



Area Advisory Committee One Meeting #5 Summary  
Thursday, November, 13, 2014, 6:30pm  
Lakelands Clubhouse - Green Room  
960 Main Street, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

**Attendees:**

**Members**

Joseph Allen	David Rosenbaum
Stuart Barr	Steve Scharf
Brian Downie	Anita Schweinfurth
Cherian Eapen	Lynne Tucker
Erik Morrison	Ronald Welke
Michael Janus	Kam Yee

**Apologies**

Girum Awoke	Francine Waters
Marilyn Balcombe	Michael Watkins
Peter Henry	

**Staff**

<b>Facilitator</b> – Holly Storck	<b>Public Involvement Task Lead</b> – Crystal Saunders
<b>Station Architecture</b> – Todd Connelly, John Bull, Kyle Kramer, Ryan Goodman	<b>City of Gaithersburg</b> – Rob Robinson
<b>Traffic Engineer</b> – Elizabeth Andrew	<b>Montgomery County DOT</b> – Tom Pogue
<b>Segment Engineer</b> – Denny Finnerin	<b>Logistics Staff</b> – Jordan Vann
<b>Urban Design</b> – Seth Garland, Lindsey DeHenzel	

**Public**

Richard Arkin	Brian O’Looney
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**Handouts:**

Meeting packets included: Meeting Agenda, Meeting #4 Summary, a zoomed out Metropolitan Grove Site Plan, Station Architecture Overview, Surface Concept Comparison table, and Station Architecture Concepts (Framework and Helix). Meeting members were asked to bring their Urban Design Station Area Site plans from the previous meeting.

**Introductions and Overview:**

Facilitator **Holly Storck** welcomed committee members and asked everyone to introduce themselves. She told the group that an AAC member had been appointed to the Gaithersburg City Council and would no longer be on the committee. His position on the AAC will not be filled. Holly then went through the agenda and said that the meeting would continue with the

station area urban design discussion from the September meeting and then the group would talk about station architecture.

## **Update from Last Meeting:**

### ***Funding Update***

At the September meeting, the AAC requested that they be given an update on project funding at the November meeting (and subsequent meetings as changes occur). Segment Engineer **Denny Finnerin** provided members with background information and the current status of project funding. She said that in 2012, Governor O'Malley allocated \$100 million for preliminary design, final design, and right-of-way acquisition as part of the 6-year Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). Funds have not yet been identified for construction. Denny said that the project team is exploring different options for funding construction. Options include but are not limited to a public-private partnership (P3), where the team would provide its documents to a concessionaire who would construct the project, and design-build, which is how the Inter County Connector (ICC) was constructed. Denny said that decisions on construction funding are closely tied to who will operate and maintain the project, which has not yet been decided. The team hopes that over the next six months they will have a better understanding of the various issues surrounding ownership of the project and funding for constructing, maintaining, and operating the CCT.

The committee asked if there is a possibility of extending the Virginia I-495 Express Toll Lanes (ETL) into Maryland and up I-270 and using the revenue generated to help with some of the CCT construction costs. Denny explained that the State Highway Administration's (SHA) ETL project that was originally planned as part of the widening of I-270 has been "shelved" and that the CCT, which was originally part of the I-270 project, was separated from it and is progressing as an independent project. **Rob Robinson**, City of Gaithersburg, said that express bus service along I-270 was a part of the original SHA I-270 plan and that it was separate service, different from the CCT.

The committee said it is aware of some controversy associated with the Muddy Branch Road alignment and wondered how it would impact or change the project and whether it would cause delay. Denny said the team does not anticipate any further changes (that is, the alignment will be in the median of Muddy Branch Road) and that they are working with the City of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County DOT, and Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning (M-NCPPC) to resolve any other issues associated with the alignment change. She also said that other aspects of the project can proceed while the Muddy Branch Road alignment is being finalized with project partners so no delay is anticipated.

## **Urban Design Presentation Follow-Up:**

The AAC continued its discussion of urban design at the station area, which it started at the September meeting. **Seth Garland**, Urban Design Lead, briefly reviewed the plans at each of the AAC's four station areas – Metropolitan Grove, Firstfield, NIST, and Kentlands – and asked the AAC members for their reactions and comments.

### ***Station Areas***

The committee asked about the bike lanes that are scheduled to be added to Metropolitan Court and how they will be integrated into the station area plans. Providing access for all modes to the stations is an issue the team is working on. Seth said that there would be bike parking at the station area. However, at this time there isn't any area designated for Bikeshare, but it could be added as the team works with Bikeshare.

The committee asked if Metropolitan Court would become a de facto "kiss-and-ride" area. Seth said that cars would be able to pull into the parking lot to drop off and pick up and that there was a designated area before the bus stops where car drop-offs could occur.

The committee asked whether buses would be coming into and out of the cul-de-sac shown in the site plan. Seth explained that that would be a service entrance and exit for the CCT buses coming from or going to the operations and maintenance facility.

At Firstfield Station, Seth noted that there is an existing bus stop along Quince Orchard Road, and the sidewalk shown will be mainly for connecting between the bus stop and the CCT. Seth also said that there would be a planting strip between the transitway and the sidewalks that would act as a barrier to keep people from crossing in the middle of the block rather than at the crosswalks. Seth also pointed out that curb barriers would be built between the pedestrian crossing areas and the roadway to protect pedestrians and to discourage people from driving into the transitway from the roadway.

Each transitway lane is 14 feet wide, and the team is currently looking at whether the width can be narrower at the stations. If a bus becomes disabled, the next bus will need to move into the other lane to pass it; there is not space in a single lane for buses to pass one another. The team looked into adding passing lanes at the stations but decided against it due to its larger footprint. Because the buses would have doors on both sides, it would be possible to drop off or pick up on the opposite side.

The committee expressed concern that the project was missing opportunities to connect with other transit services in the area such as the MD 124 Park and Ride Lot. The connections are being considered, but transit operators usually consider route changes to connect with a new service closer to the completion time.

The committee worried that at Firstfield Station people would be dropped off at the curb along Quince Orchard Road to connect to the CCT. Seth said that the team is looking at "passive opportunities" to discourage people from being dropped off on Quince Orchard Road. Some of those opportunities include identifying an informal drop off/pick up area on the adjacent side street with a signed area that keeps people from parking there during peak times and a sign that gives people a five-minute idling area.

At the NIST Station there is a ten-foot shared-use path that will run behind the transitway. When the shared-use path enters into the station area the pavement treatment could change to indicate that it is part of the station area. The committee expressed concern about changing the pavement of the shared use path as a way to indicate that bicyclists were now entering the station area. Seth noted that there may be opportunities to widen the path so that there is less overlap between

shared use path and station area. Montgomery County has designated the path as a shared-use path and it is not limited to bicycles only.

The NIST station would not only serve NIST employees. Quince Orchard Plaza and the neighborhood across Quince Orchard Road are also seen as generators of trips.

Before going over the station area plans for Kentlands, Seth told the group that this plan is the most likely to change because of the need to coordinate with future development. Holly reminded members that they have already made clear their interest in having the proposed pedestrian bridge occur at the station and asked that they spend the time discussing other aspects of the station area plan. The Kentlands station is an aerial station and will have two entry levels: one at Great Seneca Highway level and the other at Kentlands level. The team has primarily been focusing on the Kentlands level. This is seen as the primary entrance and where parking will be located. In the future, the team will be looking more closely at the Great Seneca Highway level and how to facilitate access between the street and platform.

Seth explained that the Kentlands level has some unique site topography challenges that they are working through in addition to working with the property owner to ensure that the station plans and the future development plans for the site are compatible while creating a station area that has good access and visibility.

### ***Parking***

Two of the AAC One stations have parking: Metropolitan Grove and Kentlands. Metropolitan Grove will also include MARC parking and local buses will circulate through the site. Local buses use the east side of the site and make a loop before exiting the area. The site plan shows the parking area split into two areas. This is to create a pedestrian walkway, permit the movement of the local buses through the site, and accommodate future plans for the area. The existing parking lot is large enough to accommodate the required parking so no new parking is required. Approximately 100 spaces from the existing lot will be lost, mostly from the configuration of the bus loop.

There is no parking at the Firstfield Station. The adjacent lot is part of SHA's Gaithersburg Shop. The CCT project will be reconfiguring this parking area with a new entry point, but it would not be used for CCT parking.

At the Kentlands Station, approximately 250 parking spaces are proposed for long term buildout. In the short term, there would be surface parking in a lesser amount. However, structured parking could occur in the future. The CCT project team is working with the Kentlands property owner to ensure that future development plans are taken into account. It is not yet known how the CCT and shopping center parking will be kept separate and enforced. It could potentially be done through signage and/or parking enforcement.

### **Architecture Presentation/Discussion:**

Holly introduced Station Architect **Todd Connelly** who gave an overview of station architecture and the station architecture concepts

## ***Station Basics***

Using the Station Architecture Considerations Overview packet, Todd explained station location, station sizing, station elements and amenities, station finishes, station safety, and system wide architecture.

When architects first come to a project the stations are given a general location based on ridership data and operations. They then analyze the station area to determine a more specific location. The team looks at land use; community uses; population, employment, and building density; traffic patterns; and pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular travel paths. The platform and access elements are then placed to optimize the relationship of the station with the context. At this point, the architects work with the larger project team to determine what the recommended location means for the roadway, traffic, stormwater, urban design, and landscape components of the project.

The station platform is 18-feet wide by 150-feet long. The length is driven by an operations decision to have the platform accommodate two articulated buses in each direction. With short headways, buses tend to bunch and the platform length would alleviate concerns about a bus backing up into an intersection. The length also includes ten feet in the middle and at the end for buffers between the vehicles. The width includes ADA-required two-foot detectable warnings and a three-foot accessible route on both sides of the platform with an eight-foot amenity area centered in the middle. The fixed elements on the platform are arranged for passenger convenience and issues related to queuing. The mobile elements such as number and movement of passengers test the size of the platform using a Level of Service (LOS) calculation that provides a certain square footage that is based on the ability for people to move freely on the platform. The CCT is using a LOS C. The platform size is also tested by NFPA 130 for projected egress during a fire related event. Beyond the 150-foot platform are low slope ramps that will bring a rider up to the 14-inch high platform which at that height accommodates level boarding of the vehicle. The ramps at this phase of design are below the threshold where ADA would govern the design. They are currently less than 5% slope. The station also includes a space at the bottom of the ramps that act a transitional area for pedestrian circulation from adjacent crosswalks.

Todd explained that based on research of precedents and analysis of CCT ridership, the team has determined that 60% canopy coverage would provide the appropriate amount of coverage for passengers and station amenities.

After the descriptions of the location and sizing of the platforms, Todd explained that the next few sheets provide background into a critical component of user experience. Todd continued by describing to the members that the images in the packet of station elements and amenities, architectural finishes, elements for safety and lighting are representative of the type of station we are looking to create and not necessarily exactly what has been selected. The team's goal is to use a gold standard of technology to provide interactive information about the system. Other station elements include ticket vending machines (however, how fares will be collected has not yet been determined), seating, wind screens, interactive mapping, etc. Todd said that some of the station elements could include an art-in-transit component. Todd mentioned that the architects' sustainability considerations are not limited to green technology but also include issues such as

durability and maintenance, which are important when developing the preferred station finishes. The team does not want to create a station area that looks like “a sea of concrete” and assured the committee that they are looking at materials that will bring the stations and transitway into a more human scale.

Creating a safe station is a mixture of smart design and technology. The station will be designed to be transparent, minimize hidden spaces, and use appropriate lighting. Other elements would include emergency blue light phones and closed-circuit security cameras. Whether the security cameras would be consistently monitored and how long video recordings would be kept are not yet known. These issues can be discussed further during the operations discussion.

### ***Station Architecture Concepts***

Todd introduced the station architecture concepts by saying the project team created design concepts that look toward the future of the area but also would be able to work in a variety of existing contexts. He shared examples of the Healthline in Cleveland, Ohio, which uses the same basic architectural components even when the configuration for each station changes as it travels through different land use and visual environments. It is also the intent of the team to create a consistent station area that serves as a branding element for the route. However, **John Bull**, AAC Two Station Architect, explained that the team is sensitive to the context of the stations and have discussed ways to implement different materials from the surrounding communities into station elements such as platform pavers to help tie in the community while maintaining the continuity of the system.

Todd and the Station Architecture team showed two concepts for a prototypical at-grade center platform station and aerial station. Views of the two concepts, Framework and Helix, were shown from different angles: aerial, approach (as one would be walking to the station), and platform. Members were asked to look at the different concepts and talk about their reactions to them.

The Framework concept is about creating an urban room and creating space that has an edge within the long transitway. Todd said that the team tried to create the ideal transit platform – one that had no columns in the middle of it. In the Framework concept, the columns are pulled to the outside of the transitway and the canopy is hung from the underside of the five frames, creating a constant passenger interface with the canopy. The canopy would filter light, but not create an image. This concept suggests that the structure would be protected from the adjacent roadway, and that is shown by a landscaped roadway barrier on the edge, which would also prohibit people from attempting to cross in the middle of the station area. The canopy coverage element would be limited to the platform width leaving a gap between the passenger and the vehicle..

The Helix concept is more contextual and speaks to the corridor’s science and technology identification. The Helix concept tries to generate a form, which is seen in the shape of the roof. The team is trying to enhance and reinforce the idea of the twisting with the diagonal structure. The form would be supported on tree columns. The canopy coverage element would extend over the edge of the platform, providing protection from the elements as passengers board the vehicle.

Todd said the location and quantity of station elements and procession of passengers through the station would be similar in both concepts. The proposed materials, glazing and steel, would also

be the same. He said that the main difference between the two concepts is how much “presence” they have in the community. Presence means something different in each AAC, and in AAC One the stations are located at the side of the road, and the station could blend too much into the environment.

Committee members then discussed the concerns they had about the concepts and the elements they liked about them.

Maintenance and snow/rain/leaves collecting on the flat roof of the Framework concept was raised. John explained that the glass is slightly sloped, which will help with water flow. Todd pointed out that even though the glass is translucent, no images (such as fallen leaves) would show through.

The committee was concerned that solar technology would not or is not yet available to work in translucent glass. Todd explained that the team is looking at technology that creates a patterned look to the glass and depending on how that is located it could vary across the section of the glass.

The barrier aspect of the Framework concept seems safer than the Helix concept. This is because the columns were on the outside of the station rather than on the platform. Todd said that all side-of-road stations could have a barrier that separates the transitway from the roadway regardless of architectural concept.

One member said that the Framework concept seems old and somewhat industrial because of the I-beams and the committee wondered if there was a way to soften edges; to make the columns more round and streamlined.

Members wondered if there were other transit systems that have employed a design similar to the Framework concept. That is, columns outside the platform. The team said there are examples along Minnesota’s light rail system, Charlotte’s light rail system, and Baltimore’s Metro system.

It was felt that the Framework concept with its cross beams could give greater opportunity for art that could reflect the history and the context of the stations.

Committee members asked whether windscreens and other weather protection other than the concept canopies would be provided.

Concerns were raised about station lighting causing light pollution in surrounding residential areas such as King Farm and Crown Farm. John said the team is looking at providing lighting that stays on the platform area. This led to a follow up question about the CCT’s proposed hours of operation. Denny said that the intent is for a CCT user to be able to make the first Metro train leaving Shady Grove Metro Station in the morning and have a CCT vehicle available to meet the final Metro train of the evening.

The committee wondered how wide the columns in the Helix concept are. Todd said that the columns would be approximately two-feet in diameter. If the columns were to be narrower, the

structure would need an additional column added. Todd said that the team is currently evaluating the balance between structure needs and issues such as sight lines for safety reasons.

The team then showed the Framework and Helix concepts for the Kentlands aerial station. It is important to note that the platform operation of an aerial and ground-level platform are essentially the same even though the aerial platform is larger in width. At the aerial station the canopy in both concepts would be expanded to cover the entire platform as well as the elevator and stairs located at the far ends of the platform. The aerial Framework concept is similar to the ground-level Framework concept because both structures span the width of the transitway. The coverage element for Framework would reach beyond the edges of the platform at the aerial station to protect the boarding and alighting of passengers. The aerial Helix concept is different from the ground-level Helix concept as the canopy becomes lost if restricted to the platform. Therefore, the structure spans the width of the transitway and supported with columns along the outside edge. Another issue to resolve at the aerial station is how to address the underside of the transitway at the Kentlands level. The two options the architects presented were a diagonal path that connected the Great Seneca Level with the Kentlands level. The other idea was to provide a concourse at the Kentlands level that could act as a space for concession retail or an extension of the future use of the plaza outside of the station.

The committee liked the aerial Helix concept and wondered whether it could be applied to the ground-level concept. That is, creating a softer version of the Framework concept. Todd reminded the committee that this is a study in contrasts and that one concept cannot turn into another. However, there are elements from one concept that can be introduced and translated into the other.

### **Next Meeting:**

Holly said that there was a lot to cover and consider at this meeting and suggested that members look at the architectural concepts between now and the next meeting and think about any additional comments, questions or reactions they may have. She also suggested that members take the concepts out to their community groups to solicit feedback. There will be an opportunity to continue the station architecture discussion at the January meeting.

The next AAC One meeting will be January 28, 2015, and the primary topic will be environmental impacts and an update on the environmental documentation the project team is preparing.

Finally, the project team has decided that it is necessary to hold a May 2015 meeting (rather than ending in March as previously announced). Holly asked members to think whether there are any not-currently-scheduled topics they would like to discuss. If there are, please email her and she will work with the project team to get them included.

The meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

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