



Area Advisory Committee Three Meeting #6 Summary
Monday, March 9, 2015, 6:30 pm
Ingleside at King Farm
701 King Farm Blvd
Rockville, MD 20850

Members

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| Marcia Bond | Arlene Robinson |
| Kevin Johnson | Fred Samadani |
| Alan Kaplan | Gail Sherman |
| Marilyn Leist | Mel Willis |
| Timothy McDonald | |

Apologies

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Gerald Calderone | C. Scott Maravilla |
| Martin Mankowski | |

Staff

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| Facilitator – Traceé Strum-Gilliam | City of Rockville – Katie Mencarini, Emad Elshafei |
| Project Manager - Rick Kiegel | Montgomery County DOT – Joana Conklin |
| Station Architect – Kyle Kramer | WMATA - Robin McElhenny-Smith |
| Traffic Engineer – Kevin Permisohn | Operations Task Lead – Chris Bell |
| Segment Engineer – Allison Berkheimer | Project Staff – Kyle Nembhard |
| Public Involvement Task Lead – Crystal Saunders | Logistics Staff – Lineta Duren, Tori Leonard |

General Public

Handouts:

Meeting packets included: Meeting Agenda, Meeting #5 Summary, Operations Planning presentation, and a copy of the MTA's Facility Naming Policy.

Introductions and Overview:

Facilitator **Traceé Strum-Gilliam** welcomed the group to the AAC Three Meeting #6 and acknowledged the difficulties in attempting to schedule this meeting due to inclement weather in both January and February.

She provided an overview of the agenda and what the group could expect in the evening's meeting. Members introduced themselves for the benefit of some new attendees. Public guests were also asked to introduce themselves.

Station Design Follow-Up:

Kyle Kramer, Station Architect, provided a review of the previous AAC meeting that covered station design and concepts. He also explained to the group the changes that had been made to the designs as a result of the input provided by the AAC members. Members were offered an opportunity to comment on additional station designs at a future meeting (Meeting #7).

It was mentioned that the same design concepts presented at the previous AAC Three meeting were also presented at the Montgomery County Rapid Transit Study (RTS) Corridor Advisory Committee meeting held on Saturday, February 28th in Rockville. Kyle notified the group that the Framework option was not the option preferred by the committee.

It was clarified that at the next meeting station design and concepts will be discussed, but not the number of stations.

Muddy Branch Status:

Allison Berkheimer, Segment Engineer, provided an update of the Muddy Branch Road discussions with Montgomery County staff. She explained that the Muddy Branch Road discussion has no impact or implication on AAC Three. In her update, it was noted that Muddy Branch Road will be widened to the east and that the CCT will be constructed in the median of the roadway.

Rick Kiegel informed the group that the project team brought this issue to their attention because it was of interest to the other AACs. He also noted that the CCT design team looked at alternative alignments to Muddy Branch and concluded that the Muddy Branch Road median alignment was the best option. Rick added that thorough coordination with various Montgomery County entities had been conducted, and that it was recommended that the CCT stick to the master plan and accommodate the additional two proposed roadway lanes.

During the follow up discussion, it was asked if Johns Hopkins University (JHU) was aware of the alignment through their Campus. Rick explained that Montgomery County and JHU have an agreement in which a width of 50 feet is being reserved for the CCT. Traceé added that the master plan prescribed the current alignment of the CCT. She also noted that the project team has made minor tweaks to the alignment since the master plan was adopted such as including service to USG.

Fire and Rescue Follow-up:

Allison followed up with the group about its request to coordinate with the local fire and rescue entities. She provided an update on that coordination as it related to the proposed Kung Farm Boulevard median closings. Allison pointed out that the Rockville Fire and Rescue department referred the team to the County for coordination on navigating through King Farm under new conditions introduced by the CCT. She noted that the discussion did not result in any changes to the specific medians that will be closed to general motorists. However, Allison stated that there would be mountable curbs on both sides of the median near the Ingleside facility per the recommendation of the fire department. The fire department voiced interest in having mountable curbs at Elmcroft Boulevard as well but no change to the design has been made to date.

During the discussion, the point was raised that mountable curbs could damage emergency vehicles. Several AAC Members asked if this concern had been raised in the discussions with fire and rescue. Rick confirmed that this issue had not been raised as a concern by either party

but noted the County's desire to reserve the ability to cross the median at Elmcroft Boulevard. He further explained that in a recent meeting with fire and rescue, the team learned that the county uses Elmcroft Boulevard in place of MD 355 when MD 355 is backed up.

Several attendees noted that they had personally observed the City of Rockville Fire Department utilize Reserve Champion Drive because Elmcroft Boulevard is narrow. It was recommended that the team follow-up with the City of Rockville regarding the coordination of emergency vehicle movements through the community.

CCT Operations Planning:

Chris Bell, Operations Task Lead, provided an introduction to his agenda for the evening and the topics he would cover as it related to Operations Planning. Rick noted that the material Chris presents builds on itself and encouraged members to interrupt with questions.

Ridership Forecasting

Chris emphasized to the group the importance of ridership forecasting and how it affects the results and analysis of operations planning. He provided an overview of the MWCOG model that was used to create the base model for developing CCT ridership forecasts and function as well as describing the purpose of the model. It was originally developed to model the impacts to regional air quality based on changes to the transportation network.

The MWCOG model is also used as a base for project planning. Rick added that the MWCOG model is not only used for transit projects but also for highway projects.

Chris explained that 'mode choice' is a key model component. He also provided examples of factors that could affect mode choice including the perceived convenience and advantage of driving over using public transportation or the appeal of one transit mode versus another.

The idea of verifying that the King Farm Shuttle was included as an assumption in the model was raised. The CCT Team confirmed that the model takes into account the presence of the King Farm Shuttle and the perceived advantage of using this service as an option, especially since it has no cost associated with it. It was further suggested that using the King Farm Shuttle is cheaper and thus would detract from the ridership of the CCT by users in King Farm.

The point was raised that the shuttle is free and carries 22,000 riders per month. Chris indicated that he would review the data for the shuttle. It was also noted that routes for the shuttle were determined by need - originally, the shuttle started with one route and has currently grown to three routes.

Existing 20-minute shuttle service frequency was observed to be longer than the proposed headways of the CCT. It was suggested that the shorter headways offered by the CCT will attract some users of the King Farm Shuttle.

It was suggested that assumptions for the King Farm Shuttle may be incorrect based on the 22,000 riders it carries per month. The member asked how these numbers work into the service plan and forecasting. The group also pointed out an apparent contradiction of data availability of the King Farm Shuttle. It was clarified that data regarding existing conditions is coded into the model. However, data specific to the King Farm Shuttle was not immediately available at this meeting.

It was observed that there was a drop in passenger loads between West Gaither and Crown Farm. Chris explained that this is due to passengers getting off at West Gaither. Traceé added that these conditions are based on 2020 projections. Chris added that these numbers are based on the 7 AM to 8 AM timeframe as that represents the peak commuting hour. Chris also explained how the modeling results suggest that people are taking Metro to the CCT and destinations along the CCT corridor in the non-typical reverse commuting direction.

Chris noted that the MWCOC model uses population and employment forecasts and are agreed upon based on input from local jurisdictions throughout the region. It was suggested that a census analysis of who would utilize the service be conducted. It was also suggested that more accurate data is needed for input into the model.

Chris explained how the model is based on real-world data in addition to a combination of regional surveys and transportation analysis zones. Traceé added that projects like the CCT use a regionally accepted model. Rick noted that the modeling process is a nationally accepted process and that can't be changed. Rick also noted that there is a step in the process that looks at the results and is critical to make sure the results are realistic.

It was re-emphasized that stations are not warranted based on the low activity suggested by the data at East Gaither Station. Rick validated the observation acknowledging that the boardings and alightings at these locations were relatively low. Rick assured the group that Chris will try and provide a better sense of the boardings and alightings at the East Gaither station.

Chris explained to the group that ridership numbers are not available because of some minor tweaking of the model is needed. He also noted that the modeling results are calibrated against real-world results for validity of the data.

It was asked if the CCT Model has the Purple Line in the network. Chris stated that the Purple Line project is included in the MWCOC model.

Operations Planning

Chris noted that key output of the operations planning process is to determine the bus frequency required to meet demand. Chris also explained how passenger volumes influence frequency while referring to his handout.

Chris explained that the first step is to reach consensus on operations policy elements. He noted that the team agreed to use a 60 ft. articulated vehicle with 60 seats and a maximum passenger load of 90 passengers. He cited this as a comfortable standing load and is an industry standard.

Chris discussed with the group the proposed service plan for the CCT which consists of two routes. He explained that CCT direct route would utilize the transitway between Metropolitan Grove and Shady Grove without deviating from the transitway while the CCT via USG route would leave the transitway and use local streets to serve the Universities at Shady Grove and Travillah Gateway Drive stations before returning to the transitway at Medical Center Drive. Chris also noted to the group that only CCT-branded vehicles will use the transitway facilities and that other services would not share the facility with CCT vehicles.

Chris noted that at this point in the project, there are no proposed changes to the Ride On network as a result of the CCT.

The point was raised that a transfer would have to be made to access the CCT from any other transit services in the area including the proposed MD 355 BRT route. Chris suggested that the nearest transfer point would be at the East Gaither station in King Farm. However, Rick acknowledged the inefficiency in such a transfer which would involve walking from MD 355 to the East Gaither Station at Pleasant Drive. Rick also noted that the stations along MD 355 are not set in stone but the MD 355 BRT station could be at the Shady Grove Metro station.

Joana acknowledged that the county would need to look at how to make an efficient connection between the MD 355 route and CCT but the county is not far enough along in the process to make that determination at this time.

Chris noted that the team uses the Constrained Long Range Plan network with any changes proposed by other agencies (i.e. Ride On).

Chris concluded the operations planning discussion by explaining the concept of “Policy Headways” and how, in order to maintain a premium service, the headways would need to be 15 minutes or less.

Premium Elements

Chris explained how the fare collection would be collected on either the station platform or designated locations rather than onboard the vehicle. Chris explained the concept of the barrier-free system.

Chris described the features of the BRT system including the following:

- Guideway
- Simplicity of the route system
- Branding
- Frequency
- Off-board fare collection
- Real-time information
- Automated announcements (visual and audio)

One member recalled the explanation that the CCT would not control signals. Chris explained that there is a timing element involved and that the vehicles do not control signals absolutely like a fire engine. Rick added that the CCT will not operate like a freight train through the signal but would only provide extended signal time for the CCT vehicle before turning red and only if it was determined that the CCT vehicle is behind schedule. He also explained that the bus gets priority under conditional circumstances. Therefore, priority will not be granted to a bus if the intersection already operates over capacity. Further, priority will only be used to maintain headways between buses.

The possibility of fare evasion was raised as well as how agencies can determine the rate of fare evasion incidents without on-board fare collection. Chris explained that agencies estimate the number of fare evasion incidents that occur by doing initial counts and estimate the amount of revenue they should be receiving based on the number of passengers. Rick added that fare inspectors have more of a presence at the beginning of service to establish expectations and that there are fines for frequent offenders.

Chris also described elements of safety and security which include the following:

- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)
- Operations Control Center
- Communications systems

Facility Naming Policy:

Traceé discussed the MTA naming policy and how the proposed station names on the current project are not set in stone. Traceé explained how concerns for the name of the East Gaither station in a previous meeting prompted this topic. Tracee walked through considerations that go into naming including the necessity of a proposed name that can be quickly associated with a specific geography or geographic location among others. She also noted that the policy applies to newly constructed facilities owned by MTA.

Traceé noted that MTA only names a station after a town if there is one station in that town. Characteristics to avoid are: hyphens and slashes; more than 25 characters, or named after a persons living/deceased unless there is a historical context or associated with a location.

The point was raised that the current name of the East Gaither station is misleading and confusing. Rick noted that committee members have an opportunity here to offer new names for the two stations with the AAC area. He added that the naming suggestions should be consistent with the MTA naming policy and indicated that MTA will make the final decision.

Rick explained that this group is the only group that gets a chance to influence the name of the stations along King Farm Boulevard. Rick also suggested that the team get feedback in meeting #8 on station names.

General Discussion/Closing:

The group inquired about cost estimates and how the cost would account for inflation. Rick noted that he needs permission from the MTA and MDOT Administrators before releasing the information. The member also asked for O&M costs as well as the source of the funds. Finally, a member asked about traffic impact and air quality.

A question about snow removal was raised. Traceé re-iterated that MTA is not responsible for snow removal outside of its jurisdiction. It was suggested that MTA coordinate with the City of Rockville on the issue.

Next Meeting

Traceé proposed dates for the next meeting and offered to send out a doodle poll to the members. She requested that all members respond within two days.

Traceé also proposed dates for the final meeting. The group agreed that scheduling for early June would be preferable.

As a topic for meeting #8, Traceé asked if the group was interested in a presentation about bike planning from the City of Rockville and Montgomery County Planning. Rick explained how this was influenced by the interest of another AAC and the team wanted to make that option available to all other AACs. Rockville also expressed willingness to present if desired.

Traceé also presented the option to have **Robin McElhenny-Smith** from WMATA to do a presentation on the Shady Grove Metro station. The group expressed the preference for a presentation by WMATA.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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