sure the CCT is able to serve those Metro riders.

By 2035, there will be approximately 39 buses in the fleet, with a maximum of 32 buses operating at any one time. The initial fleet will be smaller – when operating with longer headways, there is not a need for as many vehicles – and additional vehicles will be acquired over the next 10 to 12 years. The buses can hold 60 people seated and 90 people when standees are included. The team is currently looking at diesel-electric hybrid vehicles, but as the purchase date comes closer, the team will reevaluate to determine the most energy and cost efficient technology.

An AAC member raised the concern that 2035 is very far off, so an understanding about what the project will be like at opening is of more immediate concern. Elizabeth said that the traffic group is working on opening day calculations and will hopefully have information to share at the next meeting.

ACC members discussed several specific operations-related concerns including:

- What percentage of the bus fleet would be operating under capacity?
- How has the/will the CCT be aligned with Metro's headways, schedule, peak periods, and vehicle capacities?

The team suggested that these questions would be better addressed by a member of the operations team and operations could be a topic of either the January or March meeting.

Transitway Alignment

Denny Finnerin, Segment Engineer, began the tabletop tour of the alignment by directing the AAC members to the maps included in the meeting packet. One map showed the entire route with the alignment shown in blue. The second and third maps were specific to AAC One and include the alignment from the Metropolitan Grove Station to the Great Seneca Highway crossing of the Muddy Branch.

Denny provided an explanation of the elements shown on the plans, including the transitway, shared use path, station platforms, proposed structures, and any needed adjacent roadway construction and resurfacing.

She also went over the typical section. In AAC One's segment, all of the transitway is a side running alignment. One of the challenges in designing the alignment is carefully considering what elements would fit in the spaces when there are constraints. Not all elements can be included everywhere. For example, in some areas, stormwater management had to be sacrificed. In others, a sidewalk was used instead of a wider shared-use path.

<u>Metropolitan Grove Station to Firstfield Station</u>

Based on a recently completed study, the station and transitway alignment have been shifted from the north side of the CSX tracks to the south side. This change would eliminate approximately 1,200 feet of structure and reduces project costs significantly. The Metropolitan Grove station would be a side-platform station with individual platforms on either side of the transitway. The turnaround shown on the map would be sized to accommodate an articulated bus. When the outbound bus arrives at Metropolitan Grove and drops off its last passenger, it would turn around in the cul-de-sac and begin its inbound trip.

Several AAC members asked how the proposed parking structure on the north side of the tracks would be accessed if the CCT station is on the south side. Todd Connelly, Station Architect, said that the team is working to create a safe crossing. The design is currently showing an at-grade crossing, in addition to a grade-separated crossing. The cost estimate currently includes the grade-separated crossing. An AAC member pointed out that during non-MARC periods, CSX trains park at the station for 10 to 20 minutes waiting for signals to change, making it impossible to cross at grade. The team acknowledged that there are issues to be resolved at Metropolitan Grove with regard to crossing the tracks and more details will be available at the September or November meetings devoted to stations.

From Metropolitan Grove, the transitway would remain the south side of the CSX tracks, before it would turn south and travel along the west side of Quince Orchard Road. Firstfield Station

would be on the north side of Firstfield Road. It is an at-grade station, side-aligned, with a center platform. The primary entrance to the platform would be from Firstfield Road. The secondary entrance would have a crossing only across the transitway and not across Quince Orchard Road. A primary entrance is located at or near an intersection or crosswalk. A secondary entrance is the opposite entrance predominantly located mid-block. There was some discussion about why was the station located at Firstfield rather than further south, perhaps at Clopper Road. Denny mentioned that there is a large apartment complex behind Firstfield Station. Rob Robinson, City of Gaithersburg, pointed out the green space one sees on the maps at Clopper Road and Quince Orchard Road is not developable. Additionally, the Orchard Pond development has been rezoned for higher density, mixed use development. At this time, Quince Orchard Plaza does not have plans to redevelop into a more mixed use development.

An AAC member noted that shifting the transitway to the south side of the CSX tracks has removed the shared use path, which is now shown as ending at the NIST Station. The team recognized that is difficult to get to Metropolitan Grove by bicycle, but right-of-way widths are very tight in the area. However, the team is open to exploring options to create a way to create a path to the station. Rob pointed out that SHA's plan for MD 117 includes a shared use path along Clopper Road that would connect to Metropolitan Grove Road, which has paths. If constructed, the path would not follow the alignment of the CCT, but would facilitate access. Unfortunately, the SHA project has been stalled for approximately ten years.

<u>Firstfield Station to NIST Station</u>
From Firstfield Station, the transitway would remain on the west side of Quince Orchard Road until it crosses over Clopper Road on a structure to the east side of Quince Orchard Road. The transitway would remain on the east side of Quince Orchard Road to the intersection with Great Seneca Highway. The NIST Station would be located at the intersection of Quince Orchard Road and Quince Orchard Boulevard. The MTA is working with NIST staff (a US Department of Commerce facility) on how the alignment will interact with movements into and out of the NIST complex. The current proposal is to close the North Drive employee exit and build an improved entrance/exit at Quince Orchard Boulevard that would allow for more vehicle storage for cars getting through NIST security. This is the reason for the 'S' shaped roadway. The design details are still being worked on but the hope is for a more user-friendly space that takes advantage of an existing intersection.

The NIST Station would be a side-aligned, center platform with the primary entrance at the new intersection (at Quince Orchard Boulevard). The secondary entrance would have a crossing only across the transitway and not across Quince Orchard Road.

<u>NIST Station to Kentlands Station</u>
From NIST Station, the alignment would continue south along the east side of Quince Orchard Road. At Sioux Lane, the mixed use trail alignment would shift from the east side of the transitway to west of the transitway to connect with the current trail along Quince Orchard Road and Great Seneca Highway. At Great Seneca Highway, the transitway would rise up to a bridge structure to cross over to the south side of the roadway. The Kentlands Station would be a center platform station and, at the moment, is the only aerial station. It would be approximately 17 feet above Great Seneca Highway. Currently, vertical circulation would be from either end of the

platform. Work continues to progress on how to best get people from the Kentlands parking lot level to the platform and from the platform to Great Seneca Highway level. There will be more information available at the station meetings in September and November.

Because the transitway alignment goes close to The Vistas at Quince Orchard Park, an AAC member wondered if future residents had been notified about the project and another member wondered if it would be possible to put up a "Future Home of the CCT" sign similar to those at Crown Farm. It was pointed out that The Vistas at Quince Orchard Park was constructed with a transitway setback to allow room for construction. It was noted that the Crown Farm developer installed the "future CCT" sign as part of its marketing.

The switch of the mixed use trail from east of the transitway to the west of transitway at Sioux Lane/Orchard Ridge Drive sparked a great deal of discussion. There was concern about how bicyclists would make the transition across the transitway and whether the transitway could be pushed closer to the road so that the shared use path could remain on the east side. Denny explained that it would difficult due to needed design speed curve radius, the desire to keep the alignment out of the Kentlands shopping area parking lot, and other constraints. She concluded by saying that the team recognize that locating the trail between the transitway and the roadway is not ideal and are continuing to look for opportunities to improve it.

Safety concerns were raised about not including a pedestrian bridge across Great Seneca Highway from the station and building one closer to Kentlands Boulevard. Rob explained that the bridge was part of an agreement amending MedImmune's annexation agreement. From the City of Gaithersburg's perspective, it wanted to provide a connection closer to Kentlands Boulevard and provide access not just to MedImmune employees, but to residents along Orchard Ridge Drive. It was decided that this issue could be discussed in more detail at one of the station meetings in September or November.

Kentlands Station to Muddy Branch

Once the transitway crosses over Main Street, it goes back to grade, and is at grade at the Kentlands Boulevard intersection. The transitway stays on the south side of Great Seneca Highway until it reaches Muddy Branch Road.

Traffic Considerations

Interspersed with the discussion of the transitway alignment was mention of intersection operations and signal timing, especially for bicycle and pedestrians. Issues raised included:

- What impact will the CCT would have on signal timing?
- How much time will be given to allow pedestrians to cross the streets to get to the stations?
- How will extending pedestrian signal time effect downstream operations?
- What will be the impact of removing free rights and implementing right-on-red turns?

Elizabeth said that the CCT will not be pre-empting traffic signals and will follow the same lights and timing as the adjacent roadway. The traffic team is evaluating what type of traffic control is appropriate on an intersection by intersection basis. More detail on traffic will provided at the July meeting.

Environmental Concerns

Throughout the meeting, several issues related to the environment were raised. There were:

- Has the project considered a transitway similar to what is used in Eugene, Oregon? It has concrete where the tires run and a green strip running down the middle. The team said that green tracks are being looked at as part of the Red Line and Purple Line projects, but the grass test areas haven't been as successful in Maryland as it has in Oregon. It was also pointed out that green tracks are more successful as a way to minimize noise than as a stormwater management/minimization tool.
- Has the project considered constructing the mixed use trail and the sidewalks out of a permeable material? Denny said that the team is still looking at it. It is a balance between the cost of installing stormwater management and the reduction in impervious surface relative to the cost. Todd added that materials will also be a part of the urban design and station architecture planning and will be discussed at the station meetings in September and November.
- How will stormwater be managed? Does the Maryland Department of the Environment allow for offsite mitigation? Will the project need to provide addition stormwater management if there is currently a stormwater management facility in the adjacent roadway? The MTA needs to meet all MDE requirements and needs to manage the runoff generated by any new impervious surface the project creates. The team is looking at a variety of tools and techniques and which is used depends how much room is available.

It was noted that issues associated with stormwater management and other environmental strategies could be the topic of one of the to-be-determined meetings scheduled of January and March.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42p.m.

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