



Corridor Cities Transitway Area Advisory Committee Handbook

MTA Vision for the Corridor Cities Transitway

We believe that the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) Project will be of great benefit to the citizens of Montgomery County and the region. We believe that the CCT stands a greater chance of success if it is designed and built in partnership with the communities, businesses and institutions that lie along its right of way. We recognize that the opportunities for success presented by the CCT cannot be achieved unless we work together to see the project realized. Thus, we commit ourselves to working in partnership to achieving the goals and strategies of the project, recognizing and respecting always the diversity of interests and perspectives throughout the corridor and the region.



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AAC Overview

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), in partnership with Montgomery County and the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg, intends to advance the CCT through Preliminary Engineering, Final Design, and Construction. It is important that the CCT meet the needs of the citizens it is intended to serve. We hope this can be achieved in part through a collaborative effort with the Area Advisory Committees (AACs). We thank you for contributing your time, energy, knowledge and experience toward this effort. With your help, we can build upon community strengths to create a successful and integrated transit system.

What is an Area Advisory Committee?

An Area Advisory Committee (AAC) is a collaborative working group of community stakeholders established to engage in the planning and design process. Three AACs have been organized along the project alignment:

- AAC One is the northern portion of the CCT alignment and goes from Metropolitan Grove to Muddy Branch. It includes Metropolitan Grove, Firstfield, N.I.S.T., and Kentlands Stations.
- AAC Two is the middle portion of the CCT alignment. It goes from Muddy Branch to I-270. It includes LSC Belward, LSC West, Traville Gateway Drive, Universities at Shady Grove, LSC Central, DANAC, and Crown Farm Stations.
- AAC Three is the southern portion of the CCT alignment. It is on the east side of I-270 and includes West Gaither, East Gaither, and Shady Grove Stations.

Each AAC includes representatives from residential, commercial, community and institutional organizations. AAC members will participate in the process of determining how the proposed bus rapid transit alignment and stations will be integrated into their neighborhoods.

Each AAC is supported by a team of professionals that will include representatives from Montgomery County, the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg, WMATA, MTA, and consultant support staff. The consultants include experts in traffic, engineering, planning, and architecture. Other subject area experts will be available to attend AAC meetings as needed.

How Often and for How Long Does the ACC Meet?

It is anticipated that each AAC will meet quarterly during the preliminary engineering phase of the project. It is envisioned that the group will reconvene during the construction phase to solicit feedback.

The AACs may choose a preferred time and location for their meetings within the timeframes allotted and within the capabilities for the staff to support the meeting.

The agendas for these meetings will be organized by the MTA. Agenda outlines are proposed by the facilitators to ensure that each meeting will focus on elements in a manner that maximizes the



AAC member's opportunity to share and receive input on project design efforts. AAC members will have an opportunity to influence meeting agendas to focus on specific concerns of that AAC. The MTA meeting facilitators will be responsible to ensure that each AAC follows a similar progression of discussions related to design elements and will try to keep each AAC aware of activities of the other AACs.

What is the Role of the AAC?

The AACs will help shape the look and feel of the CCT project.

At the first meeting, we will solicit your concerns and interests. The team will then shape subsequent meetings around those issues while considering the timing of your input into the project design schedule.

Possible areas include station location and access, traffic management, and environmental impacts and mitigation.

AAC Responsibilities

- Represent diverse opinions.
- Provide input and insight into the impacts associated with the CCT and possible solutions.
- Serve as a sounding board.
- Share information between the CCT project team and the public.

Ground Rules for a Successful Meeting

- Everyone participates.
- Different opinions are welcome.
- Silence is agreement.
- Limit side conversations.
- Start on time; end on time.
- Members are not permitted to send a substitute.
- Members are allowed three absences
- No new members will be added.
- General public may attend AAC meetings but may only observe. A separate seating area will be provided.
- Weather related cancellations will be based on Montgomery County School schedule.



What is consensus?

- It is not:
 - unanimous agreement.
 - the opinion of the loudest voice.
- It is:
 - a fair, rational, and explicit process.
 - where participants are treated with respect and inputs are heard.
 - where everyone can live with and commit to the outcomes.

Please keep in mind that AAC members are involved to share their opinions and expertise as a means to influence the design of the CCT. The project team brings direct experience and knowledge of what is reasonable and acceptable and what is not. In many cases, the team's position is dictated either by law or policy. This will sometimes limit the team's ability to satisfy the requests of the AACs.

How Does the AAC Communicate with the Community-At-Large?

One of the responsibilities of each AAC member is to serve as an informal liaison to the larger community. We ask that you share what you learn at the AAC meeting with your friends, neighbors, and community groups and solicit their reactions and share them with the AACs.

If you would like to schedule a formal presentation with your neighborhood association, coworkers, or other organization, please let the facilitator know and she will work with the CCT team to set one up.

Station Integration with the Community

In this part of the process, the AAC will focus on the station itself. The AAC will study how the proposed station fits into the community and the preferred routes for walkers, bicyclists, drivers or users of existing transit.

Station Location

Although the official CCT plans show station locations, there is some flexibility regarding the exact location relative to crossroads, crosswalks or other relevant access points. The AAC will provide community views and input that will help locate the station, and will ensure that the station location reflects the community overall.

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- How is the proposed station accessible to walkers, transit users, bikers, and drivers?
- Where do the CCT users come from and where do they go in your community?
- What factors were considered in the decisions regarding the station layout?
- Does the proposed location not only work well for today's conditions but also for the future for the community or plans and developments already in progress?
- What will help make a successful station location in terms of access, circulation and surrounding uses?

Activity to Consider:

Check the proposed location on the site and observe the existing circulation. Imagine the station being in place and what issues need to be resolved. Imagine using the future station and how you would get to it and back home (to work or where ever) and from it.

Station Performance

AACs will investigate how the proposed station should perform in the community, how it is accessed, how people circulate to and from the station, what amenities are desired and how safety and security are achieved. The AACs will also recommend how to integrate art into the station design.

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- How should the station perform and "behave" in the community?
- How does the station integrate with the community?
- What form of art or artists will help integrate the station and the community?



- What local features are unique in the community and should be reflected in the station design.
- What accessories, services and facilities should this station have to make the station useful to the community?

Activity to Consider:

Identify stations from elsewhere which show features and design you would consider desired and appropriate for your area. Present and discuss case studies from other systems.

Station Naming

The AACs will have the opportunity to suggest names for stations. Station names should make the system easy for future riders to find their way around as well as provide recognition for communities.



When does the AAC Process Ends?

Continuing Dialogue

When the project completes preliminary engineering and receives a formal approval from the Federal Transit Administration to begin Final Design (Winter 2015/2016), the planning and opportunities to influence the outcome become very limited. At this point, the final design team is tasked with preparing project documents that direct the contractor to build the project in accordance with the vision. Contract drawings and specifications will be completed so that contractors can submit bids.

The AACs will have little to do during this time. The MTA will continue to report progress to the AACs through emails, newsletters, and an occasional meeting. When the contract is awarded and work begins in your community (Spring 2018), the AAC's role will again become important. The MTA will coordinate closely with the AACs to ensure that construction disturbances are minimized and that the promises made are promises kept.