



Area Advisory Committee Two Meeting #1 Summary
Thursday, March 13, 2014, 6:30p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Universities at Shady Grove
9630 Gudelsky Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

Attendees:

Members

Donna Baron	Toby Lehman
John Brandt	Rosalind MacLennan
Marilyn Fleetwood	David McDonough
Kara Guthro	Malanie Weerakoon
Tim Henderson	Sims Zhou

Apologies

Wayne Berman	Tami Mensh
John Dunlop	

Staff

Project Manager - Rick Kiegel	Chris Bell - Operations and Traffic Task Lead
Facilitator - Cathy Smith	Patrick Butler - M-NCPPC
Station Architect - John Bull	Gary Erenrich - Montgomery County DOT
Traffic Engineer - Charles Freeman	Crystal Saunders - Public Involvement Task Lead
Segment Engineer - Karen Kahl	Jordan Vann - Logistics Staff
	Carl Williams - Logistics Staff

General Public

Magda Clyne - Mission Hill Representative

Meet and Greet/ Mapping Exercise:

Cathy Smith, AAC Two facilitator, introduced herself and welcomed the Area Advisory Committee (AAC) members to the meeting. She requested they place two dots on the AAC Two Corridor Map - a green dot representing where they live, and a red dot representing where they work. The map provided an aerial view of the LSC Belward, LSC West, Traville Gateway Drive, Universities at Shady Grove (USG), LSC Central, DANAC and Crown Farm station areas.

Green dots were placed where I-370 and I-270 intersect, at the western most edge of Great Seneca Highway, in the Mission Hills and Washingtonian Woods neighborhoods, south of Darnestown Road near Travilah Road, south of Shady Grove Road, in Decoverly and in the far north east corner of the map to the northwest of I-270. The red dots were placed at the Universities of Shady Grove, the

intersection of Darnestown Road and Travilah Road, at the intersection of Key West Avenue and Shady Grove Road, and several dots were placed in the I-270 area. There were some dots that were “off the map” indicating that the person either lived or worked outside the area shown on the map.

Welcome:

Rick Kiegel, the CCT Project Manager, welcomed everyone and thanked them for participating on this AAC. He explained how the AAC meeting will be run and discussed the role of the facilitator and project team. He indicated that the goal is for the meetings to be very informal with interactions between the members and project team. To the greatest extent possible, presentations to the group will be done using paper copies so that members can take notes and place it in their binders for future reference. Rick then introduced the facilitator, Cathy Smith. She also thanked persons for attending, and asked members to go around the table and introduce themselves by saying their name, how long they’ve lived or worked in the area, their interest in the project and why they wanted to participate in the AAC process. Many members have lived in the area for more than 5 years. One member owns and operates several businesses along the CCT alignment and is concerned most about the impacts to her clients during the construction phase. Two members mentioned their dependency on public transportation. One member chooses not to own and car, and strongly supports public transportation. One member is the president of his HOA and wants to be involved to keep his community informed of the CCT’s progress and ensure the communities questions and concerns are addressed by the AAC. One member indicated she is against the large scale development of Belward Farms and works with Scaleitback.com. This member also expressed her misgivings about the CCT, and believes there are changes that need to be made.

Expectations:

Cathy asked all members to fill out the Title VI form. MTA uses this form as a reporting mechanism to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to demonstrate the breadth of people that participate in the public planning process. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of transit services and programs on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The demographic information collected from the Title VI form will be provided to the MTA’s Office of Fair Practice who will handle the information gathered in strict confidence. Completion of the form is voluntary and many members turned them in at the end of the meeting.

Cathy then walked members through the AAC binder. The binder included 12 sections: AAC Advertisement, AAC Area Designated Corridor Map, Team Contact Information, AAC Handbook, Meeting #1 Agenda, AAC Kick-Off Event information, and empty tabs for future meeting agendas and handouts.

Cathy reviewed the handbook emphasizing the: AAC Roles and Responsibility, Ground Rules of a Successful Meeting, Weather Related Cancelations, What is Consensus?, How the AAC’s communicate with the Community-At-Large, and the AAC meeting timeline. She requested that members review that handbook in detail and bring the binder to all events. The Team Contact Information sheet will be updated to include contact information for the members as agreed to at sign-in. Cathy stated that if anyone has questions, please contact her.

Project Update:

Prior to beginning the project update, Rick asked if anyone had questions for him? The member questions and his responses are listed below.

Question: What elements of the project can the AAC Two effect?

Rick: Any design element of the project including safety, traffic, exact station location, station access etc. are up for discussion.

Question: What kind of parking is planned for each of the stations?

Rick: The location and types of parking are on the table for discussion.

Question: Throughout the discussion this evening, we've referred to "We" - Who is the "We"?

Rick: The "We" is the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) as we are the sponsor of this project, and a subset of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). Within this AAC, Montgomery County DOT and M-NCPPC are partners as the CCT was initiated by Montgomery County in the 1970's.

Rick explained the upcoming Kick-Off Event. The Kick-Off event will be different from what we are trying to achieve in the AAC meetings. It will provide more hi-level information as there will be experts coming in from across the country to describe other systems with PowerPoint presentations.

Question: Does this AAC have the power to make changes regarding the project?

Rick: Yes, to a certain extent, but please understand that the project is not going away. The alignment has been established. The loop servicing USG and Traville Gateway Drive will service satellite activity centers by operating in mixed traffic.

While Light Rail was a consideration, Governor O'Malley announced in May 2012 that the mode for the CCT is Bus Rapid Transit. It is envisioned that the CCT will operate in an exclusive 2 lane at-grade roadway but have bridges to cross over I-270, Great Seneca Highway, Quince Orchard Road, Clopper Road, and the CSX tracks.

Question: We do not want the character or look of the CCT to change based on the city and county jurisdictions.

Rick: The MTA will be in charge of design but know that we are working with the jurisdictions so that the design is consistent in both Montgomery County and the Cities of Rockville, and Gaithersburg. However, there are some things that can't be changed such as storm water management as it is based on state regulations.

Rick discussed the current status of the project:

- The project is moving very quickly and there may be a need for an extra AAC meeting this year. The meeting is to solicit comments based on items that come up during the design of the transitway. This will ensure that the committee is current with the design elements as the project moves forward and that input can be obtained prior to MTA's final decisions on a specific matter.

The project's alignment has been established and there will be no opportunity for the AAC to modify it. However, there are two special studies currently ongoing – Mission Hills and Value Engineering. These will be completed prior to the next AAC meeting and Rick wanted the AAC to be aware of them.

1. Realignment around the Mission Hills community. This was proposed by the community to avoid “taking” a house and altering the main entrance into the development off of Muddy Branch Road. The study is examining options to move the alignment to the median of Muddy Branch Road or along one of the several alignments that take the CCT around the east and north side of the community. No decision on the realignment has been made.
2. Value Engineering is being performed on the existing alignment, to determine if the CCT design can be changed to lower the project costs and allow a faster construction timeframe. Segments being evaluated include Quince Orchard Road/Firstfield Drive, Great Seneca Highway, Muddy Branch Road and Key West Avenue.

Question: Can the community have input on working around Belward Farm?

Rick: Options for working around Belward Farm is a question of travel time, cost and engineering.

Question: Are demographic studies done to see who rides/will ride public transportation?

Rick: Yes, the demographics are based on the US Census data collected every ten years and input into the MWCOCG travel forecasting model. Periodic updates to the model are conducted.

Question: So, with no development, will the LSC Belward station disappear?

Rick: No. What we are looking at is how we will service that station utilizing Muddy Branch Road.

Rick emphasized the project is funded for preliminary engineering, final design, and most right-of-way acquisition. No money is currently allocated for construction in the six-year Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), but funding is expected to be available when needed. The team is preparing to have 15% preliminary design completed by summer 2014, and 30% preliminary design completed by fall 2015. Final design and right-of-way acquisition would occur in 2016 and 2017 with construction proposed to begin spring 2018. The phasing or the order in which the pieces of the project will be constructed has not yet been determined.

Question: How much will the project cost?

Rick: The current cost of the project is \$545 million and is based on a 2012 cost estimate. The estimate is being updated and will be based on advancements in the design and is expected to increase.

Topics for Future Discussion:

Cathy asked the members to list their top three concerns they have regarding the project. **The bold items were mentioned by multiple members.**

- Traffic on Shady Grove Road - installing a traffic light
- **Sufficient parking to accommodate those who do not live within walking distance of a station.** When the stations are not in heavy use, can they be used for community parking?
- Right-of-way across Belward Farm

- Alignment impacts on and around Muddy Branch Road, Mission Drive and Great Seneca Highway
- How do you know the origin and destination of commuters? **Will an extension to Clarksburg be implemented?**
- Intersection at Sam Eig Highway and Fields Road is an accident waiting to happen (Crown Farm). Can you explain the traffic implications in that area?
- Parking and pedestrian crossings in the Crown Farm station area
- Can we discuss the alignment route?
- Can the station locations be shifted or have they already been established?
- Pedestrian access across Darnestown Road to Belward Farm and Traville Gateway Drive
- **Parking and bike racks at each station**
- Encourage pedestrian walkability to stations, as parking is limited
- Will the crossing at Key West Boulevard be above, below or at grade?
- Great Seneca Highway/Muddy Branch Road traffic concerns – currently hard to access I-370
- **Interface with existing Public Transportation**
- Incorporation of “green” design and technology features into the system
- How the CCT will interface with USG Campus in terms of station, design, and location
- The effects of seasonal fluctuation ridership during the summer and winter breaks at USG
- How to incorporate bikes travelling on the bus. Will the bus accommodate bikes?
- Aesthetics and safety for surrounding communities
- Great Seneca Highway and Muddy Branch Road intersection towards I-370 is crowded and using Diamondback is no longer a viable option. What help is planned for this area? The master plan has Great Seneca as an interchange
- **Maximize ridership**
- What impact to traffic during construction will the project have?
- Noise level concerns and environmental impacts
- What are the impacts to Darnestown Road?
- The density of the proposed buildings could help alleviate gridlock by encouraging people not to drive

Next Steps:

The team decided to continue to hold meetings at the Universities at Shady Grove. After a vote, the AAC prefers a 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. meeting time on either Wednesday or Thursday.

Saturday, April 5th is the AAC Kick-off event. It offers a chance to meet members of other AACs and hear about how transit and BRT are bringing benefits to communities across the country.

The next meeting is proposed for the month of June and the facilitator will work with the members to tentatively set dates for the next several meetings. The third AAC meeting is targeted for the August or September time frame. AAC members should let Cathy know if they know of any conflicts they may have.